

Making a difference Emerging Practice

Working Together: Connexions
supporting young asylum
seekers and refugees

Foreword

Connexions is an innovative and exciting development in young people's services. It is about helping young people navigate their way through decisions about studying, jobs and careers. Using a range of approaches, it helps young people get the personal development they need to fulfil their potential and become the active citizens of tomorrow. It is also about helping young people who have problems, such as with drugs, alcohol, depression, are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

It was developed because services for young people were not delivering what was needed. The Bridging the Gap report illustrated this by pointing out that 161,000 young people were not in education, employment or training. Young people felt that too often they were passed from pillar to post with no co-ordination between the services. *Youth Support Services for 13-19 year olds: A Vision for 2006* sets out how Connexions aims to deliver its services over the next three years.

Connexions is building a modern, multi-disciplinary service to help all young people between 13 and 19 to reach their full potential and move successfully into adult life. Through Connexions Partnerships, it brings together all the services that help young people, directly or by brokering access to other services, and gives them access to a Personal Adviser – someone they can turn to and can trust. Young people should get whatever help they need in as straightforward a way as possible.

The Connexions vision is an ambitious one, but it is what young people have told us they want and need. There is national recognition that the success of Connexions is vital to all government departments in their aims to help young people. This applies equally at local level, where we will only achieve our shared vision for young people by working closely together. This is why it is vital that everyone involved in delivering young people's services gets involved with their Connexions Partnership.

Working together: Connexions supporting young asylum seekers and refugees

The Connexions Service National Unit (CSNU) has produced this booklet with the help of a number of organisations including Save the Children, the Refugee Council, the Department of Health, the Home Office, the Connexions Voluntary Sector Forum, Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus, Government Offices for the Regions and Connexions Partnerships. In particular, Save the Children worked with Connexions to develop the publication, and we welcome and acknowledge their vital contribution.

It is one of a series about joint working aimed at Connexions Partnerships and the range of agencies that work with young people. Other guides in the series cover teenage pregnancy, working with Social Services, youth justice services, youth homelessness agencies, the Statutory Youth Service, and voluntary and community organisations.

These publications focus on integrating support for some of the most vulnerable young people – this booklet aims to add to this expertise. It highlights the barriers faced by young asylum seekers and refugees, and how Connexions is working with other key partners to help overcome them.

Asylum-seeking and refugee children may have a wide range of educational and social needs. They are a very diverse group, from very different countries and cultures around the world, and even children from the same country may come from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Young refugees and asylum seekers may have, or come from families who have, very different political beliefs and religious observances.

While lack of English is a problem for many, others have learned the language or will be fluent speakers before they arrive in the UK. Some may have had a long interruption to their education, and young people from some countries may have had little or no education. Horrific experiences in their country of origin or during their journey to the UK can affect some young people's ability to learn and rebuild their lives. There can be other problems too – perhaps losing their parents, carers or other family members, or a huge drop in their standard of living, and some continue to suffer here because of discrimination, racism and bullying. Young people will often feel isolated, and lack the support they need to integrate. Confusion over the asylum process, and generally how the UK system works, can also cause difficulties for young refugees and asylum seekers.

While most children and young people arrive in the UK with one or both parents, some do not. They may arrive with friends or relatives who are not their usual carers, or they may arrive on their own. Young asylum seekers who arrive aged under 18 with no carers are known as unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).

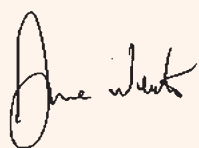
Connexions has a particular role to play in making a real difference to the way support is given to young asylum seekers and refugees – they are some of the most vulnerable young people in our society. This will involve bringing together all the organisations that deliver services to these young people to provide a coherent, multi-agency package, and one that is clearly focused on the needs of each individual young person.

All asylum seekers and refugees aged 13 to 19 are entitled to use the Connexions Service. We must ensure that everyone in this age group has access to the service, whether they have been given refugee status or other leave to stay in the UK, or if they have made a claim for asylum. This will involve Connexions working closely with Social Services, Education Services and Jobcentre Plus, as well as with refugee and voluntary organisations to make sure that young asylum seekers and refugees are given effective advice and support.

Some Connexions Services have already begun to offer specific help and support to young asylum seekers and refugees. For example, the Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership is involved in a pilot with Save the Children, which focuses on young refugees. Six Personal Advisers work specifically with young refugees in the area, and many more advisers have been given training on the particular issues facing young refugees, to help them support this group.

For Connexions to realise its vision of meeting all the diverse needs of young people, Partnerships need to work with voluntary and refugee organisations. These organisations have a wealth of expertise, knowledge and information to offer on working with young asylum seekers and refugees.

We value your thoughts on this guidance and whether you have found it helpful. We therefore need to hear back from you – what you think, both about the usefulness of the guidance and your experience of the support Connexions provides. You can do this by e-mailing Liz Miller at CSNU on liz.miller@dfes.gsi.gov.uk, or by filling in the form at the end of this booklet.



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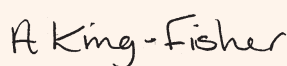
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Introduction

This booklet gives information and ideas to help people who work with young asylum seekers and refugees. It is intended to help Connexions Partnerships, Social Services, Education Services and Jobcentre Plus, as well as refugee organisations, to work more effectively together in delivering the highest quality of advice and support to young asylum seekers and refugees.

We recognise that Connexions is not the only service providing one-to-one support to young asylum seekers and refugees. Social workers and a range of others have similar roles.

A significant part of our success will depend on whether we can make sure that young asylum seekers and refugees get access to the specialist support they need. Connexions has a vital role to play in overcoming and alleviating the problems these young people face, by joint working with a number of agencies including key government departments and refugee organisations.

This guidance:

- explains the background to the development of Connexions;
- examines the issues and barriers faced by young asylum seekers and refugees, and how these can be overcome;
- sets out how key government departments and refugee or voluntary organisations can work with the Connexions Service;
- provides examples of good practice in Connexions Partnerships on how to work effectively with young asylum seekers and refugees, and highlights different models of PA working with this client group;
- details the findings of the Save the Children pilot in the Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions Partnership;
- provides a top tips guide for PAs;
- gives ideas on how to involve young asylum seekers and refugees in the processes that affect them.

The Connexions Service: an overview

The Connexions Service was set up to give all 13 to 19 year olds in England a better start in life. It provides them with integrated information, advice and guidance and helps with their personal development. Connexions aims to help young people take part in learning, achieve their full potential, and make a smooth transition to adult life.

Connexions delivers a modern service through partnership – joining together all the organisations that help and support young people. It is radical in the way it brings together the services of eight government departments – the Home Office, Department for Education and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – as well as the voluntary sector and community organisations, to support young people. By developing the service across organisational boundaries, Connexions is helping to provide consistent support.

Services are drawn together in ‘One Stop Shops’, bringing together a range of services when and where people need them.

Connexions Partnerships share the same boundaries as the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). Partnerships are responsible for planning the service; delivery is organised by bodies usually known as Local Management Committees (usually at local authority level). Connexions Partnerships and Local Management Committees are made up of a range of partners such as Local Education Authorities, Youth Offending Teams and voluntary and community organisations.

The Connexions Personal Adviser (PA)

Central to the Service is a network of Personal Advisers (PAs), who act as advocates, and directly offer or broker information, advice and guidance for young people. PAs obtain an overview of each young person’s ambitions and needs, and ensure that young people get the support they need, quickly and effectively, without being passed from pillar to post.

Personal advisers come from a wide range of professional backgrounds, bringing a variety of expertise and experience to the service. For example, they may have a background as Careers Advisers, Youth Workers, Homelessness Workers, Drugs Workers or Care Leavers’ Advisers. Some are employed by or seconded to the Connexions Service, while others remain in their own field and work under a partnership agreement.

They operate in multi-disciplinary teams, building on a range of professional practice in both the statutory and the voluntary and community sectors.

What Connexions offers young people

Connexions offers all young people aged 13 to 19:

- individual assessment, and help with planning, setting and reviewing their goals;
- access to personal development opportunities;
- support in making career decisions and moving into adult life.

Some young people will need much more intensive support than others.

The Connexions Service:

- offers **information and initial advice** to all young people on everything relating to learning and progress towards adult life;
- provides **more intensive guidance and support** for young people who need it – including in-depth career guidance and sustained support, advocacy and brokerage;
- helps and encourages young people to access other activities and support, such as school and college provision, the Prince's Trust and Millennium Volunteers.

The support young people receive depends on their needs. The needs of a 13 year old can be very different from those of a 19 year old. Issues such as race, background, education and special needs also define young people. Connexions is about treating all young people as individuals.

Many young people have a range of issues to overcome if they are to reach their full potential. Connexions is a service for all 13-19 year olds, but with a sharp focus on the young people who need it the most. For the most disadvantaged, Connexions draws together a range of key services including Drug Action Teams, Teenage Pregnancy Unit, Sure Start Plus, Youth Offending Teams and voluntary organisations working with homeless young people.

Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities can continue to be supported by Connexions beyond the age of 19, if they are not ready for adult services. This support can be provided until the young person's 25th birthday.

Connexions involves and consults with young people in the design and delivery of its services. For example, the Local Management Committee in the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Connexions Partnership has an Engaging Young People Worker who is responsible for feeding the views of young people into the decision-making processes.

Information sharing

Information about young people needs to be managed and shared (with the young person's consent) to make sure they receive the best support. Information-sharing agreements, governing data sharing, protection and security, should be drawn up between Connexions Partnerships and the organisations involved in sharing young people's information. National information-sharing protocols have been developed between some of the organisations covered in this guidance, which are available on the Partnership area of the Connexions website. There is further guidance in the *Guidance for Connexions Partnerships on Information Sharing*.

It is also important to keep up a dialogue with these organisations, to help avoid repeated assessments of the young person, and to make sure you can keep an overview of their needs over time and across agencies, ensuring that the young person does not fall through the gaps.

Annex 1 contains more details of the Connexions Service and its key principles.

The legal context

Claiming asylum in the UK

Asylum seekers are people who flee their home country and seek refugee status in the UK, possibly because of war or human rights abuses. They make a claim for refugee status (see page 14) because they believe they have a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of nationality due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a social group.

The United Kingdom must consider all applications for asylum made in this country, as a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 protocol on refugees. The UN Convention considers someone to be a refugee if they are forced to flee their home country, or country of origin, because of

'a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a social group'.

The UK is also a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This means the Home Office must also consider whether an applicant would face inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, contrary to Article 3 of the ECHR, before deciding on their claim.

The Home Office assesses each individual asylum claim in the UK to decide whether it fits this criteria. If a claim is unsuccessful, the applicant can appeal. But if the appeal is unsuccessful, they will have to leave the country. There may be exceptions to this rule. Check with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) for the latest position (see Annex 4). The IND, part of the Home Office, is the government department which deals with asylum applications and determines the support that asylum seekers receive.

The government is committed to ensuring that the UK keeps to its obligations under the UN Convention, and that people fleeing persecution are given the protection they need.

The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002

On 29 October 2002 the Home Secretary announced a substantial package of measures to fundamentally overhaul the government's immigration and asylum policy. The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (which received Royal Assent on 7 November 2002) substantially reformed nationality, immigration and asylum policy.

The main provisions of the Act are:

- To establish an effective and efficient asylum process with a system of separate induction, accommodation and removal centres.
- To speed up the asylum process and reduce abuse of the system.
- To tackle illegal working, people-trafficking and fraud.
- To raise the importance of citizenship.

Asylum statistics

The Home Office website – www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk – has up-to-date information on the countries of origin of asylum seekers. For monthly statistics on asylum claims and decisions, look on: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

There has been a significant growth in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in recent years – from 300-400 in 1995, to just over 6,000 arriving in 2002 (although this also reflects changes in the way the data is recorded). There is useful information in the Home Office guidance for social workers, *'Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children: Information Note'*, issued in 2002 (see Annex 4 for details).

The top ten countries from which asylum seekers come to the UK are:

All asylum seekers	Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
Based on figures for 2002	Based on figures for 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Iraq 2 Zimbabwe 3 Afghanistan 4 Somalia 5 China 6 Sri Lanka 7 Turkey 8 Iran 9 Pakistan 10 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Iraq 2 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 3 Afghanistan 4 Somalia 5 Albania 6 China 7 Eritrea 8 Angola 9 Vietnam 10 Moldova
Over 60% of applications in the year came from these ten countries.	Over 70% of applications in the year came from these ten countries.

European comparisons

The UK ranks in the middle of EU countries in terms of applications received per 1,000 of population. When the size of domestic populations is taken into account, the UK ranks tenth out of 15 EU countries for applications in 2001, at 1.5 applications per 1000 of population.

In 2001, applications fell by 2% for the EU as a whole (applications increased for Austria, Sweden, France, Germany and fell for Netherlands, Italy and Belgium).

The application process

Asylum procedures can be complex and the legislation tends to change frequently, but this section gives an outline of the basic procedures. A more detailed explanation can be found on the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's (IND) website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk

Making an application

Asylum seekers can make their application for asylum either at their port of entry into the UK, or by applying to the Home Office (Immigration and Nationality Directorate) when in the UK. However, if they do not apply as soon as they enter the country, they may not be entitled to support while waiting for a decision on their claim (see 'Section 55' on page 11). They must apply in person – the Home Office does not accept postal applications.

If a family is seeking asylum, the claim is made by the principal adult in the family group, and the rest of the family is asked if they wish to be included in the claim as dependants. However, children in families do have the right to make a separate application if they wish to do so. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children have to make their own individual claim for asylum.

Application Registration Card (ARC)

All applicants are screened to establish their identity and nationality. This involves taking fingerprints and photographs, and recording personal details, to guard against fraud and multiple applications. All of these details are now placed on an Application Registration Card (ARC) which is issued to the applicant, and it also states if they are entitled to work.

ARCs were only introduced recently, so some young people may have old identity documentation issued by the Home Office, which was known as a Standard Acknowledgement Letter (SAL).

Interviews

Most applicants will have an interview with an Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) caseworker at some stage during their application process. This gives them the chance to explain why they fear returning to their country of origin and to hand in any documentary evidence. The decision on the asylum claim will be decided from the interview and from a Statement of Evidence Form (known as a SEF).

Up to September 2002, the Home Office did not interview children about their asylum applications unless there were exceptional circumstances. However, the Home Office has since decided to interview in more cases. The Home Office only interview unaccompanied asylum seeking children with a responsible adult present. They are interviewed by specially trained officers.

A caseworker makes a decision on each claim and writes to the applicant to tell them. IND caseworkers aim to make a decision on the application within two months.

Legal representation

Unaccompanied young asylum seekers are entitled to a free legal representative while they apply. They may also get free legal representation for appeals, as long as they meet certain criteria. They are also entitled to have an adult to support them, and an interpreter, in asylum interviews and meetings with their legal representative.

The Refugee Council's Children's Panel of Advisers help unaccompanied asylum seeking children to get quality legal representation and help them through the application

process. The Home Office refer unaccompanied children to the panel, but other agencies sometimes need to help them to make contact. As the panel has limited capacity, it is not guaranteed that a young person will get to see one of their advisers.

Reporting

Some asylum seekers have to report regularly to an immigration office or police station – usually once a month. This is more likely to affect young people over 18. They should not have to travel further than 25 miles (or have a journey longer than 90 minutes) to report, but they are not paid travel expenses for this. This policy may change as it is currently under review.

Support while waiting for a decision

The National Asylum Support Service (NASS)

The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) of the Home Office came into operation in April 2000. It now supports, on request, asylum seekers (except unaccompanied asylum seeking children) who are destitute and who can demonstrate that they claimed asylum as soon as reasonably practicable after entering the country.

- NASS usually provides accommodation in dispersal areas outside London and the south-east (see below), and support for essential living needs because about half of new asylum applicants arrive with nowhere to stay and no means of supporting themselves. They have no choice on where they will be housed.
- Asylum seekers can choose not to take NASS accommodation. NASS then provides essential living needs support only. Many asylum seekers arriving in the UK can stay with family or friends (most of these live in London). These asylum seekers must comply with any reporting restrictions imposed on them (see 'Reporting' above) – if they don't, then their support may be suspended.

Section 55

A recent change to support services (known as Section 55) means that people who do not claim asylum immediately, or do not provide a full and accurate account of their circumstances, may not be entitled to support from NASS. However, this has been challenged in the courts. For latest update on this see either the Home Office or Refugee Council websites (See 'Annex 4: contacts and further information' on page 68).

Some people are in any case exempted from these new restrictions:

- families with children;
- people who claim asylum after a significant change of circumstances in their home country;
- people who can show they would suffer treatment contrary to Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Dispersal

Adult asylum seekers and children in families who arrive in London and the south-east are usually 'dispersed' to other parts of the country and supported by NASS.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who turn 18 before they have a decision on their asylum application, or are appealing, will usually be transferred from Social Services support to NASS support on their 18th birthday. For a young person supported under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989), who lives in London or the south-east and is transferred to NASS, this will mean being dispersed to another part of the country unless there are exceptional circumstances. For example, if a young person is studying for exams they might be able to stay where they are until their exams are over. NASS are not dispersing young people who have been looked after under Section 20 of the Children Act, except in exceptional circumstances.

