

Connexions

The connexions service: prospectus and specification



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Section 1: Introduction

The best defence against social exclusion is having a job and the best way to get a job is to have a good education, with the right training and experience... Getting this right offers the prospect of a double dividend. A better life for young people themselves, saving them from the prospect of a lifetime of dead-end jobs, unemployment, poverty, ill-health and other kinds of exclusion. A better deal for society as a whole that has to pay a very high price in terms of welfare bills and crime for failing to help people make the transition to becoming independent adults.

Tony Blair, Bridging the Gap

The purpose of this document

- 1.1** The purpose of this document is to provide further information about the Connexions Service to be phased in from April 2001. It has been produced to help potential partners and other organisations to develop outline Partnership Proposals for the structure and delivery of the new service in their areas.
- 1.2** This document should be read by those within local communities that are able to play a role in developing the Connexions Service as described in the document *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person*. The Connexions Service represents a radical departure from the way advice and guidance services for young people are currently organised:
 - ▶ it will offer a new service to all 13-19 year olds, but will give particular priority to getting and keeping on track those young people who are most at risk of encountering obstacles to a successful transition to adulthood;
 - ▶ it will achieve this through flexible and innovative delivery structures which will bring together public services, the private sector and community and voluntary organisations to reach down into communities, including black and minority ethnic communities, and deliver effectively a service which is tailored to the needs of the specific groups. At the same time as this document, a short guide to the new arrangements is being produced so that local community and voluntary organisations know what is happening and can think about how they might play a part in the new arrangements.

- 1.3** The Government outlined its vision for new youth support arrangements in the White Paper, *Learning to Succeed*, published in June 1999. The Social Exclusion Unit's report, *Bridging the Gap: new opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training*, gave further information about these arrangements. Following consultation on that report last autumn, the document *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person*, published on 3 February 2000, set out in some detail the wide ranging Connexions strategy and how the new Connexions Service will be developed, including the timescale for its phased operation. These documents are essential reading for organisations as they produce their Partnership Proposals. (The Bibliography gives information on how they may be obtained.)
- 1.4** The Connexions Service will be a modern publicly funded service which is supported by and will contribute to the aims of a number of Government Departments and external agencies. The public, business, voluntary and community sectors will work together to provide every young person with access to a personal adviser.
- 1.5** The proposed structure for the delivery of the new service will include:
- a cross Departmental Connexions Service National Unit;
 - Connexions Partnerships at local Learning and Skills Council area level, responsible for strategic planning and funding;
 - local management committees at the level of local authorities with responsibility for education and social services, or groupings of them, to suit local circumstances, bringing together local partners and responsible for day to day management of local delivery.

The process and timescale

- 1.6** There will be a two stage process to enable the new service to be phased in from 2001:
- a. Stage 1: All Connexions Partnerships are invited to produce an outline Partnership Proposal by 9 June 2000;
 - b. Stage 2: Those assessed as being most likely to deliver an effective service from April 2001 will be invited to complete more detailed plans later in the summer and we will work with them to develop these. Those aiming for a 2002 start will be asked to produce their detailed plans by the autumn of 2001, those starting in 2003 will produce them the following year.
- 1.7** Information about what partnerships will be expected to produce in their outline proposals is in Section 5. An indication of the sort of information which will be required in detailed plans is at Annex 4. The timetable for the contracting process is at Annex 1.

Development funding

- 1.8** Funding will be available to each Connexions Partnership to develop their Business Plans. In order to access this funding, which will be available through Government Offices, partnerships should indicate which organisation they intend should be the conduit for this initial funding. Funding will also be available for the production, either directly or through consultants, of maps of existing provision to identify and address any gaps or weaknesses.

Pilots

- 1.9** There will be a series of pilots to develop and test the Connexions Service. The first five area based pilots (Coventry and Warwickshire; Devon and Cornwall; Lewisham; Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth; and Humberside) were announced by the Secretary of State on 3 February 2000. Further pilots will be announced shortly. In addition there will be piloting of particular aspects of the Connexions Service including Connexions Direct, the inclusion of the voluntary and community sector and the role of the personal adviser/Learning Mentor. The intention is to build on the experience of the pilots in developing the service from 2001.

Section 2: The Connexions Service

At the heart of the Connexions Strategy will be the new Connexions Service. This service will provide a radical new approach to guiding and supporting all young people through their teenage years and in their transition to adulthood and working life. The new service will be delivered primarily through a network of personal advisers linking in with specialist support services. They will be drawn together from a range of existing public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations, and build on best practice. These organisations will come together to form new Connexions Partnerships to develop and co-ordinate the delivery of support services for young people.

Connexions: The best start in life for every young person

The clients

- 2.1** The main clients for the new service will be all young people aged 13-19 in England, giving particular priority to the young people who are at greatest risk of not making a successful transition to adulthood. For some young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities support may need to continue beyond the age of 19.
- 2.2** The Connexions Service will work with parents and carers and a wide range of partners such as schools, pupil referral units, colleges, youth work organisations, probation services, local community and voluntary organisations, employers, young people themselves, health services, police and social services. The emphasis will be on delivery through partners who know and can work closely with specific groups within the target population, for example voluntary and community organisations with credibility in particular black and minority ethnic communities.

2.3 Young people come from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures and the support they need will vary according to their circumstances. The new service will respond in ways that help all young people to reach their full potential. Young people who participate in learning are more likely to be better qualified and therefore have a better chance to participate in the world of work. The role of the service will be to encourage them to take part in appropriate learning, to be ambitious and to raise their aspirations and achievement. In doing this the service will be responsive to the circumstances of individual young people including issues of race, religion and culture. It will increase their knowledge of the education, training and employment opportunities open to them, as well as those in leisure, cultural and volunteering settings, and it will encourage them to take up those opportunities and reach for challenging goals. The Policy Action Team 12 report on Young People, published in March, supports the need for the Connexions Service to shift the balance of effort and resource over time into preventing young people from encountering the worst problems and to improve the individual services to young people.

2.4 In developing the service it is recognised that the first port of call for support is the family. The new service will need to find ways of supporting families who want to be the channel for advice and guidance themselves, but who may not immediately know all the answers. The task will be to reinforce and underpin the informal network of support systems which exist in the family, neighbourhoods and communities, through schools and peer groups. Community and voluntary organisations will have a vital role to play in this.

2.5 Further information about existing support for young people is included at Annex 3.

Key services

2.6 Connexions Partnerships will be responsible, working with local management committees, for ensuring the following services are in place:

- ▶ information, provided in a readily accessible, well organised, accurate and unbiased way. It should be available through a variety of media and cover:
 - education and training, to help young people decide the most appropriate learning route. Having full information and being aware of all the realistic choices will help young people to make the right decisions about which education or training opportunity to take up, and ultimately to achieve their full potential;
 - career options and all relevant opportunities available to each young person, based on detailed information on occupations and knowledge of the labour market in accordance with the Secretary of State's statutory duty to provide careers services;
 - informal and community based education and development opportunities;
 - a range of issues which might affect young people, particularly drug misuse, youth offending, truancy and school exclusions;
 - housing and health issues, availability of financial support, use of the Youth Card etc;
 - leisure, cultural and volunteering activities; and
 - help to interpret this information;

- advice and guidance to enable young people to make informed decisions about opportunities. The guidance should help individuals including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attain their full potential. It should raise aspirations and actively challenge bias and stereotypical attitudes. It should help young people attain their full potential, for example by tackling drug misuse or teenage pregnancy. Advice and guidance should also be available to help young people overcome a wide spectrum of barriers to their participation in learning including those associated with their academic underachievement, health, ethnicity, social, cultural or home life;
- referral and placement services to help young people overcome barriers to securing and retaining appropriate education, training and employment opportunities. The Connexions Service will also help young people already in post-compulsory education, training or employment who are seeking to move to alternative opportunities which more closely meet their needs. Advisers will need to intervene with services dealing with health, benefits and housing to ensure young people get the help they need.

