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Adult Information, Advice and Guidance

Working Together: Connexions and Adult Information, Advice and Guidance Services

Summary

The Connexions Service – part of the Supporting Children and Young People Group – the Department for Education and Skills, and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have worked with colleagues from Connexions partnerships, local LSCs and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) providers to produce this “Working Together” publication. It was first published in April 2003 and has been updated to reflect new arrangements and development work within Connexions partnerships and Information and Advice services for adults.

Supersedes

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Adult Information, Advice and Guidance Working Together: Connexions and Adult Information, Advice and Guidance Services

Executive Summary

September 2004

Subject

The primary purpose of this publication is to provide guidance on ensuring effective transition from Connexions services to adult Information and Advice (IA) services when young people reach the age of 20 (25 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities). It also provides examples that illustrate how Connexions partnerships and IA providers can work together on a range of issues to avoid duplication and ensure value for money from available resources.

This publication is not intended to be a blueprint for how services should be delivered locally. Instead, it is a tool for agencies to use, in planning jointly, how Connexions and adult IA providers can best manage service users moving between services, and it sets out some core principles on how they can work together most effectively locally. We expect that Connexions partnerships, local Learning and Skills Councils (local LSCs) and IA providers will use this publication to support business and delivery planning processes and will consider adopting some of its messages in planning for the delivery of services.

It is important that joint activity does not compromise the need for Connexions and adult IA services to be viewed as separate, discrete services providing distinct and individual products designed to meet the needs of the different age groups that they serve. Where a Connexions partnership (or an organisation providing services to the Connexions partnership under contract) also acts as a deliverer of IA services for adults under contract to the LSC, these services should not be branded as Connexions. We

recognise that Connexions and adult IA services are not "like-for-like" organisations and have very different resources and infrastructures. Arrangements for effective partnership working will need to take account of these differences and ensure coherence across the full range of agencies with responsibility for delivering IA services to adults, including, for example, colleges and JobCentre Plus. Connexions services and LSC-funded contractors for IA services need to work closely together, both at a national and a local level, to ensure that people moving from Connexions at age 20 (25 for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) are aware of, and are effectively referred to, the support available locally for adults, and that services are planned and delivered effectively.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed their thinking and the good practice examples contained within this publication.

Intended recipients

This publication is of interest to Connexions partnerships, local LSCs, contractors for LSC-funded IA services for adults, and other IAG providers.

Status

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Adult Information, Advice and Guidance Working Together: Connexions and Adult Information, Advice and Guidance Services

Section 1: About this Publication

Introduction

1 This publication describes the context for the Connexions Service and information and advice (IA) services for adults working together and sets out some principles that underpin the joint working needed to ensure a smooth transition between services for young people and those for adults. The document also highlights some of the ways in which Connexions and adult IA services are working together, at both strategic and operational levels, and includes examples of practice in a range of local contexts.

2 The document also outlines the remit of the Connexions Service and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in relation to IA services for young people and for adults.

3 The guidance here is intended to support effective planning and the sharing of good practice between the Connexions Service and IA services and in particular focuses on ensuring effective transition arrangements and the referral of service users between Connexions and IA services.

4 It is important to recognise that Connexions and IA agencies for adults are providing discrete services tailored to meet the needs of the different age groups that they serve.

Background

5 In July 2003 the Government published the Skills Strategy White Paper *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential*. This identifies the fact that high-quality and easily accessible information, advice and guidance has an important role in helping people understand the opportunities and support available.

6 For young people, the Skills Strategy records that the expansion of the Connexions Service to cover all 47 LSC areas has begun to improve support and advice. For IA services for adults four key actions to improve services have been identified. These are to:

- integrate the **learndirect** national advice service with the work of local IA services for adults
- define the range of IA services that adults should be entitled to expect and the standards to which those services should be delivered
- ensure that all LSC-funded IA providers are accredited against the **matrix** Standard for information advice and guidance services
- work with the Department for Work and Pensions to draw together labour market information and encourage JobCentre Plus staff to consider the role that learning and training could play in helping inactive benefit claimants prepare to return to the labour market.