Accommodation centres

As part of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 it is proposed that accommodation centres will be set up with services and facilities on site for asylum seekers – for example education and healthcare. Some asylum seekers will be supported in accommodation centres while their claim for asylum is considered. This will only apply to children with their families – unaccompanied asylum seeking children will not be housed in accommodation centres, and will still be the responsibility of Social Services.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the Children Act (1989)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines an unaccompanied asylum seeking child as being under 18 years old, outside their country of origin and separated from both parents or their previous legal or usual primary carer. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children apply for asylum in their own right, and are the responsibility of Social Services under the Children Act 1989.

Young people arriving on their own at 18 or over are treated as adults and supported through the National Asylum Support Service (NASS).

Support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children can be provided under two different sections of the Children Act

All separated children should receive a full needs assessment by Social Services, in line with the National Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need. This provides a systematic approach to establishing children's needs, and stresses that particular care and attention is needed in assessing separated refugee and asylum seeking children.

The framework lays down the following requirements for Social Services departments:

- Make a decision about how to respond to a referral to Social Services within one working day.
- Carry out an initial assessment of whether the child is in need within seven days.
- Carry out a core assessment within no more than 35 working days. (The young person should have access to a copy of the assessment in their own language, which they can choose to share with their Personal Adviser.)
- Prepare a care plan or children in need plan for all children. This is a plan to meet the needs (accommodation, financial and other support needs) identified, with set timescales and contingency plans if any part is not successful. Plans should be reviewed regularly.

Around 70% of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the UK are aged 16 or 17. Although some of them will have arrived when they were under 16 and will continue to receive care, accommodation and support under section 20 of the Children Act, the majority arrive after their 16th birthday and currently are usually supported under Section 17 of the Children Act. Section 17 of the Children Act usually provides less support, and young people supported under this section are not entitled to leaving care services.

The Department of Health has recently published guidelines for local authorities to stress that Section 20 should be used to support this group of children. The guidelines state that: 'where a child has no parent or guardian in this country, perhaps because he has arrived alone seeking asylum, the presumption should be that he would fall within the scope of section 20 and be looked after, unless the assessment reveals particular factors which would suggest that an alternative response would be more appropriate.'

It is important that young people should be offered services and decisions based on an assessment of what they need, and not simply on their presumed age.

Section 20

This is where the child becomes looked after by the local authority. These children will have an allocated social worker and a care plan. When they leave care at 18 they will also be entitled to Leaving Care Services until they are at least 21.

Section 17

Under Section 17, young people are usually helped to find somewhere to live (often a room in a hostel, or possibly a bed and breakfast or shared rented house) and given payments for subsistence.

Unlike young people covered under Section 20, these young people are not entitled to Leaving Care Services. If they are given refugee status, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, at 16 they may receive benefits, depending on their circumstances. Once these young asylum seekers reach 18, the support they will get depends on their asylum status. If they apply in time for an extension of their leave to stay, they continue to be eligible for support while their application is considered.

Receiving a decision

At the end of the application process, the asylum seeker may be given:

- refugee status;
- Humanitarian Protection;
- Discretionary Leave.

The young person's claim may also be refused (either individually in the case of unaccompanied children, or the whole family in the case of children in families).

The Home Office aims to give a decision within two months in 75% of cases.

Refugee

When someone's claim for asylum has been granted, based on a well-founded fear of persecution in their country, they become a refugee. They can stay in the UK indefinitely, and qualify for all the rights of a British national.

A person with refugee status is usually granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK.

Humanitarian Protection

Humanitarian Protection is linked to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which the UK has signed. The ECHR sets out a number of civil and political rights, including Article 3, which prohibits torture, inhuman or degrading treatment. Removing someone to a country where they face a real risk of suffering this kind of treatment would be a breach of Article 3 by the UK. Sometimes, although people are not considered refugees under the criteria of UN convention, they may still be covered by the ECHR.

Humanitarian Protection is granted to asylum seekers if it is accepted that they face a serious risk in their country from:

- the death penalty
- unlawful killing
- torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Humanitarian Protection normally gives the asylum seeker leave to stay in the UK for three years. In some cases it might be for a shorter period – for instance, if the situation in a country is changing.

After three years, people can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK if the risk still exists in their country. This is not granted automatically.

Discretionary Leave

Discretionary Leave is only granted in a few special circumstances – for instance, some medical cases where Humanitarian Protection is not granted under Article 3, or for unaccompanied asylum seeking children who do not have adequate reception arrangements in their country of origin.

The period they are allowed to stay in the UK varies, depending on the reason they have been granted Discretionary Leave. For instance, unaccompanied asylum seeking children are usually granted leave for three years or until their 18th birthday. As with humanitarian leave, they can be given an extension at the end of this time. However, they will normally need to spend six years in the UK on Discretionary Leave before they will be given indefinite leave to remain here.

Exceptional leave to remain (ELR)

The old system of granting Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) ended on 31 March 2003. ELR was normally granted for four years, and at the end of this period people could apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain, which was usually granted. Some unaccompanied asylum seeking children who were refused asylum were given 'ELR to 18', which means they were allowed to stay until their 18th birthday. ELR has now been replaced by Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave.

Appeals

Applicants who are refused asylum have a right to appeal against this decision – they must do this within ten days of getting the decision from the Home Office. However, if they are granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave when their asylum claim is refused, they cannot appeal unless they have been given leave to stay for more than 12 months.

Young people who have been given Discretionary Leave until they are 18 can apply for an extension to stay after they are 18 (they should apply before their 18th birthday). If this is refused, they can appeal against the decision to refuse to vary leave.

There are several stages to the appeal process, but if a young person's appeal is unsuccessful, and once all avenues of appeal have been exhausted, they will have to leave the country. The Department for Constitutional Affairs aims to resolve appeals within four months.

The Home Office has undertaken not to remove unaccompanied asylum seeking children from the country without making sure that there are adequate arrangements for receiving and accommodating them in the country they are returned to.

Once a young person turns 18, and no longer has any leave or basis to stay in the UK, they are expected to return to their country of origin. The Home Office is also developing proposals for a returns programme for young people under 18.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children can of course opt to return voluntarily at any point in the asylum process. The Home Office runs a voluntary assisted returns programme in partnership with the International Office of Migration (IOM), and can help to trace family members before they return.

Further information

There is more information on asylum and immigration matters on the IND website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk – it contains the latest on policy and law covering immigration and asylum plus statistics, reports and research into many issues affecting asylum seekers.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)

Partnerships should already be considering the implications of the Race Relations Act on their policies and services since they received Partnership Action Notes 33 and 83, issued in July and September 2002. They should have suitable mechanisms in place to meet the requirements of the Act, and these should be included in their annual plans.

Partnerships are required to set out arrangements for:

- assessing and consulting on the likely impact on race equality of relevant policies;
- monitoring policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality;
- publishing the results of these assessments and consultations;
- making sure the public have access to information and services;
- training staff to meet these new duties.

Entitlements

	Asylum seekers	Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave	Refugees
School up to 16	Compulsory and free They have the right not to be out of education for more than 20 days	Compulsory and free They have the right not to be out of education for more than 20 days	Compulsory and free They have the right not to be out of education for more than 20 days
School at 16-18	Free as for UK nationals	Free as for UK nationals	Free as for UK nationals
Financial and other support at school	Entitled to free school meals LEA or Social Services may provide uniform Normally entitled to free transport to school over three miles, up to age 16 Generally not entitled to Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) – see page 48	May be entitled to free school meals LEA may provide uniform Normally entitled to free transport to school over three miles, up to age 16 Entitled to claim Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)	Entitled to free school meals (means-tested) LEA may provide uniform Normally entitled to free transport to school over three miles, up to age 16 Entitled to claim Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
	<i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i> Not usually entitled to free school meals (looked-after children are provided for by Social Services). Looked after children must have a personal education plan	<i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i> Not usually entitled to free school meals (looked-after children are provided for by Social Services). LEA or Social Services should provide uniform Looked after children must have a personal education plan	<i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i> Not usually entitled to free school meals (looked-after children are provided for by Social Services). LEA or Social Services should provide uniform Looked after children must have a personal education plan

Entitlements

	Asylum seekers	Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave	Refugees
Further education: fees charged	Free, as for UK students, if on means-tested benefits or supported by NASS or Social Services	Free, as for UK nationals	Free, as for UK nationals
Further education: financial support	<p>Entitled to apply for Learner Support funds up to the age of 19, for any course funded through the LSC (ie not paid for privately)</p> <p>May be eligible for hardship funds, administered by colleges, which have their own criteria</p> <p><i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i></p> <p>Funds may also be available through Social Services</p>	<p>Entitled to apply for Learner Support funds up to the age of 19, for any course funded through the LSC (ie not paid for privately)</p> <p>They can also apply for Learner Support at 19 or over if they have lived in the UK for three years before the course starts</p>	Entitled to apply for Learner Support funds, as for a UK national (they must have lived in the UK since they received refugee status)
Higher education: fees charged	Fees as overseas students Providers can choose to charge UK student rates	Same fees as UK students	Same fees as UK students
Higher education: financial support	Not entitled to help with fees or living costs	If they have lived in the UK for three years before the course starts: entitled to help with fees and living costs	Entitled to help with fees and living costs, as for a UK national
	<p><i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i></p> <p>Young people aged 18 who have been looked after qualify as 'former relevant children'. They are entitled to Leaving Care Services, and the local authority must pay for their maintainance in higher education, based on an assessment of their needs</p>		

Entitlements

	Asylum seekers	Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave	Refugees
Housing	Not entitled to apply for social housing – housed by NASS	Entitled to apply for social housing from the date their status is granted	Entitled to apply for social housing
	<p><i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i></p> <p>Social Services are responsible for making sure they get housing support</p>	<p><i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i></p> <p>For all unaccompanied children under 16, and looked after children over 16, Social Services make sure they get housing support</p>	<p><i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i></p> <p>For all unaccompanied children under 16, and looked after children over 16, Social Services make sure they get housing support</p>
Health services	Entitled to use all NHS services	Entitled to use all NHS services	Entitled to use all NHS services
Benefits	Not entitled to any benefits as they are supported by NASS	They may receive benefit, depending on their circumstances	They may receive benefit, depending on their circumstances
	<p><i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i></p> <p>Not entitled to benefits as they are supported by Social Services</p>	<p><i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i></p> <p>May receive benefit, depending on their circumstances and on the support they received before from Social Services</p>	<p><i>Different rules for unaccompanied children:</i></p> <p>May receive benefit, depending on their circumstances and on the support they received before from Social Services</p>
Work and work-based learning	Generally, not allowed to do any paid work or training (unless granted permission before July 2002). They may be eligible for Work-Based Learning for Young People, or for FE training.	Allowed to work or take up work-based training	Allowed to work or take up work-based training, including programmes such as Entry to Employment (E2E) and New Deal (at 18 or over).
Voluntary work	Allowed to do voluntary work or work experience, but only if it does not replace a paid worker. They can be paid out-of-pocket expenses.	Allowed to do voluntary work or work experience. They can be paid out-of-pocket expenses.	Allowed to do voluntary work or work experience. They can be paid out-of-pocket expenses.

Issues affecting young asylum seekers and refugees

Young refugees and asylum seekers face a number of issues. Many have experienced conflict and trauma, fleeing from countries where major conflicts were taking place or where there are serious human rights abuses.

Once they arrive in the UK, they experience a new set of difficulties. These often include problems such as:

Language

- The majority of young asylum seekers speak little or no English when they arrive, and so find it difficult to progress in their education or look for training or work. Most have English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs, although some have been taught in English in their country of origin.
- As young people often learn English more quickly than their parents or carers, this can mean taking on adult responsibilities such as translating for parents in their contact with authorities. This is often inappropriate, and puts an added strain on these young people.

Education

- Young refugees and asylum seekers often find learning styles very different from what they are used to, with more library and internet research, coursework, teaching style and so on.
- Some have had significant interruption to their education before coming to the UK.
- High quality induction or reception in school is an important first step in supporting adolescent refugees as a basis for positive progress. Advisers may benefit from being part of this process.
- Belonging is an important aim for refugee students, so they value symbols of membership such as a library card or school uniform.
- Refugee students may see EAL (English as an Additional Language) staff's key role as more than language support.
- Adolescent refugees want more language support, especially at a more advanced and specialist level, to succeed academically.
- Adolescent refugees need a lot of access to ICT for schoolwork and to find where to go next.
- School libraries should be seen as a site for information exchange – pupil/pupil, teacher/pupil, adviser/pupil. Public libraries are particularly useful during the summer holidays, providing a place for continued learning, access to information and a safe, quiet place to work.

Getting used to a new system

- In a new country, asylum seekers and refugees often do not know their rights and entitlements. They often have to find their way through the system by themselves.
- Some young refugees and asylum seekers will have difficulties accessing services such as GPs, school and college places or bank accounts.

Racism, discrimination and bullying

- Some young people will experience racism or discrimination in the UK, either direct or institutional, because of their race, colour or immigration status. Bullying is also commonplace in schools and colleges. It can be very difficult for young refugees and asylum seekers to deal with this, particularly if they already feel isolated.

Getting enough support

- Many asylum seekers and refugees find themselves living on low incomes. While they are waiting for their claim to be decided, adult asylum seekers get just 70% of the normal Income Support amount (since April 2000).
- They often have to live in poor housing – many live in B&B or hostel accommodation, although the government is committed to ending this.
- 16 and 17 year olds are often particularly isolated, as they may find it difficult to contact Social Services.

Mental health

- Asylum seekers and refugees may suffer from multiple problems associated with traumatic experiences in their past, and with loss. They may have emotional or mental health problems, such as loneliness or depression. There is a limited but growing body of expertise among medical, health and welfare organisations that can provide support. (See page 52, on involving voluntary and community organisations.)

Isolation

- Young asylum seekers may lack confidence and have difficulty in adapting to their new environment.
- They may be separated from family and friends, or their parents or carers may be experiencing emotional problems themselves, which could increase the risk of family breakdown.
- They may not be able to keep in touch with family who have stayed in their country of origin, and they may be very anxious about the safety of their family.
- They may have little or no money for social activities.

Immigration status

- Asylum seekers have to deal with the complex asylum application procedures and complicated appeals procedures.
- They also have the stress of uncertainty during the asylum process – not knowing if they are going to be able to stay or face new disruption to their lives if they have to leave.
- Refugees are permitted to work (and some asylum seekers if they have permission to work under earlier legislation), but they still face a number of barriers to work (see 'How Jobcentre Plus and Connexions can work together' on page 48).
- There can be difficulties due to changes in the support they get, when the young person gets a decision on their asylum application or when unaccompanied asylum seekers become 18. (See 'How Social Services and Connexions can work together' on page 38.)

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Problems that unaccompanied asylum seeking children may particularly face include:

Age disputes

The age of an unaccompanied young asylum seeker affects the level and type of support they receive – whether it comes from Social Services if they are under 18, or from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) if they are older.

It is the responsibility of immigration officers first, and Social Services second, to assess a young person's age. However, Social Services can override an Immigration Officer's decision after a thorough assessment. It is often difficult because young people arrive without identification documents, and even medical evidence cannot identify a child's exact age – the margin of error can be five years either way.

There are a number of issues to be aware of when assessing a young person's age:

- They may look and act older than they are because of their experiences in their country of origin.
- They may look older or younger because of different characteristics – for instance, people from tropical Africa and from Vietnam tend to be very different in size.
- Boys in some parts of the world grow facial hair earlier than most boys in Europe, which tends to make them look older than they are. For example, in some parts of Afghanistan it is common to grow a beard at the age of 13 or 14.
- A young person may not know their date of birth. In some places date of birth is not important, and birthdays are not celebrated. In some parts of the world calendars are not used and time is measured by seasons rather than calendar dates.
- Different calendars are used in some countries. It can be easy to make mistakes when converting from one calendar to another, and give the wrong date of birth.
- Differences in culture – in many third world countries, young people can be married from the age of ten, and they could seem older because they have proof that they are married.

Social Services sometimes make enquiries in the young person's country of origin to try to find out their age. However, this should only be done with the young person's consent, and with great care and caution, as it could put the child or members of their family in danger.

'Out of borough' placements

It is currently common practice for local authorities in the south-east (where the highest number of separated children arrive) to place unaccompanied 16 and 17 year olds supported under Section 17 'out of borough'. They are often placed with private providers, in areas such as Manchester, Birmingham or Hull.

There are a number of problems with this type of placement – for example, it is difficult for social workers to support and monitor young people properly over such a distance.

The Home Office and Department of Health are looking at a new system of 'voluntary safe case transfer'. This would mean that responsibility for their care would be transferred to the local authority where they are moved to.

Transition at 18

Once an unaccompanied asylum seeking child reaches 18, if no decision has been made on their asylum application, they may be transferred from support under Section 17 to NASS, which will often mean being dispersed to another area of the country (see 'Dispersal' on page 11). This can obviously be very disruptive, when the young person has begun to settle where they are, and may involve another break in their education as well as in their social life. However, if they are in the middle of a course, they may be allowed to stay where they are until the end of the course and after the exams. This needs to be negotiated with NASS.