- 2.7** These services will be provided through a network of personal advisers, who will provide support to all young people aged 13-19. Where a young person needs support from more specialist services, the personal adviser will broker access to those services, continue to support the young person through their contacts with that service and monitor their progress.
- 2.8.** Connexions services will also provide support for teachers and others in developing careers education/Personal, Social and Health Education, special education needs transition processes and the provision of relevant information, including through Information Computer Technology (ICT) and advice on labour market developments.
- 2.9** Services will be supported by information systems, including an up to date register of the 13-19 population in each area giving details of learning progress, current status and other information needed by personal advisers. These will enable managers to identify young people's circumstance and needs, ensure that appropriate help is given, and monitor progress through learning, especially of groups targeted for priority support. Advisers or specialists dealing with an individual will be able to access relevant information about that young person, within clear protocols covering data exchange and access. Further information will be published in the summer.
- 2.10** It will be critical that effective information, advice and guidance services for adults are provided which are coherent with those for young people. Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) Partnerships are currently leading the development of such services for adults and Connexions services will be represented as members of IAG Partnerships. In some areas partners in the Connexions Service may act as the lead body for advice and guidance services for adults. Connexions Partnerships will need to take these arrangements into account when developing their plans and services. Connexions Partnerships may also be involved in education business partnership activity.

Professional formation of the personal adviser role

- 2.11** Personal advisers will be at the heart of the new service and will carry out a new professional role, operating across a range of different agencies such as education, health, social welfare and criminal justice to ensure the retention and progression of young people in education and training. Appropriate professional structures are being developed to support this emergent new profession. In the evolution of the role, full account will be taken of the relevant structures, terms and conditions and labour market conditions in allied professions such as social work and teaching. We will be consulting separately on the professional and training framework for personal advisers.
- 2.12** Personal advisers will be drawn from a range of backgrounds and bring a mix of skills and knowledge. There will be a particular emphasis on bringing into the personal adviser role people who are already providing effective guidance and advice through informal means, for example those from black and minority ethnic communities as well as current practitioners in careers companies and the statutory youth services. By being representative of the population as a whole, and through appropriate professional standards and training, personal advisers will be able to work effectively with young people of all ethnic origins and backgrounds. Further information about personal advisers is included in Chapter 6 of the document *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person*.
- 2.13** To support the personal adviser network it is envisaged that networks of voluntary and community mentors will be developed. Personal advisers will work with schools, colleges and voluntary organisation staff to put young people in contact with these mentors who will be able to provide additional support and act as a role model for young people.
- 2.14** The scope of the new role necessitates development of an integrated planning, assessment and review mechanism. To support this we will commission work, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Youth Justice Board, to develop a common framework for identifying young people's needs and produce a set of development tools. This will offer a basis for referral or inter-agency discussions on how best to meet the support needs identified. Key assessment information will be included in the Connexions database to aid continuing work with the individual.

Key targets

- 2.15** Connexions Partnerships will be charged with enabling all young people in their area to make the transition to adulthood successfully. This will involve giving particular support to young people whose circumstances or attitudes act as barriers to their engaging fully in education, training and work, including those in neighbourhoods where there are concentrations of barriers to participation in learning. Particular support needs to be given to groups of young people who often face specific disadvantage, including those from black and minority ethnic communities, young people in public care and those leaving care, young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, teenage mothers, young carers, those who commit crimes or misuse drugs or alcohol.

2.16 Connexions Partnerships will be responsible for meeting a range of cross-cutting targets which demonstrate their achievement in these areas. They will include, for example, improving participation in learning, improving health, reducing drug misuse, improving educational achievement, cutting crime and reducing the number of homeless young people. Connexions Partnerships will be expected to include appropriate targets, year by year, in their Business Plans.

2.17 For those partnerships implementing the new service from April 2001 further information on targets and mechanisms for agreeing them will be published in the summer.

The key principles

2.18 The document *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person* identified the principles on which the service will be based. These are set out below and at Annex 2 are some examples of how these principles may be put into practice.

Connexions Principles

The service will be based on eight key principles:

- ⦿ raising aspirations - setting high expectations of every individual;
- ⦿ meeting individual need - and overcoming barriers to learning;
- ⦿ taking account of the views of young people - individually and collectively, as the new service is developed and as it is operated locally;
- ⦿ 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'.

Connexions: The best start in life for every young person

Section 3: Developing Local Partnership Arrangements

A wide range of organisations will need to come together to work in partnership to deliver a comprehensive and coherent support service for young people. It will take time for this to happen everywhere.

Connexions: The best start in life for every young person

- 3.1** The proposed structures needed to achieve the aims of the new Connexions Service were set out in Chapter 7 of the document *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person*. There will be a contract¹ between the Connexions Service National Unit and each Connexions Partnership based on the payment of central Government funding against the partnership delivery plan. Contracts will only be awarded if the national unit is satisfied that the partnership has included in its plans the optimum mix of delivery through private, voluntary and public partners. Plans will also need to show how the mix of partners involved will provide an excellent service to all young people in the community, including those from black and minority ethnic origin and those with specific needs, for example particular kinds of disability. It will be important that in developing their plans and working arrangements Connexions Partnerships and local management committees involve and take account of the views of a wide range of partners.
- 3.2** The Connexions Partnerships will be small, strategic bodies. The Connexions Partnership will need to demonstrate in putting forward its outline proposals that those bodies named on the face of the Learning and Skills Bill (paragraphs 8-10) have been engaged in discussions on the constitution of the partnership in their area, along with employers and representatives of the voluntary and community sectors. Not all those bodies, however, need to be formal members of the partnership. It is expected that chairs of local management committees and the Chair or Chief Executive of the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will play a key role in the Connexions Partnership in their area.
- 3.3** Connexions Partnerships, when developing their business plans and agreeing arrangements for the delivery of the service, must ensure that they follow 'Best Value' principles. Partnerships will need to demonstrate that public, private and voluntary sector providers have been given a fair opportunity in each area to offer relevant services, on the basis of quality of existing provision. Where services are let under sub contract, a competitive tendering exercise must be conducted on an open and

¹ The term contract has been used throughout - funding may be via grant agreement, contractual payment or other mechanism.

transparent basis. The onus will be on partnerships to ensure there is no conflict of interest between those awarding contracts and those tendering to provide services. The national unit, through its assessment and approval of partnership Business Plans and subsequent monitoring of service delivery, will ensure that an appropriate mix of public, private and voluntary sector providers are involved; appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure no conflicts of interest exist within the sub contracting chain; and that quality thresholds are met. The pre-inspections and inspections outlined at 4.4 and 4.14 will support the national unit's assessments.

- 3.4** Voluntary and community groups will have a key role to play in the provision of the service, including as part of the network of personal advisers. It is vital that Connexions Partnerships draw on the experience of voluntary and community groups, particularly their expertise in providing effective help and support to especially vulnerable groups, where many have developed highly innovative approaches to engaging young people outside of mainstream provision. It will be particularly important to ensure that black and minority ethnic organisations are fully involved in the design and delivery of the Connexions Service and that the ethnic profile of personal advisers properly reflects the population of young people they are serving.
- 3.5** The day to day operational management of the Connexions Service within each partnership's area will be the responsibility of local management committees working on county or unitary authority boundaries or, in some cases, where local partners decide it will allow more effective service delivery, groupings of local authority areas. The local management committee will appoint a local manager, who will be responsible to it for day to day management of the service working closely with Head Teachers and others including Drug Action Teams as appropriate. The committee will agree with the Connexions Partnership what level of resourcing will be available to the local manager to deliver the service locally, what the desired targets and outcomes are to be and how personal advisers are to be deployed locally. Where services, for example for 16-19 year olds, are to be delivered across a wider area than that covered by the local management committee, the Connexions Partnership will specify what level of resource and service will be available to the local manager under the contract to help him or her fulfil his or her responsibilities.
- 3.6** The local management committee will be responsible for ensuring that the contribution of all relevant services to the Connexions Service locally are co-ordinated and a seamless service is offered to young people in their area. This may be expected to involve:
- a.** staff currently working in a range of organisations who will be deployed through the local management committees in a variety of ways. These will include:
 - community and voluntary organisations;
 - Young Person's Advisers for 16 and 17 year olds in and leaving care as proposed in the Children (Leaving Care) Bill;
 - existing careers services;
 - local authorities - social services, youth service;
 - schools;
 - Youth Offending Teams;

- ▶ arrangements will also need to be made locally with FE colleges on effective deployment of student support staff.
- b.** staff in other organisations will be a potential source of specialist advice. Alternatively they may be proposed as members of the core personal adviser service. These include:
 - ▶ Community Drug Teams and local drug projects;
 - ▶ Employment Service;
 - ▶ health services - notably mental health, drugs treatment and advice, and contraceptive and sexual health services;
 - ▶ housing services and specialist housing providers;
 - ▶ informal youth, community, arts and sports activities;
 - ▶ specialist voluntary sector organisations.

