RESEARCH

Lessons Learned from the Connexions Pilots

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1. There has been increased recognition and policy response to the issues associated with young people and their effective transition to a productive and fulfilling adult life. Over the past few years, a number of individual initiatives have been put in place to address issues of attainment in schools, effective information, advice and guidance, and engaging the wider community in working with young people. Underpinning all this work has been the principle of inter-agency working and coherent responses both to the needs of the group as a whole and to tailoring services around individual young people's specific needs.

2. The Connexions Strategy and associated Service is a significant move - offering a potential step change in the delivery of services for young people. The design of Connexions, its objectives and key principles build on many of the lessons learned to date but, most radically, it attempts to create a new delivery structure that encompasses the fundamental principle of a connected and coherent service for young people.

3. The Connexions Strategy sets out to create a step change in participation and attainment through the teenage years. It aims to ensure that increasing numbers of young people have access to the services they need, follow appropriate and high quality learning opportunities and make a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood and working life. The Connexions Service will:

- Offer help, support and advice to all young people aged between 13 and 19;
- Particular assistance will be targeted at the disadvantaged or disaffected;
- Provide coherent support to young people over time and across service boundaries;
- Help young people deal with the problems they face whether they relate to learning or a wider set of issues;
- Broker support for young people from specialist agencies as and when needed.

4. The service will be delivered through a network of Personal Advisers linking in with specialist support services. Advisers will be drawn from a range of existing public, private, and voluntary and community sector organisations. These organisations will come together to form new Connexions Partnerships to develop and coordinate the delivery of support services for young people. The Partnerships will follow the administrative boundaries of the Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). They will be complemented by Local Management Committees (LMCs), established either on local authority boundaries or by functional split, which will ensure the required range of services is in place (although in practice two Pilots did not have any LMCs).

5. 12 Partnerships began delivering the Connexions Service from April 2001, and 3 more started in September 2001. 13 Pilots were established in 2000 to begin exploring how these new services will operate in practice. The key principles of the Connexions Service are:

- 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'.

1.2 Action research

6. A great deal of resource was invested in the Connexions Service Pilots - over £7million. In order to get the maximum return from this investment the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)[1] funded an action research project, undertaking formative evaluation and passing the findings to both the DfEE and Pilots as they progressed to help develop both policy and the Pilots on the ground.

7. Many of the Pilots attempted to undertake a range of Connexions activities while others focused more on one particular activity i.e. Connexions Customer Information Systems. It is important to note that no Pilot attempted to undertake the full range of Connexions Services

8. The Pilots proved an invaluable testing bed for the development of the Service from which many important lessons have been learned, leading to a number of policy developments. The impact of the research is still being used in policy development. Much good practice has already been identified and disseminated – this report will add to that.

1.3 Methodology

9. There was an agreed division of labour between the local and national evaluators. The local evaluators were responsible for researching the following strands or aspects:

- Connexions Customer Information Systems;
- Tackling rural issues;
- Working with specific sub groups of clients;
- Delivering Connexions in schools and colleges, and;
- Use of evidence based practice (at the local level).

10. The national evaluators focused on:

- Strategic planning at the Pilot level;
- Multi agency networking of Personal Advisers;
- Integration of multi agency teams;
- Integrated delivery at the local level;
- Involving young people;
- Quantifying need, and;
- Use of evidence based practice (at the national/strategic level).

11. The action research programme to date focused on the development of the strategic partnerships, the development of services, the role of the Personal Adviser, and the

[1] The DfEE is now called the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

perceptions of clients of Connexions Service Pilots. We have used a variety of methods for capturing information about the objectives, developments and progress of the Pilots:

- Interviews with key staff in the Connexions Service National Unit (CSNU) and Government Offices (GOs);
- Interviews with the Pilot Coordinators and other key partners;
- Interviews with Personal Advisers;
- Interviews with clients;
- Developing and analysing Pilot monthly reports;
- Reports produced by local evaluators;
- Desk research, reviewing a range of literature that has been produced by the Pilots (proposals, research documents etc.), the CSNU and other organisations.

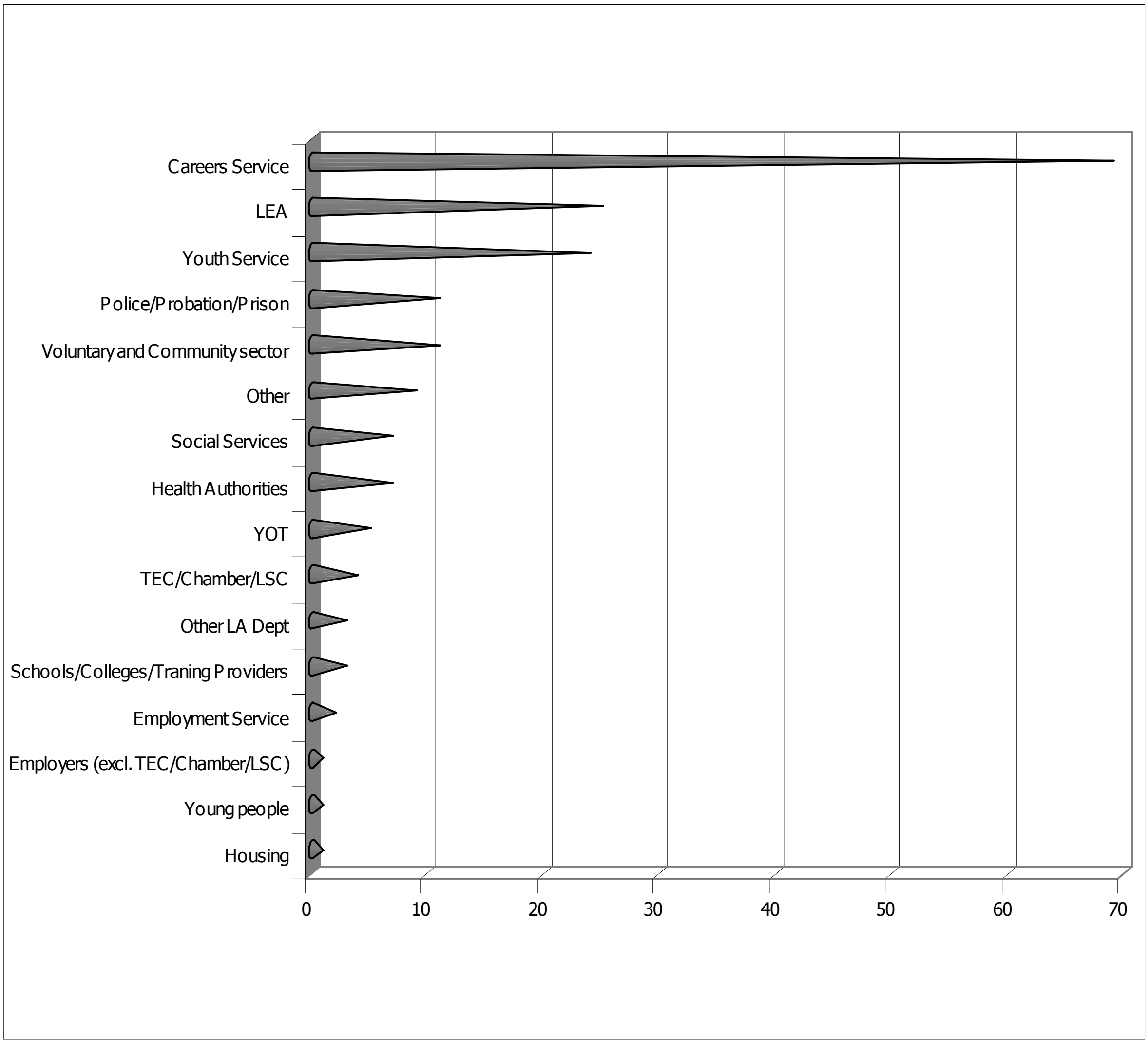
12. In addition, an important part of the national evaluator's role has been coordinating the work of the local evaluators and the development of a Performance Management Framework.

13. Interviews have so far been held with 181 lead and other key partners from a wide range of organisations. This represents about two-thirds of *all* the partners involved in the Connexions Pilots (excluding repeat visits). Three rounds of interviews took place: an initial meeting with Pilot Coordinators in August, a broader range of interviews with Pilot Coordinators and key partners between October and November 2000, and again in March and April 2001.

14. Figure 1 shows the organisations of partners that have been interviewed (Pilot Coordinators have been interviewed twice). Interviews have been held mostly with Careers Service, LEA and Youth Service partners, although we have spoken with partners from the Police/Probation/Prison Service, voluntary and community sector (VCS) and health authorities. These interviews were mostly conducted face-to-face but some were undertaken over the 'phone.

15. In addition, face-to-face interviews have been completed with 81 Personal Advisers in 12 Pilot areas and 80 clients in 12 Pilot areas (Greater Merseyside was focusing on the development of a Connexions Customer Information System and so did not have any Personal Advisers or clients). These meetings took place during two rounds of interviews, between December 2000 and January 2001, and again in March and April 2001.

Figure 1 Number of partner interviews by organisation



Source: Interviews with Pilot Coordinators, GHK

16. Arranging Personal Adviser and client interviews has been problematic, especially in the early days of the Pilots. Many Pilots did not have Personal Advisers or clients in place when we were undertaking the first round of interviews (most Personal Advisers were only in post by November). It was also very difficult to arrange interviews through the Pilots especially with clients who are disaffected and defined as hard-to-help. In some cases interviews were arranged but the clients did not turn up.

17. The Interim Report of this project (February 2001) was presented to Pilot representatives, local evaluators and CSNU representatives at a Conference in May 2001. The conference included a series of workshops focusing on key aspects of the Connexions service e.g. the development of strategic partnerships, the Connexions service in schools etc. Views and comments on these aspects arising from this conference have been included in this Final Report.

1.4 Structure of the report

18. The rest of the report is divided into the following sections:

Section 2 – focuses on the development, nature and structure of the strategic partnerships.

Section 3 – looks at the services that Pilots have developed.

Section 4 – looks at the role of the Personal Adviser, based on interviews with Partners and Personal Advisers.

Section 5 – reports on the client interviews.

Section 6 – reports on the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of Connexions services.

Section 7 – reports on the development of the Connexions Service in schools, colleges and training providers.

Section 8 – focuses on the delivery of services to particular sub groups of young people.

Section 9 – examines rural issues.

Section 10 – looks at quantifying need.

Section 11 – reports on the development of Connexions Customer Information Systems.

Section 12 – examines the use of evidence-based practice.

Section 13 – provides the main conclusions and recommendations.

2 The Development, Nature and Structure of Strategic Partnerships

2.1 Introduction

19. A great deal of time, effort and expertise was exercised in the 13 Pilot areas on developing a partnership structure that represented key interests and could manage the delivery of Connexions Services. This section reports on the key issues that arose from partnership activities: their structure and composition; the decision making process; legal structures; management roles and responsibilities; geographical issues; the involvement of young people and the voluntary and community sector (VCS); relationships with existing partnerships; funding; and national guidance.

20. The information in this section is based on interviews with the lead and other partners throughout the project, Pilot's proposals and contracts, interim, final and other reports from local evaluators, and all of the monthly reports. Strategic Partnerships were also the focus for two workshop sessions on 'Lessons Learned' and 'The Development Agenda' at the Interim report Workshop held in May 2001.

2.2 Strategic objectives

21. The Pilots were charged with undertaking a wide variety of trial initiatives that would inform the development of the Connexions Service proper from April 2001. The objectives of the Pilots, as specified in their contracts, were therefore left deliberately open. This was to be true pilot or experimental activity. The lack of prescription was a cause of concern for some people (see below) but it did enable a range of management and delivery models to be explored.

22. To illustrate this, the objectives of one Pilot undertaking a wide variety of work were to:

- *Ensure that partner operational capability will be mapped in order to determine the levels of resource that can be released to the Connexions Service and seek co-funding opportunities with partners at every stage of the Pilot's development;*

- *Undertake research with partner organisations to identify evidence-based activities that work with 13-19 year olds and develop those activities that work, improve or abandon those that do not and disseminate good practice;*
- *Build knowledge of effective working practices into all staff training and development in the Pilot and across the partnership. This will form an essential element of the development of the role of the Personal Adviser and will be achieved via partner consultation and agreement.*

23. This openness was typical of the Pilot contracts. The Pilots were originally asked to trial various aspects of the Connexions Service. Table 1 shows which particular strands each Partnership were asked to pilot either as a whole or in part. For example, Cornwall and Devon were asked to pilot some aspects of Connexions Customer Information Systems and all aspects of involving young people in design and delivery.

Table 1 Connexions Service Pilots matrix

Strands	**Cornwall & Devon**	**Coventry & Warks**	**Central London**	**Durham**	**Herts**	**Humber -side**	**Hunter-combe**	**Lewi-sham**	**Lincs**	**Mersey-side**	**Oldham**	**South Central**	**South Yorks**
Connexions Customer Information Systems	○	●	●			○	●	●	●	●	○		○
Involving Young People in the Design and Delivery	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Multi-agency networking of Personal Advisers	●	●	○	●	●	●	○	●	○	○	●	●	●
Strategic Planning at the Pilot Level	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Integrated delivery at the local level	●	●	○	●	○	○	●	●		○	●	●	○
Integration of multi agency teams	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
Tackling rural issues	○	○				○			○			○	
Working with specific sub-groups of clients	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●	●
Quantifying Need – mapping	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Use of evidence-based practice	●	●	○	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●
Working with Schools/Colleges	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●

Key: ○ Piloting some of the strand ● Piloting all of the strand

Source: Connexions Pilots Web Site

24. Pilots then developed proposals for a range of services and activities that would explore all or a sub-set of these strands. It is important to point out that the Connexions Pilots were pilots in the true sense exploring particular strands not the full Service.

25. The only requirement of all Pilots was they would all explore management and working arrangements, involving young people, and they would all conduct the mapping exercise. Beyond these three strands Pilots were free to choose which elements of the Connexions Service they would like to trial. Part of the rationale behind this approach was that the final shape of the Connexions Service proper would develop over time and that the Pilots would provide valuable information to guide this process.

26. However, Pilots reported that they were not always clear which strands they were piloting (it was often not specified in contracts and proposals), and there was further confusion over what the strands meant (there does not appear to be a singular definition) and what were the dividing lines between different strands. For example, what does integrated delivery at the local level mean and how does it differ from the integration of multi-agency teams and the multi-agency networking of Personal Advisers?

27. One consequence of this openness and lack of prescription may have resulted in a lack of clarity on the primary objectives for the Connexions Service. In the first round of interviews, 58 Pilot Coordinators and key partners were asked what they thought were the strategic objectives of the Connexions Service. Thirty-one partners either did not provide an objective for Connexions or said that they did not know or referred to a specific operational detail (e.g. terms and conditions of Personal Advisers) rather than an objective per se.

28. The largest number of respondents felt that the chief objectives of the Connexions Service were to develop multi-agency working and to provide a service that is targeted towards specific sub groups of young people (in the main disaffected or hard-to-help). The next most common response was that the Connexions Service should be universal, meeting the needs of *all* young people. Promoting and achieving the aim of social inclusion, and striking a balance between a universal and a targeted response, were the next most frequently mentioned objectives.

29. The responses indicated the lack of a clear and consistent view across partners of the objectives that underpin the Connexions Service.

30. In the current round of interviews, undertaken in March, Pilot coordinators and other key partners were asked the question ‘What does the Connexions Service mean to you?’

31. The responses again pointed to a lack of clarity as to what the Connexions Service is about. Responses included elements of what Connexions is about, for example, partnership working, providing Personal Adviser support to young people, reducing duplication of effort etc. But there was no consistent response that indicated agreement of what the primary objectives of the Connexions service are, and this was what was found during the first round of interviews.[2]

32. This confusion was reportedly due to a variety of reasons: the freedom given to the Pilots to test out management and delivery mechanisms; poor local communications; poor understanding of objectives even when adequately communicated; a focus on services rather than the overarching vision; that Connexions is aspirational so the pragmatic operationalisation of this vision in reality differs from the objectives; and, people putting their own perspective on clear and well communicated objectives. However, respondents in over half of the Pilots believe it was because of: a lack of a clear statement of objectives for the

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2 See ‘Evaluation of the Connexions Pilots: Interim Report’, GHK, February 2001.

Connexions Service from the DfEE; or that they appeared to change over time; or that they were not well communicated.

33. The objectives of the Connexions Service are currently being finalised at a national level and should be available in June 2001. It is imperative that efforts are undertaken to communicate the objectives thoroughly within the Pilots and Phase Ones, but also more widely. Partners believed that initiatives like New Deal had a high profile and were well understood, not just by managers and practitioners working within the programme but much more widely by partner organisations and the wider public. They felt that Connexions should have the same profile.

34. The approaches to Connexions in the Pilots are perhaps summed up in the following quotes:

> *“There are two views, one that it is reinventing the wheel and the other that it is the start of a new dawn.”*
>
> *“The idea of Connexions is brilliant: it is enabling us to do what we always wanted to do.”*
>
> *"Because of the timescales, all Connexions is, is a series of projects. Everyone is happy because the projects have been divided up between them. We have reinforced the project mentality on the ground - which is a bad thing. We are not getting across a significant understanding of what Connexions is i.e. a new, universal integrated service."*

35. But perhaps the following, more balanced view, better reflects the opinions of people involved in the Connexions Pilots:

> *“People are interested in Connexions (there is a lot of enthusiasm around) but there are some sticky bits, particularly about the details. Connexions has been a loose and flexible vision but with no framework to operate in. For example, how will it affect job roles, such as, the careers adviser? It is the uncertainty that gets to people. A few more steers would have been helpful. Having a vision has its advantages e.g. to provide flexibility for innovation but a clearer steer would have been helpful.”*

36. We feel that having clear and well-understood objectives of the Service is essential to pointing the Pilots in the right direction when developing their individual services. It will help to lead to more consistency in the definition of the important components of the service, such as, the role of the Personal Adviser, what is a universal service, what is multi- agency working, the extent of the involvement of young people in service design and delivery etc. It is imperative therefore that clear and consistent overarching objectives for Connexions are developed and effectively communicated to a wide audience of partners and others.

Key learning point

For DfEE:

- Develop and agree clear, coherent objectives for the Connexions Service that are effectively and widely communicated.

For Pilots:

- Ensure that the Connexions Service objectives are agreed, understood and effectively communicated to key partners.