At the moment, young asylum seekers who have friends or family they can live with can apply for subsistence only, which means they will not be dispersed to another part of the country. However, they will get no financial support for housing costs. Also, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 gives the government the power to remove this option, so in the future subsistence-only support from NASS may no longer be possible.

Young people who have been granted Discretionary Leave or exceptional leave to remain (ELR) in the UK up to the age of 18 will need support to consider their options before their 18th birthday arrives – it should be done well in advance. They have the right to apply for an extension to stay once they are 18, which should be done before their 18th birthday. If their application for an extension is refused, young people in this situation also have a right to appeal against this refusal.

Personal Advisers working with unaccompanied asylum seeking children need to be aware of:

- how old the young person is;
- their status under the Children Act – whether they are looked after, or receive support through Section 17 services; and
- the progress of their asylum application.

They may need to be more closely involved with young people covered under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989), as they receive less provision.

Advisers also need to keep up to date with the latest immigration developments, and how they affect the young person they are helping. This can be done by talking to the young person, and working closely with any other agencies involved in supporting them through the application process – such as Community Legal Services – to make sure the young person is fully aware of their rights.

However, Connexions PAs need to be aware of their limitations in dealing with the many complex issues that can arise with these young people. They need to make sure that the young person gets access to the more specialist advice and guidance they may need. There are strict guidelines about who can give legal advice to asylum seekers.

It may be helpful to refer to the:

- Connexions website: www.connexions.gov.uk – and the *Code of practice for Connexions Personal Advisers*
- Immigration and Nationality Directorate website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk
- Refugee Council's website: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

There is currently a cross-government initiative which is developing best practice guidance for Social Services departments and Connexions PAs on arrangements for UASC reaching their 18th birthday. This will be made available once completed.

Section 55 (see page 11)

The new Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 brought in a new policy that from 8 January 2003, single adults who do not apply for asylum as soon as they arrive will not usually be provided with financial support or accommodation.

If it continues in effect, Section 55 will affect 18 year olds and above who arrive alone, and younger unaccompanied children whose age is being disputed and are considered to be 18 or over. They could be left without financial support, and are likely to need significant advice and support.

The latest details will be on either the Home Office or Refugee Council websites (see 'Annex 4: Contacts and further information' on page 68).

How PAs are helping young asylum seekers access education

S arrived from Uganda as an unaccompanied asylum seeker aged 15 in 1999. Her parents and siblings had been murdered on the orders of the government and her uncle living in the UK helped her to leave the country. It took three years for a decision to be made on her case, and she was finally given refugee status in August 2002.

Remarkably, between September 1999 and June 2001 S studied for her GCSEs and passed nine GCSEs at A-C.

In August 2001 the police were called after she was physically assaulted by her uncle, and she presented herself to Social Services. She was found accommodation, but as she had not previously been looked after, she was not eligible for the support offered by the Leaving Care team.

In March 2002 she made contact with her local Connexions centre. As S was still waiting for a decision from the Home Office, the PA began by trying to get her back into education. The PA also contacted the Leaving Care team, the Children's Legal Centre, the Refugee Council and the NSPCC.

Since being given refugee status, she has been put back on Income Support and has been re-housed. Rather than having to look for work she has been able to continue the second year of her A level studies, and hopes to start a degree in accountancy.

Involving and supporting young asylum seekers and refugees

Young asylum seekers and refugees' needs can be complex, as previous sections have outlined. The Personal Adviser can play a crucial role, supporting the young person in tackling some of the issues they are faced with, and helping them to make links with other specialist services that can provide the support they need.

This section gives various examples of ways Personal Advisers can support young refugees and asylum seekers. However, there will be other approaches – the diverse and innovative approach of Connexions enables and encourages Personal Advisers to support the particular needs of each client, based on the individual and the local situation.

How a PA can make a difference

A fled from Rwanda at 16 and was given leave to remain in the UK, but found it hard to settle into his new surroundings. He was introduced to his Connexions PA through the student advice service at the college where he was studying.

His PA helped A to claim an Education Maintenance Allowance and Income Support, and also found him a temporary hostel place close to the college as he had been forced to sleep rough for a night. The PA soon followed this up by finding A somewhere more suitable to stay.

Before the PA's intervention A had begun to think about leaving college because he couldn't deal with the practicalities of his situation on his own. The speedy help his PA was able to offer him made all the difference.

How Connexions Partnerships are working to ensure the diverse needs of young asylum seekers and refugees are met

Connexions Nottingham has established a group within the conurbation to:

- share ideas and good practice amongst PAs;
- set up internal practices and procedures to ensure operational consistency;
- produce an asylum seeker and refugee reference pack to support PAs' work;
- train PAs using a combination of external speakers and resources.

In Plymouth, part of the Cornwall and Devon Connexions Partnership, a group has been set up to ease the process of ensuring that unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) receive what they are entitled to and are helped to apply for accommodation. The group is made up of Social Services, Jobcentre Plus, a youth refugee project funded by the local Youth Enquiry Service (YES) and Connexions, and is looking to involve other agencies.

The group's remit is to look at:

- how information is shared to prevent young people being passed from one agency to another;

- the transition from Social Services support to other support;
- possible joint meetings and case conferences;
- sharing interpreter costs.

In Poole, a Connexions Personal Adviser is working with a group of young asylum seekers to help address a number of issues, including:

- access to leisure opportunities, particularly sports facilities;
- purchasing everyday items such as bus passes;
- helping with shopping for food and clothes and with budgeting;
- accompanying young asylum seekers and refugees on trips;
- helping with filling in forms.

In the Nottinghamshire Connexions Partnership, individual PAs are working closely with family and community members to support clients, and a PA has been appointed to undertake outreach work in key community areas.

Some Connexions Partnerships are currently finding that their resources are not enough to cover all the support needed by the asylum seekers and refugees they are working with. For example, they cannot always afford to pay for professional interpreters, which can cost £50 an hour. See pages 55 and 63 for sources of funding that Partnerships can use.

The role of the Personal Adviser

It is important that Personal Advisers should not create unrealistic expectations about what they can achieve. They should be clear about the limitations of their own experience and professional development, and know when to refer a young person to another service or specialist. However, a Personal Adviser can play a crucial role, supporting the young person to tackle some of the issues they face.

Support in education, training and employment

Personal advisers can offer a whole range of help and support to young asylum seekers and refugees:

- Helping them understand the educational provision available to them – perhaps using a buddy scheme (see ‘Setting up a buddies club’ on page 32).
- Helping them to find a school place.
- Helping them find and join ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and other further education courses – liaising with the local Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and colleges.
- Helping them to overcome isolation in school or college – getting involved in hobbies, leisure activities and socialising, making friends and having fun – perhaps setting up a young refugee group (the section, ‘Setting up young refugee groups’ on page 30 gives details of how to do this).
- Getting them the grants they are entitled to – for instance, school uniforms, school meals, college hardship grants or an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).
- Helping them to apply for an NI number, by liaising with Jobcentre Plus.
- Supporting young people whose education has been disrupted – by referring and liaising with appropriate agencies such as the LEA and the local LSC.

- Helping to get their overseas qualifications recognised, using the appropriate agencies such as the National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the UK (NARIC) (see page 47 for information on what NARIC can offer).
- Helping them to find suitable work – by liaising with Jobcentre Plus and local employers.
- Working with employers to overcome their concerns about employing refugees, and liaising with Jobcentre Plus where appropriate.
- Getting them involved in social activities – through buddy clubs, mentoring and groups.
- Encouraging them to take part in summer activities outside of school where they can keep learning and practising English over the holidays and reduce loneliness, which can often be worse during the holidays.
- Awareness raising among others in the community, to reduce discrimination against refugees and asylum seekers.
- Identifying gaps in the support available, and finding ways to bring in extra resources – eg extra funds for support teachers, or EAL courses. (Money may be available from sources such as EMAs.) This will involve liaising with the agencies and departments who lead on these issues.
- Adolescent refugees at school need more guidance than UK students on what services and opportunities are available, and how to access this knowledge. This is needed early on.
- Guidance needs to reinforce a positive self-image for refugees and to give them confidence to challenge labelling by others.
- For some, past traumas can make it difficult to focus on anything beyond surviving day by day, and they may need specialist help to deal with this and help them move forward.
- Where schools successfully provide a feeling of sanctuary for refugee students, the students may need encouragement to consider options for the future that would involve moving away from the institution.
- Follow-up work with students is important to support adolescent refugees who move away from the school or borough to make sure they continue to get the support they need.

Helping young asylum seekers and refugees to receive what they are entitled to

These young people may need advice and support on a wide range of issues such as benefits, accommodation or health (including mental health). Personal advisers need to understand what asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to, and give them the advocacy support they need to get it.

- They can help young people to claim benefits, liaising with Jobcentre Plus, the Inland Revenue and local authorities. They can help to identify which benefits young people may be entitled to, help them fill in the paperwork, accompany them to interviews and advocate on their behalf, and help them get expert advice, for instance from welfare rights organisations or legal services.
- Many of these young people may need help in finding suitable accommodation. This means liaising with Social Services, housing departments and doing anything from helping to fill in forms to finding a place to stay.
- They will often need to refer someone to appropriate services such as counselling.
- Another important part of the work is to liaise with parents, carers and social workers.
- PAs may be able to help young people apply for crisis loans by liaising with Jobcentre Plus.

- For unaccompanied asylum seeking children, it is important to make sure they have a suitable legal representative – someone who specialises in similar cases, with good proven experience. Personal Advisers may need to refer the young person to the Refugee Council Children’s Panel.
- Personal Advisers can help young people in ‘out of borough’ placements (see page 21) by finding out how the young person can make contact with their social worker, by phone or in person, and the Social Work team manager responsible for the service they are receiving. They can also find out what the private provider is expected to do (eg are they supposed to help the young person into education?). There may be local projects which could help the young person to get what they are entitled to. For example, Save the Children has projects in some areas of England (contact Save the Children local teams for more information – see Annex 4 on page 75).

How PAs are making a difference

Central London Connexions has a number of PAs working with the Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers Team. This is an area where accommodation, if it is available at all, is very expensive. The young people referred to the team are usually placed ‘out of borough’, which presents some difficulties when they are referred for advice.

One of the PAs has now ensured that referral forms are faxed to them so that they can find suitable English courses close to the young peoples’ homes.

These young people receive subsistence payments from Social Services, which means they have to come into the borough once a fortnight to collect their money. The PA has set up procedures so that when young people are granted refugee status the PA meets with them and helps them fill in Income Support or Jobseeker’s Allowance forms. They can then collect their money weekly from a local post office. It is £10 more than Social Services can give and the fact that they are receiving benefits is like a passport to other services – it helps them to get a bank account and an Education Maintenance Allowance.

The PA also accompanies young refugees to college interviews and to the bank, working with one particular bank and explaining the issues encountered by refugee clients. They hope to break down some of the red tape surrounding opening an account so the exercise can be done more quickly and sensitively.

They have met with a senior social worker to discuss ways of working together. The social worker has plans to produce an introductory pack for young people when they arrive in the country, which will be translated into different languages. The PA has asked for details of Personal Advisers and Connexions support to be put into this pack. They are also looking at ways of setting up an information area and providing Profile Builder (a pictorial Connexions package).

Where appropriate, they have introduced young people to the Connexions office nearest to their homes so that they can get more local support and have liaised with the office until the young person is settled.

Helping with other problems

PAs can also help young asylum seekers and refugees to deal with many of the other problems and issues they face:

- Mentoring systems are important for refugee students.
- Adolescent refugees particularly benefit from friendship groups and this should be encouraged and supported in a structured way. PAs can help by setting up groups, mentoring, hobbies, leisure activities and socialising to help young people feel less isolated outside school, and help them to make new friends.
- Help in making links with relevant community groups which can give them cultural as well as practical support. However, keep in mind that some young people will not want links with people from their home country, for the same reasons they are seeking asylum.
- Setting up groups to help asylum seekers and refugees to integrate with British-born young people.
- Awareness raising with other professionals who work with young refugees on the issues they face.
- Helping them to learn life skills – budgeting, healthy cooking and personal health.
- PAs may be able to support young people in dealing with age disputes.
- Supporting young people who are faced with major transitional changes when they reach 18 (see 'Transition at 18' on page 22).
- Supporting young people to make a complaint about problems in the support they are receiving, for example with accommodation or social services support.

Youth justice

Some young asylum seekers or refugees may become involved in the youth justice system – attending court and negotiating their way through this system can be an added pressure on them. Many get involved in crime because of issues related to poverty, or because adults pressurise them to do so. Personal Advisers need to work with local Youth Offending Team (YOT) workers to get a full picture of the young person's situation, or if they receive a community or custodial sentence. The young person will have a designated YOT worker, and the Personal Adviser should liaise with them to make sure the young person receives all the services they need.

YOTs are themselves multi-agency teams, and by working with them, PAs can often access additional services. For more information, see the Youth Justice Board website: www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk or contact your local YOT.

Children with parents or carers

Besides the many children who have arrived in the UK on their own, for others who have arrived with their parents, there may be other issues. For example, their parents may be disempowered or preoccupied by surviving their new circumstances, and with their own problems, that they cannot give their children the attention they need. It is important for others to give these children social support. Check that children and their families have support – eg from community groups, after-school clubs and befriending schemes.

Familiarity with the UK system

When asylum seekers first arrive in the UK they will probably be quite unfamiliar with how the UK education system works. Also, their past experience may make them

suspicious of authority and wary of contact with schools. Lack of English can also prevent parents getting involved with schools.

It may be possible to find or set up a family programme – in some areas these have been set up to help families understand the education system, and help parents to help their children. They focus on helping parents to improve their language, literacy and numeracy, in the context of supporting their children's education.

Training for Personal Advisers

Personal advisers may need training to be aware of the needs of young asylum seekers. Training may be available from the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS) and from the Refugee Council. See page 73 for information on how to contact them.

Dealing with racial harassment and discrimination

A large number of asylum-seeking and refugee children experience racial harassment at school or near home.

Racial harassment can take many forms – anything from name calling, racist graffiti or abusive phone calls to physical attacks or threats. There are a number of places to report harassment, depending on the circumstances. These include police stations and reporting centres, local authorities, Citizens Advice Bureaux, housing offices, local helplines and race equality councils.

- Multi-agency work can help to challenge racial harassment, bringing in people such as parents, the police, youth groups and Connexions.
- It is important to make sure that young people who are experiencing racism, discrimination or bullying are supported at school.

Helping children who have had traumatic experiences

Many young refugees will have had distressing experiences in the country they have fled from, during their journey and after they have arrived in the UK. Connexions PAs need to be aware that they are dealing with a vulnerable group, and some of these children may need emotional and mental health support. They may find it difficult to settle at school because of their past experiences.

To help them cope with trauma, some children may need to see an educational psychologist, or someone from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) or a specialist mental health project. Others may be able to settle with help from pastoral support programmes, counselling, mentoring, art therapy at school, or just having someone to talk to about their problems.

It can be difficult to get help with counselling or psychological support, as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are under pressure. The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture may be able to offer support instead, but they do not work all over the country.

Some schools offer individual or group counselling for children who have suffered stressful experiences. They are usually run by teachers with counselling qualifications or

other professionals. Bear in mind, though, that families from some cultures may be unfamiliar or unhappy with the idea of counselling.

Links with their home language, culture and community can sometimes help prevent these children becoming distressed. Save the Children produce a free guide on the emotional health of young unaccompanied refugees – see 'Publications' on page 77 for details.

How Connexions PAs are working in partnership to support traumatised young asylum seekers

Some of the referrals to Connexions PAs, working as part of the Asylum Team in North London are young women who are pregnant, or who have very young children. Many of these young women have been raped, and several have suffered other forms of serious abuse in their own country – in some cases since arriving in England. These young women have very acute needs beyond those that can be offered by the PA in the Asylum Team. As a result, the Local Management Committee (LMC) has established a specific PA post in the NHS Primary Care Trust Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Team. Their purpose is to ensure that the joint LMC and NHS targets are met on supporting teenage parents and reducing conceptions, and on providing information to asylum-seeking young women on access to support and counselling services.

Setting up young refugee groups

Although PAs focus mainly on one-to-one casework, it is also worth considering setting up a group to involve young refugees. This gives you the chance to provide support to more young people, compared to working only one-to-one. Being part of a group can help young refugees to:

- make friends and feel less isolated
- have fun, which can be a great release from everyday responsibilities and worries
- feel more positive about their identity
- find out information and get advice
- acquire new skills, for example in IT classes or drama workshops.

Save the Children produce a guide giving practical advice on how to set up a group for young refugees – see the detail in Annex 4.

How Connexions Partnerships are ensuring that the diverse needs of young asylum seekers and refugees are met

In North London a Community Personal Adviser is working with individual unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The PA realised that as well as needing support, help and information, many of these young people had no social lives or access to social structures.

Funding was obtained from the Connexions Partnership to work with this vulnerable group. The funds have been used to set up a group taking part in a range of activities, in partnership with other agencies. The programme of events covers personal, social and educational activities, including training skills and football matches coached by a leading football club. Activities such as basketball, table tennis and indoor football also take place at a local youth centre. Most of the group also attend ICT and basic skills courses at a local training centre.

For more information on how to set up a young refugee group see the **Save the Children guides** listed in Annex 4 on page 77.