3.7 The local management committees will be responsible for ensuring that the personal adviser service works to uniform standards and reaches all young people without duplication of effort. Together with the Connexions Partnerships, and in discussions with Head Teachers, college principals and others, the committee will agree an integrated and coherent management structure for personal advisers, including staff seconded to the service or working under formal or informal partnership agreements. It will also be responsible for managing the relationship between the personal advisers and the specialist support on which they will need to call to help young people enter or stay in learning and play a positive role in their local communities. It will be important for local management committees to have good links with Learning Partnerships.

3.8 The Chairs of local management committees will be agreed locally but will usually be senior community figures, from the community, voluntary or private sectors or local authorities, in the person of the Chief Executives. They will also be members of the Connexions Partnerships. Critical to the success of the Connexions Service will be that these committees fully engage the communities they serve. They will need to ensure that all groups are represented including: representatives of the voluntary and community sector as agreed locally; careers and guidance companies; employers; representatives of statutory services including members of Youth Offending Teams; health and social services; representatives from secondary schools and FE colleges and young people themselves.

3.9 Subject to the passage of the Learning and Skills Bill a number of organisations must be consulted by Connexions Partnerships in determining the provision of services in their area. These are the:

- ▶ local authorities as appropriate;
- ▶ Health Authorities;
- ▶ Chief Officers of Police and Police Authorities;
- ▶ Probation Committees;
- ▶ Primary Care Trusts; and
- ▶ Youth Offending Teams.

3.10 These bodies will have a responsibility to collaborate to ensure that individual activities support the overall Connexions Service. They will be expected to co-ordinate their functions with those of others to provide a coherent service for young people.

3.11 In addition, the Bill states that the following may be consulted:

- any voluntary body providing services for young people;
- and any other bodies which are deemed appropriate.

3.12 Particular attention needs to be paid to the involvement of black and minority ethnic groups. The experience of young people within these groups is very varied. Some make a successful transition but some face particular problems such as non-participation, educational underachievement and limited opportunities when they leave school. Too often in the past the black and minority ethnic sector has been marginalised. There is much variation within these groups but some of these young people lack trust in statutory authorities and have little or no involvement in mainstream services. The involvement of black and minority ethnic voluntary and community organisations, as well as of young people and their parents, as partners in the planning and delivery of the service is an essential component of the new structure. It will also be important to ensure that the staffing of the service at all levels is broadly representative of the community it serves.

3.13 Schools and colleges will also be key partners in the delivery of the Connexions Service, and partnerships will need to ensure that services fit with their support systems and objectives. Locally, Connexions services will need to establish a coherent framework for the management role and deployment of personal advisers for school age young people, including those who are not in school. They will need to agree how this will operate in each school, so that school support for pupil progression dovetails with Connexions input. Similar approaches may be needed in the college sector, to link the role of Connexions with the responsibilities of post-16 institutions to provide guidance and support under the new funding arrangements of the Learning and Skills Council.

3.14 Personal advisers working in schools and Pupil Referral Units will be appointed and managed by the Head Teacher, but will also operate as part of the integrated Connexions Service. Their role will be similar to Learning Mentors who have been introduced through the Government's Excellence in Cities initiative. In each school or college a Connexions Service manager and the Learning Mentors/personal advisers will agree with the school or college management how the Connexions Service staff will be deployed, and their links to the institution's own services and structures. Their work will naturally contribute both to Connexions targets and the institution's own targets for raising attendance and achievement rates, and in the case of pre-16 pupils, reducing exclusion rates and truancy.

3.15 As set out in the document *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person*, Chapter 7, the new structures will have an impact on existing careers and youth services. In those areas with partnership careers companies (eg those currently owned by TECs and local authorities) we expect that their resources for supporting 13-19 year olds along with relevant parts of local authority youth services, will be brought together to form new structures from which the multi-disciplinary personal adviser teams can operate at local level. Equally, we expect that private and not-for-profit careers service companies will be able to play an active role in the delivery arrangements for the service. There will also be the potential for them to be involved as members of the local management committee. Outline Partnership Proposals should demonstrate how the youth service and careers service will be brought together in the Connexions Service.

3.16 As indicated in 1.8 development funding will be made available to assist partnership formation and for the mapping of existing provision.

All prospective members of Connexions Partnerships should now come together to agree how the Connexions Service can operate most effectively at area and local level and to produce outline Partnership Proposals. In doing this, they should work from the documents referred to in 1.3 and the Bibliography.

Section 4: Contracting, Quality Assurance and Inspection

The Connexions Service will be delivered through a structure which... ensures proper accountability, high standards of service to young people and proper co-ordination of the work of Personal Advisers. The Connexions Service will ensure that all young people have access to the support and guidance they need, when and wherever they need it, irrespective of their circumstances... and will ensure that no young person falls through the net of support.

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Contracting mechanisms

- 4.1** Once the Connexions Partnership's business and delivery plans are agreed with the national unit the contract for the Connexions Service in their area will be awarded. The Connexions Partnership working with the local management committee will be responsible for identifying suitable providers of services in its area, ensuring there is an appropriate mix of public, private and voluntary sector providers. Depending on the size of the area non-statutory providers may cover either the local management committee or Connexions Partnership areas. Exceptionally, a franchising arrangement may be negotiated by the national unit where a national provider could be 'approved' to provide certain services and would appear on a recommended list of providers on which Connexions Partnerships could draw. However, it will be important to ensure that these arrangements do not cut across the responsibility of the Connexions Partnership for meeting the needs of its area in the most appropriate way.
- 4.2** The Connexions Partnership will be accountable to the national unit for ensuring that its plan for both statutory and contracted services is delivered satisfactorily, targets are met, performance monitored, and benchmarking of services undertaken. It will be expected to take action with local management committees and other partners to remedy any weaknesses in service delivery. Failure to improve performance could ultimately result in termination of the contract. In such circumstances the Connexions Service National Unit would take responsibility

for contracting with local providers. For those services provided under contract to the partnership, normal contract management processes will apply. When sub-contracting services, we will expect partnerships to guard against creating long contracting chains which can blur accountability. For the services provided under a statutory duty the partnership will also have a monitoring role and equivalent mechanisms will be used.

- 4.3** The Connexions Service will be funded by co-ordinating existing resources which are currently devoted by partners to relevant services for the client group, through the Connexions Partnership. Also, through the Government's spending review, we will be looking to identify any additional resources which may be available to the new service. The overall budget for the service and its funding models have yet to be determined. Those partnerships which, following an initial assessment, go forward to prepare to deliver the Connexions Service from April 2001 will receive resourcing and other detailed information from the national unit to enable them to prepare the required Business Plan by the autumn.
- 4.4** In assessing Business Plans, as in every other area of service provision, our objectives will be to meet the needs of young people and secure the highest standards and best value for money. The national unit will be empowered to withhold funding for plans which do not demonstrate that first class provision will be delivered and the best value secured. If the national unit considers that potential partners have not been given an adequate opportunity to play a part in the service, it will be required to take appropriate action, including contracting directly with private or voluntary sector organisations (including black and other minority ethnic groups) for the provision of particular services and re-tendering for delivery of the service as a whole. As the Connexions Service develops, rigorous inspection arrangements will ensure that providers are held accountable for standards and failure or poor performance is addressed. As a platform to raise standards, steps are being taken to develop a series of pre-inspections at LSC area-wide level of youth support services where there are concerns about weak provision. Connexions services will need to take account of the outcome of inspections in developing future delivery arrangements.