7 The LSC and Connexions will work together at national, regional and local levels to implement the actions identified in the Skills Strategy.

8 In response to the Skills Strategy, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has published a National Policy Framework that establishes a minimum core IAG service for adults that service users should have a right to expect from 1 August 2004. Further details of the National Policy Framework can be found on the DfES website at www.dfes.gov.uk.

9 This publication also supports the expectation outlined in the Secretary of State for Education and Skills' Remit Letter to the LSC in November 2000 for "close working between the Council and the Connexions Service" and also that the Secretary of State "would expect to see proposals for the development of adult services based on stronger links with those provided by Connexions partnerships for young people, whilst maintaining the particular focus on each age group".

10 The LSC published its strategy document *Coherent Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Services for Adults* in January 2004. This proposes the establishment of local Strategic Boards for IAG for adults convened and led by the LSC and to include a senior representative from the local Connexions partnership. More details of the LSC's strategy document can be found on the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk.

11 It is intended that the establishment of local strategic boards for IAG for adults will include a senior Connexions representative to ensure the continued development of IAG services that are "joined up" from the perspective of the service user, and the effective transition of young people from Connexions services to IA services for adults at the appropriate age.

Section 2: Key Principles

12 Connexions partnerships and adult IA providers need to work closely together to ensure that all young people and adults are aware of the different services each provides and to know which to go to at different stages of their lives for relevant information and advice.

13 The way that this is planned and delivered will differ according to local circumstances, structures and provision. However, there are some principles that underpin coherent service delivery:

- clear strategic planning at national and local levels
- effective referral systems between Connexions partnerships and IA contractors
- supported transition from Connexions to appropriate adult IAG provision at age 20
- effective support for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

14 More detail of each of these principles is given below, and Section 3 includes examples of how the principles are being put into practice in local areas.

Clear Strategic Planning

15 The LSC and the Connexions Service, part of the Supporting Children and Young People Group, are committed to working together to ensure that national policy decisions take account of the need for coherent IA for young people and adults and to ensure that appropriate provision exists and can be accessed by service users. This will be achieved by:

- working together as key delivery partners of the national Skills Alliance to deliver Skills Strategy objectives
- ensuring coherence in the requirements and guidance for Connexions services and the national specification for LSC-funded delivery of information and advice services for adults
- working together at a regional level to support Regional Skills Partnerships
- monitoring arrangements for transition from Connexions services to adult services as part of the Office for Standards in Education and Adult Learning Inspectorate inspections
- supporting national projects and research
- facilitating the sharing of good practice.

16 The delivery of IAG services for both young people and adults in a local area should be underpinned by a clear and consistent local strategy that ensures coherence in the planning of the Connexions Service and IAG services for adults.

17 The strategic boards for IAG convened and led by the local LSC will develop a three-year vision and strategy for adult IAG that should include how they will work with key stakeholders, such as Connexions, and how, more specifically, the effective transition of young people from Connexions to adult services will be ensured.

18 This will include the need to ensure that LSC strategic area reviews are undertaken with full consideration of the implications for

IAG services and draw on the outcomes of LSC strategic area reviews that relate to IAG.

19 Good strategies for Connexions partnerships and IA contractors working together will focus on the needs of the service users and consider the implications for delivery from the perspective of service users, including potential users of the service. Strategic planning will recognise that the Connexions Service and adult IA services are separately designed to meet the needs of the different age groups that they serve and will make sure that the positioning of services is clear and distinct to all.

20 It is important that Connexions retains its brand identity as a youth support service for 13–19 year olds. Where adult IA advisers are based in Connexions premises, it should be made clear that services to adults do not fall under the remit of the Connexions Service. This may be through the use of a separate brand for IA services for adults and other ways of distinguishing the different levels of support that can be provided, and the different range of issues on which advice can be given to young people and adults respectively. (It is intended to launch a national brand for IA services during the Autumn of 2004).