Setting up mentoring schemes

A mentor can help young refugees to deal with some of the difficulties they face. Specifically, it can help in the following ways:

- Having someone to talk to and share problems with can help build their confidence and reduce their feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Having fun, for example going to the cinema or playing football with your mentor, can be a great release from the worries and responsibilities that many young refugees face.
- Mentors can offer help in practical issues, for example how to apply for a training course or a job, help with homework, preparing for an interview or applying for a driving licence.
- Mentoring helps young people to integrate with their local community, which helps build their confidence and gives them better access to local services. They will gain a better understanding of local culture and be able to improve their English.

For more information on how to go about setting up a mentoring scheme, see the **Save the Children guides** listed in Annex 4 on page 77.

Joint working between Save the Children and Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions

A specialist team of Connexions Personal Advisers have been working with young refugees and asylum seekers living in Coventry and Warwickshire since July 2001. Save the Children provided a small grant to develop this work, which allowed them to access a larger grant from the European Social Fund. There are currently six dedicated Personal Advisers working with young refugees and asylum seekers, primarily with unaccompanied children, although some are working with young refugees and asylum seekers who live with their families.

- The Personal Advisers work in various settings – one in Social Services, one at a school and the others are outreach workers.
- They provide advice and support on a range of issues, and funding for equipment and resources required for courses and employment.
- One of the Personal Advisers is also a refugee. This has helped the team understand the issues better and helped to increase the team's cultural awareness.

By November 2002, the project had supported 136 young people.

They are developing a social education project with the Coventry Youth Service, aiming to introduce young people to life in the UK and address issues of sexual health, relationships, educational opportunities, leisure and social provision.

The project has also made links with the Leisure Service in Warwickshire who provide training sessions and kit for young people, enabling them to form a football team. This has helped to motivate the young people and increased their general morale.

The work undertaken in Coventry and Warwickshire has highlighted a number of issues to be aware of when supporting young refugees and asylum seekers:

- A lot of preliminary work was needed to sort out young people's immediate practical concerns before PAs could start to support them in pursuing their education, training and employment goals.
- A general lack of support in the area – eg a severe lack of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision – put pressure on PAs to provide kinds of support they would not normally provide.
- The project has limited capacity, so PAs sometimes provide support in a group setting rather than one-to-one.
- Training on the rights and entitlements of young refugees and asylum seekers, and guidance on providing sensitive and culturally aware support, are essential for PAs working with this group.
- PAs placed in schools and Social Services might not be targeting the most vulnerable young people, who do not have a school place or an allocated social worker. Mapping where young refugees and asylum seekers are is essential to find and support these young people – for example, finding out if there are hostels in the area where other local authorities are placing young people (often the local Social Services team would not know about them).
- Networking with Social Services and schools is important to establish good referral systems. Referral agencies need a realistic understanding of what support PAs can provide to make sure they refer the right cases.

Setting up a buddies club

A Personal Adviser based in a secondary school in Coventry decided to set up a buddies club, with the support of the local youth service. Young refugees and asylum seekers were partnered up with British-born young people.

The club provided a chance for local young people and young refugees and asylum seekers to socialise together in a safe space. It also gave both groups information and advice on future education, training and work opportunities. Over 50 young people were involved in the club.

The young people met at the on-site youth centre during school lunch breaks and after school. The PA and Youth Worker, who jointly run the club, provided advice and support. At any one session there would be between 30 and 45 young people.

Young refugees and asylum seekers were looking for help from the buddies club with:

- accessing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses;
- housing or accommodation problems;
- obtaining support from Social Services;
- claiming benefits;
- queries about asylum claims;
- entitlement to Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs);
- how to get into further education;
- how to access other training, for example how to learn to drive.

The club received very positive feedback from the young people involved. One young person said, *'I do not know what I would have done without the support of my Personal Adviser'*.

Top Tips on working with young refugees and asylum seeking young people

Be clear: Young refugees and asylum seekers will have often been passed from pillar to post trying to find the support they need in a country and support system that are unfamiliar to them. When you meet your client for the first time, it is important to explain what they can and cannot expect from you and be clear where they can access support that you are unable to offer. Don't promise to do things that are not realistic, which will raise the young person's expectations.

Communicating with young people with little English: Supporting young people who are not fluent in English takes good communication skills. You may often need an interpreter, but when an interpreter is not involved, it is useful to develop techniques to aid communication. For example, use simple language, speak clearly and check that the young person has understood what you said. Listening skills are equally important, and it is essential to check that you understand what the young person is saying – for example, ask them to repeat what they have said.

Issues to be aware of when using interpreters:

- This will change the dynamics of the meeting, as it is no longer a one-to-one situation.
- It helps to use professional interpreters who have experience of interpreting for young people. Brief the interpreter about the meeting and explain what you expect from them.
- Check that the young person feels comfortable with the interpreter and that they understand them (eg, are they speaking the right dialect, is it acceptable for a male interpreter to talk with a female young refugee or asylum seeker?).
- Be careful of issues in the country the young person comes from: if the interpreter is from a group which is hostile to the young person's group, or if they could be seen as having links to their current government, this could pose problems.
- Young people may arrive unannounced, so you will need access to interpreters who can respond quickly although this may not always be possible.
- Language Line is an option where there is no access to interpreters – more likely in rural areas or small towns (see Annex 4 for contacts). A telephone interpreting service has its own difficulties, and should only be used as a stop gap to locating an interpreter.
- Unqualified peer or adult interpreters are a possible alternative if a professional interpreter is not available, but be careful about this. Problems can include lack of professionalism and poor quality interpreting, and asking personal questions in front of interpreters who are known to the young person is often inappropriate. It can also be a problem for the interpreter, especially when young people are asked to interpret for friends or family.

Advertising the PA service: Face-to-face contact with young people is the best way of advertising your service (you may need to consider outreach work, giving talks to refugee community organisations, etc). However, publicity material may be useful to give to young people as a record of your contact details, and to pass on to other young

people who may be looking for support. Referral agencies can also hand out your flyers to young people when they are describing the Connexions Service.

Keep the publicity material simple and get it translated into the languages used by the young refugees and asylum seekers in your area. Do not include too much information – a brief description of what support can be offered and contact details should be enough.

Avoid labelling: Many young refugees and asylum seekers are acutely aware of the negative press and public opinion about asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. It is not surprising that many of them avoid telling people about their immigration status. Be sensitive to this and be careful not to inadvertently get clients you are working with 'labelled' by their status. For example, if you are working in a school, try to prevent pupils seeing you as someone who works exclusively with refugees – avoid telling other pupils your job title if it includes the word, 'refugee'. Or you could say you are there to support all young people whose first language is not English. See 'Dealing with racial harassment and discrimination' on page 29 for suggestions about tackling discrimination against refugees and asylum-seekers in schools.

Developing trust: It is important to gain the trust of young refugees and asylum seekers as they may be wary of using Connexions, unsure of its links with other government departments such as the Home Office. When asking questions be aware that:

- The young person may have been asked these questions many times – when they applied for asylum, by their solicitors, by their social workers. Be clear why you also need to know this information and explain why. To avoid asking sensitive questions unnecessarily try and get as much information as you can from other professionals working with the young person (keeping in mind their confidentiality agreements with their clients).
- Some questions may trigger bad memories. Be prepared to listen to the young person and be confident about providing support if they get upset.

Individual assessments: Treat young refugees and asylum seekers as individuals, not a homogenous group. If you work with many young refugees and asylum seekers it can be easy to slip in to making quick judgements based on previous experience. Don't assume, however, that everyone you meet from the same country will have the same needs. The needs of young refugees or asylum seekers are diverse, and an individual assessment of need should always be carried out.

Inevitably, there will be some similarities in support needs. For example, many newly arrived young people will not speak English, will have few or no friends or family to support them, especially if they arrived unaccompanied, and be unclear about their rights and entitlements or how to go about accessing them. Many young people who have been in the country longer may be experiencing problems with transition to other services, either because of a change in their immigration status or because of their age (see page 22 for more information).

Support over time: The support needs of a young person will change over time. For example, you may have helped a newly arrived client to find a school place and settle in, and as they may seem to be adjusting to life in the UK they need less support. However,

their situation may change at any time. They may receive a negative decision on their asylum application and they will need not only practical support to know what to do next, but also emotional support to help them get through this uncertain period.

It is important to regularly review the support needs of your clients. It is good practice to have the same PA providing support throughout someone's access to Connexions – continuity can be very important for a young person who has had so much instability in their lives.

Involve young people in shaping and developing the Connexions Service. It is important to find out young refugees' and asylum seekers' views about the service to make sure it is meeting their needs. On a day-to-day basis this can be assessed through the work the PA is doing – regular checks to see that the support they are providing is what the young person needs.

There are a number of ways young refugees and asylum seekers can have an input at a more strategic level. One option is setting up a young person's steering group or having young asylum seekers/refugee representatives at inter-agency or adult steering group meetings. (Be sure that the young people feel comfortable contributing at 'adult' meetings and it is not a token gesture towards young people's participation.) This option is probably more feasible once there is a group of young asylum seekers and refugees using Connexions, who are more likely to be interested and confident in giving advice on developing the service. The second option is to get advice from established young refugee groups on how they would like to see the service develop. Be aware that voluntary agencies, schools, colleges, Youth Services, Social Services or community organisations may have already set up young refugee groups.

Involving families and carers: It is important to gain the trust of families and carers, as well as the young people themselves. Parents or carers should be told the Connexions Service aims and what support the young person and their family can expect. The support of parents and carers will help you in your job, in obtaining information about the young person and in helping them to support the young person through problems they encounter. An information sheet translated into appropriate languages will be helpful for family and carers, and where possible, make face-to-face contact.

How Connexions Partnerships are working with young asylum seekers and refugees

Consultation is being undertaken in a number of ways in the Connexions Partnership in Nottinghamshire, including:

- informal consultation with young people – this has led to them using the same interpreter at subsequent meetings with a young asylum seeker or refugee;
- feedback received by PAs on the appropriateness and quality of Life Skills provision – this has led to discussions with the LSC to get more suitable, targeted provision;
- information on cultural differences has been fed back to PAs by interpreters and used to inform current practice.

Five-step guide to setting up a service for young refugees

1 Knowledge and Training

PAs will need different levels of training on asylum and immigration issues and how to support young refugees and asylum seekers – from a basic understanding of the issues, to a detailed knowledge of the asylum process and rights and entitlements of young refugees. There are various courses available – see Annex 4 on page 70.

PAs working specifically with this group will need ongoing training as asylum seekers' and refugees' entitlements change regularly. Connexions Partnerships may wish to cascade the knowledge from this 'specialist' PA training down to generic PAs. Awareness training should be given to all staff who have contact with young refugees and asylum-seekers, including reception and administrative staff. This will help to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for this client group.

2 Using PA resources

PAs specialised in working with young refugees may not be able to support all young asylum seekers and refugees wanting to use Connexions – particularly in areas where there are large numbers of young asylum seekers and refugees. But all PAs should be able to provide some level of support to young refugees – as part of offering initial information and advice to all young people. It would help to provide an information sheet for all PAs on what to do in typical scenarios and when to refer to a PA who specialises in working with refugees and asylum seekers.

3 Knowing your limitations

Young refugees face many barriers to reaching their education, training and employment goals. However, even well informed specialist PAs may not be able to deal with all of them, and other professionals will need to be brought in. For example, a young person with emotional or mental health difficulties may need the help of a professional counsellor.

4 Networking

Being well networked will save time and effort in trying to sort out complicated issues facing young refugees and asylum seekers. Organisations working with young refugees and asylum seekers include: Social Services, refugee community organisations, voluntary agencies, health services, Ethnic Minority Achievement Services (EMAS/EMAG/EMTAG), LEAs, the Home Office (including NASS), housing departments and Jobcentre Plus.

There are a number of national inter-agency working groups to be aware of on young asylum seekers and refugees, run by the Department of Health and the Home Office, for example a working group on issues for transition at 18 (see page 23). Check if there is a local inter-agency working group in your area looking at the support needs of young refugees. If not, consider setting one up. For a working group to be effective, it needs commitment, clear terms of reference and a set of specific objectives.

A regular working group can be very effective in:

- keeping members up to date with policies affecting young refugees and asylum seekers and deciding on local responses to them
- keeping up to date with what support is available
- helping PAs to keep track of where newly arrived young refugees and asylum seekers are being placed.

It is important to be networked within Connexions as well as externally. This allows you to share ways of working and to keep up to date with what your Connexions Partnership and others have to offer so you can refer clients appropriately. One way is through regular PA newsletters or meetings.

How Connexions Partnerships are using outreach with voluntary and community organisations

The Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Connexions Partnership has funded a special project to employ a Link Worker at Oxford College to support young refugees and asylum seekers joining English as an Additional Language (EAL) courses. Part of their role is to link with voluntary and community-based organisations as well as the PAs supporting this group. The Link Worker has plans to take part in the PA Diploma course.

5 Referral systems

There are a few key principles to follow when planning a referral system for young refugees and asylum seekers:

- Develop a joint referral plan with other agencies (eg Social Services, Jobcentre Plus, schools, colleges). Make sure the referral system is effective, and it is important to have management agreement from key agencies.
- Make sure the referral agencies understand the role of the PA so they do not have unrealistic expectations.
- Ask referral agencies to tell Connexions when they plan to refer a young person so that preparations can be made before their visit – eg arranging for an interpreter, getting background information on the young person from other agencies etc.
- Regularly review your referral plan – are you are reaching your client group? For example, are young refugees and asylum seekers who do not have contact with Social Services and who are not in school or college, accessing the service? Young people who have been excluded from, or are waiting to access education, are often very isolated. They have very little money, and comparatively few opportunities to get together. PAs will need to consider outreach work in the local community to reach the most isolated and unsupported young people.
- Maintaining good working relationships with referral agencies is essential to ensure an effective and joined up service for this client group.

How Social Services and Connexions can work together

Social Services provide a range of care and support for adults, children and families. They are the principal point of contact for children who need care. Even though accommodation and support are provided by NASS, children who arrive seeking asylum with their families are entitled to Social Services support, in the same way as any other child, if they have a particular problem or need.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are cared for under the Children Act 1989, and are automatically the responsibility of Social Services departments in local authorities.

There is more explanation in 'The legal context' on page 8.

Connexions and Social Services

More information on the way in which Social Services and Connexions can work together effectively can be found in *Working Together: Connexions and Social Services*. A key area where they need to work together closely concerns Leaving Care Services. This is detailed in sections 3.2, 3.3 and 6.3 of the booklet.

Connexions Partnerships working with Social Services to help young asylum seekers

In Dorset, Connexions staff access specialist services through contacts on their Asylum Seekers Network. Dorset and Bournemouth Social Services have provided the necessary pool of interpreters. In Poole, for example, Connexions and Social Services have co-funded interpreters to help with filling in benefit forms.

Needs assessment

Social Services should give every unaccompanied asylum seeking child a full assessment of their needs. The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need sets out a number of requirements which Social Services must follow. They must:

- decide how to respond to a referral within one day;
- make an initial assessment of whether the child is in need within seven days;
- produce a core assessment within 35 working days, and give the child a copy in their own language;
- prepare a care plan or children in need plan setting out how and when their needs (eg housing, financial support) will be met.

Leaving Care Services

Leaving Care Services are important for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, and are outlined here.

Only young asylum seekers who have been looked after by the local authority are entitled to Leaving Care Services. In June 2003, the Department of Health issued guidance (LAC 2003 (13): see Annex 4) which emphasised that when a child arrives alone in this country seeking asylum the presumption should be that they should come under section 20 of the Children Act and become looked after. In some circumstances,

the local authority needs assessment might show up factors which suggest treating them differently – for instance if the child does not want to be treated as ‘looked after’.

Local authorities have to arrange for each *eligible* and *relevant* child to have a Personal Adviser, and for *former relevant children* to continue having an adviser (under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000).

Eligible children: Children who remain looked after until they must leave care at the age of 18 are defined as *eligible* by the Children (Leaving Care) Act.

From the age of 16 they must have a Personal Adviser (who may be a social worker, a member of a leaving care team or from a specialist asylum team) and a Pathway Plan. The Pathway Plan must be based on an assessment of the young person’s needs, and it sets out the support and services they will receive to enable them to become more independent when they leave care. The Pathway Plan for young asylum seekers will need to take into account the uncertainty about whether they can continue to live in the UK, depending on the decision on their asylum claim.

(See the booklet, *Working Together: Connexions and Social Services*, for more details.)

Former relevant children: Once they reach 18 and leave care, eligible children become classified as *former relevant children*. If they are still being helped by the local authority with education or training when they reach 21, they will remain a former relevant child to the end of the programme of education, even if they are over 21 when it ends.

These young people will have access to a Personal Adviser and a Pathway Plan. They also get help with employment, education and training, and vacation accommodation for higher education or residential further education, if needed. The local authority also has to take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the child.

The young person’s adviser

The local authority can either provide a Social Services Personal Adviser, or use a Connexions Personal Adviser if there is an agreement for this with the Connexions Partnership.

The young person’s adviser is responsible for:

- providing advice and support;
- preparing and assessing the pathway plan;
- reviewing the pathway plan;
- liaising with the local authority to implement the pathway plan;
- co-ordinating the provision of services, and trying to make sure the young person makes use of them;
- keeping informed about the child’s progress and well-being;
- keeping written records of contact with the young person.