Quality assurance

- 4.5** *Learning to Succeed* and *Bridging the Gap* both emphasised the need for provision including of support, advice and guidance, to be consistently good and continuously improving. The Connexions Service will be required to ensure coherence of all forms of support to young people, to build on the best of current practice and to continue to drive up standards, developing creative and innovative ways of delivering the service. The Connexions Service National Unit will be responsible for setting standards for the provision of services to young people and for quality assuring the processes by which services are provided, monitored and improved. It will develop systems to enable the sharing of best practice drawing on the evidence of inspections and of its own monitoring of provision. In order to do this and to assess the impact of the service, we will put in place the following measures:

Quality management

4.6 The organisations which are likely to be partners in the Connexions Partnerships bring a variety of approaches to quality management, including the use of the European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM) Model; ISO 9000-series recognition; Chartermark and the Guidance Accreditation Board's Quality Mark. In addition, local authorities are required to meet a duty of Best Value. Consequently, it has been decided **not** to impose a requirement for the adoption of a particular quality management system or framework. Rather, all Connexions Partnerships, organisations with which they contract to deliver the services and local management committees will be expected to commit themselves from the start to quality management processes which embody the key principles set out in *Learning to Succeed* and *Bridging the Gap*, reflecting many of the criteria embodied in systems currently in use by prospective Connexions Service providers. These are:

- Accountability - Connexions services will be accountable for the provision of services, for consulting the users of the service and being responsive to the needs of young people;
- Effectiveness - Connexions services will assess the performance of individual providers against standards developed by the Connexions Service National Unit and take firm action where provision falls short of acceptable standards of quality;
- Efficiency - Connexions services will be well governed and managed. They will seek best value for money in the provision of services and look for examples of best and most efficient practice to build on and replicate;
- People (staff) - Connexions services will ensure that their people are competent and are given opportunities for continued training and development;
- Continuous Improvement - Connexions services will aim for excellence in provision. They will ensure that all provision is consistently good and continuously improving;
- Equality - Connexions services will provide an effective and appropriate service for all young people irrespective of gender, ethnicity, sexuality or disability.

Financial management and audit

4.7 As part of the development of the Connexions Partnerships and their three year Business Plans we will require them to demonstrate: financial viability; that robust financial systems will be in place to adequately safeguard public funds; and that effective audit arrangements will be established. The more detailed information which the Department will require before contracts are signed will be included in the information and guidance produced in support of the second stage of the contracting process.

Accountability

4.8 The Connexions Service must be fully accountable to its customers and stakeholders particularly to the young people it serves. The Connexions Partnership will be responsible for ensuring that there is a sound framework in place which demonstrates how they will be accountable to their communities. The key features of such a framework will include:

- ▶ ensuring that in their planning and delivery the partnerships embody the eight key principles of the Connexions Service;
- ▶ arrangements for involving and consulting young people and for receiving and responding to concerns raised;
- ▶ the publication of Business Plans which will include strategic objectives, performance indicators, and how these will be evaluated;
- ▶ the publication of regular performance information, an annual report and annual accounts;
- ▶ holding periodic open meetings wherever appropriate involving the wider community in its activities;
- ▶ using IT and other media as appropriate to provide information about its services and performance.

4.9 The local management committee and Connexions Partnership will be expected to involve their area community when drawing up their plans, delivering services and monitoring progress. They will ensure that local young people from across the age range and who represent the different local communities including those of black and minority ethnic groups, are actively engaged in the development of the service.

4.10 The need to consult with and actively engage young people in governance and delivery, to promote innovation and to evaluate provision and to ensure that practice is evidence based are themes which need to run through these quality management processes.

4.11 The Connexions Service National Unit plans to issue guidance on the quality improvement strategy during autumn 2000. It will be compatible with that being developed for the LSC, and other relevant initiatives, and will be coherent with the common inspection framework being developed by the Inspectorates.

4.12 In order to fulfil the key principle of developing people, partners in Connexions services will normally be expected to work towards recognition as Investors in People. Partnerships will also be expected to cover equality of opportunity in their quality arrangements, where they will need to show evidence in 6 broad areas: internal organisation; service delivery; management information; community collaboration; work with partners and internal personnel arrangements.

Benchmarking and impact evaluation

4.13 Connexions Partnerships will undertake a rolling programme of evaluation clearly articulated in the plans. In addition to conducting their own local benchmarking, research and development studies, they will be required to co-operate with the national unit in developing the service to a high and consistent standard at national level. This may involve taking part in research studies specified by the national unit. In the short term the emphasis will be on formative evaluation to identify and share good practice. In the longer term it will also involve benchmarking national performance, comparative studies to assess service efficiency and value for money and formal independent evaluations to assess the impact of the Connexions Service in relation to policy objectives.

Inspection

- 4.14** The Connexions Service will be subject to independent external inspection. The framework and process for inspection will be designed to reflect the multi-agency approach of the service. OFSTED will play a leading role in designing the framework and managing the inspection programme, involving other inspectorates as appropriate. All organisations through which Connexions services are provided will be required to co-operate with this inspection.
- 4.15** We will be consulting on the inspection framework later this year.

Training and development

- 4.16** Connexions Partnerships will be required to ensure that personal advisers employed within the Connexions Service have met recruitment specifications. These include: ensuring that personal checks including criminal background checks have been completed prior to employment; that they have attended or agreed to attend appropriate training at a recognised centre offering approved personal adviser foundation training; and that they work effectively in the role of personal adviser to the standards agreed for the role including, for example, the practical application of equal opportunities and diversity.
- 4.17** Partnerships will have responsibility for ensuring that the professional development of personal advisers meets requirements set out in the Professional Framework for Personal Advisers and the Qualifications Framework. They will also have responsibility for identifying and spreading effective practice.
- 4.18** The document *Connexions: The best start in life for every young person* announced that there would be a consultation exercise on the role, training, qualifications and development of personal advisers, taking into account the range of developments and initiatives which bear upon the work of this group. We envisage, however, that all personal advisers will be required to undergo a programme of training which will be developed in the coming months in consultation with a range of partners. A consultation document will be published shortly and be available on the Connexions web-site (see Bibliography) or through DfEE publications. Decisions will be taken on this issue following the outcome of the consultation.

Section 5: Next Steps - Outline Partnership Proposals and the Assessment Process

In order to test out key elements of the service and learn from the work of local partners we will be phasing in the Connexions Service from April 2001... Partnerships seeking to deliver the new Connexions Service will have to demonstrate that they have appropriate structures in place to provide a quality service to young people.

Connexions: The best start in life for every young person

5.1 Government Offices supported by the Connexions Service National Unit will be assisting local partners as they come together to develop their outline Partnership Proposals. A list of key contacts is at Annex 5. Each Connexions Partnership will need to send three hard copies of its outline Partnership Proposal to Janice Burton, W4A, Department for Education and Employment, Moorfoot, Sheffield, S1 4PQ by 9 June 2000. The partnership should ensure that at least one of these copies is in a format which can be readily photocopied (ie without permanent binding) and include an electronic version of the document on disk which is compatible with Word95. These proposals are not intended to be detailed Business Plans. Consequently, our expectation is that they should cover between 10-20 pages.

The assessment process

5.2 The new service will be phased in from 2001. The contracting process for the Connexions Service, for which this document is the initial specification, will be in two stages. All partnerships will prepare outline Partnership Proposals during spring 2000; these will be assessed during June 2000 and those partnerships most likely to deliver an effective service from April 2001 will be invited to complete more detailed plans later in the summer.

5.3 The number of Partnership Proposals that can be supported from April 2001 will depend on the overall level of resources available. We will also consider the impact the new service will have in securing high quality support services for young people and value for money. In assessing outline Partnership Proposals the following will be considered:

- vision - the extent to which the partnership's vision of the Connexions Service will deliver the eight key principles set out in Section 2;
- resources - an initial view of the resources each partner will commit to the new service;
- partnership structure - the scope and nature of the partnership and delivery arrangements that will be formed to deliver the service and the extent to which it includes an appropriate mix of public, private, voluntary and community sector involvement;
- consultation - including those that have been involved to date and plans for the future.

5.4 We will work with those partnerships identified to go forward from April 2001 to develop their plans, based on more detailed information which we will issue in summer 2000. An indication of the sort of information which will need to be included in those plans is at Annex 4. We will also work with partnerships who will not be delivering the service from April 2001 to ensure that their preparation for the new arrangements continues and they receive all the relevant information about the development of the Connexions Service.

Preparing outline Partnership Proposals

5.5 All prospective Connexions Partnerships should now:

- produce outline Partnership Proposals; and
- indicate when they assess they will be ready to implement the Connexions Service in their area.

5.6 This section sets out the structure and content of outline Partnership Proposals and indicates what evidence should be submitted in support of those proposals.