21 Some Connexions Service and IA contractors have found it helpful to produce a written partnership agreement or protocol to formalise their commitment and consolidate arrangements. Both the Connexions Service and the LSC will expect Connexions partnerships and IA contractors to describe effective arrangements for working together in their business or delivery plans for 2004/05.

22 Within the context of separate, discrete services for young people and adults, effective planning will help to make best use of resources, exploring where these can be shared appropriately, and to avoid duplication of effort.

23 All staff of Connexions and IA contractors need to have a good understanding of the role of each other's organisations and the services they provide. Strategies need to include a statement of how this will be achieved on an ongoing basis.

24 Strategies will also need to show how good communication will be achieved at all levels and how information will be shared effectively and efficiently between Connexions and adult IA contractors and providers.

25 Both Connexions and adult IA contractors are working integrally with a wide range of partner organisations. Some of these will be key players in both Connexions and adult IAG services, delivering to both young people and adults or playing an important role in the transition of young people to adult services and provision.

26 Currently, the requirements and guidance to Connexions and national specification for IA services for adults include the requirement to ensure that effective links and partnership arrangements are developed between the LSC and Connexions and, for example, other agencies such as higher education institutions and JobCentre Plus.

27 There will be other examples, such as Local Authority services' training provision in the voluntary and community sectors or work in prisons and the probation service, where information and advice are planned and delivered for both young people and adults.

28 Strategies for delivering IAG will need to take account of the need for coherence between these organisations and to meet the needs of the range of service users and age groups they serve. The establishment of the strategic boards for IAG for adults described earlier should support this greater coherence.

Effective Referral Systems

29 Connexions staff should be able to refer adult service users to the appropriate IA service for adults. Equally, all providers of IAG services for adults should know how to identify and refer any young person who may benefit from the support of the Connexions Service and be clear about the actions they should take to carry out a referral.

30 Connexions partnerships and providers of IAG services for adults will need to establish or maintain robust arrangements to ensure that, as Connexions is identified as the service for young people in a locality, that access and referral to IAG services for adults is not diminished.

Supported Transition

31 Connexions partnerships will need to assess young people's needs as they approach the age of 20 and work with adult IAG providers to ensure that young people are supported in gaining access to information and advice services for adults.

32 This will include all staff being clear about when the transfer from the Connexions Service to adult IAG provision should take place. For example, it will need to be decided whether the transfer comes into effect from the date of the young person's 20th birthday, or whether local arrangements are in place to continue to provide support for individuals under the Connexions Service if their need for support is likely to end in the near future.

33 Because IA services for adults are not resourced or structured in the same way as the Connexions Service, referral may be to a range of organisations providing services to adults and may be resourced from LSC funds or by other agencies from other resources. Examples here include referrals to JobCentre Plus provision or Local Authority services.

34 In 2004/05, some provision is made through the LSC IA programme funding for enhanced services to people with identified needs for additional support. Some of the activities provided through enhanced services may benefit young people who need additional support to transfer to adult IAG provision. Further information about enhanced services is available in the national specification for IA services for adults for 2004/2005, published by the LSC on its website at www.lsc.gov.uk.

35 Clear and efficient arrangements will need to be in place to manage the sharing of information about individuals between Connexions and IAG providers. Such arrangements will need to take account of any confidentiality agreements, including:

- the need to secure informed consent from the service user
- the capacity of partner organisations to store information securely and effectively within the framework established through the Connexions Customer Information System
- the requirements of the *Data Protection Act 1998* and the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*.

Effective Support for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

36 The definition of a learning difficulty or disability as defined in the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* is as follows.

A person has a learning difficulty or disability if: he/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of persons of his/her age; or

he/she has a disability which prevents or hinders him/her from making use of facilities

of a kind generally provided by institutions providing education or training for young persons of his/her age.