2.3 Developing the Partnerships

2.3.1 Pilot proposals

37. This research project was commissioned after the Pilots' proposals had been accepted and (most) of the contracts had been signed, so we are not in a position to comment on this process. Nevertheless we were interested in the way that the Pilots had organised partners to focus on the development of the pilot service in their area.

38. In a lot of discussions with partners, the balance between representation and effectiveness was raised several times (see below). In terms of developing the Pilot Connexions proposal, the emphasis was clearly on the latter. All the Pilots felt that the timescales were very tight and this limited the extent, nature and effectiveness of consultations with young people and other agencies, particularly those beyond the statutory sector (e.g. the VCS).

39. In nine Pilots, one or two people were given the task of writing the proposal. Here, there was usually little disagreement that the lead organisations or lead people should be from a department of the local authority and the Careers Service. The decision as to which organisation should lead on the proposal was a result of pragmatism (e.g. an organisation that covered the entire Connexions area); relative political weight (e.g. in some areas the local authority was the clear lead, in others the Careers Service was); or, a neutral choice (for example, the lead organisation in one area was chosen because it was next in line to sit as the revolving Chair in a pre-existing partnership). In only one Pilot did either the local authority or the Careers Service have to be brought to the table.

40. Once written, the proposal was then distributed to other key partners (mostly within the statutory sector, especially the Youth Service, LEAs and Careers Service) for them to comment.

41. In four Pilots a formal 'Task' or 'Action' group was formed to develop the proposal. These Task Groups all included people from local authority departments (especially the Youth Services) and the Careers Services, in one a YOT representative was also involved.

42. Once the draft had been written, the next stage was to broaden the circle of involvement. In the vast majority of cases this meant sending the draft proposal out for comments. When comments were returned the core people would consider them and develop the final proposal to be sent for DfEE. In some cases there were formal workshops to which people were invited to discuss the proposal but these were not common.

43. The involvement of young people in the development of the proposals was severely limited. The VCS was involved in most areas, but the extent of their involvement varied enormously. The extent to which young people and/or the VCS were (or could be) involved in the proposal within the timescale depended on whether there already existed formal consultative forums or a clearly identifiable lead person or organisation.

44. Table 2 shows how the initial 'start-up' group in one Pilot came together and then developed into a more formal management committee. This process was typical of the Pilots.

Table 2 Development of the proposal and partnership structures an example

A 'start-up' group initiated the work and developed the bid and the first meeting took place in May 2000. This group comprised the TEC, Social Services, Youth Services, the LEA, Careers Services, Police and Health Services. From this core group a more inclusive Management Group emerged, the first meetings of which took place in June 2000. A large Management Committee emerged from this with over 40 people invited to attend. This group, while clearly representative of a wide range of organisations, was too large to be effective. We held our first stakeholder conference in June with specific objectives in mind. The conference was to reach as broad a range of organisations and professionals as possible in the area to inform them of the aims of the Connexions Service, to consult with them about the plans and to discuss the recruitment and selection of Personal Advisers. There was also the aim to make voluntary and statutory organisations aware of the potential to be involved in making bids to provide services within designated Pilot areas.

Source: Hertfordshire Local Evaluators Report

45. The vast majority of partners across the 13 Pilots were satisfied with their role in the development of the proposal. This was because partners felt that the best was done given the extremely tight timescales. Most respondents said that they appreciated that one organisation needed to take the lead and that they had been adequately consulted. There were very few dissenting voices. In one Pilot one Youth Service partner said that their organisation was not involved and that it was a Careers Service dominated exercise. In another area two Careers Service partners complained that it had been a local authority dominated exercise.

46. The main concerns were the short timescales (see above) and the national guidance, reported by at least one partner in all of the Pilots. The short timescales exerted enormous pressure on the Pilot Coordinator(s) and limited the extent and effectiveness of consultation. The national guidance was criticised for being insufficient or not prescriptive enough, and the point was made that key elements of the Guidance changed. Three Pilots were concerned that initial guidance seemingly excluded Careers Services from the Partnerships but, when this was reversed, they had then to include representatives of the Careers Services into discussions.

47. The lack of prescription caused concern because it gave people little to focus on and little to communicate to other partners. It made initial discussions too broad and it made it difficult to explain Connexions to others.

Key learning points

For DfEE:

- National guidance needs to be clearer, more timely and consistent.
- Tight timescales limit broader involvement and wider consultation.

For Pilots:

- Given a history of tight timescales for responding to policy and funding opportunities – what systems and processes need to be in place to effect speedy responses.

2.3.2 Composition of the Strategic Partnerships

48. By June 2000, all of the 13 Pilots had been chosen and were being established (although one Pilot said that they did not receive a contract until September). The first stage

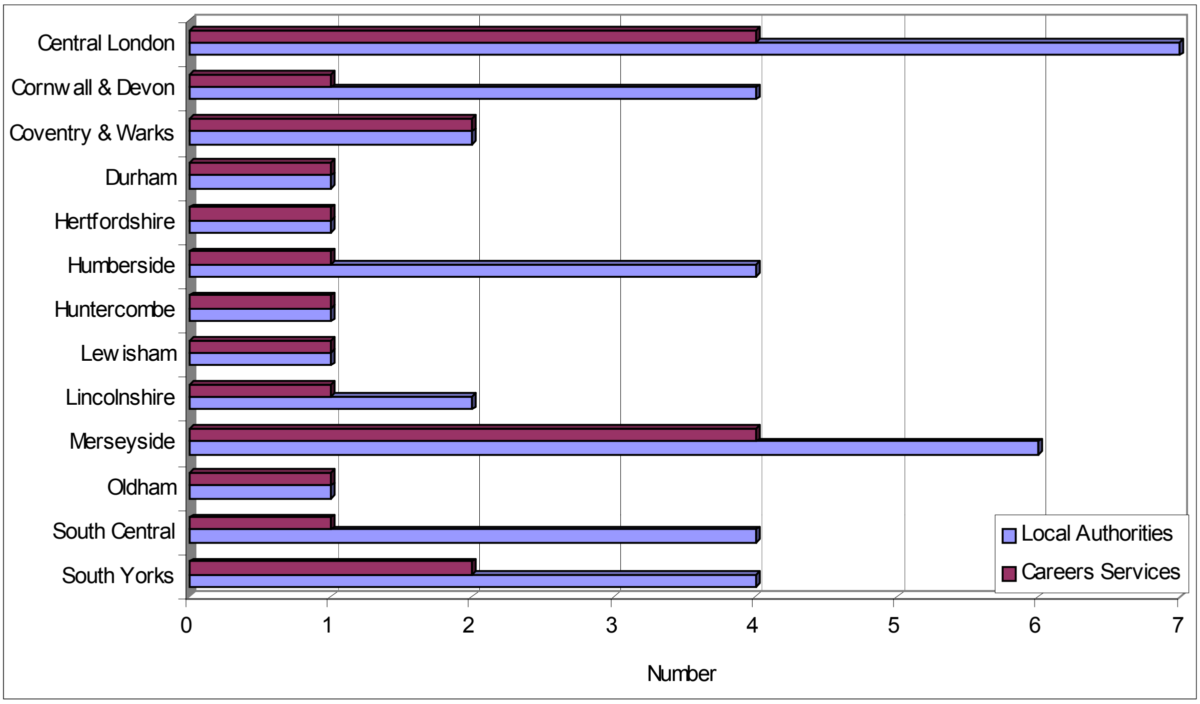
was to develop the management structures that would oversee the delivery of Connexions Services in that area.

49. The areas that the Strategic Partnerships covered varied considerably in terms of their geographical spread, population size, urban/rural profile, levels of deprivation, number of local authorities and status of the Careers Service company or companies

50. Figure 2 shows the number of local authorities (excluding District Councils) and Careers Services covered by each of the Connexions Pilots.[3] Central London, Humberside and Greater Merseyside are the most complex areas and had the largest numbers of local authorities and careers companies in their areas. None of the Pilots crossed an LSC boundary.

51. There was some debate and negotiation over the geographic coverage and boundaries of some Connexions Partnerships – in Coventry and Warwickshire, Durham and Lincolnshire – but the issue has not been very contentious. However, in South Yorkshire there was a clear desire on the part of Sheffield that it should have constituted one Connexions Partnership in its own right.

Figure 2 Numbers of Local Authorities and Careers Services covered by the Pilots



Source: Interviews with Pilot Coordinators and key partners, GHK

52. Another geographic issue has concerned organisations whose coverage has extended beyond the defined Connexions area. In one Pilot, a large VCS organisation was redrawing its internal operational divisions to make them coterminous with both Connexions and the LSC boundaries. In another area, the Pilot covered two Probation service areas, one of which covered another area as well. Matters were resolved by one service taking a strategic view but involving its sister organisation in operational issues.

53. Local authorities and Careers Service companies were the basic building blocks of Partnerships in all of the Pilot areas. This was acceptable to all interviewees because it was the Careers Services and Youth Services that would be most affected by Connexions. The

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[3] The Huntercombe Pilot is based at a Young Offenders Institute.

relationship between local authorities and Careers Services was a critical element in how smoothly the core Partnerships were developed. In about three-quarters of the areas, local authorities were heavily involved in Careers Service companies as shareholders. The presence of private sector careers companies, and their role in the Connexions Partnerships, has been an important issue in two Pilot areas.

54. The relationship between Careers Services and local authorities was an issue in all but four of the Pilots. The main points for discussion were the lack of involvement of the Youth Services; confusion over the involvement of the Careers Services in the partnership; mutual suspicion to some degree; and implications of the legal status of the Careers Service company. To illustrate:

- In one Pilot area the LEA representative said that there was a struggle over partnership and ownership issues, commenting that ‘there is lots of suspicion but also a lot of enthusiasm’. Within the same Pilot, the Careers Service representative felt that the local authorities were ‘too many, too small and too parochial’.
- A Careers Service interviewee in another Pilot said that they were disappointed with the role of the Youth Service. Their perception was that after losing schools, colleges, and Careers Services the local authority was feeling marginalized. The Youth Service was the only service they still provided to young people and this was being threatened by Connexions.
- In one area, the Careers Service felt marginalized as the local authorities had several departments represented on the Board but the Careers Service only had one place.
- One Pilot had not included the Careers Service initially in Connexions. The rationale for this partly centred on the issue of vested interests – the extent to which Board members could be both partners and providers/contractors to the partnership.

55. However, it must be stressed that in most Pilot areas there was a very good relationship between these two core partners based on a strong history of partnership working. Where this was not the case, it was a major issue. However, the issue has been resolved in all cases.

56. A further important basis for the development of the Partnership and the Service (especially where more than one local authority was concerned) was the extent of Partnership working that already existed in an area. All but two Pilots identified a long history of partnership working in their area especially around combined efforts to secure funding from a variety of sources. Interviewees mentioned Lifelong Learning Partnerships, ESF, New Start, Objective 1, Health Action Zones, Education Action Zones, Adult Information and Guidance, Learning Gateway, SRB, SureStart, Excellence in Cities, and Education Business Partnerships (EBPs). In addition there were economic development partnerships, regular meetings between local authority Chief Executives and Directors, and other operational relationships that have also benefited Connexions such as the work of Careers Services in schools and within outreach communities. Furthermore, one Pilot’s proposal was able to link the objectives of the Connexions Service with overall local authority, LEA, Youth Service, Crime Prevention, Careers Service and Health Authority strategic objectives.

57. The pre-existence of Partnership working meant that partners were already involved in multi-agency service management and delivery within and across local authority boundaries. One partner said that there were many familiar faces on the Connexions Board and another referred to the ‘usual suspects’.

58. Existing partnership meant that some Pilots were already developing Personal Adviser-type networks and were also experienced in involving the VCS.

59. The strength of Partnership working either between local authorities or between the Careers Service companies and the local authorities varied within Pilots as well as between them. Some LMC areas were much further down the partnership path as a consequence of prior joint work, and in two cases, the Youth Service and Careers Service were very close to merger.

60. Most Pilots said that existing Partnerships had helped the development of the Pilot. Not only did people have awareness and understanding of partner agencies but also it helped in the development of specific aspects of the Connexions Service e.g. the use of caseload managers in the development of Personal Adviser networks was based on work with the Learning Gateway in that area.

61. Two Pilots were cautious in commenting on the value of previous partnership working. One said that it could be difficult in bringing new partners when existing relationships were strong and another said that it might confuse the objectives. The practicalities of partnership working were also raised. Connexions meetings were an addition, and had to fit into the existing networks' meetings.

62. The development of Connexions Partnerships was also dependent on the relevance of Pilot activities and the Connexions vision to the partners so that they wanted to 'buy into it'. There was also a willingness of people to work together even when negotiations became difficult. We know of no examples where partners walked out of discussions, and this personal and organisational commitment should not be underestimated.

63. The choice of the lead organisation was dependent in most cases on which organisation was best placed to hold the contract and how much resource they were able to devote to the Pilot. The Careers Services in most areas was felt to the natural choice because it was *'their budgets that were the only funding that were going into the Pilots*'. In some a local authority was chosen as the lead - a solution that was acceptable to all.

64. The Careers Service was the lead organisation in eight Pilots, the local authority in four and the Prison Service in one (this was because of the Pilot based at Huntercombe Young Offenders Institution).

65. The development of the Pilots' Boards involved resolving a series of tensions[4]:

- Effectiveness versus representation – how large does the Board need to be to ensure that all appropriate organisations are represented? How large should the Board be to serve as an effective decision making body?
- Bottom-up or top-down development – should one first define need and the service functions and then develop the management structures/strategic vision from there or vice versa.
- Which organisations to include and which to exclude – for example, which VCS agency to involve. Is it necessary to have a representative from the Youth Justice System, the Police and YOTs etc. each individually represented, or is it adequate to have one local authority Chief Executive or the Chief Executive and the Directors of the LEA and Social Services?
- Autonomy of LMCs or centralisation – what is the relative balance of power between the LMCs and the Board?

[4] Throughout this report we shall refer to the highest decision making body in the Pilots as the Board although this is not necessarily its formal name in each Pilot area. For example, some Pilots refer to it as the Partnership, the Company, the Executive etc.

- Balance of power between the executive and the Board – what is the relative balance of power between the key individuals in the Pilot (e.g. Chief Executives of Careers companies/Chief Education Officers) and the Board
- Level of representation within organisations – what grade, and which individual within each organisation should sit on the Board?

66. The ways in which these tensions have been resolved, has defined the management structure in each Pilot area.

Effectiveness versus representation

67. The size of the Boards varies considerably from more than 20 to fewer than five. This was not necessarily related to the size of the Pilot area or the number of local authority areas. For example, one Pilot covering one local authority had a Board including 19 representatives whereas another Pilot covering four local authorities had five Board members.

68. It was felt by some that the larger the Board the less effective would be the decision making process.

> *"The early implementation team was too small and too exclusive. However, its size has enabled rapid decision making and a focus on action."*

69. However, the progress of the Pilots does not appear to be related to the size of the Board but rather the complexity of the issues and the history of partnership work and viewpoints of the partners.

70. Nine Pilots had developed or utilised additional partnership tiers to broaden representation. Six Pilots had a broader range of groups on their LMCs in a deliberate attempt to widen representation. Four Pilots had developed dedicated Strand or Task Groups that focused on the development of specific initiatives. The use of alternative tiers not only achieved wider representation but also bought the expertise of appropriate organisations much closer to service delivery. For example, some Connexions services worked closely with Foyers. Few Pilots saw the need to have Housing Associations represented on their Boards, but by utilising LMCs or Strand Groups they could embrace organisations such as Housing Associations that are essential and closely involved in service delivery.

71. Whichever organisation is represented at whatever level, it is important to be open and honest about what the terms of involvement are. If people are involved on a consultative basis, to consult on decisions made elsewhere then this involvement should not be presented as 'participation'.

Bottom-up or top-down

72. The advantage of the bottom-up approach was that the Partnership defined the need and the tasks first and developed the structures later. In this way, it was more likely to develop a service that fitted in with what young people were experiencing:

> *"We identified the structure of the LMCs then composed the Board from the LMC Chairs and then identified 'appropriate stakeholders'. We are working on the details of the LMCs and the services, the strategic vision will come later."*

73. The proponents of the top-down approach felt that it was necessary to define the strategic vision first and this created the coherent development of services. Three Pilots

adopted a bottom-up approach and the remainder a top-down approach. It is too early to suggest which approach is the more effective, although one partner in a Pilot adopting the 'bottom-up' approach commented *"practitioners went into a lot of detail before the strategy had been agreed and this wasted a lot of time"*.

74. Whichever method was adopted it has been pointed out that there was often a gap in the middle e.g. at line manager level. There was a need to invest more in communication and participation at this level. In some instances, Senior Managers may be well briefed about and involved in Connexions but fail to communicate this effectively within their own organisations.

Respective power of the LMCs and Boards

75. There were differing views as to where the balance of power should lie between the Board and the LMCs. Two Pilots (that covered more than one local authority area) were not planning on having any LMCs in their areas. But in most, it was felt that each local authority area should have an LMC and that the LMC would be the organisation that defined and delivered Connexions services. The rationale behind this was that local authority based LMCs would be closest to deliverers and to the decision-making associated with delivery.

76. The role of the Board was seen very much as focusing on strategic planning, overall Pilot management, being the accounting body and responsible for performance management. However, the roles of each were still very much in development and views were not consistent across or within Partnerships as yet. This was illustrated in two Pilots where the views of partners on the LMCs differed as to the relative weights given to the Boards and the LMCs.

77. LMCs fall somewhere along the spectrum between being simply advisory bodies at the local level all the way through to being implementation bodies that are interested in taking on an executive role. Where the LMC falls within this spectrum depended partially on their composition – large groups that attempted to incorporate representation from all the local stakeholders were less able to take on advisory roles. Smaller groups however were able to take on executive tasks, but may then refer to a larger representative group/council. Geography also influences membership and role.

78. It was suggested that LMCs in more rural areas found it difficult because of the distances involved to have a large group of stakeholders that could meet frequently. Such an arrangement was more feasible in an urban area. Another issue for rural areas was the degree to which there was the institutional development of stakeholders in order for them to become involved in the process.

Which organisations to include?

79. As Figure 3 shows there were a wide range of organisations represented on the Boards, from Careers Services, Youth Services and LEAs through to health authorities, housing associations, the Police and various VCS organisations. If each Board included the full representation of organisations involved in Connexions to date, then each Board would have had at least forty members[5].