If the local authority contracts out the role to Connexions, the Connexions PA will perform both the role of young person’s adviser and Connexions PA. (They will need to be accountable to the local authority Leaving Care Service.) If they use a Social Services Personal Adviser, then this adviser will also perform the role of the Connexions PA. Otherwise, the two roles would be too similar to co-exist.

How the Education Services and Connexions can work together

Education is an essential part of the process of integrating young asylum seekers and refugees. Schools and colleges have a vital role to play in helping young refugees to make a life in their new country. As Jill Rutter writes in the NUT booklet, *Relearning to Learn*:

'Education provides the key to new and hopefully better lives for refugees. That refugee children flourish and achieve to their full potential is not only in their interest but also vital to the host community. Many schools and teachers are succeeding in providing a haven of peace, stability and opportunity for refugee children. Teachers play a fundamental and positive part in the lives of refugee families and especially their children.'

Their learning needs vary a great deal. Their education may have been disrupted, or in some cases they may have had little or no education before coming to the UK. Almost three-quarters may have little or no English when they arrive, but some will have learned English before, or will have been educated in English in their home country.

The DfES publication, *Good Practice Guidance on the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children*, contains a great deal of useful information on this subject. You can access it from the website:
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/links_and_publications/

In areas with large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees, Personal Advisers may specialise in dealing with their needs.

Up to 16: compulsory schooling

The Entitlements section on page 16 sets out the entitlement to education provision for each stage of the immigration process.

Asylum-seeking and refugee children up to the age of 16 have the same rights to educational opportunities as other children: they are entitled to education appropriate to their age, ability, aptitudes and any special educational needs they have. This is true regardless of their situation. Even if a family's asylum application has been refused and they are going through the process of appeal, the children keep their full rights to education while the appeal progresses.

Asylum-seeking children are entitled to free school meals if they are supported by NASS. Some LEAs and schools also provide free uniforms, or LEAs can give grants to help pay for these.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children supported under Section 20 of the Children Act (1989) are entitled to the same help as other children in public care. They must have a personal education plan, and each school must appoint a designated person who will

be responsible for the education of looked after pupils. Children in care tend to underachieve, and this may be compounded by the problems faced by asylum-seeking children, so they are at a great risk of underachieving.

Responsibilities of the Local Education Authority (LEA)

Local education authorities have a legal responsibility to make sure that education is available for all children of compulsory school age, whatever their immigration status. All children must be allocated a school place by their LEA as soon as possible.

However, Connexions PAs should be aware that each LEA publishes an annual School Organisation Plan. This sets out how each school will comply with its duties, and how any problems with finding school places will be dealt with.

LEAs are encouraged to develop procedures to allow support in local schools for asylum-seeking and refugee children, including arrangements for:

- giving families information on local schools and the admissions procedures;
- giving adequate support when children arrive in the middle of a term;
- making sure 15 and 16 year olds get full-time education;
- giving schools access to good quality interpreting services;
- making sure there is support available for English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- making sure staff are given the skills to teach asylum-seeking and refugee children.

It can be difficult for schools to plan for children arriving at random times through the year, and this can mean that some children may be left without a school place for a short while. If this happens, LEAs must provide some form of alternative education provision but this will not necessarily be full time as it would be in school.

Courts have ruled that LEAs' duty to find school places is a 'target duty'. This means that as long as the LEA is obviously trying to meet this duty then it is not in default, even if places are not found for all these young people. This presents a challenging situation for those working with and advising these young people.

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, local authorities and schools must promote good race relations. This includes offering translation and interpreting services to help with school enrolment, and tackling racist bullying. There is more on dealing with racial harassment and discrimination on page 29.

Admissions and induction

The first priority is to get children into a suitable school.

When NASS is sending a family to a dispersal area, they will normally send the LEA details of any school-age children. The family then needs to apply for a school place in the same way as other parents.

In some LEAs, places tend to be only found in the least popular schools, and when places are in short supply, children who arrive in the middle of a term (as often happens to asylum-seeking children) are most likely to be affected by this problem. Connexions PAs may be able to advocate on the children's behalf to offer them a wider choice.

In some cases the family is visited by an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to discuss what is available. Parents from abroad will be less familiar with the UK system so will need more information to help them make an informed decision.

LEAs often find it more difficult to place Key Stage 4 children than other ages, as they would be partway through GCSE courses. Some young people are given a package of school and further education, but others are placed a year below their age to give them time to settle and catch up. Their Personal Adviser can work with the school and the young person, helping to find out what the young person needs and prefers, and negotiating with schools and further education providers.

Young asylum seekers and refugees will generally need more guidance about how the education system works, what it can offer, and what opportunities they can access. They do not have the background knowledge and understanding that young people born in the UK gain as they grow up.

Good induction is particularly important for asylum-seeking and refugee students, as they often have to adjust to a completely new education system. Some LEAs have designated welfare officers or 'new arrivals' teachers who help children to enrol and settle at school.

Access to translation or interpreting services varies, but local authorities, NASS, One Stop Services or refugee community organisations in the area may be able to help.

It is important at this stage to find out what languages students speak, whether they are literate, in English or other languages, and what level of education they have already reached. When a child starts school they are usually assessed in some way to find out their English language needs, and some schools look into how literate they are in their own language.

Asylum-seeking children usually go straight into mainstream classes, with support from EAL staff, with a few separate EAL sessions each week. It seems to work best if people from the same refugee community can help newly-arrived children.

How Connexions PAs can work effectively with schools

In Tyne and Wear Connexions Partnership, many PAs work as mentors with asylum seekers who need intensive help. For example, one PA negotiated with a school to move a young asylum seeker back a year in school as she was not coping.

The local education department informs Connexions when young asylum seekers join a school in the area, and lets PAs in schools know what the young people attending their schools will need. They also give them access to the interpreter service when needed, although there is a shortage of interpreters. Plans are in hand to have one PA to handle these links as part of their caseload, once all staff are in post.

The Local Connexions Manager in North Tyneside was asked to sit on an interview panel held by the Refugee Service, to appoint a Careers Guidance Worker. A representative from the North Tyneside branch of Connexions also attends regular meetings held by the Education Service, which examines the needs of vulnerable groups such as young asylum seekers and refugees.

Funding

Schools are quite likely to raise the issue of funding when they take young asylum seekers and refugees. However, LEAs receive funding for newly-arrived young people in exactly the same way as for all other children who attend their schools.

Money is also made available to schools through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant – a total of £154 million for 2002-03 – which they can use towards support for these young people in learning English. Schools can use the money to employ extra teachers and classroom assistants to help with English language provision.

LEAs can allocate money from the Vulnerable Children's Grant, which is worth a total of £84 million over three years from April 2003. Part of the Standards Fund, it is intended to help improve access to education for vulnerable children. It is used according to local needs, helping to provide coherent support to the key groups of looked after children, which include young asylum seekers and refugees. LEAs must use the money to develop strategic approaches for helping vulnerable children, not to replace previous grants for specific groups. It is mainly intended for school-age children, but LEAs can use it to support young people up to 19.

Other sources of funding include the Children's Fund, Excellence in Cities and mini-EAZs.

How Connexions can help meet asylum seekers' educational needs

Cornwall and Devon Connexions Partnership are addressing issues faced by young asylum seekers and refugees within appropriate multi-agency groups. They are discussing with the local LSC to bid for funds from the Local Investment and Development Fund to meet the needs of young asylum seekers who arrive late in the education system, or need particular support with post-16 education and training.

The Education Welfare Officer

Education Welfare Officers, employed by LEAs, can be a great source of help to young people and their families settling into a new country and having to deal with an unfamiliar education system. They may visit the family, with an interpreter if necessary, to help them make decisions about their children's schooling and help them over difficulties which arise. They remain in touch with the children and their families over a period of time.

The Education Welfare Officer is one of the key people working to support young asylum seekers and refugees. Personal Advisers should build effective relationships with the Education Welfare Officers in their area, and liaise with them about young people's progress and difficulties they are facing at school.

The Education Welfare Service, along with special needs staff, may be able to support young people who have suffered from horrific experiences. The Education Psychology Service can also provide individual support for young people who need it.

In an area with a number of refugees or asylum seekers from particular communities, the LEA and schools may look for staff from the refugee communities to work as Education Welfare Officers and teachers to work on home/school liaison.

All schools must also have a member of staff with responsibility for child protection, who should be aware of the needs of asylum-seeking and refugee children. These staff often have good links with Social Services departments.

Raising young people's achievement

One essential factor in raising the achievement of these students is to create strong links with their parents, and good links between the school and other agencies, including refugee community groups. Refugee community organisations and English as an Additional Language (EAL) teams can often help schools find books in refugee languages and dual languages.

Another is to assess young people's language and other abilities accurately when they first arrive, and when they first start in education in the UK. This initial assessment needs to consider the young person's educational experience and the role of their parents. For some young people it is helpful to give them a preparatory education programme before putting them into mainstream education. This is likely to include ESOL, numeracy and literacy.

How Connexions PAs are working in the community with refugee community organisations

In Haringey, part of the North London Connexions Partnership, there is a Connexions-funded PA based in the Kurdish Advice Centre who also works with three secondary schools to support Kurdish young people. Their work involves identifying Kurdish pupils who are at risk of exclusion, underachieving or who have poor attendance, and providing support to them and their families.

The Partnership has provided funding for supplementary classes to help young asylum seekers and refugees prepare for their GCSE exams and improve their educational achievement.

Further education

The full details of eligibility for further education are set out in the Entitlements section on page 17.

The regulations for course fees, and whether someone is considered to be a 'home' or 'overseas' student, are complex, and depend on their immigration status, age, and whether they are receiving any benefits or support from Social Services or NASS.

Once given refugee status, a young person is entitled to exactly the same access to courses and funding as a UK national. Young asylum seekers up to 19 are treated as UK students, and are not charged fees if the family is on means-tested benefits or supported by NASS. If they have been granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, they do not pay fees, and may be entitled to help with transport, books, childcare etc.

It may be useful to highlight some problems that can arise when advising young asylum seekers and refugees on their further education choices.

Post-16 further education for most young asylum seekers and refugees will be available through FE colleges, and generally not through school sixth forms, though this option is open to them. Although it does happen, access to a school sixth form might be difficult because:

- their organised academic year and tight course planning make it difficult to take students halfway through courses;
- the young person may have missed too much work and there may not be time for them to catch up before assessments and exams;
- 16 and 17 year-olds generally go to ESOL courses at further education colleges, so tend to continue their education at the same college.

Many young asylum-seekers or refugees will need support and courses to improve their English. Almost all further education colleges have EAL/ESOL courses, but they are often over-subscribed.

Connexions Partnerships should liaise with their local Learning and Skills Council to find out what provision is available, and to discuss what might need to be developed.

Problems can occur for unaccompanied young asylum seekers when they reach 18 as they may be transferred to the NASS system, and sent to a dispersal area. If they are in full-time education at the time they will sometimes be allowed to finish the course and exams. This needs to be negotiated and agreed with NASS.

How PAs are helping young asylum seekers access education

L came to the UK from West Africa in October of Year 11, with his 23 year-old brother. They were sent to one of the dispersal areas, where he joined a local city school. Before this, he had not been in a classroom since the age of 12.

When he left school, he was referred to the Learning Gateway. L had good spoken English although his grammar and pronunciation needed some work. He also spoke Portuguese as his first language and some German, Italian and Spanish. He expressed an interest in resuming his disrupted education.

L discussed some of his experiences in West Africa including the death of his father and the disappearance of his sisters and mother. He said he had received a lot of support from his tutors in school and was ready to put the past behind him.

His current problem however was housing. He was no longer living with his brother and was staying on a friend's floor.

An individual plan was discussed, and action points were prioritised – the first was to sort out accommodation. L then went to see a local young persons' housing project to discuss his housing needs, and a local life skills project offering ESOL support. The PA attended the ESOL interview with L and he was offered an immediate start date. The PA also discussed L's financial situation with the Under-18 Officer at Jobcentre Plus.

The housing project were willing to take L and he moved in later that day. A few days later the housing project found that L had been refused Income Support because he did

not have 'proof of estrangement'. His PA contacted Jobcentre Plus about how to appeal on L's behalf and helped him to draft an appeal. They also asked his permission to contact his brother to ensure that he was aware of the appeal. They completed the appeal form and sent it to L for his signature. The PA explained the situation to the housing project and was assured that L would not have to pay rent until he had an income.

The day after moving in, L chose, with some support, a balanced range of GCSEs, A and AS levels. He needed a great deal of explanation of study routes and length of study. With the PA's support he then enrolled at a local college on a full-time programme of GCSEs including English, Spanish, Italian and Law, with plans to progress on to A levels next September. He is progressing well so far.

On the basis of the information given, Jobcentre Plus agreed to pay L his Income Support. L, who is still enjoying college, commented that 'now the money is sorted out, everything is better for me'.

Student funding

All young people aged 16 to 19 can now apply for money from the Learner Support Fund for any further education course which is publicly funded through the LSC. Young people over 19 with Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave need to have lived in the UK for three years, but those with refugee status can apply at any age. See the Entitlements section on page 17 for more details.

Currently in its pilot stage, the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly payment to encourage young people to stay in further education. It will be introduced nationally from September 2004. Young people can claim an EMA for three years, starting in Year 12, and it consists of £30 a week plus regular bonuses if they keep to their 'learning agreement', although the EMA will be means-tested. Young people with refugee status can apply. Young asylum seekers are generally not entitled to apply, although young people from countries with a reciprocal agreement with the UK on Child Benefit may be eligible if they have lived here for three years.

Some local authorities run similar grants of their own. To qualify, young people need to have been living in the relevant area for a certain number of years.

There may be other kinds of financial help available. The Educational Grants Advisory Service (EGAS) also provides information on loans, grants and benefits, and a database of educational trusts and charities. Check their website for information: www.egas-online.org

Planning for work

Most young refugees are keen to work, and many hope to gain vocational or academic qualifications. They need good information and advice to help them choose the right routes as well as a clear explanation of the options open to them. Taster courses and work placements are very useful, where they can meet people doing the kind of work they are interested in.

As progression through education, training and work may be quite different here from that in their home country, young refugees may not fully understand the implications of choosing a particular course or route. Their career aims might be influenced by what is familiar or has high status in their home country, without detailed knowledge of the range of choices open to them in the UK.

Young people with refugee status are eligible for training programmes for young people such as Modern Apprenticeships and NVQs. Asylum seekers are not eligible for these programmes, and are not allowed to take paid work of any kind. Some training providers run courses specifically for refugees. For more information, see the Jobcentre Plus website on: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk, the Community Service Volunteers site: www.csv.org.uk or the LSC site: www.lsc.gov.uk.

Higher education

The Entitlements section on page 17 gives the full details of the fees and financial support for higher education courses for each immigration status group.

Asylum seekers are usually charged fees as overseas students, and are not entitled to any financial help. Universities can waive the overseas student fees, and charge the home student rate. Young people with Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave pay the same fees as UK students, and can get help with fees and living costs, but only if they have lived in the UK for three years. Refugees are treated the same as UK students.

Young refugees may have qualifications from their country of origin, which can be used to enter higher education as long as they are recognised in the UK. The National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the UK (UK NARIC) has a database comparing qualifications across the world. Individuals can send in details of their qualifications and NARIC will send a letter of comparability setting out what UK qualifications they are equivalent to, for a charge of £25. Many advice agencies subscribe to the UK NARIC database, and can offer this information free to refugees.

How Jobcentre Plus and Connexions can work together

Jobcentre Plus deals with all working age benefits, including Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support and sickness and disability benefits, and with helping people into work. They run work preparation programmes such as New Deal and Work-Based Learning for Adults, which are suitable for young refugees aged 18 and over who are entitled to work in this country but are unemployed.

Young people's immigration status affects their entitlements, so it is vital to understand these details before providing advice and guidance. The details are set out in the Entitlements section on page 16. Save the Children produce a free guide on the rights and entitlements of young unaccompanied refugees – see 'Publications' on page 77 for details.

Connexions can work with Jobcentre Plus, liaising with them on:

- helping young refugees to claim benefits
- applying for crisis loans
- applying for a National Insurance number
- preparing for finding work and in looking for work
- overcoming employers' concerns about taking on refugees
- specialist help for young people with disabilities.

Benefits

The details on which young asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to claim benefits are outlined in the Entitlements section on page 18.

Entitlements depend on the young person's age, and in some cases how they are supported under the Children's Act, as well as their immigration status.

Broadly:

- young asylum seekers are not entitled to claim benefits;
- they may receive benefits once they are given refugee status, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, depending on their circumstances – for instance, young people who are looked after by a local authority will not normally be able to claim.

Connexions has the lead responsibility for helping 16 and 17 year olds receiving benefits to move towards employment. They liaise closely with Jobcentre Plus about the young person's progress in finding suitable training, work or education.

When they move to adult services at the age of 18 (eg Jobseeker's Allowance for adults or New Deal), Jobcentre Plus takes over lead responsibility for helping them into work. Liaison continues between Connexions and Jobcentre Plus to exchange information and agree what further support the Connexions Personal Adviser needs to offer the young person, if any.