Learning and Skills Act 2000

37 There will be circumstances when a young person with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not ready to access the adult IAG services provided locally and will require continued support from the Connexions Service beyond the age of 20. However, it is likely that most people with learning difficulties will need to make the transition after their 20th birthday.

38 In these situations, their personal adviser should arrange a case conference (or other suitable approach) with the young person (and their representative, parent or carer, if necessary) and the appropriate agencies. This should include, where possible and within available resources, appropriate provider(s) of adult IAG services, local organisations, and specialists, including health specialists. The case conference (or other approach) should take place soon after the young person's 19th birthday.

39 The aim of the case conference (or broader approach) should be to agree on the support needs and to identify which organisation should lead that support. The Connexions Service may continue providing support, including any ongoing assessments, until the person's 25th birthday. The arrangements should be reviewed at least annually, with the express aim of helping the service user make use of adult IAG services and thereby reduce their dependency on the Connexions Service.

40 These reviews should involve the young person, their representative, parent or carer, if necessary, and appropriate agencies, specialists and local organisations. In good practice, the agreed adult will assume

responsibility for managing reviews and providing support in phases.

41 Local IA providers may not have the resources or infrastructure to support a case conference approach from LSC IA programme funds. However, other appropriate organisations, such as colleges, JobCentre Plus or other relevant agencies, may support the case conference approach as part of their own separately funded responsibility to the service user and through their own resources.

42 The Connexions Service produced an information pack, *Information to Support Connexions Partnerships in their Work with People with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities*, in September 2002. This is available from the Connexions website at www.connexions.gov.uk.

Section 3: Examples of Joint Working

43 There are many examples of how Connexions and IA contractors are already working closely together, both in planning for services and in their day-to-day practice. Some examples of current arrangements are described below.

Strategic Links

44 The new Strategic Boards for IAG and new contracting arrangements for adult services should provide a clear opportunity for strategic planning and effective arrangements for local delivery between the local LSC, Connexions partnership and IA services to be shared and coherent. Examples of how strategic links are being developed locally include the following.

- a Connexions, Greater Merseyside and Greater Merseyside IA Delivery Network have a Service Level Agreement that underpins all their strategic planning. LSC Greater Merseyside convene a three-way strategic level meeting that involves Connexions, Greater Merseyside, Greater Merseyside IA Delivery Network and JobCentre Plus. This provides an effective mechanism for a cohesive approach to working arrangements for the three organisations.
- b Berkshire IA Delivery Network and Berkshire Connexions Partnership have an agreed protocol to ensure that as young people approach the age of 20 (25 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) they can continue to access a network of IA provision should they need to, and that their transition from one service to the other is smooth, providing them with

the confidence to progress into adulthood and work, training or higher education.

- c Coventry and Warwickshire have a joint protocol between Connexions, the local LSC and the IA Delivery Network that details working practices and joint planning to maximise effective working of all three organisations. Meetings are held monthly to ensure that:
 - there is no duplication of service
 - effective service user transfer arrangements are in place
 - appropriate joint training of local LSC, IAG and Connexions staff is identified and commissioned.

Good Communications

45 In some local areas good communication exists at all levels of service delivery through activities such as:

- regular briefing sessions
- “keep in touch” meetings
- newsletters shared between services and containing information on each other’s services
- clear contact points, known by all staff, so that staff in each organisation know who to talk to about particular issues.

46 Somerset IA Delivery Network hosted a very well-received “getting to know you” networking “mini-conference” – a collaborative venture between the IA Delivery Network/Connexions and JobCentre

Plus and involving Connexions frontline staff, some of the Connexions local area management team and JobCentre Plus senior advisory staff.

47 Information sharing will also include the potential for sharing information about individual service users, with their informed consent and according to the requirements of the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

48 The Management Information System bought in by Greater Merseyside IA Delivery Network builds on the Connexions, Greater Merseyside Management Information System and allows direct export of data gathered from Connexions, Adult Guidance Services as a delivery contract partner to Greater Merseyside IA Delivery Network. This avoids duplication in the input of service-user data.