80. A total of 177 organisations were included on the Boards of 13 Connexions Pilots. Seventy-seven members were representatives from local authorities mostly the Head of the LEA, the Youth Service or the Chief Executive of the local authority. Local authorities were represented on every Pilot Board and the LEAs on all but one. Careers Service representatives sat on all of the Pilot Boards, totalling 24 people.

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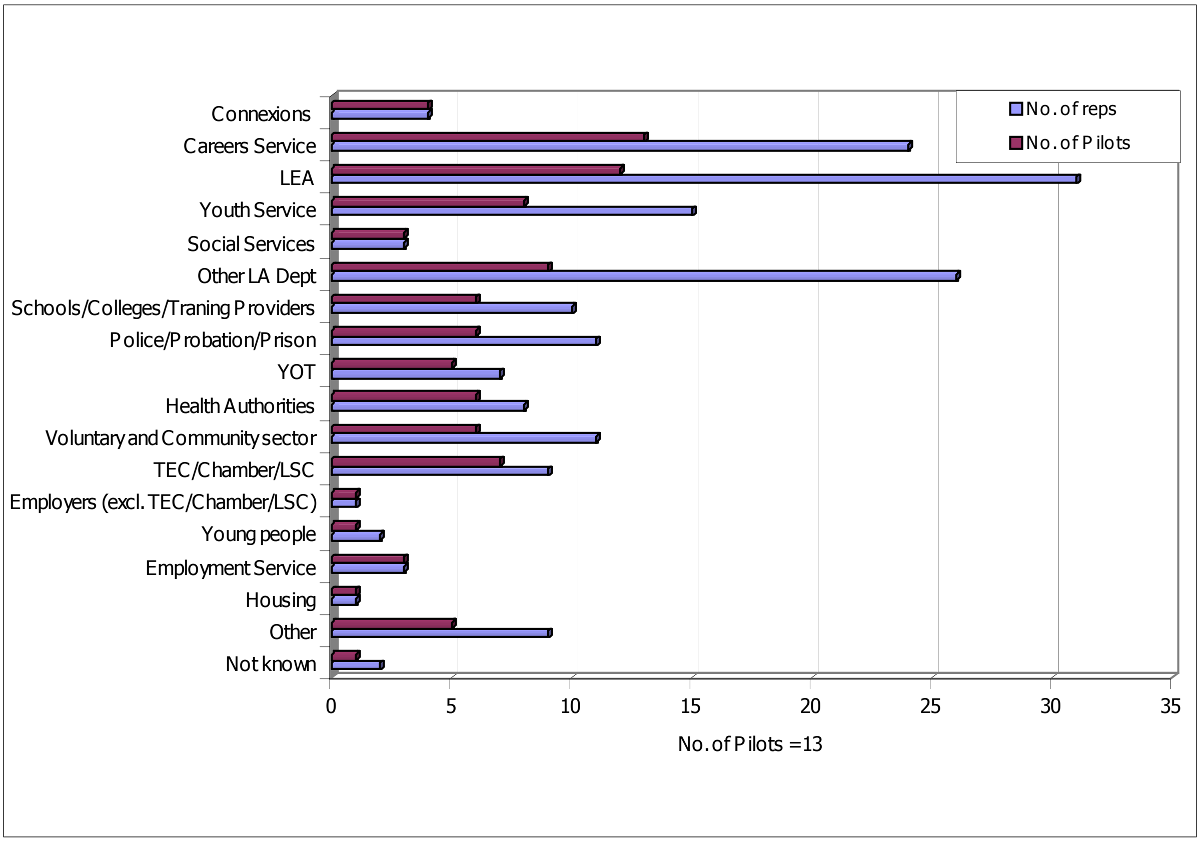
[5] By 'represented' we mean that these organisations had been provided with a seat on the Pilot Board irrespective of the extent of their involvement or how often they attended Board meetings.

Figure 3 Representation of organisations on Connexions Boards



Source: Interviews with Pilot Coordinators and key partners, GHK

81. The Police/Probation/Prison service and the VCS each had 11 representatives across six Pilots. Schools/colleges/training providers had ten Board members; TECs/LSCs/CCTEs, Health Authorities and YOTs also had seven or more members.[6]

82. Table 3 shows the Board membership by individual Pilot area. It shows the variation in the number and types of organisation that sat on the Boards. Seventy percent of these 13 Pilots had more than ten representatives.

83. The table's two right hand side columns total the number of representatives of each organisation across the 13 Pilot Boards *and* the number of Pilot Boards organisations sat on. For example, LEAs had a total of 31 representatives on the 13 Pilot Boards and 12 Pilot Boards had at least one LEA representative on it.

84. The different composition of Strategic Boards was mostly related to the nature of previous Partnership working, the type of services that Pilots were developing and a strategic view of the nature of the Connexions Board. Some Pilots saw the Board as more sharply focused than others, and that non-core agencies (i.e. not Careers Service nor local authority) were best represented via other means e.g. Stakeholder Conferences, LMCs or Task Groups.

85. Partners were asked if they felt that any groups were not represented on their Board but should be. Whilst some people mentioned agencies as disparate as libraries and Drugs Action Teams (DATs), there were six groups of people or organisations that several partners felt most strongly about. These were elected members, employers, schools and colleges,

[6] When we refer to TECs throughout this report we also include Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTEs) and LSCs, although after March 2001 TECs and CCTEs all became LSCs.

young people, the VCS and ethnic minority members. The involvement of schools, colleges and training providers, and young people will be discussed in detail in later Sections.

- Partners in three Pilots felt that **elected members** needed to be included because they provided a direct and accountable link to the local community. And because they were the ultimate authority for Youth Services, Social Services and LEAs. One Pilot has deliberately involved elected members on the LMCs and another on the Board. However, elected members tend not to be included as Board members. In another case, members for one of the local authorities were kept informed of the Connexions work through the formal LA committee reporting cycle.
- There was much discussion about the involvement of the **VCS**. Five Pilots had VCS representatives on their Boards. The most frequent question asked of the VCS, by partners in six Pilots, was who represents the VCS? In large part this was due to the size and complexity of these organisations. One Pilot counted 600 organisations in their area and another counted 200. VCS organisations are involved in delivering a variety of services to distinct sub groups of young people. They also range widely in terms of size and resources. Some are part of a wider national network or large institution whilst others are a one or two person operation. In addition, the VCS was not just seen as a deliverer of services but also as an advocate for sub-groups of young people. So can Partnerships have just one VCS representative on the Board or are several needed to cover this diversity? In some areas, it was felt that there was a clearly identifiable suitable VCS agency, for example, the London Youth Forum – which has 480 affiliated youth groups in Greater London. But in others there was no obvious choice.
- The inclusion of VCS agencies on other tiers within the Pilots e.g. LMCs and Task Groups was one way of addressing this issue. For example, if a strand were piloting services to young homeless people then a VCS housing organisation would sit on the Strand Task Group. One VCS partner also raised the issue of the capacity of VCS organisations to become involved given how small some of them can be. The suggestion was that the VCS might need some development support and funding to be able to participate effectively. In one Pilot area at least, the Board was developing capacity building projects for the VCS.[7]
- An issue raised at the workshop was the inclusion of **BME** members on LMCs, Strategic Partnerships and other management and delivery structures. How can one offer a convincing service to BME young people if ethnic minorities are not represented on the key decision making structures? Ethnic monitoring should be introduced as soon as possible to ensure adequate representation of BME people.
- Four Pilot Boards included **employer** representatives. However, in most cases these were from a TEC or CCTE. But it was an issue whether they are truly employer representatives. Only in one Pilot was a private sector employer on the Board.

[7] The use of public funds for capacity building in the VCS is not a new phenomenon. We know that this has happened in London with TECs involved in capacity building of the VCS delivering business support services.

Table 3 Board membership by Pilot area

	Central London	Corn & Devon	Cov & Warks	Durham	Herts	Humb-erside	Hunter-combe	Lewi-sham	Lincs	Mersey-side	Oldham	South Central	South Yorks	No. of Reps.	No. of Pilots
Connexions[8]	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	4
Careers Service	1	2	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	4	2	1	4	24	13
Total local authority, of which:	*5*	*10*	*6*	*6*	*2*	*8*	*1*	*1*	*4*	*9*	*7*	*4*	*12*	*75*	*13*
LEA	3	4	2	3	1	3	0	1	2	5	1	4	2	31	12
Youth Service	2	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	0	5	15	8
Social Services	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	3
Other LA Dept	0	6	4	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	4	0	5	26	9
Schools/Colleges/ Training Providers	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	10	6
Police/Probation/ Prison	2	3	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	6
YOT	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	7	5
Health Authorities	1	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	6
VCS	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	11	6
TEC/CCTE/LSC	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	9	7
Employers (excl. TECs)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Young people	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1
Employment Service	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	3
Housing	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	9	5
LA Dept. not specified	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Total	**12**	**21**	**14**	**12**	**11**	**24**	**10**	**3**	**5**	**17**	**20**	**5**	**23**	**177**	**13**

Source: Interviews with Pilot Coordinators and key partners, GHK

[8] These people tended to be full-time employees of the Connexions Service Pilot who, despite their Youth Service or careers service backgrounds, felt they sat on the Board to represent Connexions and not their source organisation.

86. Several partners also raised issues about the representation of local authorities:

- Who represents the local authority on Connexions Service Boards? We have spoken of some people's desire to have elected members more involved (see above) but there was also a wide range of local authority departments' representatives and range of senior officers sitting on the Boards, from Principal Youth Officers to Chief Executives. On some Boards there were several local authority representatives covering three departments.
- A related issue was how many votes a local authority should have: whether it should be one vote per authority or one per Board member. This was felt to be more of an issue for the future once the legal structure of the Connexions Service was under discussion.
- One final point was which hat could or would a local authority representative wear? One LEA partner said that they formally represented the LEA but they also chaired a YOT. So could one say that that the YOT was also represented on the Board? Furthermore, do representatives sit on the board to represent their source organisations or do they (as they would on a board of a private company) have an obligation to represent the interests of the company (however it may be legally formulated).

The relationship between the executive and the Board

87. In all of the Pilots there were a small, key group of people that served as the Executive i.e. they carried out the highest level of Pilot management in between Board meetings. In all cases these involved senior people within the Careers Service and/or the local authority. The number of individuals ranged from two to six. These people represented the effective decision making authority within the Pilots. They would decide on important issues and present them to the Board for discussion and ratification. This function was generally seen as an effective means of managing the Pilot.

88. No one criticised the existence of such groups but rather their relative weight to the Board. In most Pilots, the Board performed much like a legislature and was the ultimate decision making body. In these cases the management of the discussion was paramount especially where the Boards were large. In two Pilots, the membership of the Board and executive were very similar and so debate between the two bodies tended not to be opened out.

89. All areas were developing effective communications mechanisms and various decision-making tiers, but in one or two areas debate was more closely managed than in others.

Levels of representation within organisations

90. The level of representation of people within the same organisation varied considerably between areas. For example, in one Pilot the Chief Executive of the local authority would sit on the Board whilst in others it would be an officer with a more operational focus. This issue mostly concerned local authority representatives. There were advantages and disadvantages to the seniority of representatives. The more senior the representative the more authoritative the decisions, however, the time pressures on these people, were often such that they could not attend every meeting. Senior operational officers (heads of services rather than Heads of Departments or Chief Executives e.g. Principal Youth Officer) were more likely to attend and could involve themselves in much more detailed operational discussions but lacked the power to carry the local authority on issues such as resources and funding.

91. At the workshop it was felt that the involvement of the Chief Executives of partner organisations was essential because the Board needs the authority to make and affect decisions.

92. Most of these issues are eventually being resolved through effective and inclusive discussions. In most cases the Pilots had expanded their membership beyond the original core groups of people as the expertise of a having broader membership and a genuine desire to broaden representation have become apparent.

93. Another lesson emerging from the workshop was having an independent chair. In particular, one should avoid having the Chair and the Managing Director from the same agency or the same Department within for example the Local Authority. In such cases there was no counter weight of argument to their views.

94. Levels of attendance and the consistency of representatives (i.e. the same person from the same organisation) did vary between meetings. Some Pilots reported that increasingly (or inevitably) there was a core partner group developing that attended every meeting. These people represented organisations that were most affected by the Connexions service (e.g. careers and Youth Services), their attendance was continuous and consistent. The attendance of other organisations, in one Pilot a representative from the Police in another from a housing organisation, has become more variable.

95. The following were the key issues that partners identified. Some of these issues suggest changes in practice, e.g. for the DfEE, whereas for others they reflect real aspects of the development of Connexions that Partnerships were tackling. The solutions were not clear as yet – but they act as pointers to other partnerships/Phase 1 Services as to what they might anticipate and what the Pilots experienced.

Table 4 Pilot's key issues concerning the development of the Strategic Partnerships[9]

Key issues being tackled by the Pilots

The objectives, fit and accountability issues associated with Connexions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision about Connexions is, there is a danger of Connexions being all things to all people.
- Connexions is aspirational and the pragmatic/operational view may be different.
- How does Connexions relate to other services or initiatives? Is there a danger of money being taken away from successful initiatives like peer mentoring and anti-bullying work to support Connexions?
- How can a Board with a wide mix of values and cultures and all sign up to Connexions absolutely?
- Develop business and delivery plans take a lot of time, and need appropriate management structures and to get them agreed.
- What is the relationship between the LMCs and the Board?
- Who is responsible for Connexions, who do you sue if something goes wrong?
- Define what issues are relevant to which tier of management.

Effectively engaging partners:

- Attendance may be low by organisations that see Connexions as extra work or marginal to their jobs. Does this matter? Or how can Connexions be made more real/more significant to them?
- Who to involve and when? You need Chief Executives so decisions can be made and to move things along.
- There is a need for a sharing of good practice on how to engage VCS organisations and others such as the Trade Unions, and ethnic minority people.
- Problems associated with engaging the VCS are not a local issue. It appears to be an

9 The key issues, good practice lessons, and learning points in the shaded boxes are taken from partner interviews or from Pilot monthly reports.

issue across in all the Pilots. Therefore is there the potential for some form of collective or national action? For example, development funding to support and facilitate the engagement of the voluntary and community sector.

- Partners want to know what is in it for them. They need to be told what the nature of their involvement will be, is it consultation or participation?
- The geographical complexity of some area creates particular difficulties in identifying and involving partners. If it is not a 'natural area' some people may not be able to identify with it.
- The need to recognise that people can be defensive especially if they feel their services are threatened.
- The need to allay fears of agencies that are being re-branded as Connexions services, especially reassuring staff about the implications for them.

A need for stronger, clearer, consistent National Guidance:

- Important national directives need to be given early on in the process e.g. the need to include Careers Services as full members on Boards came after the Board had been established [without a careers service representative].
- The need for clarity over Partnership structures'.
- The lack of a clear understanding of what Connexions is means that it is difficult to communicate it to potential partners.
- The business planning guidance for Phase 1s was issued late. Without this we cannot write the Business Plan so the deadline became unrealistic.
- There are important differences of opinions. Should the LMCs directly deliver services, should Connexions bring the Youth, Social, Education Welfare and Careers Services all under one banner? There needs to be more direction as there are real pressures on the ground and everyone has a different interpretation. But very little has been made clear. How can you engage with Connexions when you don't know what it is?
- There is a lack of information from the DfEE, especially with regard to what is going on in other Pilots, what the role of the Personal Adviser and the Chief Executive is, and what resources are available.
- The need to know what is happening in the short to medium term e.g. what happens after March 2001.

Other issues:

- The timescale was very tight.
- Tensions between Pilots and GOs/CSNU on Partnership structures. If some are seen to work well in a particular area shouldn't they be allowed?
- The need for a full-time Pilot coordinator with adequate secretariat and political support.
- Clarifying and determining the role of the Connexions Chief Executive.
- Not giving the Pilot coordinator enough muscle.

96. The following are the main good practice lessons that partners identified in interviews and in the monthly reports; they are direct quotations.

Table 5 Pilot's good practice pointers concerning the development of the Strategic Partnerships

Good practice pointers
Developing an effective Board
➢ The Board must be corporate, flexible, move quickly, embrace offers of help, be genuinely focused on the customer and understand tensions between partners.

- Be clear as to which organisations should be involved on the Board, in managing services and those who would be consulted; agree the strategic vision first and this should be based on what we can do to improve young people's preparation for adult working life.
- The need is to establish clear lines of decision-making, accountability, operational planning and implementation.
- Using an independent chair can overcome some partnership tensions. But avoid having the Chair and MD from the same organisation.
- The involvement of the Chief Executives of partner organisations on Boards is paramount.
- Use appropriate representatives at different times. At the start when you are developing services you do not need a Director, when considering legal structures you need the Director.
- Have an agreed Memorandum of Operations that defines Board roles, membership, chairing and schedule of meetings.
- Have a proper cycle of meetings e.g. Week 1 LMC; Week 3 Board; Week 5 LMC; Week 7 Board etc. – to facilitate the synchronization of debates, decision making and effective communication.
- Rather than impose a rationalisation of existing partnerships – schedule all the related partnerships to meet on the same day with sequential agendas/meetings – the idea would be to juxtapose all the various partnership meetings such that a rationalisation naturally occurs.
- Use existing structures and partnerships if possible.
- Try and define which issues will be relevant to whom.

Developing Connexions requires time, leadership, commitment and ownership:

- There is a tremendous burden on the Pilot Coordinators – the time commitment should not be underestimated.
- Connexions needs leadership.
- The size and diversity of the agencies Connexions needs to communicate with means you need a discriminating approach and different methods of involvement and communication.
- No one has ownership; if you don't have ownership there is no effective control.
- The real challenge is maintaining commitment whilst also developing a more effective management structure.
- The early implementation team was too small and too exclusive however its size has enabled rapid decision-making and a focus on action.
- People need to think in terms of Connexions, not in terms of Careers Service or Youth Service.
- Allow people a settling in period before they come up to speed.
- To engage in pre-Board meeting preparations, especially in relation to briefing of individual members and exploring member's views on scheduled decisions/agenda items.
- Recognise the need to invest in the Board, to invest in the process of change. Invest not just in Board meetings but also in development sessions around team building, articulating and agreeing the mission, vision and core values for the new Connexions service. What will an effective service look like?