Paid work and training

As with any young people, most young refugees want to take up work and become

independent. To do this, they need good information, advice and guidance to help them understand the options open to them in the UK, and what each can lead to.

Particularly important is information on:

- higher-level ESOL courses;
- vocational courses which offer language support;
- Work-Based Learning programmes;
- voluntary work and work experience;
- how to look for jobs and work-related skills;
- employment rights such as the right to time off for study or training, for 16 and 17 year olds, and the minimum wage;
- tax, childcare entitlement, bank accounts, financial and debt management.

How Connexions Partnerships are responding to issues raised by young asylum seekers and refugees

The Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Connexions Partnership is coming up with solutions to a number of issues that young asylum seekers and refugees are raising in their discussions with PAs. They include:

- the need to find work – Jobcentre Plus & Refugee Resource are setting up an employer group, and share these contacts with Connexions
- lack of accreditation of prior learning, qualifications and experience – this county-wide issue is being picked up by the Asylum Seeker Strategy Group.

Asylum seekers

In terms of entitlements to work, since 23 July 2002 asylum seekers are no longer able to work until they receive a positive decision on their asylum application. This means young asylum seekers are not eligible for programmes run by the LSC or Jobcentre Plus, or for vocational training, although they can attend vocational college courses.

People financially supported by NASS are not allowed to take paid work of any kind (unless they were given permission before July 2002, under earlier legislation). They cannot take part in government-funded training programmes provided by the LSC or Jobcentre Plus, although further education courses, such as ESOL, are still available to asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers who had already been given permission to work before 23 July 2002, or who had applied before July 2002 for their work restriction to be lifted, are not affected by this change.

Refugees

Refugees have the same rights to work or train as any other UK citizen of the same age.

Once they have been given refugee status they are eligible for training programmes for young people such as Modern Apprenticeships, NVQ learning or Entry to Employment (E2E). Refugees over 18 will be eligible for programmes run by Jobcentre Plus, such as New Deal or Work-Based Learning for Adults. People normally need to claim Jobseeker's Allowance for six months before they can start on New Deal, but some jobseekers who face particular disadvantage in the labour market can start immediately as long as they

would be entitled to Jobseeker's Allowance. This is likely to apply to a number of refugees, such as those who need help with English before they can work.

Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave

Young people with leave to stay in the UK are also entitled to work or train, as for refugees or UK citizens.

Connexions helping young refugees into work

In Haringey, part of the North London Connexions Partnership, an Entry to Employment scheme is being developed for young asylum seekers and refugees. They are consulting with groups that are highly represented in the borough, for example Somali, Kurdish, Kosovan and Albanian. Work will be undertaken with around 50 young people to give them the skills they will need to take up training and employment opportunities.

Barriers to work

Refugees face a number of issues which can make it difficult for them to work, for example:

- *Language*: some young people will speak little or no English, and if they have learned English in their home country this will often have focused on reading and writing – they may be much less proficient in spoken English needed for employment .
- *Qualifications*: qualifications from abroad are not always accepted in the UK. There may be conversion courses, but they are not always available all over the country. Even if they have recognised qualifications, refugees and asylum seekers may not have been able to bring their certificates with them, and so will not have proof of their qualifications.
- *Understanding the system*: they may not understand how to go about finding work, or the culture of the UK workplace, and they may not have the usual support networks.
- *Work experience*: lack of work experience or references from the UK can be off-putting to employers.
- *Paperwork*: for asylum seekers who have permission to work, their papers may still state that they are subject to checks, which may put employers off taking them on.
- *Racism*: a recognised barrier to work for anyone from ethnic minorities, and particularly for recent immigrants. This can be made worse by unfavourable media coverage of issues related to asylum seekers.

There are various ways to help overcome some of these barriers. It is particularly important to give young refugees and asylum seekers a better understanding of work and workplaces in the UK.

Some ideas which have proved helpful include:

- showing videos of work-related programmes, eg from the BBC's Learning Zone;
- presentations from people such as guidance staff, employers, employees and trade union representatives;
- visits to workplaces;
- work shadowing;
- using mentors or buddies;
- voluntary work;
- work tasters and trials.

Voluntary work

All asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to do voluntary work. This is true even for people who are appealing against a negative decision. Refugees are free to take up any kind of voluntary activity, but for asylum seekers the work they are doing must not replace a paid worker.

Mentoring and voluntary work experience can be very valuable, and also give people opportunities to practise using English in a work context.

How Connexions can involve young asylum seekers and refugees

Haringey's Somali community is developing a youth information and training centre where young Somalis will be trained to provide advice, training, guidance and counselling to other younger or newly arrived Somalis. This service will be run for young people by young people.

While giving young people the chance to take an active part in their local community, volunteering also provides opportunities for their own personal development. Volunteers can gain useful experience, building their confidence and learning or improving various skills, including using English. Active citizenship and community involvement can be important for young people trying to integrate into a new country.

For young people from 16 years old, one of the best choices would be to get involved in Millennium Volunteers, part of the Connexions strategy. Its Award of Excellence for 200 hours of voluntary activity is an excellent way of proving their abilities to potential employers, colleges and universities.

Millennium Volunteers may also be available for 14 and 15 year olds, as 'Young Citizens', allowing them to achieve a certificate for 50 hours' voluntary work. The MV website is at: www.mv-online.gov.uk There is also useful information on the Community Service Volunteers site: www.csv.org.uk

Refugees who have been in this country for some time can themselves act as mentors, which can help give them new skills and increase their confidence, as well as helping new arrivals to integrate. This helps because they can communicate in the same language, providing insights and information from their own experience, and act as role models.

The person who acts as a mentor can include this on their CV, which can be useful in helping to find work.

Three publications may be useful in this area:

Volunteering? Is it worth it? The effect of volunteering on refugees' prospects for getting paid work, Susan Stopforth, Refugee Education & Training Service, 2001

Training programme for refugees' advisers, CD-rom, Refugee Education & Training Service, 2002

Setting up mentoring schemes for young refugees in the UK, Save the Children, 2002

How Connexions can work with voluntary and community organisations

Voluntary and community organisations are independent of government, non-profit making and self-governing. Some large organisations employ many professional workers; others are very small and run by volunteers.

Voluntary and refugee community organisations make a vital contribution to Connexions. The sector can work together with a Connexions Partnership to:

- provide a responsive, coherent and integrated service to all asylum seeking and refugee young people;
- build a two-way bridge to enable young refugees and asylum seekers access to services;
- give a range of opportunities to support the personal development of all asylum seeking and refugee young people;
- develop new skills, take advantage of expertise and add value to the work of the voluntary and community organisations and the Connexions Partnership;
- develop strategic relationships and partnership working arrangements, in line with *The Compact and Code of Good Practice*, to help with the design, provision and evaluation of Connexions at a local level.

These organisations are therefore key partners, and Connexions Partnerships are expected to involve and work with the full range of organisations. This means not just the larger organisations, but smaller ones working at community or even neighbourhood level, and should include groups working with particular sectors of the community such as minority ethnic groups, refugee community organisations, faith-based groups and those dealing with people with disabilities, for example. Involvement should also include organisations operating mentoring, volunteering and personal development programmes.

Involvement will vary depending on the size and nature of the organisation but could include tendering all or part of a service to a larger voluntary organisation, or providing a grant to fund a specific project run by a small community group.

Support could also include enabling voluntary and community organisations to build their capacity to deliver services and to get involved in networks so that they can participate more effectively in Connexions.

As the voluntary and community sector is such a key partner, it is important to include representatives from these organisations on the management boards, Local Management Committees and other Partnership structures wherever possible. To make sure the people chosen can effectively represent the local voluntary and community sector, Partnerships need to map local provision and to involve local umbrella and infrastructure organisations such as Councils for Voluntary Service, Councils for Voluntary Youth Services and Rural Community Councils in the nomination and selection procedure. They should also be aware that local black and minority ethnic organisations and faith-based voluntary and community groups may well have their own separate networks.

Connexions Partnerships may also be able to offer support to voluntary and community organisations in a number of ways, for example by:

- Training and developing workers. Many organisations will be interested in receiving training about Connexions, and some voluntary sector workers may wish to train as Personal Advisers. Connexions will fund the cost of the training and may be able to help with back fill costs during training and transport costs to venues.
- Basing Personal Advisers and other Connexions staff in voluntary or community settings.
- Helping to develop organisational information, management or quality assurance systems.
- Helping organisations to acquire resources, for example by strengthening their fundraising expertise through workshops, or initiating joint fundraising bids across the sector.
- Capacity building, including funding work on quality standards.
- Working with organisations to develop guidance and publicity materials.
- Contributing to work (normally led by local authorities or local strategic partnerships) on developing local compacts with the voluntary and community sector.

Voluntary organisations involved with refugees and asylum seekers

There is a list in Annex 4 of voluntary organisations which work with asylum seekers and refugees.

It is vital to find out about local refugee organisations in your area, and to visit them, collect any information they produce, and invite them to Connexions events and information sessions.

Many refugee voluntary and community groups will have knowledge, contacts and experience which will be extremely valuable to the Connexions Partnership's work with asylum seekers and refugees. The provision they can offer could take many forms: clubs and activities, interpreters and translators, or a source of information and mentors. Agree with the voluntary group what they will supply. This can be paid for from the Partnership's local budgets.

Connexions Partnerships involving voluntary agencies in their work

The Cornwall and Devon Partnership uses interpreters, and produces information in other languages. They also get a great deal of help and guidance from organisations such as Refugee Action, Refugee First, the Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support Council, and the English as an Additional Language (EAL) service.

Voluntary organisations can also act as sub-contractors, delivering Connexions Personal Adviser services on behalf of a Connexions Partnership.

They can refer young people to Connexions, and may be the best way to make contact with young asylum seekers and refugees who are not in education. Make contacts so that these organisations know what help Connexions can offer to young people from their community.

Partnerships should consider the following suggestions when they intend to sub-contract to voluntary or community organisations:

- Brief the voluntary and refugee community organisations (RCOs) about the Connexions Service.
- Explain to the voluntary organisations and RCOs what service you need them to provide.
- Explain the benefits of getting involved in a Connexions Partnership.
- Hold an information meeting to explain the process of applying for funding from the Partnership.
- Explain the criteria you will use to decide which organisation should apply, and for assessing bids and awarding sub-contracts.
- Explain the monitoring and reporting requirements and the financial, administrative and monitoring systems needed to deliver the sub-contract.
- Explain the implications of monitoring and reporting for potential sub-contractors.
- Explain what support your Partnership will offer organisations that are awarded sub-contracts.
- Provide an application pack and go through it to make sure that all potential applicants understand what is required.
- Offer one-to-one support for applicants on how to complete the bid application.

For more information, see *Working Together – Connexions with Voluntary and Community Organisations*.

How Partnerships can use outreach work with voluntary organisations

In Oxfordshire, Connexions works with voluntary organisations to make contact with asylum seekers and refugees. One key youth work project for asylum seekers has received funding to become a Connexions Access Point. PAs work from there and from other bases in the community.

Organisations can help with joint mapping or planning locally. It is a good idea to involve them in consultation and drawing up strategies for delivering Connexions for asylum seeking or refugee children.

Funding and resources

Connexions Partnerships are funded and resourced from three sources:

- National grants from the Department for Education & Skills, via the Connexions Service National Unit.
- Resources from partner organisations (either cash or in kind) which are managed by existing organisations but are co-ordinated through Connexions Partnerships to ensure coherence.
- Other funding accessed by Partnerships at regional level – eg European Social Fund, Single Regeneration Budget and lottery funding.

Organisations can access funding for projects which support the delivery of Connexions objectives in a number of ways:

At a national level, the Connexions Service National Unit (CSNU) runs the National Voluntary Youth Organisations (NVYOs) grant scheme. Through this, national organisations can receive funding to run personal development and social education programmes for young people. A key feature of the scheme for 2002-05 will be to encourage NVYOs to become involved with Connexions.

At Partnership level, each partnership will have their own arrangements for letting contracts for delivering services in support of the aims of Connexions. Organisations should contact them to find out more. There is no financial limit on the value of contracts that Partnerships can offer.

In addition to contracts, Connexions Partnerships can also award grants of up to £30,000 per organisation each year to small informal community groups to allow them to be involved in delivering the service. Partnerships can allocate up to 5% of their grant funding from CSNU for this. The money can be used wherever the Partnership thinks a group would make a valuable contribution to the Connexions Service, but where, for some reason, they cannot enter into a formal contract. An example would be where the small community group has no legal status, but can offer a valuable service to young people.

For work with asylum seekers and refugees, money may be available for schools through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant towards support for young people in learning English. The money can be used to employ extra teachers and classroom assistants. Other sources of funding include the Children's Fund, Excellence in Cities and mini-EAZs.

For children who are supported by NASS, schools can also claim a one-off payment of £500 from DfES.

The EC provides funding for practical help for refugees and asylum seekers through the European Refugee Fund. It is distributed to member states in proportion to the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in their country. The Fund can be used for developing accommodation services, supplying aid such as clothing or food and social help. It can also be used for help in finding accommodation, language training or work.

Funding is also available from the Home Office through grants such as the Mentoring Capital Grant and Race Equality Grant. Organisations can apply for a Mentoring Capital Grant to pay for capital expenses needed by projects offering mentoring services outside schools. They can be local, regional or national voluntary or community organisations, but they must be using volunteer mentors. The Race Equality Grant can be used for projects which promote race equality. There are three main areas it supports: creating community networks, improving access to jobs and services, and publicity to create positive images of minority ethnic communities.

For more information on Connexions Funding, see Annex 2.

Keeping informed

Partnerships should make sure they keep up to date with the work of partner organisations, and developments that affect young asylum seekers and refugees. This can mean building links with other government agencies and local authority departments, voluntary organisations and refugee community groups – attending their meetings or events and reading materials sent to them by the groups themselves, or supplied through umbrella organisations, Government Offices and CSNU.

Annex 4 gives more information on publications and useful organisations. This includes details of websites where you can check for the most up-to-date information.

Connexions Partnerships run mailing lists to keep interested organisations informed on developments, events etc. Partnerships should also think about providing this information on their web site.

To keep up with national developments on Connexions, there is the quarterly newsletter *Making Connexions*. Partnerships and other organisations can also submit articles for publication in the newsletter. The 'Working With Us' section of the Connexions web site contains a range of information about working with other organisations, and how they can get involved.

Annex 1: Additional information on Connexions

This annex contains detailed background information on Connexions for other organisations who want to know more.

The Connexions Key Principles are:

- **Raising aspirations** – setting high expectations of every individual.
- **Meeting individual needs** – and overcoming barriers to learning.
- **Taking account of the views of young people** – individually and collectively.
- **Inclusion** – keeping young people in mainstream education and training and preventing them moving to the margins of their community.
- **Partnership** – agencies collaborating to achieve more for young people, parents and communities than agencies working in isolation.
- **Community involvement and neighbourhood renewal** – through involvement of community mentors and through Personal Advisers brokering access to local welfare, health, arts, sport and guidance networks.
- **Extending opportunity and equality of opportunity** – raising participation and achievement levels for all young people, influencing the availability, suitability and quality of provision and raising awareness of opportunities.
- **Evidence-based practice** – ensuring that new interventions are based on rigorous research and evaluation into what works.

The Connexions Service and young people

All young people should benefit from individual assessment, planning, setting and review of goals, access to personal development opportunities, support in making career decisions and an effective transition to adult life. This vision is inclusive and recognises that some young people will need much more intensive support to make progress than others – for example from Connexions Personal Advisers, teachers, learning mentors and other professionals.

In delivering this fully differentiated service, the Connexions Service should:

- Make available **information and initial advice** to all young people on the full range of issues that relate to their participation in learning and progress towards adult and working life. This includes initial advice on career and learning options, and on opportunities for personal development and community involvement, but not in-depth career guidance.
- Provide **more intensive forms of guidance and support** to those young people who are assessed as needing it, and for whom the Connexions Service is agreed as being the most appropriate source of help. This includes in-depth career guidance and sustained support, advocacy and brokerage activities.
- Encourage, signpost and help all young people to access other appropriate activities and support, delivered by the partners and sectors represented on the Connexions Partnership, eg general school and college provision, wider youth services, Prince's Trust and Millennium Volunteers.

Connexions Partnerships have particular responsibilities in the area of assessment and planning for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities, which includes special education needs (SEN). To fulfil these responsibilities, the Personal Adviser. For young people with statements of special educational needs, the Connexions Personal Adviser's work will include:

- Attending the Year 9 annual review of a young person with a statement of SEN, co-ordinating the resulting Transition Plan, and where appropriate attending subsequent annual reviews, including the last one before the young person leaves school. (This is covered in the SEN Code of Practice.)
- Ensuring that all young people with learning difficulties or disabilities who are in or likely to go into post-16 education, training or higher education, receive assessments of their educational and training needs as and when appropriate. Section 140 of the Learning and Skills Act sets out the statutory provision for these assessments from Year 11 onwards.
- Supporting young people who are coming to the end of their involvement in the Connexions Service. This support may be provided if necessary up to someone's 25th birthday.
- Working with other organisations and agencies to support and meet the needs of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. This includes other agencies who are working directly with these young people, specialist assessment services and local LSCs.