49 In Lincolnshire and Rutland, information sharing is supported by co-location of Connexions Personal Advisers and IA Delivery Network staff.

50 Connexions partnerships will have similar information-sharing agreements with the wide range of partner agencies they work with, reflecting the broad nature of the service they provide.

Quality Development

51 There are also opportunities for Connexions partnerships and IA providers to share good practice in their approaches to quality assurance. This is particularly the case where services to young people and adults are delivered from the same premises.

52 For example, there is potential for shared approaches to mystery shopping and service-user feedback on services.

53 Connexions and IA providers may also want to review good practice and the potential for joint working to support the

achievement of quality standards, such as the **matrix** Standard, Investors in People or other quality criteria published by the Connexions Service (formerly CSNU) and the Office for Standards in Education.

54 The achievement of the **matrix** Standard is now a requirement for Connexions partnerships in cases where they act as the contractor responsible for the procurement and management of IA services for adults and/or the delivery of IA services to adults as a subcontractor.

55 Some IA providers have developed shared approaches to continuous quality improvement. In Herefordshire and Worcestershire, joint working has provided a forum for Connexions advisers to meet staff from IA Delivery Network organisations to discuss quality issues. Mystery shopping feedback has been shared and briefing events on quality issues for managers have been held.

Referrals

56 Many Connexions and IA Delivery Networks are planning together to make sure that effective systems are in place to support the referral of adults to IA services, while taking account of local delivery structures for IA for adults.

57 In Merseyside a new approach is the targeted mailshot of Connexions service users at their point of transition from Connexions, as they reach their 20th birthday. This draws the attention of the service users to the availability of adult IA services and includes a flyer and a business card advertising the Greater Merseyside IA Delivery Network helpline and website and **learnirect** and Worktrain.

58 In Bristol, six IA partners from the voluntary and community sector offer a drop-in centre for adults based in the

Connexions shop in the city centre. Connexions provide the venue and reception staff and the service is available four days a week. Service users can also use the careers library and IT resources. The service is open at lunchtime and is free.

Supported Transition

59 Helping young people to make an effective transition to IA services for adults is crucial to ensuring that individuals continue to receive support and to understand how they can be helped to access learning throughout their lives.

60 The IA Delivery Network in Cambridgeshire is at present carrying out a pilot with Connexions to look at support for those reaching their 20th birthday. Extra hours have been given to an Adult Adviser in the Cambridge area to act as facilitator with Connexions Personal Advisers, who will suggest referral to the Adult Adviser or to other specialist providers in cases where there are specific needs, such as support for mental health issues. Referrals have also been made to New Deal as a result of this work.

61 While this pilot is still underway, a number of recommendations are emerging. They include:

- adding mention of support to post-20 year olds on the Connexions website
- formalising searches of the database on a regular basis to identify service users approaching 20 years of age and writing to them
- expanding the pilot to all areas
- including transitions as a quarterly agenda item at Connexions management meetings.

62 One way of supporting transition is through the young person identifying an agency from which they can continue to gain a level of support beyond the age of 20.

63 In the greater Bristol area, Priority Youth Housing see the benefits of involvement of both the IA Delivery Network and Connexions in building the capacity of their organisation to deliver across the age range and by making use of the skills and resources of both services. For example, those services can help in providing models for the delivery of IA, in approaches to quality assurance and in gaining access to networks of other providers. Another important element of the joint Connexions and IA Delivery Network approach in Bristol is the local area helpline, which young people and adults can call for advice.

64 Materials such as information packs produced for all young people to receive as they approach 20 also supports transition to IA services.

65 Staffordshire IA Delivery Network have developed a birthday card, which Connexions will send out with a covering letter to all young people coming up to their 20th birthday. The card will outline the services provided by the Adult Division within Connexions (including the IA Delivery Network), which they will be entitled to receive from age 20 onwards.