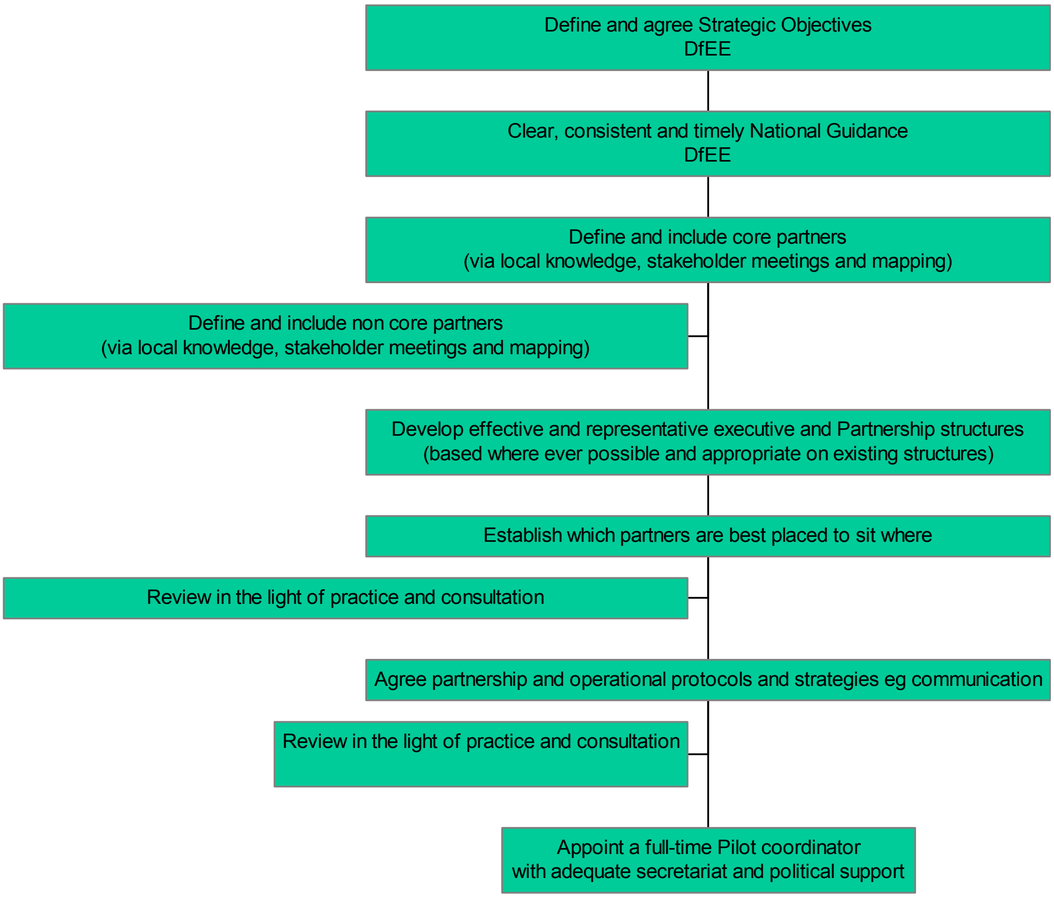
Effectively involving Partners means using a range of targeted messages, methods and opportunities to contribute:

- The need for motivators to get people involved, especially money, because Connexions is a national not a local initiative.
- Having each Board member responsible for a discrete task.
- Use Task Groups to expand representation. This enhances delegation, ownership and

widens representation. For example, in one Pilot every member of the Board leads a Task Group this gives them a role/responsibility in order to make Connexions real.
- Use people with time and knowledge rather than rank.
- Work with partners to identify areas of specialism and overlap.
- Workshops – we have had good turnout but it is almost impossible to get the breadth of representation you need. We need more targeted approaches so we held a series of targeted presentations and this enabled us to get closer to certain groups.
- Try and link the Connexions Strategy in with other strategies and projects in the area.
- Build on existing networks e.g. one Pilot has Youth Area Networks that bring together youth support service providers within wards in the City (e.g. Police, Youth Service etc.) and Connexions is linking in with these.

97. Based on the experience of the Pilots we suggest the following model for developing the Connexions Partnerships (see Figure 4). It begins with the agreement of strategic objectives and the development of guidance at a national level. Local partnerships were then given the responsibility of defining and involving core and non-core partners and the developing appropriate structures for their involvement. These structures and protocols must be reviewed in the light of consultation and experience. We also suggest appointing a full-time Pilot coordinator with adequate secretariat support.

Figure 4 Model for developing Connexions Partnerships



Source: Interviews with Pilot Coordinators and key partners, GHK

2.3.3 Cultural impacts

98. Perhaps the biggest impact *and* challenge has been changes in the way people and agencies work on their own and with others in delivering services to young people. The

successes have been:

- The bringing together of agencies and support professionals across a wide range of management groups from Strategic Partnerships to Strand or Task working groups. This has included public, private and non-profit organisations and service organisations with different philosophical underpinnings about the way support services should be delivered to young people. This has never happened to this extent before.
- The success of these groups in working together to develop legal entities and agree the nature of service delivery.
- Agreement on the role of the Personal Adviser, the target client group and method and location of delivery.

99. However, the extent that the Connexions Service is a new service incorporating new ways of working and new ways of delivery does vary from Pilot area to Pilot area. The challenges were:

- Overcoming existing philosophical and territorial boundaries in developing services to young people;
- Deciding on the extent to which young people should be involved in the design and development of services and at what level;
- The extent to which support services to young people look and feel different to what has gone on before. Some Partners have said that Connexions is what they would have done anyway given additional resources. However, the Connexions Service has to about more than having access to additional resources. The test of the success of Connexions will be the extent to which the eight principles (see page 1) have been implemented within Partnership management and delivery structures.

100. Pilot Coordinators and partners do not want a re-badged Careers, Youth or any other Service, the status quo was not an option.

2.3.4 Communication

101. Communication between national and local levels and between local partners has been an issue that many partners have raised. In the previous section some partners felt that communication between the DfEE and the Pilots could be improved especially regarding the objectives of the Connexions Service and guidance on Pilot development. Similar issues have been raised by various partners about intra Pilot communication and several methods and strategies have been devised to ensure effective communication.

102. Communication has proved to be an issue:

- Between the DfEE and Pilot Coordinators – as we have seen, some Pilot Coordinators felt that communication, particularly concerning guidance and objectives, could have been clearer, more consistent and more timely.
- Between the DfEE and other key partners. Several key partners raised concerns that the DfEE only communicates with the Pilot Coordinator in the Pilots. For example, information would be sent to the Pilot Coordinator in, say a Careers Service, and then they would distribute amongst the other key partners. There were two concerns. Firstly, there were concerns that this caused delays. Distributing and/or receiving information via the internal mail systems in large organisations could sometimes be a slow process, especially when partners were facing tight deadlines. These partners would have preferred to receive information directly. A much smaller number of partners, especially

significant core partners, felt that as a matter of course they should have received direct communications from the DfEE.

- Between other national departments and sponsored organisations (e.g. the Home Office and the Police). Several partners also felt that more could have been done to communicate the message of Connexions to partner organisations by the DfEE and other Government Departments. For example, Connexions Partnerships often-included Government funded agencies, such as, the Police, Probation Service, Housing Associations, Health Authorities, schools and colleges etc. Some partners felt that Government Departments, like the Home Office, could have done more to communicate Connexions to organisations they directly sponsored.
- Within partner and stakeholder organisations. A few partners felt that there was not a communications problem between senior people across partner organisations but that there was within partner organisations at lower tiers of staff. They felt that there was a responsibility for senior representatives and Board members to more effectively communicate Connexions within their organisations. For example, whilst the LEA, Head teachers and Principals may be involved and informed about Connexions, other school and college staff (including some with management responsibility for Personal Advisers) may know very little but may have greater responsibility on operational matters.
- Between lead and other key partners. The main communication issue between partners tended to be misunderstandings based on different philosophies and values and was viewed as part of the significant Connexions learning curve.
- Between lead and key partners and other stakeholders. A handful of partners felt that there were issues in communicating between core and non-core partners. These tended to be mainly logistical problems, for example, identifying appropriate VCS agencies. Some, mainly VCS partners, felt that they could have been involved earlier.

103. One of the main reasons that there were so few communications problems at a local level was because of the resources that most Pilots had devoted to this aspect. The vast majority of Pilots had communicated extensively with other stakeholders and young people, using a variety of methods.

104. Table 6 shows examples of the strategies and efforts the Pilots have developed to enhance communication with partners and key stakeholders. (NB communication with young people and schools, colleges and other training providers is dealt with separately in subsequent sections).

105. For example, it was felt that as far as communication strategies were concerned it was important to identify (via the mapping exercise, local knowledge and local directories etc.) who is out there and to continue to develop this contact list. Existing networks may be fine but there were felt to be limits to their effectiveness. There were likely to be many potential stakeholders so different methods had to be developed to communicate with different agencies or groups of people. This will require the development of different methods and messages for different audiences.

Table 6 Pilot's key good practice pointers concerning communications within the Pilots

Good practice pointers **Communication strategies**: ➢ Use existing networks. ➢ Identify audiences and then define the message and the medium. In particular attempt to understand the values and norms of the organisations and their respective professions.

- Consider developing a centralized communications function – for consistency of messages, economies of scale but also to offer support for local communication initiatives.
- Good communications were crucial but difficult over a large area therefore, in one Pilot, each LMC is to have a communications strategy.
- The size and diversity of the agencies that Connexions needs to communicate with require a more discriminating approach and different methods of communication.
- Effective and appropriate communications need to persist over time.

106. The Pilots developed a range of consultation and communication mechanisms. Virtually all of the Pilots held at least one Stakeholder conference whereby all relevant local organisations (represented by more than one hundred individuals) were invited to a day event including presentations and workshops. These conferences were perceived as useful not merely as a means of communicating Connexions but also in relation to filtering future contacts. Discussions, feedback forms, reply paid envelopes etc. were used to determine which agencies out of the hundreds were the key ones to involve.

107. It was important to provide ongoing consultation mechanisms and the Pilots had adopted a variety of methods – newsletters and web sites included – to both keep partners informed and to promote Connexions to an even wider audience.

108. Also of paramount importance were communications within the Pilot structure especially to operational and delivery staff. Most Pilots had several strands in which people are working out what Connexions means on the ground. It was important to develop communications mechanisms that fed these lessons and good practice back and across Connexions managers and delivery staff.

109. It must be remembered that communication is a two way street, it benefits Connexions as well as partner organisations. For example, involvement of certain agencies had raised awareness of other issues, sexual health and mental health. Both issues are very important to young people but may have been at the periphery of local Connexions agendas prior to contact with these agencies. Some Pilots had also received seconded staff with particular specialities, for example, a senior manager from a health service, who now works as a Connexions Development Consultant on health issues.

110. At a local level there could be a tension between the different messages that various partners were disseminating. In a few Pilots communications had been centralised to ensure a consistent message. However, not all partners were happy with such centralisation.

111. Most of the communications issues in Table 7 were concerned with the national level. There was a call to develop a communications strategy that could be applied at the local level. Developing effective communications was an issue that all local partnerships were facing and trying to work out, and the development of a national strategy or facilitating ideas and good practice between Pilots is possibly a role for the CSNU.

Table 7 Pilot's key issues concerning communications within the Pilots

Key issues

National level:

- DfEE treat partnerships as coherent wholes whereas they are loose confederations and so information sent to a lead contact may have distribution problems so people may think there is a lack of information from the DfEE.

- There was no communications strategy from the DfEE on how Connexions should be promoted, especially to young people.
- A great deal of time is taken up explaining what Connexions is or meant to be and then explaining it again when the DfEE changes its mind.
- YOTs and Police should have been made aware of Connexions via the Home Office.
- The DfEE should have communicated Connexions better to schools and colleges.
- The need for the CSNU to provide examples of good policy and practice in an 'Evidence Bank' possibly as an adjunct to the web site. For example, on continuing professional development for Personal Advisers, effective practice in the field, what role can the voluntary sector play and consequently what are the best mechanisms and structures for ensuring their participation in the Connexions Service, and provide intelligence briefings on various Government policies and their implications for Connexions.
- Furthermore, the CSNU has an essential role to play in ensuring the learning process operates effectively. All the Partnerships are busy and so cannot organise the dissemination of their own 'good practice' etc. but were more than willing to share whatever information they had if someone else would organise the process.
- Facilitate networking e.g. whom to talk to about what.
- Find out and provide information on what the Partnerships need to know.
- The web site is being used as an irregular tool for dissemination of information. It needs to be timely, reliable, comprehensive and accessible.
- Deliver a national awareness raising campaign – on the scale of that associated with the New Deal

Pilot level:

- There is a need to ensure consistent messages in the press and this requires central control of press releases. But LMC members must have responsibility for their own communications.
- There is a problem with understanding Connexions. There is concern about the messages being passed down within the Police, Health Authority, schools etc.
- Partners need to cascade information effectively within their own organisation.

112. Figure 5 shows an idealised communications strategy based on the good practice and key issues raised by partners. The main elements were the need for clear, consistent and timely messages *at all levels,* in addition to the need to develop appropriate messages and mediums for that particular audience.

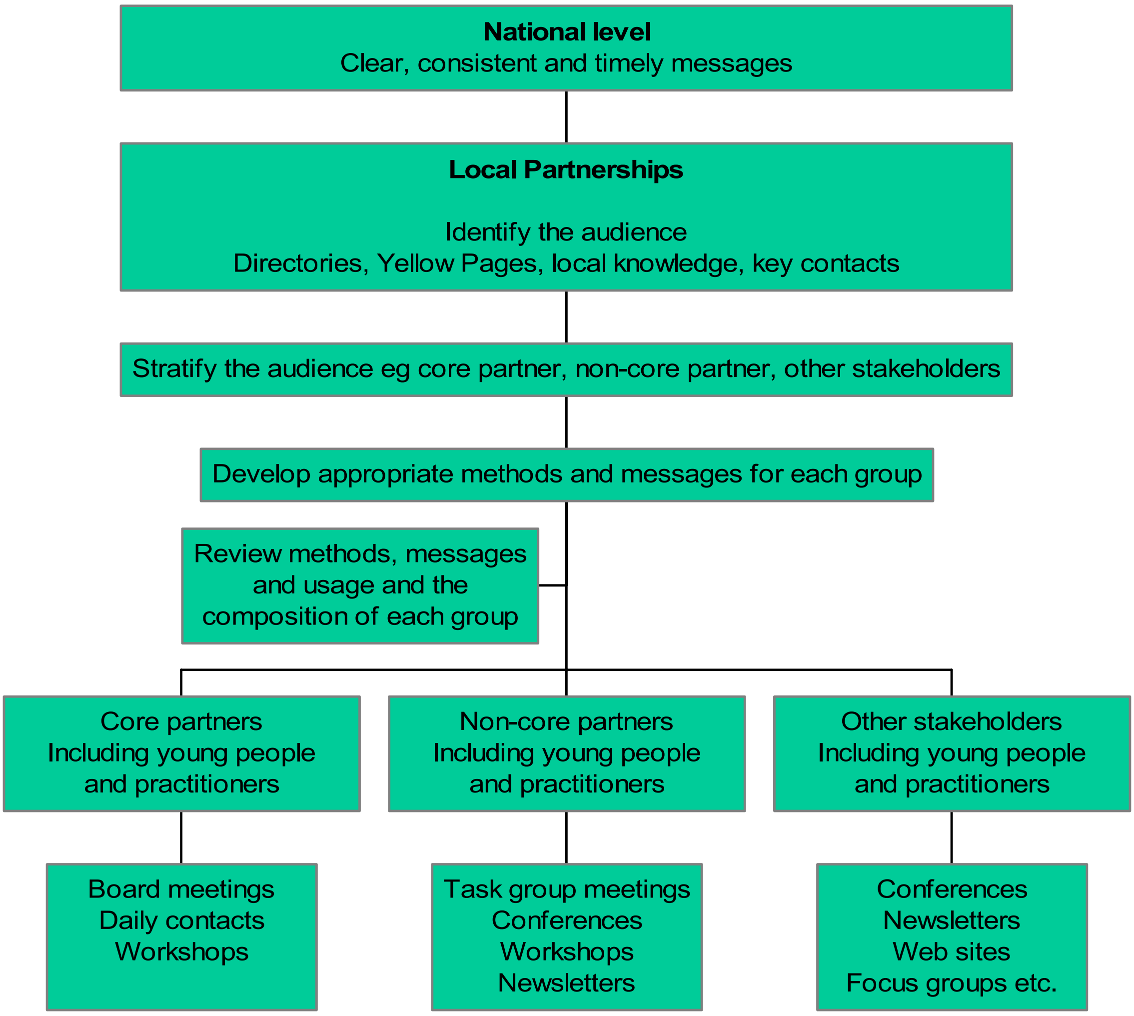
113. One of the key messages coming out of the Pilots was that you cannot communicate enough. Some Pilots felt that the profile of other national initiatives e.g. New Deal was much higher than Connexions and they would like to see a similar emphasis given to Connexions.

114. The other key messages was that this effort has to be maintained over time as representatives from partner agencies change, new agencies come on board and the nature of the Connexions Partnership and Service changes.

115. The main advantage that Connexions has brought to communications between partners was that it has 'formalised the informal'. In the past, careers service and youth workers may have met with Police officers, housing officers and health authority workers. But these channels tended to be informal, ad hoc and dependent on the character of the individuals. When people left their posts it might be difficult to sustain the channels of communication. As one Principal Youth Officer said:

"In the past I might have spoken with [the Chief Executive of the Careers Service] maybe two or three times a year. Now I am speaking with him two or three times a week."

Figure 5 Developing a communications strategy



Source: Interviews with Pilot Coordinators and key partners, GHK

2.3.5 Legal structures

116. When researchers first met with representatives of the CSNU and GOs, one of the major issues they mentioned was determining legal structures. In most Pilots, legal structures were not an issue. But where they were, they took up a large amount of time and resources.

117. The Connexions documents 'The Best Start in Life for Every Young Person' and the 'Prospectus and Specification' help describe what was envisaged for the structure of the Connexions Partnerships:

"Connexions Partnerships will be small, strategic bodies."