Full guidance on Connexions and young people with learning disabilities can be found on the Connexions website at www.connexions.gov.uk (see Annex 4 for full list of website addresses).

The Connexions Personal Adviser

The role of the Personal Adviser is central to the Connexions Service. All young people have access to a Connexions Personal Adviser. The aim of the role is to ensure that young people are able to engage in learning and reach their full potential. Connexions Personal Advisers have a broad remit, and the exact role they fulfil for each young person within this remit depends on the support the young person requires. However, for those who need it, the role of the Personal Adviser includes the following elements:

- working with a network of voluntary, statutory and community agencies, and commercial bodies to ensure a coherent approach to support for the young person;
- engaging with young people to identify and address their needs, offering impartial information, advice and guidance on learning and career options and personal development opportunities, with a view to raising the aspirations of each young person;
- working with and supporting education and training institutions and employers in meeting the needs of young people;
- working with parents, carers and families to support young people in accessing learning and other personal development opportunities;
- managing information effectively to facilitate the process of meeting the needs of young people;
- reviewing and reflecting upon their own professional practice to achieve continuous improvement.

Personal Advisers come from a range of professional backgrounds, bringing a variety of expertise and experience. Some are directly employed by the Connexions Service, others will be seconded to the service and some will remain in their existing professional context, working under a partnership agreement with the Connexions Service. Young people are allocated a Personal Adviser with the relevant skills and background and who best reflects their specific needs and circumstances.

The work of the Connexions Personal Adviser can be split into direct work with young people and brokering services. The balance between direct work and brokerage will depend both on the skills and the knowledge of the Personal Adviser and the needs of the individual young person.

Access to the Connexions Service

The Connexions Service has a strong base in schools and further education colleges. However, the Connexions Service must be available to every young person, including those who are not in education, employment or training. To address this, Connexions has outreach and drop-in centres, and works closely with other agencies, including Social Services, Jobcentre Plus, and youth, voluntary and community organisations, both to deliver the Connexions Service and to promote its benefits to this group of young people.

Access to the service can be by a variety of routes:

- Self-referral – for example in school or college, at or Connexions centres, via training providers, through the Youth Service and other informal settings, over the phone or in time over the web.
- Parental or carer referral – parents or carers may well make the initial contact with Connexions, having been informed about the service by the school or college or by publicity.
- Professional referral when the young person is in formal or informal learning – the school/college/training provider/Youth Worker has to make a judgement about who is referred to Connexions.
- Professional referral when a young person is not in learning – these young people should always be considered priority clients and may be referred by any agency which is in contact with them (including health services, YOTs, and voluntary and community organisations).

The Connexions Service operates in 47 areas covering the whole of England, within the same boundaries as local Learning & Skills Councils. There is a list of Partnerships by region in Annex 3.

The following structures have been established to deliver the service:

The Connexions Service National Unit

The Connexions Service National Unit, based in the Department for Education and Skills, has responsibility for:

- Connexions Service policy;
- establishing a Grant Agreement with Connexions Partnerships for development and delivery of the service;
- monitoring performance and quality improvement.

Connexions Service Partnerships

Connexions Service Partnerships are the strategic bodies responsible for:

- developing and delivering the Connexions Service in their Partnership area (Connexions Service Partnership areas have the same boundaries as the Local Learning and Skills Councils);
- deciding how Local Management Committees will operate;
- ensuring that the service is delivered at a local level;
- contracting for local provision and specialist services.

Connexions Partnerships have to demonstrate that they have involved voluntary and community organisations in their work, and that these organisations have had a fair opportunity to provide relevant services. Their accountability is monitored both by the Connexions Service National Unit and by Government Offices in a number of ways: for example, by approval annually of their business plans; by contract management meetings held with the Partnerships; by regular 'progress reports' sent to the Connexions Service National Unit; and by inspections by OFSTED.

Local management committees (LMCs)

Local management committees exist in nearly all Partnership areas (though they may have different names). They are responsible for:

- the day-to-day operational management of the Connexions Service at the local level (based on local authority boundaries or groupings of local authority areas);
- ensuring that a fully differentiated Connexions Service is available through a network of Personal Advisers;
- ensuring Personal Advisers work to uniform standards; managing the relationship between Personal Advisers employed by different agencies; agreeing the location of Personal Advisers to deliver an accessible service to young people.

Connexions Partnerships and Local Management Committees are both multi-agency bodies, made up of a range of partners, for example local education authorities, Youth Offending Teams, Jobcentre Plus and voluntary and community organisations.

Connexions Framework for Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review

The Connexions Framework for Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review has been developed to support Personal Advisers in helping young people make a smooth and successful transition to adult and working life. It outlines a process for identifying needs, planning effectively and taking action to address and review those needs. In particular, it is intended to help Personal Advisers co-ordinate more coherent service delivery to young people who face significant or multiple barriers to learning, some of whom may be currently involved with a range of different agencies.

The Connexions Framework was issued to all Partnerships in June 2001. APIR will be mandatory for all Partnerships from April 2004. Partnerships and CSNU are currently working together to implement this successfully.

Connexions Direct

In addition to the traditional methods of delivery for the service, Connexions Direct uses telephone and internet technology to help Connexions reach out effectively to all young people. The service has been piloted in the North East of England since September 2001, with 21 Partnerships involved by the end of June 2003. Connexions Direct will be rolled out to all 47 Partnerships by 2004.

Connexions Direct is an integral part of local Connexions provision, offering a complementary tier of service delivery. It offers information and advice through qualified practitioners who, where necessary, also facilitate referrals to Personal Advisers and specialist support services on the ground.

You can find out more about Connexions Direct from the website:
www.connexions-direct.com.

Connexions Card

The Connexions Service aims to raise the aspirations of, and motivate, young people. The new Connexions Card supports this aim. It is an exciting and innovative cross-departmental project – a Smartcard, available to all 16-19 year olds in England who want it. It rewards young people for their engagement in learning – both formal and informal, including volunteering.

The Card rewards 16-19 year olds for their participation in learning, and for meeting agreed targets by collecting points which can be redeemed against discounts in the High Street or for 'money can't buy' offers such as a look behind the scenes at a football match or concert.

You can find more information about the Card at www.connexionscard.com

Millennium Volunteers (MV) and Connexions

MV was launched in January 1999 and is now part of the Connexions Service. It aims to support young people who want to make a sustained commitment to volunteering for the benefit of the community. It provides opportunities for young people aged 16-24, who are at a formative point in their lives, and the hope is that they will develop and retain an interest in volunteering throughout their lives. The aim is for young people to perform a variety of useful tasks which are of personal interest to them within the community, which will contribute to their personal development, and to make a demonstrable impact on local communities.

There have been over 100,000 Millennium Volunteers since 1999, and there are currently over 32,000 volunteers who have achieved 200 hours of volunteering for the MV Award of Excellence. MV will play an increasingly important role in the roll-out of Connexions. MV is one of the ways in which young people's interest and involvement in education and training can be sustained. Given the extensive scope of the programme, MV will also form part of the portfolio of opportunities which Personal Advisers are able to offer young people so they can become more involved in their communities.

NSF and Connexions

The Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) was set up in response to the 'Bridging the Gap' report. Announced in September 1999, it aims to bring the most disaffected and disengaged 13-19 year olds, living in some of the most deprived areas in England, back into education, training or employment.

There are currently around 650 projects based in 40 of the most deprived local authority areas. The total budget available until September 2003 is £60m

In November 2002 The Minister for Young People and Learning announced that NSF will receive further funding of £10m a year from 2003-4 to 2005-6.

To date, 60 per cent of the young people leaving the programme have gone into education, training or employment.

Further information can be found on our website at: www.dfes.gov.uk/nsf

The Connexions Brand

The Connexions Service, the Connexions Card and Connexions Direct are all part of the Connexions brand. A strong brand identity is essential:

- to build awareness of the Connexions range of services
- to provide specific information about the Connexions services
- to demonstrate to the public at large that the government is serious in its endeavours to support and improve services for young people.

Much of the work which voluntary and community organisations undertake will continue to be outside Connexions. However, work funded by, under contract to, or delivered under the auspices of, Connexions, by partners in the voluntary and community organisations, must be branded as Connexions (this includes publications, stationery, websites, press notices and signage).

Corporate identity and style guidelines and a note on the management of the brand have been issued to Connexions Partnerships, who can advise further.

The Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sectors

The Compact and four associated codes of practice (on Funding, Consultation and Policy Appraisal, Volunteering, and Working with Black and Minority Ethnic Organisations) have been published by the Home Office Active Community Unit. They offer good practice information and models for developing agreements and protocols.

A fifth code on Community Groups, and a supplement to the Funding Code are in preparation.

See Annex 4 for information on how to get copies of the Compact and codes of practice.

Annex 2: Funding information

This annex contains information on how the Connexions Service is funded, how it funds voluntary and community organisations, and useful information on the European Social Fund (another way in which funding can be accessed for work with Connexions).

How Connexions is funded

The Connexions Service is funded from three sources:

- **Grants from the Department for Education and Skills via the Connexions Service National Unit.** Over £455 million is available in 2003-04 to fund the Connexions Service. The vast majority of this is allocated to Connexions Partnerships, through a funding formula which gives weight to areas with the greatest numbers of young people with additional needs.
- **Existing resources devoted to youth support and guidance activities at a local level.** To achieve their objectives, Connexions Partnerships need to bring together relevant aspects of the work of local authority Youth Service, Education Welfare Service, Youth Offending Teams, Social Services (particularly leaving care teams) and voluntary and community organisations. Funding for these services will therefore form part of the overall resources that are available at a local level. Partners are not expected to transfer staff or money to the Connexions Partnership, unless there is agreement that it would be helpful to do so. Rather, Partnerships are asked to identify the work that they do, that will also help to deliver the goals of the Connexions Service. They should make sure that this is coordinated effectively to ensure that young people receive a seamless service.
- **Other sources of funding** such as European Social Fund or lottery money.

Funding from Connexions Partnerships

The types of activities that Connexions Partnerships might choose to fund will vary: they might be 'pump priming activities' to help small community groups build capacity to deliver services; or they could be to deliver services which are needed, but not available through other statutory or voluntary sector organisations.

Most funding for voluntary and community organisations will be through contracts to deliver particular aspects of the Connexions Service. There is no financial limit placed on the value of contracts that Partnerships can offer to organisations, although individual Partnerships should determine their policies on the value of contracts they offer to voluntary and community organisations. Where small informal voluntary and community organisations do not have contracts, Connexions Partnerships can award grants of up to £30,000 per year to an organisation to run projects which support the objectives of Connexions. In deciding the amount of, and eligibility for, these awards, Partnerships will need to consider a range of factors, including:

- what the provision on offer will achieve (the outputs)
- how closely these meet the objectives of the Partnership
- the quality of the provision
- the organisation's ability to deliver the outputs.

Payments will usually be made in arrears, although there is some flexibility to make payments in advance in exceptional circumstances (eg salaries for staff involved in a new project) subject to authorisation by the Connexion Service National Unit. All provision purchased through this process must support the delivery of the Connexions Service and be closely linked to the priorities identified in Partnerships' business and delivery plans.

The Connexions Service National Unit grant can only be used to support Connexions activity and should not be used as a substitute for other sources of funding. This 'additionality rule' for the Connexions Service National Unit grant funding means that Partnerships cannot use their Connexions grant to pay for activities that were previously funded from another source – for example if provision has been paid for by another local partner or by a government grant. This helps to ensure that the extra money that the government has made available for Connexions buys additional activity, and is not being used to replace existing services. However, there are two exceptions to this:

- where the Connexions grant is being used to purchase additional activity, over and above what is being done already, and
- where other sources of funding are short term – eg when time-limited funding from the National Lottery, ESF or regeneration budgets ceases.

In these circumstances, voluntary and community organisations do not need to demonstrate that they are providing extra activity in exchange for Connexions funding. Nor do they necessarily need to make changes to existing activities/projects in order to get funds from Connexions for these, if they and the Partnership agree that the current activity is the best way to meet local needs and circumstances. This should ensure that valuable provision already in existence can be preserved if other sources of funding cease.

European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) funds activities to develop employability and human resources.

The current ESF programme, which runs until December 2006, supports five activities:

- active labour market policies
- equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion
- improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning
- adaptability and entrepreneurship
- improving the participation of women in the labour market.

ESF normally provides up to 45% of the costs of a project. The rest, which is called 'match funding', has to come from other sources. Partnerships can use all of their CSNU grant for matching ESF-eligible Connexions work. This can include PA training programmes, but not the Diploma, Understanding Connexions or supervisory training, which are already part-funded by ESF, matched by money from a CSNU central budget.

Voluntary and community organisations and other providers can bid to Government Office (GO) ESF secretariats for ESF funding for individual projects. If their bids are approved, they are responsible for delivering the project and for providing management

information to support their claim for ESF. However, the introduction of Connexions Partnerships offers a forum for all providers of services for young people to discuss and co-ordinate their bids for ESF. This will ensure they maximise the use of ESF and prevent bids being submitted for provision which already exists, or which will only have a limited impact. In some instances, Connexions Partnerships may be prepared to act as lead partners in ESF bids, bidding on behalf of other partners, if all the parties agree to this. They will then take on the responsibility for managing and monitoring the project if the bid is successful.

Some Connexions Partnerships have successfully applied to become ESF Co-Financing Organisations (CFOs). CFOs bid to GOs for ESF money for activities within their remit. They then pay this, with the required match funding from domestic funds, to providers which have been contracted through open, competitive tendering. The projects funded must meet the priorities and criteria set out in the CFO's co-financing Planning Prospectus. This allows the Connexions CFO to use ESF strategically, and relieve providers of some of the administrative burden of submitting applications and claims, allowing them to concentrate their resources on delivery. With this in mind, a simplified application form for providers has been introduced across all CFOs. Although CFOs will take on the audit and monitoring responsibilities, providers will still need to keep records and provide information to help the CFO to meet these responsibilities.

As access to ESF varies from area to area, Partnerships or providers interested in applying for ESF support are recommended to contact their GO European Secretariat for advice on whether to bid for funds direct to the GO or to a CFO.

More information on ESF is on the ESF website (www.esfnews.org.uk), and more about the implications of co-financing for the Connexions Service and its providers is on the Connexions website (www.connexions.gov.uk). Information is updated regularly on both these sites.

Annex 3: Government Offices for the Regions

Connexions contacts and Partnerships

For details of your local Partnership please visit the Connexions website (www.connexions.gov.uk) or contact the appropriate Government Office.

Government Office (GO)

EAST OF ENGLAND

Tim Barber
GO for the East of England
Eastbrook
Shaftsbury Road
Cambridge CB2 2DF
01223 372504
tbarber.go-east@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

EAST MIDLANDS

Neil Weightman
GO East Midlands
Belgrave Centre
Talbot Street
Nottingham NG1 5GG
0115 971 2631
nweightman.goem@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

LONDON

Clive Senior
GO London
Floor 3, Riverwalk House
157-161 Millbank
London SW1P 4RR
020 7217 3360
cseior.gol@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

NORTH EAST

Eric Bannister
GO North East
Wellbar House
Gallowgate
Newcastle NE1 4TD
0191 202 3559
ebannister.gone@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Partnerships, by region

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Suffolk
Hertfordshire
Essex, Southend & Thurrock
Bedfordshire and Luton
Norfolk

Lincolnshire and Rutland
Nottinghamshire
Leicestershire
Derbyshire
Northamptonshire

North London
East London
South London
London West
Central London

County Durham
Tyne and Wear
Tees Valley
Northumberland

Government Office (GO)

NORTH WEST

Tony McGee
GO North West
Cunard Building
Pier Head
Water Street
Liverpool L3 1QB
0151 224 2912
tmcgee.gonw@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

SOUTH EAST

Corinne Leppard
GO South East
Bridge House
1 Walnut Tree Close
Guildford GU1 4GA
01483 882 520
cleppard.gose@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

SOUTH WEST

Nita Murphy
GO South West
2 Rivergate
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6ED
0117 900 1932
nmurphy.gosw@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

WEST MIDLANDS

John Robertson
GO West Midlands
Floor 3, Chamberlain House
Queensway
Birmingham B1 2DT
0121 212 5441
jrobertson.gowm@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

Derek Ireland
GO Yorkshire and the Humber
516 City House
New Station Street
Leeds LS1 4JD
0113 283 5259/5260
direland.goyh@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Partnerships, by region

Cheshire and Warrington
Lancashire
Cumbria
Greater Merseyside
Greater Manchester

Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire
and Buckinghamshire
Kent and Medway
Sussex
Berkshire
Surrey
South Central

Cornwall and Devon
Somerset
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole
West of England
Gloucestershire
Wiltshire and Swindon

Coventry and Warwickshire
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin
Staffordshire
The Black Country
Herefordshire and Worcestershire
Birmingham and Solihull

Humber
South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire
York and North Yorkshire

Annex 4: Contacts and further information

Website addresses

Connexions website www.connexions.gov.uk
Department for Education and Skills www.dfes.gov.uk
Immigration and Nationality Directorate www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk
The Home Office www.homeoffice.gov.uk
The Refugee Council www.refugeecouncil.org.uk
Save the Children www.savethechildren.org.uk
British Red Cross (help with family tracing) www.redcross.org.uk/trace
Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service www.wusuk.org
Refugee Legal Centre www.refugee-legal-centre.org.uk
Immigration Advisory Service www.iasuk.org/advice
National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) www.naric.org.uk
Jobcentre Plus www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk
Learning and Skills Council www.lsc.gov.uk
Inland Revenue www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk
Millennium Volunteers www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk
Health of Asylum Seekers and Refugees Portal (HARPWEB) www.harpweb.org.uk
Neighbourhood Support Fund www.dfes.gov.uk/nsf/
Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) www.bteg.co.uk
British Youth Council www.byc.org.uk
Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) www.emf-cemvo.org.uk
National Council of Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) www.ncvys.org.uk
National Association of Councils of Voluntary Service (NACVS) www.nacvs.org.uk
Action with Communities in Rural England (Rural Community Councils)
www.acre.org.uk

Organisations which offer training

Refugee Council

The Refugee Council runs a series of seminars across the UK for people working with refugees and asylum seekers. Each one-day seminar aims to bring service providers up to date on one of the following areas: asylum support, the NASS system, unaccompanied children, healthcare, further education/training needs, delivering ESOL and widening participation of asylum seekers and refugees.