66 Berkshire IA Delivery Network and the Connexions Partnership have developed a postcard, which is sent out when service users on the Connexions database who are in work-based training or are unemployed reach 20 years old.

67 Somerset IA Delivery Network have also developed a colourful postcard with an introduction from Connexions to the IA Delivery Network, offering phone, text or e-mail as a means of contact.

Support for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

68 As part of their commitment to ensuring that the needs of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met, some Connexions services and IA contractors have developed specific agreements and close working relationships to manage the transition of individuals who may continue to need additional support beyond the age of 20.

69 Devon and Cornwall Enhanced Service pilot is currently supporting a project in North Devon to develop a robust referral service to the local IA Delivery Network known as Go4 for the disadvantaged and disabled young people leaving the Connexions Service. The main aim is to identify service users in this group and to help them make an effective transition into the adult services in the community. This project encouraged Connexions and Go4 staff to work closely together, specifically Connexions Personal Advisers working with people with special educational needs (SEN) and the Extended Connexions, as well as those rising 20 leaving care, working with the Youth Offending Team, and others who had not gained a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 2.

70 In Herefordshire and Worcestershire, joint working is carried out between the Special Needs Personal Adviser and the IA worker for SEN, with referrals taking place as appropriate.

71 Greater Merseyside IA Delivery Network has convened consultation groups of member organisations at the request of Connexions, Greater Merseyside to provide qualitative feedback on Connexions Referral Policy and Procedure for service users with

SEN, and Connexions Vulnerable Adults Policy. The Connexions Referral Policy and Procedure for service users with SEN provides a clear framework for the supported transition of service users with special needs from the Connexions Partnership to adult services.

72 In Lincolnshire, the IA service set up a partnership agreement with the Connexions Learning Difficulty and Disability team to deliver services to adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The team receives referrals from Connexions Personal Advisers and Adult Guidance Advisers. This enables clients to receive a continuous service beyond the age of 25, when they are no longer eligible for Connexions.

Shared Delivery

73 While it is important that service users are able to identify the discrete service being delivered separately by Connexions and adult IA providers respectively, there are many examples in which shared premises and delivery points are being used to ensure good value for money. This includes: shared one-stop access points that can be used by young people or adults; IAG services being delivered to young people and adults from Connexions Service premises; and IA subcontractors and Connexions partners delivering services to both young people and adults in the community.

74 In Herefordshire and Worcestershire, the IA Delivery Network have worked together with Connexions to establish joint information point venues and keep them updated.

75 In Lincolnshire and Rutland, adult IA services are being accessed through 10 Connexions services. Information, advice and guidance services are supported by Connexions assistants, who provide services

to adults and young people, and share resources. Adult guidance is also funded through the LSC Local Initiative Fund, the European Social Fund and New Deal.

76 Joint working has also enabled Connexions advisers to reach more isolated rural areas.

Joint Training

77 Some ways in which Connexions services and IA contractors have worked together on joint training have included:

- familiarisation and briefing of Connexions staff and IA contractor staff and providers to ensure understanding of each other's strategy, roles, practice, and so on
- delivering joint programmes for Connexions staff and IA providers to achieve NVQs in advice and guidance
- looking at training programmes to identify shared training needs and to provide joint delivery
- accessing the different expertise of IA providers and Connexions partners to build skills and knowledge, for example by working with service users with basic skills needs or refugees and asylum seekers, through joint training in disability awareness or using IT as a guidance tool.

78 The Data Protection Officer from Connexions, Greater Merseyside is delivering a workshop as part of the Greater Merseyside IA Delivery Network Training and Development Plan to Greater Merseyside IA sub-contractors. This involves an introduction to the *Data Protection Act 1998*, with a comprehensive information pack for all IA sub-contractors.

79 Herefordshire and Worcestershire have delivered shared training events that have included frontline training, focusing on:

- customer care telephone techniques for frontline staff
- Internet training
- basic skills awareness for Personal Advisers
- quality standards training
- supervision and appraisal for Managers.