5.7 All prospective Connexions Partnerships should aim to provide as much detail in their proposal as they have available at this time. This will assist in determining when they will be ready to deliver the service. Those which assess themselves as ready to start later than April 2001 should indicate when they can begin operations and what steps they have taken to date to develop their partnership arrangements. Partnerships may wish to contact their Government Office as listed at Annex 5 to discuss the level of detail required for their individual circumstances.

5.8 A flow chart of the process and timescale is at Annex 1.

5.9 Government Offices will be asked to organise and facilitate an initial meeting of prospective partners and other interested parties in each prospective Connexions Partnership area. The purpose of the first meeting will be for partners to agree a

co-ordinator to take forward the proposals, to establish a group to produce a strategy for delivery and to ensure that all partners are kept involved in its development. The co-ordinator may also be the organisation which seeks development funding through the Government Office.

The structure and content of outline Partnership Proposals

5.10 Prospective Connexions Partnerships should come together to draw up their initial proposals. Prospective Partnership Proposals must indicate how they will organise and deliver Connexions services in their area. Proposals must contain the following sections:

Vision

5.11 In this section each prospective partnership should describe its members' vision of the Connexions Service in its area and how the partnership will meet the key principles of the Connexions Service. It should also make clear how it has engaged the following groups:

- ▶ young people who represent the different local communities who are likely to require different levels and intensity of support;
- ▶ parents and carers, particularly those of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- ▶ young people, families and community leaders in black and minority ethnic communities;
- ▶ schools, pupil referral units and colleges;
- ▶ providers of support for young people from the statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors, including disabled and special needs organisations;
- ▶ employers and providers of education and training and others in the area who have a stake in the success of youth support services.

Assessing the needs of young people in the area

5.12 In this section partners should draw together existing relevant information about the needs of the cohort group in their area from, for instance, LEA Behaviour Support plans, Education Development plans, Careers Services Plans, housing strategies, Health Improvement Programmes, Youth Justice Plans, Children's Services Plans, DAT action plans, Excellence in Cities Partnership proposals and Learning Partnership proposals. Account should also be taken of any other relevant locally drawn up plans, such as in those areas that have transition planning groups for young people with special educational needs. The planning arrangements for the Connexions Service will form part of a wider, more comprehensive planning process within the locality. These arrangements are currently under review (the Government issued *New Guidance on Children's Services Planning* on 12 April which gives proposals for consultation) and further details will be available in the summer.

5.13 The proposals should provide a brief narrative description of the different needs of young people in the area and of the level of service required to meet those needs. They should include an assessment of how well services have worked up to now for young people most at risk, and black and minority ethnic communities.

Identifying existing provision

5.14 In this section partners should draw together an inventory of existing information about the range of provision available to young people aged 13-19 within their area. New Start projects, Youth Offending Teams, careers service companies, local teenage pregnancy co-ordinators, health, youth and social services, OFSTED, LEAs, Local Councils of Voluntary youth services, black and minority ethnic community leaders, Education Business Partnerships and Learning Partnerships are amongst the organisations which might be able to supply information.

5.15 Using available information partnerships should show:

- who provides services - schools and colleges, youth services, careers service companies, Health Action Zones, Youth Offending Teams, Employment Service, Community Drug Teams, health and social services, the voluntary and community sectors and other partnerships;
- the sources of funding for services itemising central and local government funded activities delivered by LEAs, other government bodies, private companies and voluntary and community sector organisations including programmes such as New Start, European Social Fund (ESF) and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) projects, Excellence in Cities;
- identify which services will be provided as an integral part of Connexions, and how they will engage those organisations to whom young people may be referred for specialist provision to meet their specific needs.

5.16 In the summer funding and a framework will be made available to the selected partnerships for them to undertake a comprehensive mapping exercise.

Resource assessment

5.17 In this section partner organisations should produce an inventory of the resources they expect to draw together under the delivery umbrella of the Connexions Service. Each prospective Connexions Partnership should identify the resources it expects to call on and the mixture of providers on whom it expects to draw to achieve the purpose of the service, particularly:

- a broad estimate of the number of personal advisers currently available across the area;
- sources and levels of funding (other than those for human and physical resources) expected to be available for deployment by the partnership;
- public, private and voluntary providers on whom the partnership expects to draw to deliver the Connexions Service.

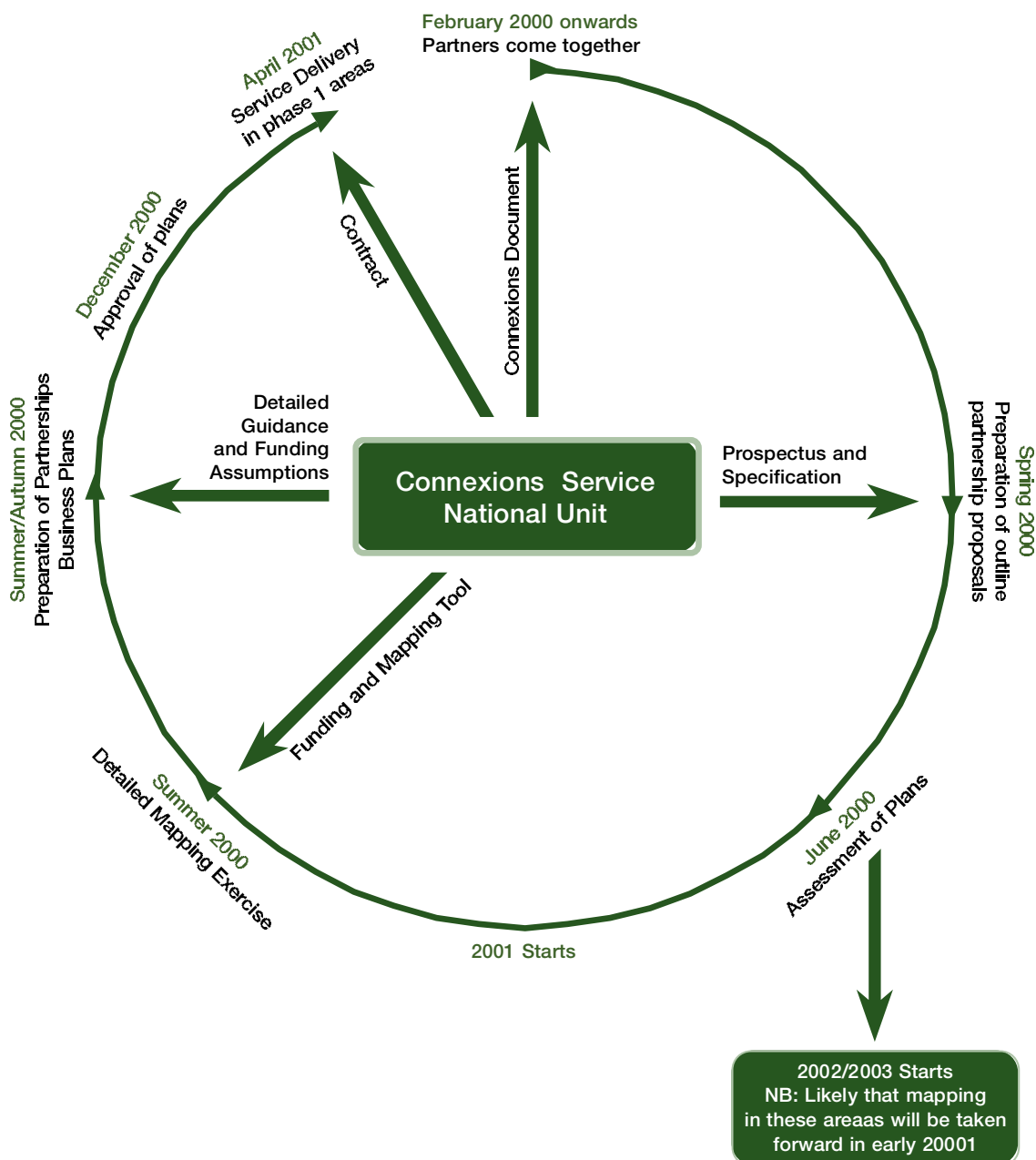
Formation of the partnership

5.18 The prospective partnership must present its proposals for organising the Connexions Service to meet the needs of the area effectively by:

- ▷ forming an entity capable of contracting with the Connexions Service National Unit to ensure the delivery of the Connexions Service. It must describe the proposed structure of the Connexions Partnership and include evidence that:
 - all key partners named on the face of the Learning and Skills Bill together with representatives from the voluntary and community sector and employers are involved in the partnership;
 - careers service companies, youth services and representatives of voluntary and community providers of support for young people including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, schools and colleges are closely involved in developing outline Partnership Proposals or there are plans to encourage and enable them to get involved;
 - young people themselves will be closely involved in the design, development, governance and delivery of the service;
 - the constitution of the Connexions Partnership is appropriate for the area;
 - it builds on existing partnerships and good effective practice;
 - the plan reflects the best use of resources.
- ▷ establishing suitable local management committees. These should be based on the boundaries of local authorities with responsibility for education and social services, or groupings of them as agreed locally. In a few areas, where a single local authority covers the partnership area, the Connexions Partnership and local management committee may be one and the same. Details of the structure below the Connexions Partnership should be provided, showing:
 - the relationship between the Connexions Partnership, local management committee(s) and local manager(s);
 - how local management committees will be organised and constituted in the area;
 - how the resources of partnership careers companies (those currently owned by TECs and local authorities) devoted to supporting 13-19 year olds will be brought together with the relevant parts of the local authority youth service;
 - how the multi-disciplinary personal adviser teams are to be organised in relation to local authority areas (or groupings of them where appropriate).

Annex 1

Key Stages in Developing Partnership Plans



Annex 1

Annex 2

Putting the Connexions principles into practice

At the organisational level Connexions Partnerships might show that they are embodying the principles in the following ways:

- **raising aspirations.** Partnerships will develop plans to show how they intend to raise aspiration and achievement in their area and to what extent, working from data for present achievements. They will agree with their local management committees targets for local delivery areas and monitor progress;
- **meeting individual need.** They will work with young people and others to identify the needs of young people within the area, analyse that need, carry out a mapping exercise of provision within the area which is appropriate to those needs and discuss with providers and young people how successfully current provision meets young people's requirements. They will produce a plan to set out how they intend to meet needs and fill any gaps, taking specific account of the needs of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, managing diversity and meeting the needs of young women and young men. They will make the local LSC aware of the plan and negotiate with it about how provision might be developed to address any unmet needs. They will ensure that services are independent and free of bias towards any particular provider of education, training, employment or support who may be a beneficiary of those services;
- **taking account of the views of young people.** They will develop a strategy and plan for engaging young people in the design and delivery of the service not just at the outset but as the service develops and for involving them in the ongoing management of the service. They will collect young people's views in a systematic way, including young people from black and minority ethnic groups and those who are hard to reach or engage in learning. It should ensure that these views are taken into account in improving provision, building on and supporting the work of Learning Partnerships to develop feedback mechanisms;
- **inclusion.** They will seek to keep young people in mainstream education and training and prevent them moving to the margins of their community. In doing this their plans will show how they intend to balance the need of the whole client cohort for its services with the provision of more intensive support for those who would otherwise be unlikely to commit themselves to participation in learning, including those already in employment;
- **partnership.** They and local management committees will work in partnership wherever this will improve their ability to recognise and meet the needs of all young people in the cohort. Through their multi-agency organisation they will promote forms of collaboration between agencies which produce mutual benefit and achieve more for young people than any of them could achieve in isolation. They will, for example, work to encourage institutions to adapt in order to raise and meet the aspirations of all young people;

- **community involvement and neighbourhood renewal.** Partnerships will publish plans for raising participation and achievement levels for all young people and explain how success can be gauged. They and local management committees will consult within local communities, including those centred around interest and black and minority ethnic communities, on the most appropriate methods of building and sustaining links between young people and communities. They will report clearly to all with an interest in their work on management of resources and on their achievements, demonstrating how their actions have impacted on the levels of community involvement and voluntary activity. They will take account of young people's and their communities' views about performance and will take action to redress any weaknesses and raise standards;
- **extending opportunity and equality of opportunity.** The Connexions Service will have at its heart the principle of equality of opportunity. It will work with the LSC locally to influence the availability, suitability and quality of provision and enable more young people to recognise how useful particular opportunities might be to them. To do this, in consultation with those who have an interest in their services (Government departments, clients, staff, partners, the community), they will develop aims and objectives, operational standards, plans and targets for under-represented groups of young people in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability and/or learning difficulty. By helping individuals to make genuine and informed choices, by challenging all forms of stereotyping and tackling racism, by promoting equality of opportunity and engendering that awareness in other people they will enable those who tend to under-achieve in terms of learning and in the development of their career to reach the level of their peers;
- **evidence based practice.** They will aim for excellence. They will utilise the most efficient and effective ways of achieving their aims and objectives and of giving those who use their services best value and will continuously improve their services, basing decisions about improvements on evaluating their own performance and on evidence of successful practice wherever it is to be found.

At the level of local delivery Connexions services might show how providers will put the principles into practice in the following ways:

- **raising aspirations.** Their staff will deliver services in ways which encourage young people to have high expectations of themselves and will challenge stereotypical views of their prospects. They will work with young people to raise their awareness of opportunities and promote their participation in those opportunities which are likely to benefit them. They may use role models and other methods of helping young people recognise their potential;
- **meeting individual need.** Providers will ensure that their services help young people to gain the greatest possible benefit from education and training. They will identify and meet the differing needs of young people and help them overcome barriers to learning in appropriate ways. Their assessment, information, advice, guidance, advocacy, placement and referral services will reflect the interests and ambitions of individual young people;
- **taking account of the views of young people.** Providers will put in place processes to ensure the ongoing consultation and involvement of young people in the design, nature and quality of the education and training provided and on how it might be improved. They will demonstrate that they act on the feedback

they receive. Young people's views will also be represented at their management committees. For young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities they will need to also take the views of advocates, parents and carers;

- ▶ **inclusion.** Providers will seek to help young people engage or re-engage in mainstream education and training. They will involve young people in designing provision which maintains their interest and commitment and prevents them becoming disengaged. Providers will be able to demonstrate that they are improving the employability of young people they help, and that they are contributing to enhancing the skills of the workforce;
- ▶ **partnership.** Providers will work together at local level in ways which maximise the effectiveness of their provision. In doing so, they will develop links not only with other direct providers of the service but will show how they work with agencies providing, for example, information, advice and guidance for adults, paying benefits etc. Based on mutual respect, providers will demonstrate ways of pooling and sharing resources, best practice and enthusiasm so that all more effectively achieve their key purposes;
- ▶ **community involvement and neighbourhood renewal.** Providers will draw on the resources of different local communities including those centred around interest and black and minority ethnic communities, to ensure that young people have ready access to advice, mentoring, information, guidance and placing services. These will be in convenient locations at the time young people need them and in forms from which they can benefit. Services will remain available for as long as they are needed. They will introduce young people to the opportunities for learning which exist through local health, arts, sport and volunteering activities and assist them to participate in learning and gain maximum benefit from it. Providers will enable young people to be involved in local communities in ways which are meaningful to them and which enable them to become engaged as citizens;
- ▶ **extending opportunity and equality of opportunity.** The service will be required to meet the terms of legislation such as the Sex Discrimination Act and Race Relations Act. It will also be covered by the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 both as an employer and as a service provider. Providers will ensure that their services are equally effective to all young people whatever their background, gender, race, religion, stage of development, ability or disability and sexual orientation and will be supplied on the basis of individual need. They will be accessible to young people wherever they live. Equality of access and opportunity should be an expectation of any young person coming into contact with the new service. This should be reflected in the quality assurance framework. Inspection reports should be required to deliver evidence of equality and the evaluation framework should include consultation with young people;
- ▶ **evidence based practice.** They will work within their local networks and partnerships to identify and share good practice and will demonstrate that they are continuously striving to improve the service to their clients. They will benchmark their achievements and practices with those of other organisations, both within their local networks and elsewhere. They will incorporate into their ways of working where appropriate practices which have been shown to be effective elsewhere.