"The Connexions Partnership will need to demonstrate…that those bodies named on the face of the Learning and Skills Bill…have been engaged in discussions on the constitution of the partnership in their area…"

118. The organisations identified that should be involved in discussions were LSCs, local authorities, health authorities, Police authorities, Probation Committees, Primary Care Trusts, YOTs, employers, the VCS, and there was reference to engaging with young people and ethnic minority groups. The guidance says more about which organisations should be consulted (but not necessarily by what means or how often) than who should be formally represented.[10]

119. Partnerships cannot be profit-making organisations because if they were they would not be able to receive a Government Grant or other funding e.g. the National Lottery. This is an important point as it rules out private sector careers companies as the organisation for the management of the Connexions services.

120. Partnerships also had to be fully accountable to customers and stakeholders, particularly to its young clients.

121. At least three partners questioned the need for a legal structure. They pointed to the YOT structure as a potential model for the delivery of Connexions. This involved having a lead authority alongside a partnership – rather than establishing a new institution. YOTs have membership from a range of organisations, a mix of professional staff, and are perceived to effectively deliver services through multi-agency working.

122. All of the Pilots (excluding those not covering the whole LSC area e.g. Oldham) were proposing separate legal entities for Connexions. There were three options that people were considering – a company limited by guarantee, a charity and a lead authority within a partnership.

123. The method chosen by the large majority of Pilots was a company limited by guarantee. In three Pilots this was based on a transmutation from the existing Careers Service or similar partner organisation. There were advantages and disadvantages to whichever option was chosen especially in more complex geographic and political areas.

124. The issue of the legal structure was one that was being discussed amongst all of the relevant Pilots and one that will be faced soonest by the Phase One services. All were having (or will have) the same discussions. A few Pilots brought in outside consultants to help them explore the issue. One Pilot at least spent many days thrashing out these issues. Some discussions involved very technical (and very expensive) legal arguments that may be being discussed in several Pilots at the same time. It may be a role for the CSNU to circumvent much of these discussions by funding legal advice to explore and rule on issues of accountability, which structures are appropriate and which are not.

2.3.6 Funding

125. The 13 Pilots between them received more than £7,000,000. Figure 6 shows the DfEE’s end of year allocation by Pilot area.

126. Seven Pilots received funding of £700,000 or more. In addition to this funding, several Pilots received additional funds to meet further development costs or for specific activities e.g. additional mapping activities. This additional funding amounted to about £200,000 across five Pilot areas. Funding was based on the needs and activities identified in the Pilots’ proposals to DfEE.

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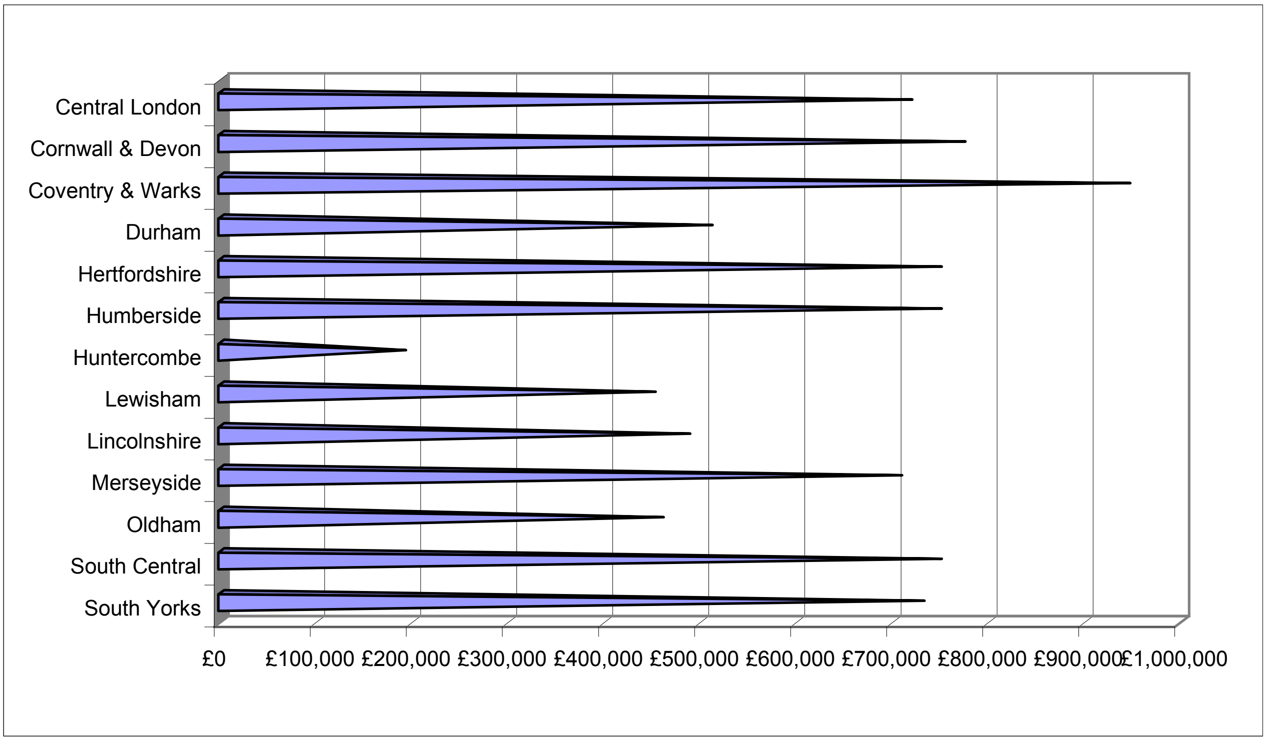
[10] ‘Structural Options for the Strategic Partnership’, SWA Consulting Limited for Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions Partnership.

Figure 6 Level of DfEE funding by Pilot area



Source: Interviews with Pilot Coordinators and key partners, GHK

127. There was also a range of additional funds that partners brought to the Pilots themselves, mainly funding-in-kind. Although it was difficult to put a precise value on it, in one area this 'in-kind' funding probably amounted to about £600,000. This included about £100,000 for the development of a One Stop Shop, £75,000 for senior management time, £375,000 worth of Personal Advisers and other delivery staff, and £75,000 on developing and printing promotional and other information plus stationery.

128. This was an extreme case and we calculate that in the larger Pilot areas e.g. Cornwall and Devon, South Yorkshire etc. that partners contributed funding worth about £250,000.

129. Four Pilots were also trying to get additional funding from the ESF, GO, New Start and Learning Gateway to further resource the services they were developing. We are not sure whether all of these additional bids have been successful.

130. To date, the main issues raised by some partners with regard to funding were:

- Whether the first year's funding will be spent within the time period given delays to contracting and to setting-up operations.
- The need for caution and to ensure that the Connexions funding was not used as a substitute for existing funds – thus not creating nor facilitating any real added value.
- The tendency of representatives to be protectionist towards their own funding and the difficulty in developing a collective pot of funds that can be directed towards Connexions. Guidance is needed on what funding is included, how is it to be accounted for across different local authority boundaries; the extent to which additional Connexions funding is to compensate for an historical relative lack of local authority funding or should be targeted to need and so not distributed evenly across the area nor agencies. Whilst the intent was to move towards joint planning of provision, it was still unclear what each of the partners was bringing to the table.

- The need to un-pack the different funding streams and the rules and regulations associated with each. Simplify the whole funding arrangements from many 'bits and ad hoc funds'.
- Providing funding in advance of the 'go live date' for essential preparation e.g. the hiring of a CEO. The current arrangement with the Development Funds is inadequate – the development funds are only awarded on the basis of a specific task/project but what is needed is a general budget line to pay for preparatory activities.
- Clarifying who retains control of the funds within certain management structures.
- How does the funding regime work when young people move between different Connexions areas – does the money move with the young person?
- Informing the Partnerships of related funding initiatives, especially in schools. An example was given that an announcement on funding said funds were being devolved from central government to schools to tackle disaffection.
- Funding and allocations. Essentially, Connexions will eventually see a change in the basis of allocating funds. At the local level this may be contentious. It was partly contentious because the recipients were 'used to' a regular allocation of funds. For example, in the past schools were given an annual sum to fund the provision of careers libraries in schools, but now the Connexions Service may want to centralise information resources and not devolve the funding for schools. This creates problems and a feeling that Connexions may be using 'their funds', it also removes devolved decision-making. Contentious decisions can end up in local papers etc. Partners need to anticipate the reaction to their decisions, communicate the basis for change effectively and plan carefully for any difficult reactions.
- What is to be the distribution of resources within partnerships, i.e. across LMC areas and to what extent this should reflect existing funds for youth support services or levels of need. As one partner said, the spending per head (in their area) varies from £70 to £200 for youth support services across LMCs. Should Connexions even out this variation in resource allocations? Will Connexions reward low levels of spending? This respondent suggested a formula that provided funding to current levels in each LMC area (based on current Careers Service and Youth Service spend) and that the Board would then discuss the distribution of any remainder. Another partner suggested a formula that provided the same per capita spend in each area (based on the population of young people) and then additional resources based on levels of deprivation. Though this would also require a formula to measure levels of deprivation.

131. A national funding discussion document was available that explored the advantages and disadvantages for different funding regimes. For example, should it be funding based simply on the potential client population or should it include levels of deprivation. If levels of deprivation are included which indicator should be used – attainment of GCSEs, levels of youth offending/unemployment/non-participation in education or training, DoE deprivation indices etc.

132. If it is based partly on the population of young people and levels of deprivation then what should be the weighting between the two – 50:50, 60:40 etc? At the time, a final decision on the funding formula has not yet been made but the document does ensure that there will be (at the very minimum) no diminution of levels of funding for youth support services.

133. As the partnerships develop, especially those progressing towards Phase 1, the issue of funding, its distribution and the levels of partners' contributions will come increasingly to the fore. In one sense it is anticipated as a real test of the partnership as to whether agreements can be reached. In another sense it was recognised that there was reluctance for partners to commit funds until the allocation from Central Government had been made clear. The next few months will prove critical.

2.4 Local Management Committees

2.4.1 Membership of LMCs

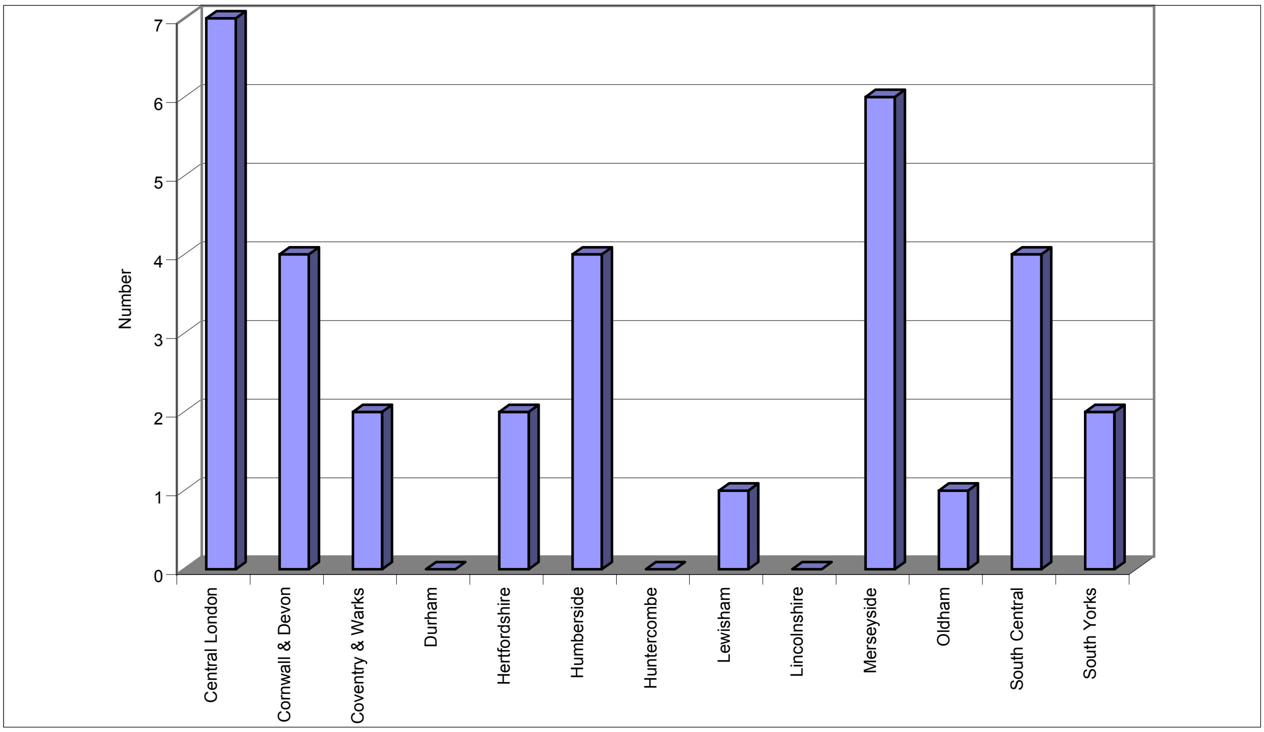
134. National guidance in the 'Prospectus and Specification' states that:

> *"The local management committee will be responsible for ensuring that the contribution of all relevant services to the Connexions Service locally are coordinated and a seamless service is offered to young people in their area. This may be expected to involve:*
>
> *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.*
>
> *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."*

135. The number of Local Management Committees (LMCs) varied considerably between Pilot areas as Figure 7 shows. In London and Greater Merseyside there were going to be more than five LMCs, whilst Durham and Lincolnshire were not planning any. Two Pilots, Lewisham and Oldham, had been operating strategic partnerships and they would become an LMC in themselves when the wider partnership was put in place. Huntercombe is a unique Pilot based at a YOI.

136. Lincolnshire were not planning any LMCs because they wanted to develop other task or strand groups based around particular issues or geographical areas.

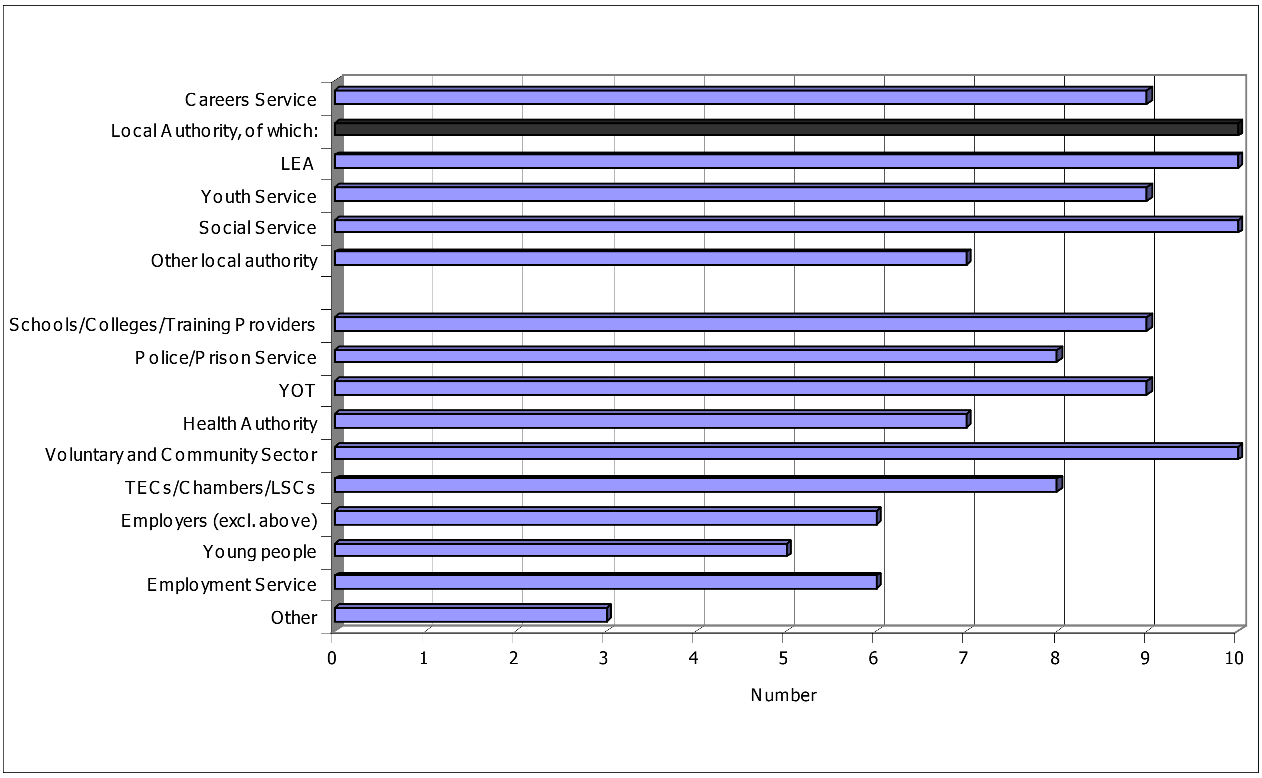
Figure 7 Number of LMCs in each Pilot



Source: Interviews with lead and other key partners, GHK

137. Figure 8 shows the membership of LMCs in the ten Pilot areas that were planning to have them. Local authorities and the VCS were represented on them all, and Careers Services, Schools/Colleges/Training Providers, and YOTs were each represented on nine.