80 Also, in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, as part of a strategy to address the skills shortage in advice and guidance work, joint assessor training is taking place comprising Connexions staff and IA sub-contractor practitioners.

81 Plum, the Hertfordshire IA Delivery Network, has delivered training to Connexions Personal Advisers already qualified to NVQ at Level 4 in guidance to deliver IA advice episodes and one-to-one enhanced services. Personal Advisers have commented that delivering IA services has given them a wider understanding of long-term career progression routes for young people. They have had to learn about the career paths of adults, some of them with unexpected diversions using transferable skills, and have been able to feed this knowledge into their discussions with Connexions service users.

Annex A: Connexions Service

Overview

1 The Connexions Service has a broad remit, having been established in 2001 to provide integrated information, advice and guidance (IAG) and access to personal development opportunities for all 13–19 year olds in England. It aims to help young people engage in learning, achieve their full potential and make a smooth transition to adult life. In recognition that support from Connexions extends beyond IAG on learning and career options, the service brings together a wide range of existing agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors, such as social service youth offending teams and teenage pregnancy services. The support offered to young people is differentiated according to need, but aims to respond to early signs of social exclusion and prevent the escalation of adverse circumstances.

2 Connexions partnerships share boundaries with the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils, and are responsible for planning the service, while day-to-day delivery is organised through local management committees. Connexions partnerships are multi-agency bodies comprising a range of partners, such as local education authorities, careers services, youth offending teams, social services departments, health bodies and voluntary sector agencies. Together, these agencies have developed a crosscutting strategy to address the identified needs of 13–19 year olds. By developing the service across organisational boundaries, Connexions has helped to develop consistency in the support young people receive, based on a shared understanding of their needs, and it has helped to strengthen the links between agencies.

3 Within the context of a universal service for all 13–19 year olds, Connexions focuses its efforts on activities that seek to reduce the numbers of 16–18 year olds who are “not in education, employment or training”. This is achieved through a mix of:

- work with pre-16 service users to ensure that they have the support they need to overcome barriers to participation and achievement
- work with 16–19 year olds to improve retention in learning and work
- work to help those who are currently not in education, employment or training to move into learning or work.

Connexions: the vision to 2006

4 Connexions will judge its progress by the proportion of young people who make a successful transition into further learning and work between the ages of 16 and 19. Connexions will contribute to:

- improvements in young people’s behaviour, and a reduction in the numbers of young people involved in crime
- better outcomes for young people from black and ethnic minorities
- improvements in the overall effectiveness of services in meeting the needs of young people.

Key principles of Connexions

5 There are eight key Connexions principles:

- **raising aspirations** – setting high expectations for 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 from 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 the 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 of what works.

Annex B: Learning and Skills Council

Overview

1 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was established in April 2001 under the terms of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000*. It is responsible for funding all post-16 education and training in England, except higher education, and its work covers the following:

- further education
- work-based training and young people
- workforce development
- adult and community learning
- information, advice and guidance services for adults
- education business links.

Vision, mission and targets of the Learning and Skills Council

2 There are two key strands that underpin everything the LSC does. One is to raise participation in learning among 16–18 year olds. The other is to improve skills levels to meet the economic and social needs of England in the 21st century.

3 The LSC's vision is that by 2010 young people and adults in this country will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.

4 The LSC's mission is to raise participation and attainment through high-quality education and training that puts learners first.

5 The current Remit Letter from the Secretary of State for Education and Skills set out the Secretary of State's expectations

of the LSC, and has charged it with further development of coherent information, advice and guidance (IAG) services for adults.

High quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) will be essential if people – especially non-learners – are to be drawn into learning, and helped to ensure that they make the right choices about learning. And beyond that, every learner, in whatever form of provision, should have access to readily available, impartial and high quality IAG about learning and work.