Tony Coleman, Training Co-ordinator, 020 7802 3049

Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture

The Medical Foundation provides training on working with survivors of torture and organised violence. Available to voluntary organisations, refugee community organisations and statutory agencies.

020 7813 79999 (Children's section)

Refugee Education Training and Advisory Service

RETAS provides training and guidance on educational entitlements and access for young refugees and asylum seekers.

Nick Lawson, 020 7426 5815

Organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers

Amnesty International (UK)

99-119 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RE

020 7814 6200

A worldwide human rights organisation. Present information on the risks refugees may face in their country of origin. May provide statements of support for asylum seekers.

ARHAG Housing Association Ltd

2nd Floor, 122-124 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 6HE

020 8365 7170

Re-settling refugees in short-life and permanent housing. Offering help and advice on all aspects of housing. Helping members with benefit claims.

Asylum Aid

28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS

020 7377 5123 E-mail: info@asylumaid.org.uk Web address: www.asylumaid.org.uk

Advising and assisting refugees on their applications for asylum in the UK. Conducting appeals against refusal of asylum. Providing advice on related areas such as welfare rights and housing. Providing general support to recently arrived refugees to help them settle in the UK.

The British Council

10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN

020 7930 8466 Web address: www.britishcouncil.org

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for promoting educational opportunities and cultural relations, building partnerships with organisations and individuals to run development projects and programmes. It also administers professional and academic examinations, and helps young people take part in exchange projects.

Children's Legal Centre

Advice line: 01206 873820 E-mail: clc@essex.ac.uk

Web address: www2.essex.ac.uk/clc

Free and confidential legal advice and information.

Community Legal Services

CLS Policy Team, 1st Floor, 12 Roger Street, London WC1N 2JL

0845 608 1122

Web address: www.justask.org.uk

Referrals to appropriate solicitors and general advice.

Employability Forum

Elizabeth House, The Mezzanine Floor, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NQ

020 7401 5449

Web address: www.employabilityforum.co.uk

Strategies to help refugees who have permission to work to prepare for and find work. Assessing individuals' language and work-related skills.

Family Reunion Services: British Red Cross Society

Family Reunion Section, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EJ

020 7235 5454

Web address: www.redcross.org.uk/trace

An international tracing service for families separated by conflict.

Family Services Unit (FSU)

207 Old Marylebone Road, London NW1 5QP

020 7402 5175

E-mail: centraloffice@fsu.org.uk

Web address: www.fsu.org.uk

Anti-bullying projects in schools and in the community. Working with refugee and asylum-seeking families. Family support groups. Advocacy.

Forced Migration Online

Web address: www.forcedmigration.org

Offers access to a wide range of online resources dealing with the situation of refugees and asylum seekers all over the world. Aims to give comprehensive, impartial information and to promote awareness of the issues.

Gharweg Advice Training and Careers Centre (Gharweg)

5 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7XW

020 7620 1430

E-mail: gharweg@aol.com

One-to-one advice sessions in welfare advice and running training courses and career guidance for clients. One-off activities in development education issues.

Immigration Advisory Service (IAS)

County House, 190 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YB

020 7967 1221/1330 Helpline: 020 7378 9191 (24 hours 7 days)

E-mail: advice@iasuk.org

Web address: www.iasuk.org

Free individual advice and representation throughout the UK. IAS undertakes all immigration and asylum work including tribunal and judicial review. Offices in Birmingham (Central and Sheldon), Cardiff, Glasgow, Hounslow (Ebury and Grove Road), Leeds, Liverpool, Central London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Norwich, Oakington and Sylhet, Bangladesh.

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

115 Old Street, London EC1V 9RT

020 7251 8708

Web address: jcwi.org.uk

Language Line

11-21 Northdown Street, London N1 9BN

translation service: 0800 169 2879 office: 020 7520 1430

Web address: www.languageline.co.uk

A 24-hour interpreting service offering access to interpreters in more than 100 languages over the telephone. Public and voluntary services can subscribe to this service. They also provide translation for documents.

Local Government Association Asylum Support Team

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

020 7664 3298 / 3339 / 3244

Web address: www.lga.gov.uk

Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture

96-98 Grafton Road, London NW5 3EJ

020 7813 7777

Web address: www.torturecare.org.uk

Care and rehabilitation for individuals and families who have suffered torture or other forms of organised violence.

Migrant Helpline

Room 65, 1 Control Building, Eastern Docks, Dover CT16 1JA

01304 203 977

E-mail: info@migranthepline.org

Web address: www.migranthepline.org

Advice and support to newly arrived asylum seekers to help them get support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). One Stop Service for asylum seekers and refugees in Kent and Sussex.

Migrant Organisations Development Agency (MODA)

4 Deans Court, St Paul's Churchyard, London EC4V 5AA

020 7248 3545

E-mail: moda44@hotmail.com

Information about organisational and community development issues. One-to-one advice, technical and practical support. Training and supporting the development of new community organisations.

Migrants Resource Centre (MRC)

24 Churton Street, London SW1V 2LP

020 7834 2505

E-mail: migrantrc@gn.apc.org

Advice and information service, with a specialist service in immigration; education and training, particularly English and computing courses; volunteering opportunities; community development; facilities to meet some social and childcare needs.

Refugee Action

3rd Floor, The Old Fire Station, 150 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8SB

020 7654 7700

E-mail: waterloo@refugee-action.org.uk

Advising refugee groups in the UK on social, cultural, employment, education and training issues. Running a refugee reception centre. Advice and support to asylum seekers who are dispersed without choice to the North West, East Midlands, South Central, and South West Home Office regions.

Refugee Action Mental Health Project

Centenary House, 54 North Street, Leeds LS2 8JS

0113 244 5345

Web address: www.refugee-action.org/better_mental_health_project.htm

Refugees Arrivals Project (RAP)

41b Cross Lances Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 2AD

020 8607 6888

E-mail: rap@refugee-arrivals.org.uk

Independent advice service on access to NASS support, health, education and legal matters for refugees, asylum seekers, their relatives and friends. Covers the airports at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City. Emergency accommodation, while waiting for NASS decision.

Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU)

The Learning Centre, University of North London, 236-250 Holloway Road, London N7 6PP

020 7753 5044 Web address: www.unl.ac.uk/ragu

Refugee community organisations

There are over 500 refugee community organisations (RCOs) in England. To find out which organisations work in your area, please contact a member of the Community Development Team at the Refugee Council:

Manager: Carl Blackburn	020 7820 3074
Partnership Development Manager: Calvin Armstrong	020 7820 3084
Fund-raising: Devan Danthasamy	020 7820 3076
Women: Elaheh Rambarzini	020 7820 3022
Women: Sophie Cottrell	020 7820 3024
Information: Gabriella Oakley	020 78203070
Finance: Girma Afley	020 7820 3073

Refugee Council

Bondway House, 3-9 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ

020 7820 3000

E-mail: info@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Web address: www.refugee.org.uk

Vocational training courses, English as a second language, support and orientation into UK work culture and jobsearch methods. Employment preparation courses, advice and guidance (careers counsellor and outreach guidance service). Advice and referral service dealing with newly arrived asylum seekers, and support to other agencies advising refugees. Community Development Team providing support to refugee community organisations, and support to regional refugee councils.

Refugee Council Children's Panel of Advisers

Advice line: 020 7582 4947 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm)

Help for more vulnerable, unaccompanied asylum seeking children – guidance through the complexities of the asylum process, referral to solicitors, attendance at solicitors and the Home Office, plus support through the appeals process.

Refugee Education Email Network (REFED)

Web address: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/refed

Support for teachers and other professionals working with young refugees and asylum seekers, allowing them to share information and discuss practice.

Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS)

World University Service (UK), 14 Dufferin Street, London EC1Y 8PD

020 7426 5800

E-mail: retas@wusuk.org

Advice and help for refugees and asylum seekers over 18 in getting UK education, training and work

Refugee Legal Centre (RLC)

Sussex House, 39-45 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF

020 7827 9090

Helpline: 020 7378 6242 (Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 9.30 am-1.00pm)

E-mail: rlc@refugee-legal-centre.org.uk

Web address: www.refugee-legal-centre.org.uk

Providing legal advice and representation (including at appeal hearings).

Refugee Support Centre

47 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RH

020 7820 3606

Counselling/psychotherapy to refugees and asylum seekers. Training, support and information to health care, Social Services and community workers on the psycho-social needs of refugees. Addressing the unmet mental health needs of especially vulnerable groups such as elderly refugees and children.

The Ruth Hayman Trust

PO Box 17685, London N6 6WD

E-mail: trustee@ruthhaymantrust.com

Web address: www.ruthhaymantrust.com

Small grants to help adults living in the UK who have English as their second language take up education and training. Awards are up to £200, but refugees have found this fund especially useful.

Save the Children

Head Office: 17 Grove Lane, London SE5

020 7703 5400

Website: www.scfuk.org.uk

London team: 020 8741 4054

North East team: 0191 222 1816

North West team: 0161 434 8337

West Midlands team: 0121 555 8888

Yorkshire and Humberside team: 0113 242 4844

Working with refugee and asylum seeking children and young people is a priority area of work for Save the Children in England. They focus on gathering evidence on the impact of asylum legislation on children and young people, through research and project work, and use this evidence positively to influence policy and practice.

Student Action for Refugees (STAR)

3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ

020 7820 3006

Website: www.star-network.org.uk

A national network of young people who campaign for refugee rights, raise awareness of refugee issues and practically support refugees in their local area.

Publications

A full set of Connexions publications are available on the Connexions website. (www.connexions.gov.uk). This site also contains a dedicated page of information for voluntary & community organisations. Also check the sites for local Connexions Partnerships.

For general enquiries about the Connexions Service, please contact connexions.service@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

For enquiries about Personal Adviser training, please contact patraining.connexions.service@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Quarterly national newsletter: Making Connexions. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, e-mail your name, address and postcode to: dfes@prolog.uk.com or telephone 0845 60 222 60. Also contact your local Partnership to get on the mailing list for their local newsletter.

Other publications in the 'Working together' series and others which may be of interest include:

Working together: Connexions and the statutory youth service (Ref: CXSYS)

Working together: Connexions and teenage pregnancy (Ref: CXTP)

Working together: Connexions and Social Services (Ref: CXSS)

Working together: Connexions and youth justice services (Ref: CXYJS)

Working together: Connexions and youth homelessness agencies (Ref: CXHA)

Working together: Connexions with voluntary and community organisations
(Ref: CXVCO)

Youth Support Services for 13-19 year olds: A Vision for 2006, CSNU, 2002 (Ref: CXVIS02)

Strategy for Engaging the Voluntary & Community Sector in Connexions (Ref: CX SEVCS)

Making a Difference – Emerging Practice – Connexions and the RNIB (Ref: CXDIFFRNIB)

Making a Difference – Emerging Practice – Connexions and Teenage Pregnancy (Ref: CXDIFFTP)

Making a Difference – Emerging Practice – Connexions and Mental Health Services (Ref: CXDIFFMH)

These are all available from DfES publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ. 0845 60 222 60, e-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Bright Ideas – Involving Community Groups in Connexions – handy tips, available for Stephen.standret@dfes.gsi.gov.uk or phone 0114 259 4862

NSF Toolkit for Connexions Partnerships on working with the community & voluntary sector (ISBN 1 901974 39 1) available from the Community Development Foundation, e-mail: admin@cdf.org or phone 020 7226 5375

Cold Comfort: Young separated refugees in England, Kate Stanley, **Save the Children**, 2001. Research with young separated refugees in England and professionals working with them. £7.50. To order a copy contact Plymbridge distributors, 01752 202 301 or e-mail orders@plymbridge.com

Series of free short guides on working with young refugees, from Save the Children, published between September 2002 and March 2003. The guides are on: working with unaccompanied asylum seeking children at ports of entry; setting up young refugee groups; setting up mentoring schemes; the rights and entitlements of young refugees and emotional health support for young refugees. To order copies, call 020 8741 4054.

How to make a new life in the UK: A self-help guide for young refugees and asylum seekers, National Information Forum, 2001. Available from www.nif.org.uk or by phoning 020 7402 6681.

Booklets in different languages and regional guidance from the Refugee Council, including:

Information for Asylum Seekers, Refugee Council. A leaflet explaining asylum applications, access to support and services.

Claiming Asylum, Refugee Council.

Refugee Resources in the UK 2003, RADAR, Refugee Council Online CD-rom, RADAR, Refugee Council – lists all agencies for asylum seekers and refugees

NASS Policy Bulletins, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office

Supporting Unaccompanied Children in the Asylum Process, Wendy Ayotte, Save the Children, 1998

Training programme for refugees' advisers, CD-rom, Refugee Education & Training Service, 2002

Department of Health Local Authority Circular LAC (2003) 13, available from 0870 155 5455 or on www.doh.gov.uk/publications/coinh.html

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children: Information Note, Home Office, July 2002. Gives guidance intended for social workers on many aspects of applying for asylum for young people.

Educating Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children, Jill Rutter, DfES 2002

Supporting Refugee Children in 21st Century Britain, Jill Rutter, Trentham Books, 2002 and 2003

Educational Advice and Guidance for Young Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Patricia Ellis and Nicola Nimmo, Refugee Studies Research Team, University of East London, for Central London Connexions Partnership, 2001

The Education of Refugee Children, Neil Remsbery, Pupil Inclusion Unit, National Children's Bureau, 2003

Education of Young People in Public Care, guidance from the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health

Aiming High: promoting the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, DfES

Volunteering? Is it worth it? The effect of volunteering on refugees' prospects for getting paid work, Susan Stopforth, Refugee Education & Training Service, 2001

Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England and associated codes of practice on Funding; Black and Minority Ethnic Organisations; Volunteering; Consultation and Policy Appraisal (all published) and Community Groups, and a Supplement to the Funding Code – are available from Home Office, Active Community Unit, Room 216, Horseferry House, Dean Ryle Street, London SW1P 2AW (Tel: 0207 217 8400). These documents are also available on the web at: www.thecompact.org.uk

Annex 5: Local contacts

This should be a helpful way to keep track of the organisations and people you may need to contact in relation to work with asylum seeker and refugee children. It includes examples and likely organisations, but individual partnerships can add any other contacts in their area.

Funding	Organisation	Name and contact details
Local Learning and Skills Council		
Learning partnership		
Regional development agency		

Support	Organisation	Name and contact details
National Refugee Council	National Refugee Council	
NASS	NASS	
One Stop Service		

Health	Organisation	Name and contact details
Community health service		
Doctors		
Dentists		
Opticians		
Health education service		
Well woman clinics		
Well man clinics		
Counselling services		

CAMHS

Housing and welfare

Organisation

Name and contact details

Social Services

Housing office

Welfare advice

Benefits office

Religion

Organisation

Name and contact details

Mosque

Church

Temple

Interpreters

Organisation

Name and contact details

Community groups

Organisation

Name and contact details

Education and training	Organisation	Name and contact details
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Local education authority		
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Schools		
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Further education colleges		
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Adult/community education		
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Training providers		
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Jobcentre Plus		
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Employers' organisations		
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Learndirect centre		
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Libraries		
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Local LSC		
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Leisure	Organisation	Name and contact details
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Sports centres		
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Youth clubs		
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Women's groups		
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Men's groups		
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Clubs and societies		
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Others	Organisation	Name and contact details
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Annex 6: Feedback form

Emerging Practice/Working together: Connexions supporting young asylum seekers and refugees

How useful did you find this publication?

Are there any topics or areas that you would like covered, or covered in more detail, in subsequent editions of this publication?

What other materials would be useful to facilitate joint working between Connexions and other relevant organisations?

Any other comments or feedback?

Please e-mail comments to Liz Miller (liz.miller@dfes.gsi.gov.uk) or return this page to Liz at the Connexions Service National Unit, DfES, Room E4a, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ. You can also fax your comments on 0114 259 3371.

Copies of the wording of this report can be made available in alternative formats.
Please see contact details below.

Further copies of this publication can be ordered from:

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