Annex 3

Support for Young People

The Connexions Service will have a specific role to consider and provide for the needs of particular groups of young people:

Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Connexions Partnerships and local management committees will need to meet provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and ensure that services are accessible to disabled people. For clients with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Connexions Service staff will have to be proactive to enable them to achieve the best possible outcome. The service will have a role in co-ordinating support designed to minimise the non-participation of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities post-16. It will need to be able to access specialist help for those with severe and complex conditions and will have an important role to play in the transition arrangements set out in the *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN)*.

The Connexions Service will also have a specific responsibility to ensure formal and detailed assessments are conducted for young people who have significant levels of need. Some of these young people may have a statement of special educational needs, others may have developed needs shortly before they left school or whilst in FE or other training. Those who have previously had formal assessments and statements may need only a 'top-up' assessment of their needs which will be overseen by the Connexions Service. For those aged 20-25 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who have been formally assessed under the terms of the Learning and Skills Bill, Connexions Partnerships will be contracted to continue to ensure they deliver the level of provision that careers services currently deliver through their contract with the Secretary of State where this is necessary.

Young people from black and minority ethnic groups

Young people from black and minority ethnic groups are at high risk of unemployment, exclusion and marginalisation within their communities. The Connexions Service will have to work in a way which is appropriate for different black and minority ethnic communities and reflects positive action and anti-racist practice in the way services are provided to young people from these communities. It is particularly important that they work with the young people from black and minority ethnic groups, their parents and organisations in the community, particularly those which are representative of local minority ethnic groups, and schools to develop strategies to improve the attainment, aspirations and opportunities for these young people.

Young people moving across geographical areas

Where young people move between partnership areas, responsibility for the transfer of information lies with the exporting local management committee. For those young people being educated away from home, the home local management committee must make arrangements with the host to support them. Such young people may be educated in residential, out of area establishments including young offender institutions, residential special schools and colleges.

Support for young people excluded from school

The Connexions Service will need to work with other agencies to identify those young people who have been excluded from school and will develop local strategies to help tackle social exclusion and promote equality of opportunity. These will include helping young people to improve their employability, ensuring equal opportunity for all and taking action which will encourage and support excluded young people back into mainstream education and training.

Working with other organisations

Some groups of young people will have specific needs which can be best met through specialist statutory or voluntary organisations. Where the Connexions Service identifies a need which could best be met through such an organisation it will refer the young person to the most appropriate agency locally. The following are examples of key groups and services:

Youth service outreach work

Over many years and in many areas, detached youth workers have been active on the streets and in places where young people congregate, working to establish a rapport (outside the confines of 'officialdom') with young people. Building such a rapport with young people, who may have had a negative experience of school or other formal contacts, can be a protracted process requiring specialist skills. Outreach workers will offer advice and guidance, build relationships and encourage young people to re-engage with society.

Education Welfare Services and support for young people with poor attendance

The Education Welfare Service delivers the advice, guidance and specialist support which ensures that young people are engaged and re-engaged with education including regular attendance at school. The Education Welfare Service therefore will also be a critical part of the Connexions Service in relation to its work with secondary age pupils. From September 2000, pilots will be introduced in up to 15 local education authorities looking at the way the Education Welfare Service in secondary schools is managed. The pilots will examine whether giving headteachers more day-to-day control over Education Welfare Officers can help schools to improve levels of attendance and reduce truancy. The pilots will be tested in a number of the new Connexions Service pilot areas to see how they can compliment the Connexions Service.

Support for young people in and leaving care

It will be essential for Connexions staff to be fully aware of and link into support services provided for all young people in public care aged 13 to 19. In addition, the Children (Leaving Care) Bill presently before Parliament introduces a Young Person's Adviser for young people aged 16 to 21 (or 24 in the case of those being helped by their local authority with education or training) who have spent a prescribed time being looked after. This applies whether they stay in the care of the local authority or leave care.

The statistics show that these young people tend to have very poor educational outcomes, with as many as 75% leaving care without a single educational qualification. They also have a high incidence of unemployment and homelessness. The role of the Young Person's Adviser will be to build and maintain a relationship of trust with the young person; to prepare a pathway plan and keep this under review; to maintain regular contact and provide practical advice and support, including access to specialist services. These Young Person's Advisers will be one of the professional groups providing the Connexions services.

Support for young carers

The aim of all those involved with young people is to ensure that those whose parents or other relatives have specific needs arising out of disability or health conditions enjoy the same life chances as all other young people in their locality. The needs of young carers, however, often go unidentified. The Connexions Service will be well placed to spot where young people are having difficulties associated with caring responsibilities. Local authorities with responsibility for education and social services are required to provide services that are geared to ensure the education and general development of children and young people with additional family burdens do not suffer and that young carers are not expected to carry inappropriate levels of caring responsibility. Young carers can receive help from both local and health authorities.

Support for young people who have been abused or maltreated

Young people who have been abused or traumatised may as a result not be able to achieve their potential at school. A change in school performance may be symptomatic of family difficulties or in some cases abuse. Personal advisers will need to be alert to these possibilities and work closely with social services departments and other agencies according to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (1999).

Support for young people with mental health problems

The Connexions Service will need to agree local protocols for meeting young people's identified health needs, and in particular, their mental health needs. This will normally be through the young person's or their family's general practitioner. Often services will be able to be provided directly by the Primary Care Team; referrals to specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or adult services will then be made as appropriate.

Support for homeless and inadequately housed young people

The Connexions Service will need to work with providers of housing and housing advice to ensure that young people have appropriate, safe and secure housing solutions which will allow them to participate fully in education and training. This will mean working with local authority housing and social services departments, registered social landlords, specialist supported accommodation providers and local housing and homelessness advice services. Homeless young people are among the most disadvantaged and often have multiple problems.

For some groups, there are considerable benefits in having a support service accessed within their accommodation and outside normal office hours. For such young people the Connexions Service may be delivered most effectively through the provider of their accommodation.

The Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions led initiative

Supporting People will address the everyday support needs of particularly vulnerable young people who are living away from their families. For young people leaving care the new arrangements being developed by the Department of Health will meet their support needs. The Connexions Service will need to complement this general support by providing the specific information, advice and guidance these young people need concerning education, training or employment.

Support for young offenders

The Connexions Service will need to work closely with Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the Probation Service to ensure continuity of support to young offenders throughout their teenage years. For some young offenders the personal adviser may be situated in a YOT. Connexions services should share their expertise with YOTs, and vice versa. Eighteen and Nineteen year old offenders fall outside the YOT client group. Here the Connexions Service needs to work with the Probation Service and the Employment Service (ES) to divert young people away from further offending and towards more constructive activity. Connexions services should develop strong links with any institution in their area holding young offenders in custody.

Support for drug misusers

Drugs can create serious barriers to learning. Problematic drug use is associated with poor educational achievement and low aspiration, the exclusion (self or enforced) of young people from school, study or training, mental ill health and criminal behaviour. Slightly over half of young people using the Connexions Service will have used an illegal drug and around a fifth of 16 to 19 year olds will do so regularly.

Drug Action Teams (DATs) operate at Metropolitan/County level and co-ordinate action on drugs in their area. A wide range of organisations locally, including schools, the health trusts, the Police and others, are involved in the delivery of drugs prevention education. Health authorities are responsible for assessing young people's drug prevention and treatment needs, and planning and purchasing such services. Connexions Partnerships will need to work with DATs on the strategy and plan for achieving drug related targets in their area and on the scale and scope of drug advice and treatment services to be available to young people. At local level, Connexions services will need to work closely with local drug projects to ensure that young people receive the most appropriate help and support for their needs.

Support for those at risk of teenage pregnancy and for teenage parents

Britain has the worst record on teenage pregnancy in Europe. Each year in deprived areas, 5 - 10% of 15 to 17 year old young women will discover they are pregnant, with the risk that their education and future employment prospects will be seriously jeopardised. There are also unacceptably high conception rates among under 18s in many more prosperous areas. The Government's goal is to halve the rate of conceptions among under 18s in England by 2010, and to increase the participation of teenage parents in education, training and employment.

Connexions advisers will be well placed, in liaison with the local teenage pregnancy co-ordinator (appointed jointly by health and local authorities), to ensure that young people know how to access local contraceptive services. Connexions advisers will also be able to signpost pregnant teenagers and teenage parents to the full range of relevant support services they may need to access. Local teenage pregnancy co-ordinators are to issue, by the end of 2000, checklists of local services to assist other professionals working in this field.