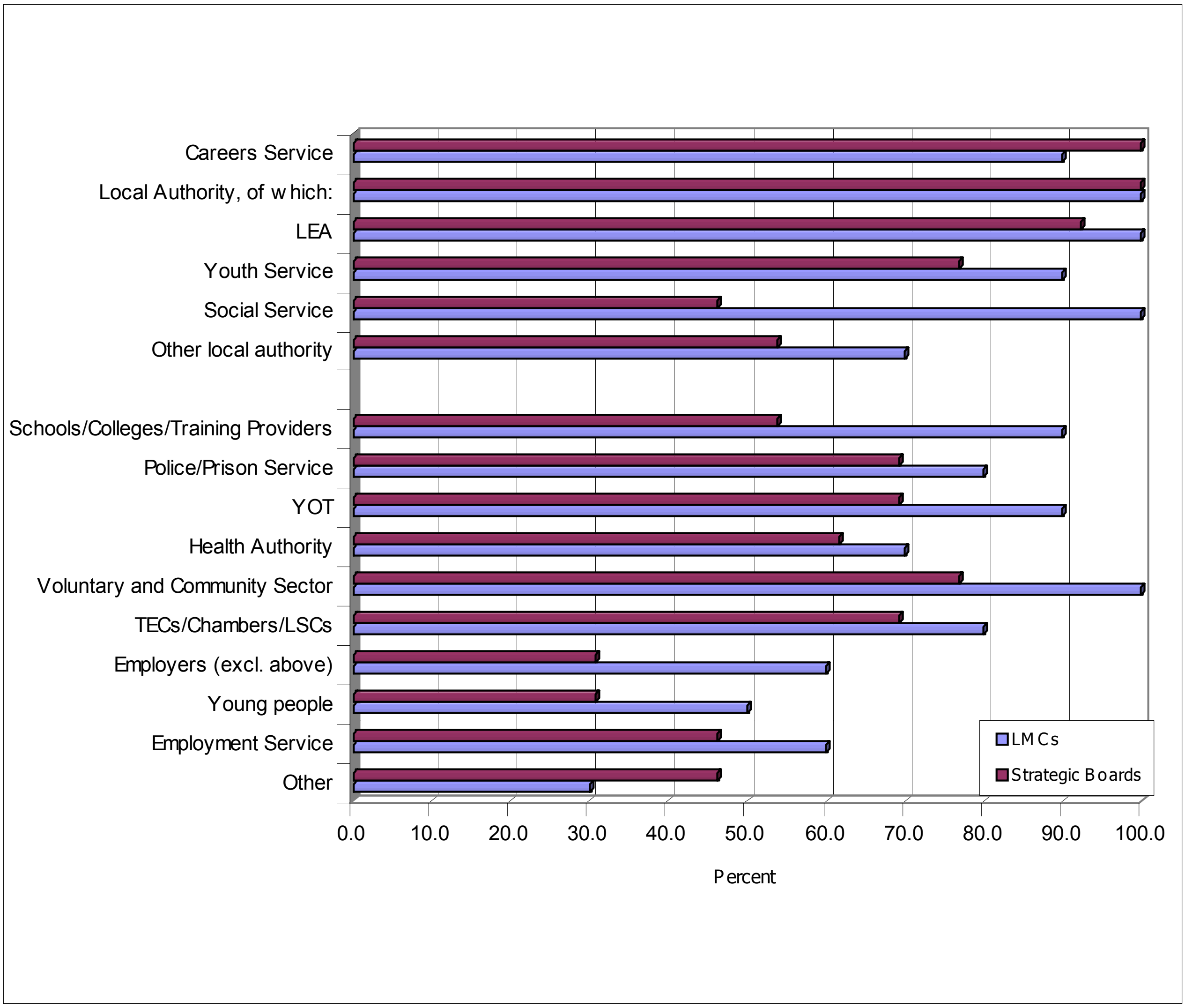
Figure 8 Membership of LMCs



Source: March's monthly report, GHK

138. Figure 9 compares the membership of LMCs and Boards.[11] It shows that there was much broader representation of organisations on LMCs than Boards, particularly amongst non-statutory and non-core organisations. All organisations, except Careers Services and 'other' organisations were more likely to be represented on LMCs than Boards.

Figure 9 Comparing the membership of LMCs and Boards



Source: March's monthly report, GHK

[11] We were able to get the organisational make-up of LMCs in ten Pilots and are comparing this with the Board profiles from all 13 Pilots. For example, the Careers Service sits on the LMCs of nine Pilots (90%), and on all of the Pilot Boards (100%).

Table 8 Membership of LMCs

	Cornwall and Devon				Coventry & Warwickshire		Hertfordshire		Humberside			
	Plymouth	Torbay	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Devon	Coventry	Warks	St Albans	Brox-bourne	NE Lincs	North Lincs	East Riding of Yorks	Hull
Connexions	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0
Careers Service	4	2	1	1	1	2	5	3	0	4	2	3
LEA	5	3	0	3	0	2	6	6	1	1	3	3
Youth Service	1	2	1	2	2	0	8	6	0	4	1	2
Social Services	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	2
Other LA Dept/Not specified	2	5	1	1	1	2	6	0	1	1	1	2
Schools/Colleges/Training Providers	2	4	2	2	3	2	16	16	3	3	3	3
Police/Probation/Prison	2	2	1	4	1	1	3	1	1	1	0	0
YOT	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	1
Health Authorities	3	3	1	3	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	1
Voluntary and Community sector	2	3	1	2	1	1	8	0	1	1	2	5
TEC/Chamber/LSC	0	1	1	1	1	1	5	2	1	1	1	3
Employers (excl. TEC/Chamber/LSC)	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young people	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
Employment Service	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	8	1	1	1	8
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**25**	**28**	**13**	**23**	**15**	**16**	**77**	**48**	**16**	**19**	**17**	**35**

Table 8 continued

	Lewi-sham	Oldham	Greater Merseyside					South Central				South Yorks		Total
			Halton	Wirral	Sefton	L'pool	Knows-ley	Hants	Isle of Wight	Ports-mouth	Soton	Barnsley/ Doncaster /Roth'ham	Sheffield	
Connexions	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	**12**
Careers Service	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	**47**
LEA	1	1	2	5	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	3	4	**56**
Youth Service	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	3	**43**
Social Services	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	**23**
Other LA Dept/Not specified	0	4	0	5	3	0	0	4	0	1	0	3	4	**47**
Schools/Colleges/Training Providers	1	2	1	6	5	2	2	2	4	3	2	4	6	**99**
Police/Probation/Prison	0	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	**27**
YOT	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	**16**
Health Authorities	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	2	**32**
Voluntary and Community sector	0	2	0	1	5	0	1	3	0	3	2	2	5	**51**
TEC/Chamber/LSC	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	**25**
Employers (excl. TEC/Chamber/LSC)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Young people	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**8**
Employment Service	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	**11**
Housing	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**6**
Other	0	3	0	2	0	3	4	0	7	0	0	0	1	**52**
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**3**	**19**	**6**	**33**	**24**	**13**	**13**	**12**	**20**	**16**	**9**	**21**	**37**	**558**

Source: Partner Interviews, GHK

139. Table 8 shows the membership of LMCs in nine of the ten Pilots with LMCs. We did not receive the organisational composition of the seven Central London LMCs.

140. Together, there were over 180 organisations represented on these 11 LMCs. The size varied from three to 28 and there was a wide range of organisations represented. Young people were represented on 4 LMCs.

141. Similar issues of objectives, communications and attendance were also present at the LMC level as well as at Board level.

142. Issues concerning the size and composition of LMCs were very similar to those facing the Boards e.g. effectiveness versus representation, which organisations to invite, who represents which sector etc. (see page 14). But it was clear that LMCs had enabled the Pilots to broaden representation and expand the range of people involved. Some Pilots were also discussing having geographical representation lower than the LMC level to represent, for example, District Councils. Some LMCs, for example Warwickshire, could cover a wide range of Districts, from very rural to urban/industrialised.

2.4.2 The roles and responsibilities of LMCs

143. However, as we have seen, there was considerable discussion over the relative weight of the LMCs and Strategic Boards, within Pilots and between Pilots. Some Pilots believed in subsidiarity, that the lowest level should have the most power, but in others the LMCs were viewed more as discussion forums. In one Pilot, all the LMC Chairs were represented on the Board, so there was a strong link between the two levels.

144. The role of the LMC was explained in the 'Prospectus and Specification' as:

> *"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. 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."*

145. The Piloting of the Connexions Service led to different interpretations by the Pilot areas of the roles of LMCs and the division of responsibility between them and the Strategic Partnerships. Should the LMCs be responsible for planning service delivery, recruiting Personal Advisers, developing ICT systems, mapping need, defining targets etc? If LMCs were given responsibility for e.g. the recruitment of Personal Advisers, do they decide the number of Personal Advisers that are needed or just the recruitment processes. What would happen to Partnership quality standards if the recruitment processes in different LMCs were dissimilar, or if one LMC area did not want to involve young people or involve them only in particular ways?

146. As with many elements of the Connexions Service these questions were being worked out and when they have been are likely to vary between Partnership areas.

147. All Pilots with LMCs see the relationship between the Strategic Partnership and the LMC as a two way process. The Board would provide financial, operational and strategic guidance of the Partnership overall with the LMC providing advice and information on local needs and requirements, at a policy and a delivery level.

148. However, whilst there was general agreement on the consultative role of the LMC, there was less unanimity on the issue of whether or not the LMC was the appropriate decision making forum for Connexions. This stems from a concern that the LMC is not a legal entity and as such it is a voluntary body with no accountability. As representative from two Connexions Pilots comment:

> *"The LMC won't be able to manage. The contracting is with the partnership. The LMC will be advisory, influential, consultative, but the contract will be held by the partnership."*
> *"LMCs are voluntary groups of people, who could just walk away at any stage - there is no accountability. Their role will be more advisory, to make recommendations how the funding should be spent, to inform the decision-making process."*

149. One Pilot formally investigated this issue and concluded that:

> *"The LMC does not carry the obligations, duties and responsibilities of approved or accountable bodies and is not, therefore, liable as a partnership for compliance, defects, defaults or irregularities."*

150. In contrast, another Pilot wanted accountable LMCs. They proposed that the LMCs were responsible inter alia both for the, *"management of the service delivery and for ensuring accountability of the service to clients."*

151. The term Local Management Committee was a basis of confusion in some areas as it raised the issue of what is meant by 'management' if there is no management and accountability.

152. The term 'Management Committee' also meant different things to different partners. With this in mind one Pilot was using the term Local Reference Groups to clarify the distinction between Strategic Partnership and local coordination. There were debates *within* Partnerships as well:

> *"The objective of the first meetings of the two LMCs has been to discuss their role. The area managers had prepared draft terms of reference based on Connexions background information and information from the Strategic Partnership. However, the discussion during both meetings went different ways, i.e. one LMC saw itself as a decision-making group, whereas the other LMC went for being a consultative group."*

153. Many Pilots feel that genuine integrated delivery was aspirational. So far, LMCs have worked extremely well as an *advisory* group within the Pilot. The key issue for the LMC, as Pilots developed into the full-blown Connexions Service (as Phase Ones or beyond), was to decide on how the group may evolve. Will the LMCs have advisory or management functions or a combination of the two? Furthermore, these decisions were being made in the context of confusion and a lack of understanding about the role, responsibilities and funding issues.

154. The roles and functions of an LMC was an important area for Connexions that would

benefit from facilitating good practice lessons, key learning points and producing guidance.

155. In one Pilot (Central London) there were two LMC models developing and a paper was produced characterising them and exploring the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Table 9 Two LMC models

Most LMCs said how keen many other agencies are to be involved. They had concerns about developing an appropriate balance between proper representation and practical functioning. There seem to be two models developing which are trying to do this.

2.4.2.1 Open LMC with an executive group

Westminster and Southwark have kept the membership of the LMC very large with wide criteria for joining. The membership list is continually updated and reviewed on a regular basis. In recognition of the difficulties of decision-making in large groups, an executive group will be set up to assist in coordinating operations. Membership will include those partners seen to be at the core of the service.

In Westminster, membership will consist of: LB Westminster's Education Directorate, LB Westminster's Children and Families, Capital Careers, a school or voluntary organisation and the local Connexions manager. In Southwark, it will be the LMC chair, the Deputy Chair and the Operations Team, which currently comprises a Connexions manager, the Youth Service business manager and a Connexions administrator.

The executive group will then advise the LMC on the strategies for meeting identified objectives. This, to an extent mirrors the Drug Action Team/Drug Reference Group split with Westminster cited as a model of good practice, and saw as translatable to Connexions in general.

Advantages

- A wide range of interested parties will be included in the process;
- There is a ready – made forum for consultation;
- The Connexions Service has a clear identity.

Disadvantages

- The extent to which this group will be able to make effective decisions is curtailed;
- Accountability between the executive and larger group can be confused;
- It will take a lot more servicing.

Application and good practice

This model would seem to be appropriate forum for the discussion of young people's issues are lacking and the voluntary sector infrastructure is weak. Care will need to be taken of how the membership of the executive group is constituted to ensure that it remains representative. The decision-making process and lines of communication also need to be transparent.

The larger group could easily become, or appear to be, a rubber stamp for the decisions of the executive.

2.4.2.2 Closed LMC with accountable members

Boroughs such as Camden and Islington are adopting a second model of an LMC. The LMC is a lot smaller but all members have specific roles and spheres of representation within the group. New members are only allowed to join on the basis of their contribution to the group and where it is clear to whom they are accountable.

Advantages

- Simpler decision making progress;
- Clearer lines of accountability;
- Ability to respond more quickly.

Disadvantages

- Some groups will feel marginalized;
- While the ability to make decisions quickly is there, accountability may be lost.

Application and good practice

This model would seem most applicable where there are already accepted avenues for discussions of young people's issues across agencies and sectors.

It may be applicable where the voluntary sector infrastructure is strong or where the local VCS has a small capacity.

156. It was important, therefore, that the structure of LMCs does vary to respect and represent local diversity.

157. Very few LMCs had stated strategic objectives and this probably increased the confusion as to what their roles and responsibilities were. Instead LMCs had been tasked with developmental or operational issues. For example, LMCs in one Pilot area had developed Business Plans for the Phase One rollout, these included delivery targets for the medium term and the service offer to particular groups (e.g. care leavers). In another Pilot area, each LMC had developed a local delivery plan and was developing Service Level Agreements with providers.

158. Just as the freedom given to the Pilots has led to different interpretations of core Connexions components (e.g. the structure of the partnership Board) so there was variation in the approaches LMCs had developed to their allotted tasks. For example:

- **Management of Personal Advisers**. In one Pilot area, one LMC area the management of Personal Advisers was the responsibility of the host organisation within which the Personal Adviser was placed (e.g. a housing organisation) whereas in another LMC, Personal Advisers report to a Connexions service manager (because this was how they managed their Learning Gateway Personal Advisers.
- **Coordination of services**. In a Pilot one LMC was utilising its existing system of local district partnership groups made up of local voluntary agencies and representatives from statutory authorities. The other LMC developed an overarching group made up of representatives of local and voluntary groups to reflect the needs of local areas within it.

159. Whilst there was evidence of local flexibility, most components of the Connexions service were similar from LMC area to LMC area e.g. the role of Personal Advisers, branding and marketing etc. This was mainly due to the fact that the Strategic Partnership was established first and has had to address these issues. It will be interesting to see how components of the Service develop differently between LMC areas.

160. Whilst local flexibility was central to the Connexions Service, quality standards throughout Partnership areas need to be defined. No Pilots reported that the level and quality of service management and delivery varied between LMC areas. In order to ensure that whilst services may be different, quality is not compromised, one Pilot will use a system called Viewpoint during its Phase One. Viewpoint is a software package that will be used by the Personal Advisers to obtain the views of young people every year on the quality of the service delivery. Personal Advisers used laptops and specially designed 'non-

confrontational' software. This created a database of responses around a series of issues e.g. access and use of the service etc.

161. Table 10 shows good practice pointers raised specifically about LMCs during the interviews and in monthly reports. These were in addition to the good practice pointers concerning the Strategic Partnerships. A key good practice pointer was that the LMCs must be given important responsibilities or people will lose interest and that their roles and responsibilities should be clear.

Table 10 Pilot's key good practice pointers concerning LMCs

Good practice pointers

- Give the LMCs something to do;
- It is useful having the local authority Chief Executives involved because it gives the LMCs gravitas;
- Appoint local managers to give a focus and support to the LMCs;
- Differences of opinion are important as they lead to lively debate;
- Use the LMCs to develop executive and operational groups within the local areas;
- Determine the aims and objectives of the LMCs. Some members are keen to have a sense of what they are being asked to become involved with, before they do so (even though they are being invited in order to work out what Connexions and the LMC is);
- Previous partnership activity has been extensive in nearly all areas and where this is the case it is has been very useful in providing a firm foundation for the development of LMCs. But on the other hand, it can lead to the involvement of only the 'usual suspects'.

162. Table 11 shows that a key issue in the development of LMCs was being clear about its role and how it related to the Strategic Partnership and the Connexions Service in the area as a whole.

Table 11 Pilot's key issues concerning LMCs

Key issues

- There is confusion over the role of the LMCs;
- How do LMCs feed into the rest of Connexions?
- Minor operational issues can divert the work of the LMC;
- There is a lack of consultation within some agencies;
- There was an initial fear on the part of some people that Connexions would swallow up their organisations;
- How different can the LMCs be in terms of roles and representatives etc?
- LMCs vary across the pilots in terms of rationale rather than composition. They are seen as key delivery mechanisms, but remain underdeveloped as Partnership issues have taken precedence;
- The primary role at present for LMCs in the Pilot areas is as an information exchange between the LMC and the Strategic Board;
- The term 'Management' is problematic in some areas as the delivery contract is held not by the LMC, but by the Board;
- LMCs have 'responsibility as opposed to accountability';
- The size of the LMC may not be a problem in the short-term, but as delivery begins to occur, this may provide fewer opportunities for organisations to contribute. Furthermore, the time commitment from members of LMCs is becoming an issue in some Pilots.

2.5 Conclusions

163. Before we move on to our own conclusions and recommendations we would like to add in the conclusions of Pilot coordinators and other key partners after almost a year of developing the Connexions Service in their areas.

164. We asked interviewees, if they had their time again, what would they have done differently.

Table 12 If you had your time again what things would you have done differently?

Service planning and delivery
➢ Young people should be young people first and labelled second. There is a lot of energy spent talking about which specific groups of young people will be targeted in which way; we must remember that they are all people; ➢ There have been a few hiccups, but then that is part of the process of being a Pilot. For example, we developed the three tiers of need to develop a caseloading model. It didn't work, but what it did was clarify the discussion; ➢ We did not spend enough time planning it strategically; instead we have been chasing different issues and fire fighting. The groups have been too big. We should have engaged a small number of organisations with experience of working in a New Start type of work and taken the statutory agencies – around half a dozen people; ➢ We should have been brave enough to appoint a Connexions Chief Executive from day one. It needs a strategic thinker with an overview of how individual organisations work to meet the needs of young people. The question what we need to do has never been addressed, what happened was fire fighting, e.g. mapping exercise; ➢ Building clarity of strategy; engage local communities [LMC areas] much earlier, although we have done a lot of consultation of stakeholders over the last year; ➢ I would have liked a year to pilot Connexions and then written the business plan. This would have allowed greater involvement of, and wider consultation with, young people.
Communications
➢ Changed the communication strategy; ➢ Consult and communicate on a wider basis.
National guidance
➢ We would have like more guidance as to who should have been the lead partner. The Development Manager felt very strongly that the DfEE should have prescribed a lead partner even if it were for the first few weeks this would have prevented drift in the initial planning stages; ➢ I would have liked relevant staff from the DfEE and Government Office to have met to resolve conflicts and develop a common understanding of what is expected from the project. Staff from these two organisations have had different expectations and this lack of consistency has put pressure on the pilot.
Nothing
➢ Nothing really, we have been very successful to get it up and running, put a project manager in place, recruit Personal Advisers, working with young people, and delivering services.