Secretary of State's Remit Letter to the LSC, paragraph 48

6 Paragraph 14 of the Remit Letter sets out the expectation of "close working between the Council and Connexions" and also, in paragraph 48, the Secretary of State "would expect to see proposals for the development of adult services based on stronger links with those provided by Connexions Partnerships for young people, whilst maintaining the particular focus on each age group".

Vision for information, advice and guidance for adults

7 The LSC Strategy for coherent IAG for adults aims to improve the participation and achievement of adults in learning and at work by ensuring that excellent IAG on skills, training and qualifications is at the heart of everything we do.

Objectives for information, advice and guidance for adults

8 The LSC has identified seven key objectives for delivery of a successful LSC IAG strategy for adults. These are to:

- ensure that excellent IAG on learning and work is an integral part of all LSC-funded provision
- develop a flexible IAG infrastructure that meets the needs of the learning and skills agenda at national and local level
- achieve an integrated IAG service to ensure “joined-up” provision from a service-user perspective
- ensure that all information on learning opportunities, labour market intelligence and funding support is up to date, accurate, comprehensive and quality assured and is made widely available to potential learners
- improve advice services that help the service users interpret and use the information they have been given
- raise the quality and effectiveness of the service
- measure the impact of IAG services for adults on meeting LSC and Skills Strategy objectives.

Delivering Information, Advice and Guidance Services for Adults: National Activities 2004-05

Contract arrangements for LSC-funded information, advice and guidance services to adults

9 IA services for adults are, from 1 August 2004, to be delivered on behalf of the LSC by a contractor, who may deliver IA services to service users but who will also subcontract with other agencies to meet the needs of identified priority groups in the local area.

10 The national specification for delivery of LSC-funded IA for adults sets out six national activities to be delivered by the contractor for IA services. These are as follows.

Activity 1

- To ensure that nationally set targets for IA sessions are achieved by increasing the access to, and availability of, IA services.

Activity 2

- To meet the additional IA needs of clients with qualifications below National Vocational Qualification at Level 2 through the provision of an appropriate range of enhanced services.

Activity 3

- To measure the impact of all programme-funded IA services on service users through effective monitoring and to determine how much difference the service makes to individuals in their learning and work plans.

Activity 4

- To ensure continuous improvement in the quality of IA and enhanced services by: training staff from across the network to the appropriate level of competence; maintaining and expanding the number of organisations accredited to the **matrix** Standard for information, advice and guidance services; and developing an independent evaluation review process to assess the effectiveness of the Delivery Network.

Activity 5

- To provide a more coherent service for the service user by raising the profile of IA services with key stakeholders and partners within the LSC and across local LSC-funded programmes.

Activity 6

- To provide a coherent service for employers and employees by raising the profile of IAG in the workplace in partnership with Business Link and other employer intermediaries.

Target Groups

11 Contractors for the delivery of adult IA services to adults are expected to demonstrate how the IA entitlement and prioritised delivery of face-to-face advice will be delivered to ensure those without a National Vocational Qualification at Level 2 are reached (IA services may be offered to all adults aged 20 with no upper age limit who are employed, unemployed or economically inactive), and how other priority groups will be identified and engaged.

Annex C: Contacts

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Annex D: Resources

Publications

Connexions (September 2002) *Information to Support Connexions Partnerships in their Work with People with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities.*

Connexions *Requirements and Guidance 2004–2005.*

DfES (July 2003) *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential.*

DfES (2003) *Client Needs for Coherent Information Advice and Guidance Services on Learning and Work.*

DfES (2003) *Information Advice and Guidance for Adults: National Policy Framework and Action Plan.*

LSC (January 2004) *Coherent Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) Services for Adults: Strategy 2004.*

LSC (September 2003) *Improving Working Arrangements with Key National Agencies: Guide to Collaborative Working.*

National Specification for the Procurement and Management of Information and Advice Services in Local LSC Areas 2004–2005.

Websites

Connexions – www.connexions.gov.uk

Department for Education and Skills – www.dfes.gov.uk

Learning and Skills Council – www.lsc.gov.uk

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