Support for young people who are unemployed

The Connexions Service will need to work closely with the Employment Service (ES) and Benefits Agency (BA) to provide continuity of support and a seamless delivery to young unemployed people. The sharing of information and expertise will ensure that previous work is acknowledged and built upon whilst also supplying young people with details about learning, work and benefits they may be entitled to claim.

Annex 4

Outline of information for the Connexions Partnerships Business Plans - to be produced in the autumn

1. This annex gives prospective Connexions Partnerships an early indication of some of the more detailed information which is likely to be required in the plans to be developed during the summer and sent to the Connexions Service National Unit during the autumn by those partnerships which are to go forward to deliver the Connexions Service from April 2001.

Assessing the needs of young people in the area

2. The Connexions Partnership should identify numbers of young people in the following categories which it will need to inform its delivery plan. Young people:
 - aged 13-19 in the area, subdivided by year group and level of needs;
 - likely to need relevant and appropriate information and advice on educational/vocational, health and social issues;
 - likely to need in-depth guidance and support including the out of school population;
 - likely to need sustained, integrated specialist support and tailored provision;
 - the proportion who will be hard to reach and engage;
 - requiring assessment of their learning needs;
 - likely to need specialist supported housing.

Delivery plan

3. In this section partnerships should set out how and when they plan to deliver the aims and objectives of the Connexions Service. Partners will need to take full account of the services to be delivered in Section 2 of this document and further guidance provided in the summer. Each partnership should present its proposals for:
 - the range and concentration of services it plans to deliver to meet the needs of all young people for ready access to information, guidance, outreach and support, including their plans for:

- ▶ a network of qualified and suitable personal advisers sufficient to meet identified needs;
 - ▶ using existing resources such as shop front premises and community centres;
 - ▶ improved data sharing in the area to enable the efficient operation of any Connexions system that will be developed nationally;
 - ▶ working with the LSC, Learning Partnerships and providers to develop strategies to match provision to the needs of young people and identify trends in and reasons for non-participation in learning.
- 4.** Details of the resource levels available to partners will be provided in the summer. In preparing their plans each partnership will need to consider how they will achieve efficiency gains over existing provision and set out:
- ▶ the delivery mechanisms it expects to use, showing how it will combine existing resources using a mixture of eg sub-contracts with voluntary and private sector bodies and agreements with statutory partners, schools and colleges;
 - ▶ ensure the commitment of all organisations involved in the delivery of Connexions services to the eight key principles and to high service standards;
 - ▶ involve young people, their parents and carers and the range of communities, including those from black and minority ethnic groups, in the delivery and development of the Connexions Service in their area. The Connexions Service will provide the lead, building on and supporting the work of Learning Partnerships, to establish and maintain effective feedback mechanisms for young people's views.
- 5.** The partnership should indicate which services it plans to provide through schools, colleges, outreach and other means and the proportion of resource it will devote to each aspect of delivery. It should provide a rationale for its delivery plan.

Quality assurance

- 6.** In this section the partnership should show how it intends to manage the organisation and delivery of services effectively and efficiently. The partnership should supply evidence that its members can:
- ▶ manage the delivery of services to measurable standards, achieve planned targets consistently, account for performance to customers and stakeholders, remedy weaknesses in provision, benchmark itself against best practice, achieve improvements, innovate and work in partnership;
 - ▶ operate robust financial systems which adequately safeguard public funds. The partnership should provide evidence that key members operate such systems. Further guidance will be provided.

Transition plan

- 7.** Partnerships will also need to submit a transition plan which takes account of the key transitional issues for each partner, identifies any particular local difficulties

and demonstrates that these can be managed competently in the time available. The transition plan should include how the partners will:

- ▶ ensure continuity of support for young people whilst the new service is put in place;
- ▶ secure sufficient personal advisers, including those from black and other minority ethnic groups, who agree to complete appropriate training and meet recruitment specifications to satisfy the needs of young people who require face-to-face services, without jeopardising services to others;
- ▶ acquire the physical facilities and equipment required for the new service including, where desirable, the transfer of assets from existing organisations including careers libraries and employer data bases;
- ▶ organise the disposal of assets which are no longer required;
- ▶ manage continuing responsibilities (eg fixed term leases);
- ▶ set up appropriate management processes eg financial, IT, planning, delivery, review;
- ▶ negotiate contracts for the delivery of services on or after April 2001.

8. It should identify how it will:

- ▶ provide for employers, schools, colleges, training providers, local communities, the ES and Department of Social Security (DSS) to be given information about the Connexions Service;
- ▶ provide information for young people about how they will be able to access the services, including information for specific groups such as homeless young people, those for whom English is not a first language and those with a learning difficulty and/or disability.

Annex 5

List of Government Office Contacts

Government Office for the East Midlands

Peter Ward
Government Office for the East Midlands
The Belgrave Centre
Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GG
Tel: 0115 971 2729
Fax: 0115 971 2747
email: pward.goem@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the West Midlands

John Robertson
Government Office for the West Midlands
77 Paradise Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B1 2DT
Tel: 0121 212 5441
Fax: 0121 212 5458
email: jrobertson.gowm@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for London

Freddie Randell
Government Office for London
3rd Floor Riverwalk House
157-161 Millbank
London
SW1P 4RR
Tel: 020 7217 3259
Fax: 020 7217 3485
email: frandell.gol@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber

Derek Ireland
Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber
City House
PO Box 213
New Station Street
Leeds
LS1 4US
Tel: 0113 283 5259
Fax: 0113 283 5404
email: direland.goyh@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the East of England

Andrew Simmons
Government Office - East of England
Victory House
Vision Park
Histon
Cambridge
CB4 9ZR
Tel: 01223 202008
Fax: 01223 202020
email: asimmons.goe@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the North West

Tony McGee
Government Office for the North West
Cunard Building
Pier Head
Water Street
Liverpool
L3 1QB
Tel: 0151 224 2912
Fax: 0151 224 2929
email: tmcgee.gonw@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the South West

Kevin Tinsley
Government Office for the South West
5th Floor
The Pithay
Bristol
BS1 2PB
Tel: 0117 900 1820
Fax: 0117 900 1911
email: ktinsley.gosw@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the North East

Eric Bannister
Government Office for the North East
Wellbar House
Gallowgate
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 4TD
Tel: 0191 202 3559
Fax: 0191 202 3510
email: ebannister.gone@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Government Office for the South East

Hilary Omissi
Government Office for the South East
2nd Floor, Bridge House
1 Walnut Tree Close
Guildford
Surrey
GU1 4GA
Tel: 01483 882520
Fax: 01483 882409
email: homissi.gose@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Bibliography

Useful Publications

Tackling drugs to build a better Britain: the Government's ten-year strategy for tackling drugs misuse/ presented to Parliament by the President of the Council (1998 - The Stationery Office, ref CM3945)

Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning
(DfEE, 1999 - The Stationery Office, ref CM4392) (2)

Bridging the Gap: new opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment
(Social Exclusion Unit, July 1999 - The Stationery Office, ref CM4405) (3)

The Learning and Skills Council Prospectus: Learning to Succeed
(DfEE, 1999, DfEE Publications, ref LSOP1) (2)

Connexions: The best start in life for every young person
(DfEE, February 2000, DfEE Publications, ref CX2) (1)

Information and Guidance for Learning Partnerships
(DfEE, January 2000, DfEE Publications, ref LSC/IGLP/01) (2)

Report of Policy Advice Team 12
(Social Exclusion Unit, March 2000 - The Stationery Office)

New Guidance on Children's Services Planning (Draft document for consultation)
(Department of Health, April 2000, available from SC3, Room 113, Wellington House, 133 Waterloo Road, London SE7 8UG) (4)

Teenage Pregnancy
(Social Exclusion Unit, June 1999 – The Stationery Office, ref CM4342)

Useful Website Addresses

1. Connexions Unit: www.connexions.gov.uk
2. Department for Education and Employment: www.dfes.gov.uk
3. Social Exclusion Unit: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu
4. Department of Health: www.doh.gov.uk/scg/cspconsultation.htm

Notes

Connexions

The connexions service: prospectus and specification

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Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

DfEE Publications
P.O. Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham
NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 60 222 60
Fax: 0845 60 333 60
Text phone: 0845 60 555 60
email: dfee@prologistics.co.uk

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