165. The main conclusions are that:

- There was a developing Connexions infrastructure in place, by this we mean that there were distinctive structures and working arrangements that could be called a Connexions Service;
- There was a high level of commitment and enthusiasm to the principle of the Connexions Service and to making it work in practice;
- Partners were committing considerable resources to developing Connexions in their area; in some cases this was over £750,000;
- There was still confusion over what the objectives of the Connexions Service were. This made it difficult to communicate and understand the notion of what Connexions is and allowed for a variety of interpretations;
- There was a large range and number of organisations involved in Connexions Boards - almost 180. This did not include organisations and people represented on LMCs and strand/task management groups;
- There was a considerable emphasis on developing effective and appropriate communications structures. A variety of methods were employed. However, partners still felt that more could be done especially by other Government Departments, and by partners within their own organisations;
- The issue of a legal entity was not generally an issue, but where it was it took up a lot of people's time and resources.
- There was now much more concern over funding issues, especially as Connexions will soon become the manager of funds and contracts.
- There was seen to be a need for more development funding (e.g. to employ Chief Executives ahead of projects going live), greater clarification over who retains control of funds, and how different funding streams may be simplified.
- For some Pilots the focus on developing the Connexions Service for the Phase One roll outs has, naturally, diverted attention away from the Pilots;
- As the Connexions Service broadens, there is a need to give more ownership to partner organisations and ensure that their identity is not lost. Also, the need has been identified for partner agencies to identify outputs that they have produced.

2.6 Recommendations

166. There is a need:

- For greater clarity over many aspects of the Connexions Service especially its objectives and key concepts.
- To develop mechanisms to enhance the communication of good practice and to increase networking; for example, the development of a dedicated web site; the identification and publication of good practice and key learning point; and the creation of a resource or evidence bank.
- To identify and respond to key issues and learning points.
- To share experience: Many Pilots are working to address the same issues but feel that they are working in isolation.
- To address the whole range of issues surrounding funding at the local and national levels e.g. who manages and controls various funding if a young person moves from one area to another what happens to these funds; how to ensure consistency and clarity on funding streams.
- To improve the profile of the Connexions Service e.g. launch a national campaign similar to New Deal.

- For national guidance to be clearer, consistent and more timely. The CSNU should:
  - Give clearer frameworks for action;
  - Set boundaries for decision-making e.g. what are Connexions partnerships NOT allowed to do;
  - Make statutory duties clearer;
  - Answer technical questions promptly and consistently e.g. the eligibility of asylum seekers for services;
  - Provide technical advice/support e.g. on the legal entity issue;
  - Communicate information about other initiatives that are related e.g. the Connexions card. Use the Connexions services as a conduit either for funding related initiatives within an area or at a minimum for cascading information;
  - Ensure that the DfEE provides a policy context that is consistent with the national approach and set of policies on youth.

3 Pilot Connexions Services

3.1 Introduction

167. This section looks at the services for young people that the Pilots have been seeking to develop. It provides an overview of the types of services that Connexions Pilots had been developing, and the processes involved in that development. It is mostly based on proposals, contracts and monthly reports, but also interviews with partners. We focused on services to young people and therefore exclude other key activities that Pilots were developing e.g. Connexions Customer Information Systems, the involvement of young people etc.

168. Later sections focus on services for specific groups of young people (e.g. care leavers) and Connexions services in schools, colleges and other training providers.

3.2 Pilot services

3.2.1 Level of Activity

169. It was difficult getting agreement on the numbers of services that Pilots were developing. The highest figure, based on interviews with Pilot coordinators and key partners, combined with Pilot contracts and proposals, was 91 separate services. However, the figure from March's monthly report was, we believe, more realistic because it has been consistent over the past few months. The total in March's monthly report was 64 (excluding work such as developing web sites, mapping etc). This figure excludes the work undertaken in Greater Merseyside (who were focusing particularly on tracking and other information systems) and includes services, for example, in Cornwall and Devon that were very much research based and developmental.

170. These 64 Pilot services ranged from the development of Connexions services in schools and colleges to working with young people with specific needs e.g. care leavers, young people with Special Educational Needs, homeless young people etc. One Pilot was specifically looking at the development of Connexions within a YOI.

171. There was a wide range and number of Connexions services that were being developed.

3.2.2 The Starting Point

172. The Connexions Pilots were not starting with a blank sheet; there were a wide variety of projects and services already existing on the ground in addition to agencies like YOTs, Behavioural Support Teams, Education Welfare Officers and Youth Service workers. For example, there already existed anti-bullying initiatives, One Stop Shops, compacts and a variety of services (sometimes delivered via the VCS) focused on homeless young people, drug users, teenage parents and carers etc.

173. Furthermore, there was a variety of existing multi-agency provision delivered via initiatives such as Excellence in Cities, New Start, New Deal, CRISS, On-Track, Neighbourhood Support Fund and the Learning Gateway. [12] That was why a key element in

[12] On Track was a Home Office funded programme focused on children at risk of getting involved in crime. From April 2001, the 24 On Track pilot projects will be integrated into the DfEE's Children and Young People's Fund (CYPF). Crime Reduction in Secondary Schools (CRISS) is a Home Office initiative aimed at integrating approaches to improving schools' management of pupils' behaviour and reducing truancy and exclusion as a means of curtailing offending.

all of the Pilots was to map the existing provision and embrace it either via referral strategies or sub-contract arrangements, and invite these agencies on to project task groups.

174. The fact that Connexions Pilots were not starting afresh has meant that there were existing delivery structures. The challenge for the Pilots was to identify them and begin to work with them. The mapping exercise was seen as benefiting this process. Again a key message for (and to benefit from) Connexions was 'formalising the informal'. Whilst there was 'joined-up' thinking in some areas, it tended to be informal, ad hoc and not inherent to services.

175. Connexions has also been able to feed off the commitment of partners to concepts such as social inclusion and meeting disaffection that many partners were already working towards. We have seen in Section 2 that the Connexions Service's aims and objectives have been able to dovetail with the existing plans and strategies of key partners.

176. The development of Connexions services has also benefited from the experience of partners working in areas such as housing and health. They have helped Pilot Coordinators and Managers understand other organisations, their cultures and the realities of service delivery to particular groups of young people. One health service had seconded a senior manager to work as a Connexions Development Manager (Health) whilst another was now involved in various health forums e.g. sexual health. This underlines the point made elsewhere in this report that Connexions is very much a two-way street.

177. However, there were some difficulties that needed to be overcome. For example, deciphering the roles of partner and potential partner organisations, i.e. who takes the lead on what issues and why they should. There was also an issue of the lack of accountability of some organisations to their stakeholders and client groups and the view that Connexions is voluntary and people could walk away if they wanted.

178. Finance was also an issue. Some Pilot Coordinators felt that it was difficult getting partners to commit resources and that it did not help Partnership development if some agencies were perceived to be 'holding back' from committing to Connexions services. There was also confusion over who should contribute financially and how much. The financial commitment of core and non-core organisations varied considerably throughout the Pilots, and some people would like clearer guidance on partner contributions.

179. Generally, the views of interviewees were positive regarding service development. However, the view of service and project managers in all areas was that *'Connexions is about expanding local provision, pulling things together, embedding, enhancing and extending existing provision.'* How this is going to be precisely undertaken was still being worked out, to a greater or lesser extent, in many areas.

3.2.3 Services offered

180. Table 13 shows the range of services that the Pilots were developing and whether it involved multi-agency working. The most frequently mentioned service was delivering Personal Adviser support within schools, with nine Pilots mentioning this service. Four Pilots said they were providing Personal Adviser support in colleges and support to asylum seekers. Three mentioned assistance with benefits/housing etc., support to care leavers and developing a One Stop Shop.

Table 13 Pilot services

Type of service	Number of services	Does it involve multi-agency working
Personal Advisers in schools	9	Yes
Personal Advisers in FE Colleges	4	Yes
Support to asylum seekers	4	Yes
Assistance with benefits/housing etc.	3	Yes
Children leaving care	3	Yes
One Stop Shop	3	Yes
Assistance with health/drug problems	2	Yes
Clothes bank	2	Yes
Multidisciplinary Connexions outlet	2	Yes
Research into rural issues	2	Yes
Research into working with teenage parents	2	Yes
Support to ethnic minorities	2	Yes
Supporting looked after children	2	Yes
Careers Advice and Guidance	1	Yes
Compact club	1	Yes
Connexions in a PRU	1	Yes
Connexions in a YOT	1	Yes
Creating learning opportunities for post 16 care leavers	1	Yes
Detached Personal Adviser	1	Yes
Developing support for BEM young people	1	Yes
Extension of New Start projects	1	Yes
Foyer based Personal Adviser	1	Yes
Meeting additional identified needs	1	Yes
One–to-one Personal Adviser support to young people	1	Yes
Personal Advisers at drop-in centres	1	Yes
Personal Advisers in the Community	1	Yes
Peer Mentoring	1	Yes
Research into working with gifted and vulnerable	1	Yes
Service to gay men and lesbians	1	Yes
Support for homeless	1	Yes
Support for young men	1	Yes
Support for young people with SEN	1	Yes
Support to custody leavers	1	Yes
Support to unaccompanied minors	1	Yes
Support to young offenders	1	Yes
Supporting excluded	1	Yes
Work with unemployed	1	Yes

Source: March's monthly report, GHK

181. Most services were aimed at particular groups of young people who were seen as disadvantaged, disaffected or hard-to-help. These were delivered through Personal Advisers and all involved Multi-agency working, such as young people in care/care leavers, asylum seekers, and young people with health/drug problems.

182. Some Pilots were developing provision via ICTs but this was mostly limited to diagnostic tools and providing information. Far and away, the main method of delivery was

via a Personal Adviser through face-to-face interaction with one client, although some large rural areas were exploring the potential for provision over the phone (something which Connexions Direct is developing to link in with local provision) and some Personal Advisers were developing group work. This model was similar to the ways that services were delivered before Connexions.

183. Services were slow getting off the ground for a variety of factors. These were; having to organise the involvement of other agencies; mapping existing provision; defining need and deciding the best way to address it; delays in contracts and funding; problems in recruiting Personal Advisers; the pressure of other work; and the need for service changes to be approved by elected members. It also did not help that most contracts were approved just before the school holidays.

184. The recruitment of Personal Advisers (which will be explored in more detail in Section 4) also delayed the establishment of services. Many Personal Advisers were seconded, as secondment was perceived as a quicker process than open recruitment. But secondment raised problems in back-filling staff. As staff often came from agencies providing front-line support to young people (e.g. Careers and Youth Services), care had to be taken not to diminish other non-Connexions service provision.

185. In addition, support and management structures needed to be in place, and this was also a time-consuming process. Furthermore, there needed to be agreement on operational issues; for example, what should be the caseloads of Personal Advisers?

186. Most services did not begin until November, when the Personal Advisers were recruited. The fact that most services were Personal Adviser-based meant that clients were given effective advice, referral and counselling services. In the vast majority of cases, the Personal Adviser met with the client on a one-to-one basis and assessed what the client needed. If it was counselling and advice within the Personal Advisers remit, then the Personal Adviser would provide that information and support directly themselves, usually after an initial assessment process and the development of personal plans or targets (see Section 4 for a more detailed discussion of this process). If the client required more specialist assistance then the Personal Adviser would refer the client to a more appropriate agency. One Pilot specified the role of the Personal Adviser as including:

- Identifying levels of support to young people currently available relating to family/relationship, health, employment and training, financial matters, housing and other issues;
- Developing a relationship with a young person – listening, understanding and building trust;
- Assessing the young people's needs – identifying specialist needs and necessary support;
- Offering one-to-one support on a weekly/needs basis – location and timing subject to agreement with young person;
- Setting goals and review progress on a monthly basis, and;
- Maintaining the relationship, tracking and follow-up on progress.

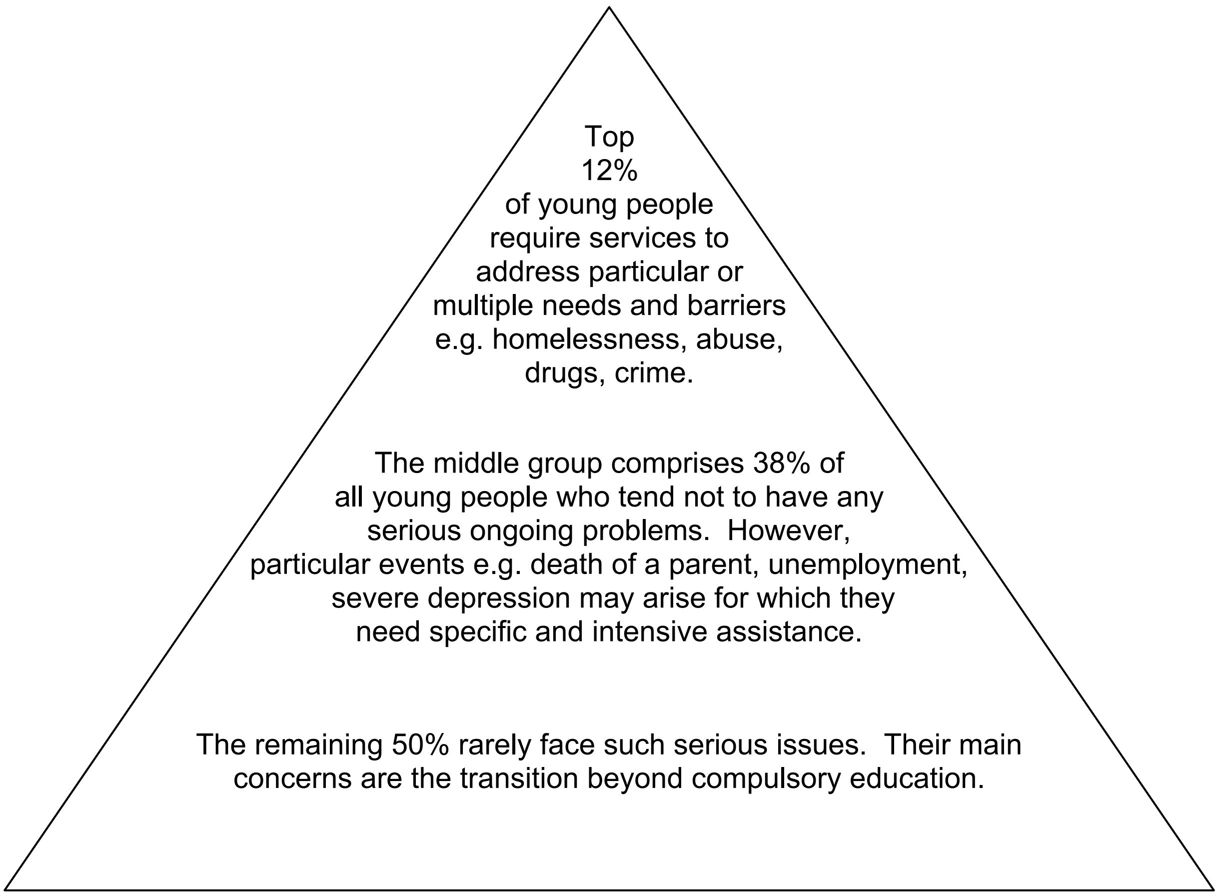
187. The key aim of the Personal Adviser in this Pilot was:

> *"To build a supportive relationship with a view to helping young people progress into training, employment or some form of learning by removing the barriers to help them reach their true potential."*

3.2.4 Defining Purpose and Need

188. It has been difficult finding out the operational objectives of the Pilot services and the outcomes that were being pursued; for example, increasing educational attainment and the take-up of post-16 education and training opportunities. We believe that this was because there was an implicit assumption that Connexions services were there to ‘support’ the young person through key transition points or through those times when the young person is facing very substantial problems.

Figure 10 The triangle of need in Coventry and Warwickshire



189. Five Pilots have used the triangle or tiers to clarify the levels of need and approximate levels of demand. To illustrate, Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions undertook research based on interviews with 500 young people and parents, in Coventry. They were asked what sort of assistance they needed. About 50% of young people (the bottom level of the triangle) were fine and needed minimal support needs beyond information and advice about employment, training and education options, mostly at Years 11 and 13.

190. The middle tier comprised 38% of young people who were generally fine but things could go wrong for them e.g. they could become unemployed, lose a parent or suffer an injury. For the most part, these young people required information, advice and support about education, training and employment issues. However, if a crisis did happen then they required intensive support to help them deal with it.

191. The remaining 12% faced very serious ongoing barriers and multiple problems. They needed support to overcome their barriers and problems. Advice about education, training

and employment was a complete waste of time. *Only* when their serious needs were addressed would they then need advice about employment, education and training. So the support provided to young people in crisis was more around raising motivation, self-esteem and the specific issue(s) they faced.

192. Another Pilot, developing a Connexions service in schools and colleges, suggested that the top tier should consist of; young people not on the roll (the 'disappeared'), permanently excluded, those in the Youth Justice system, in-care, casual admissions and new arrivals/asylum seekers; those with substance abuse problems; those not having attended school or college for a fortnight; pregnant/parent; and; temporary or fixed term exclusions. The middle tier should comprise of: casual offenders; young people with truancy or lateness issues; those on a learning contract or 'on report'; young people referred by a tutor because of a sudden decline in attainment, and anyone post-16 studying at NVQ level 1. The bottom tier would consist of all the young people not included in the other two tiers.

193. In this Pilot, the identification and referral of top and middle tier young people would tend to be made by other agencies e.g. schools, DATs, YOTs, etc.

3.2.5 Targeting Sub-Groups of Young People

194. The vast majority of Pilot services focused on specific sub-groups of young people, e.g. the highest and middle tiers of need. Although it was not formally specified as such, this was because careers information and advice was already available and this formed the universal service. Connexions was there to 'fill gaps', to bolster support for targeted groups of young people with specific needs over and above that already supplied. There is a section devoted to the issues facing specific sub groups of young people and how the Connexions Pilots were addressing them.

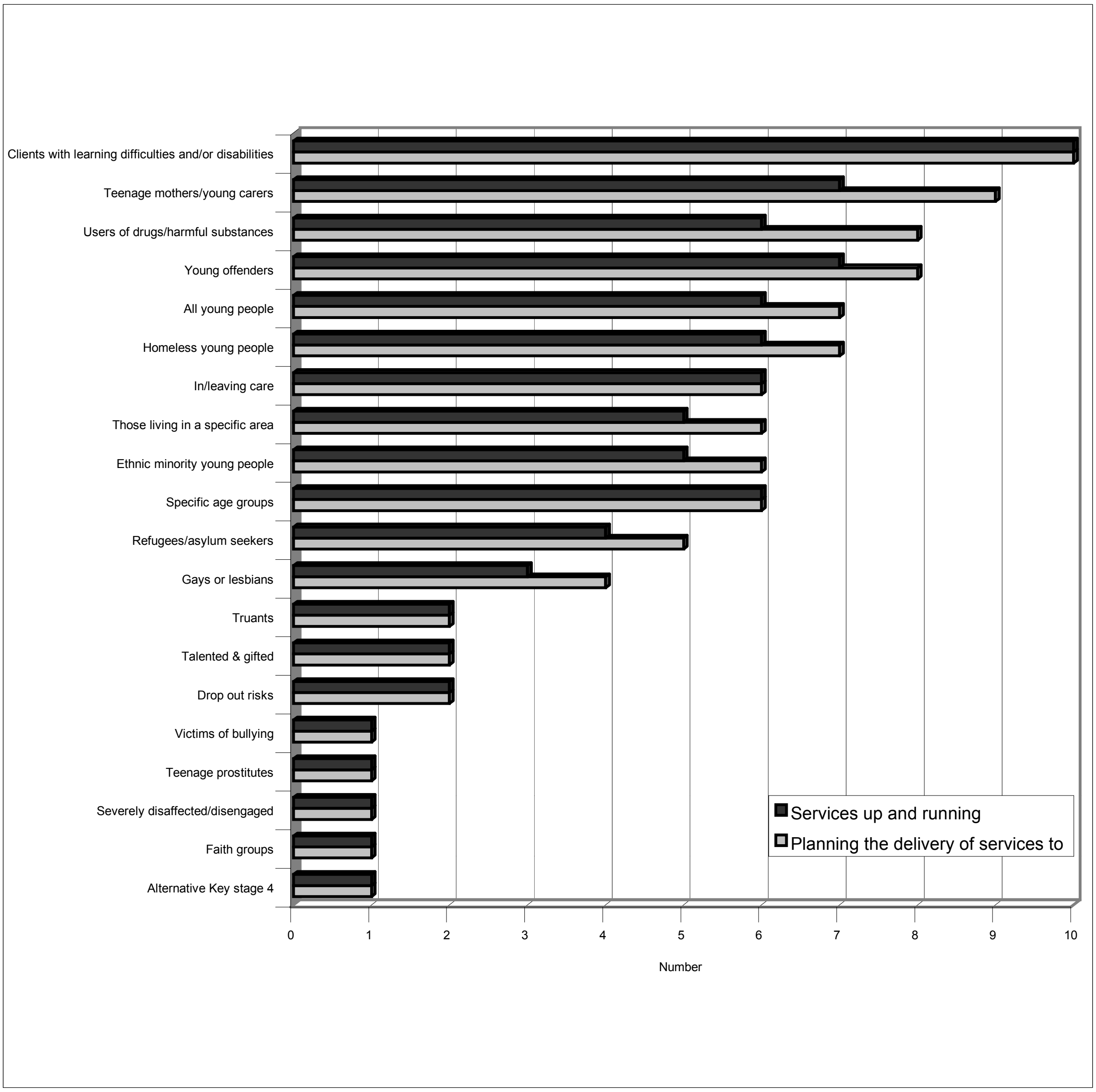
195. Figure 11, based on the responses of all Pilots, shows the sub-groups of young people being targeted by Connexions services. The most mentioned sub-groups were clients with learning difficulties or disabilities. Other important groups were teenage mothers/young carers, users of drugs/harmful substances, young offenders and homeless young people.

196. Young people in care or leaving care were also a priority group in many Pilot areas. Care leavers were seen as facing multiple and prolonged disadvantages, in some areas they were also seen as constituting a large proportion of hard-to-help and disaffected young people.

197. Seven Pilots were piloting services to all young people i.e. the universal Connexions Service.

198. In total, the Pilots were developing services to meet the needs of 20 separate sub groups of young people. In time, future Connexions Partnerships may want to expand services to e.g. teenage prostitutes, talented and gifted and the victims of bullying. There is a need to disseminate the experiences, learning points and good practice, which the Pilots have identified when working with these particular groups.

Figure 11 Sub groups of young people targeted by Connexions services



Source: March's monthly report, GHK

3.3 Multi-Agency Working

199. Other specialist units within the Pilot area were already catering for the majority of these sub-groups in one form or another. Services to clients with learning difficulties were almost entirely school based and involved close work with SEN Units. Young offenders' services involved YOT workers, and those in and leaving care had been identified as an important group by many Youth and Social Service Departments. Therefore, nearly all of these Connexions services involved working alongside, communicating and liasing with well-established and (in most cases) statutory services.

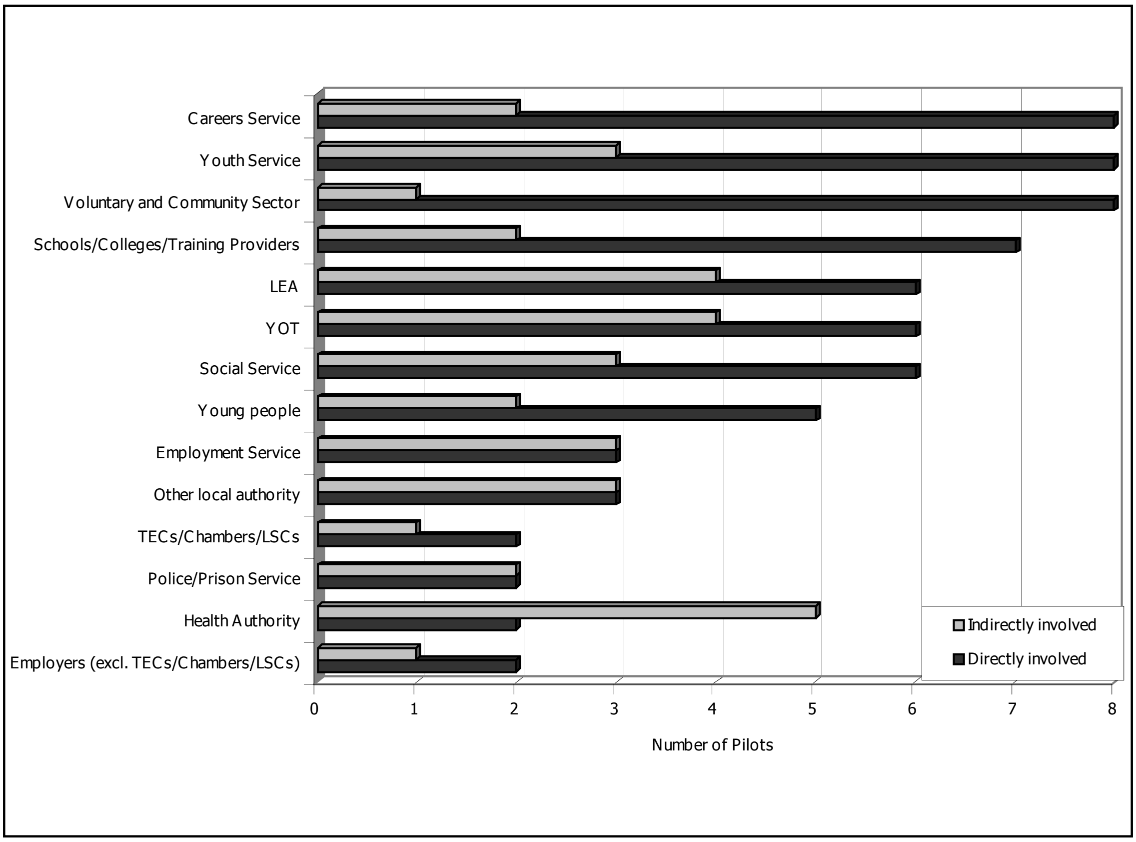
200. Figure 12 shows those partner organisations involved directly or indirectly in the delivery of Connexions services. It is based on responses from 11 Pilots.

201. The Youth and Careers Services, and the VCS were the organisations mostly involved in the direct delivery of Connexions services, in eight Pilots.

Schools/Colleges/Training Providers, Social Services, LEAs, and YOTs were also closely involved. Health authorities, the Employment Service and other local authority departments tended to be involved, but indirectly.

202. In all, 104 organisations were involved, directly or indirectly in the delivery of the 65 services across the Pilot areas. Therefore, on average, nine organisations were working together in each Pilot area to deliver the range of services.

Figure 12 Partner organisations involved directly or indirectly in the delivery of Connexions services



Source: March's monthly report, GHK

203. Many services also involved developing and enhancing the work undertaken by VCS organisations, for example, homelessness, teenage carers and parents, drug users.

204. Table 14 shows the range of VCS involved in the management and delivery of Connexions services. About two-thirds of these organisations were involved in a strategic capacity sitting either on Boards or LMCs. The remaining third were involved in the delivery of services either through their premises or as prime contractors.

Table 14 VCS involved in Connexions Service

Specific	General
Black Card – Black and Ethnic Minority community organisation	Children's Society
Care trust	Church Youth Organisation
Centrepoint	CVS
Checkpoint (Children's Society)	Denaby main forum
Chrysalis Drug Agency	East Devon Voluntary Association
Community Safety Partnerships	Education Business Partnership
Depot (Stratford)	Faith groups[13]
East Devon Voluntary Assoc. (Eye project)	London Youth
Foyer	Millennium volunteers
Hampton Trust	One Stop Shop
Herts Care Trust	Employment Access Centre
Homeless organisations	Plymouth Guild of Voluntary Service
Island volunteers	Princes Trust
Leamington youth access project	PTA
M25 Doncaster housing agency	Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP)
NCH	Rugby youth access project
One Voice	Rural Community Council
Open Cast Theatre Community Group	Swinton Lock Adventure Centre
Refugee Network	Torbay Voluntary Services
Roundhouse Trust	Voluntary Action North Lincs
Single Parents Project	Voluntary Sector Forum
Street reach - organization for young prostitutes	Voluntary Youth Services
The Happening – with disaffected pupils/point of exclusion	Warwickshire VYS
Venus - organisation for young women	Youth Enquiry Centre
Victim support	Youth Fora
Warren Centre	YMCA
Waterways Museum	Young People Counselling
Y Zone 2000 Youth Café	Young People's Rights and Participation Group (part of Children's Society)
	Youth Association – service delivery

Source: March's monthly report, GHK

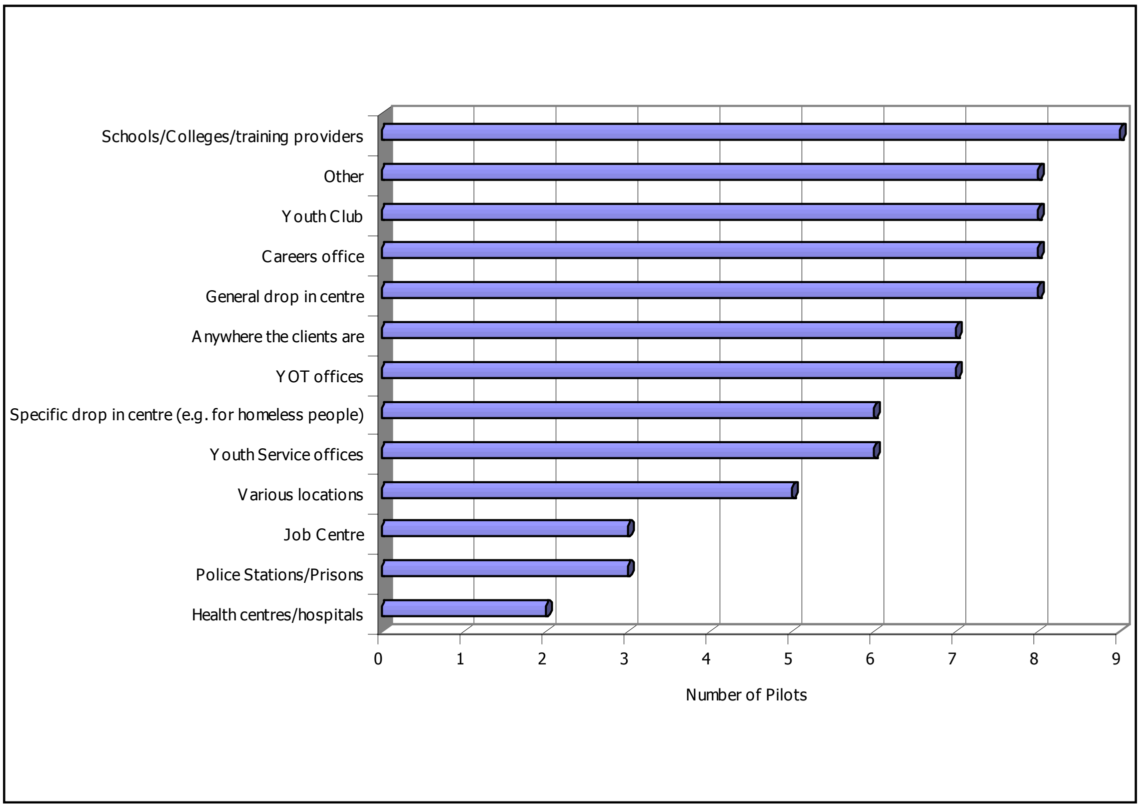
205. One Pilot, developing a service for homeless young people, was involving the Housing Department's Homelessness Section and voluntary sector housing projects in the delivery of the service. The Personal Adviser had worked in a similar capacity with the Youth and Careers Services and so was familiar with homelessness and housing projects. A management group consisting of the Personal Adviser, the Youth service, the Homelessness Section, VCS housing projects, a range of housing professionals drawn from different disciplines and local councillors oversaw the service. The Personal Adviser had initially mapped provision for homeless young people and developed procedures and protocols for working with partner agencies (e.g. identification of need and referral mechanisms). The Personal Adviser role was then developed to fill identified gaps and deliver education and training advice where and when appropriate.

[13] Faith groups represent people of the same religious faith e.g. Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Christians.

3.3.1 Multi-Site Working

206. Figure 13 shows where Pilots were basing their Personal Advisers (based on responses from ten Pilots). Schools/Colleges/Training Providers were the most common location for Personal Advisers (in 9 Pilots) followed by general drop-in centres (e.g. One Stop Shops, community centres etc.), careers offices, Youth Clubs and other locations (e.g. a Housing Department or YOI). Pilots were, between them, using 80 different venues for the delivery of services.

Figure 13 Location of Personal Advisers



Source: March's monthly report, GHK

207. Therefore, by far and away the most common delivery model was a Personal Adviser, located in a partner organisation providing one-to-one counselling, advice and support to disaffected, disadvantaged or hard-to-help young people.

208. In the larger, and particularly the rural Pilots, there was an issue of getting coverage across the whole area. Even if people did not necessarily want an obvious physical Connexions presence (like a drop-in centre or One Stop Shop) it was helpful to have a base where peripatetic and other Personal Advisers could work from or have meetings in. Some Pilots used careers and youth service outreach offices for this purpose, but one Pilot felt that it was important to have a dedicated Connexion's working space that was separate from other organisations.

209. An issue mentioned in one Pilot was that services to young people should be delivered separately from adult services. This might apply for example, to benefits, health and housing advice. Some young people may be put off from seeking advice from non age-specific centres. This philosophy has underpinned the creation of drop-in centres and One Stop Shops designed specifically to attract young people. However, another Pilot found the opposite.

210. The following case study is based on a series of feedback reports from managers and team leaders at the several drop-in centres that this Pilot has developed across the area. We have amalgamated the individual reports from each of the drop-in centres.

Table 15 Delivery of Connexions services at drop-in centres

Performance

- Project plans were drawn up between the Careers Service and the Youth Association for the developments of Connexions drop-in centres in several locations. Meetings have been held to agree and review the implementation of these plans - one at each of the premises.
- The Youth Advice Centre was officially opened in October 2000. The signage and other publicity were arranged and a PC with appropriate software was installed.
- Training for staff in the use of the software together with discussions about other information on learning and work opportunities has taken place.
- A Personal Adviser from the Careers Service has been assigned to work as part of the drop in centre, complementing other outreach work undertaken in the area.
- Support staff have been added to carry out benefits advice and job/training placement work.
- Youth workers are on-site, developing new support services.
- The Connexions Pilot has enabled significant enhancement of the venues for young people.
- Personal Advisers working at the project have come from a range of backgrounds including youth and careers work.
- Project plans have been drawn up and ongoing monitoring involving key partners is in place.
- There are an increased number of young people receiving support.
- Inter-agency referrals have increased as a result of the Pilot.

Good practice

- The main feature of this project has been the excellent working relationship between the managers and delivery staff of the Youth Service and Careers Service staff, from initial consultation, planning and flexible approaches, to the delivery of services in the new centre. This has mainly been served by a willingness for compromise where necessary, ideas sharing and regular joint staff briefing seminars closely supported by head office marketing and information teams. The Careers Service's Customer Service Advisers have participated in joint training with the Youth Service's "SHARE" information and Advice volunteers; Youth Workers have given detailed information on housing and benefit matters, and act as regular referral and advice points for Personal Advisers across the area.
- Young people and partner agencies have been consulted and involved at each stage, from planning the Centre's layout and resources, to the design and contact of the marketing leaflet. The Youth Forum now meets regularly in the centre, and other agencies are committed to using the service and facilities e.g. care leavers' Personal Advisers use the centre every week.
- There has been a commitment from the beginning of the project to make full use of the range of services available, and to ensure that young people are aware and benefit from these services. We have already seen good practice with individuals, for example, homeless young people claiming Job Seekers Allowance can get personal support in finding housing and claiming benefit, as well as making the best career options for them.
- The added value from the Connexions Pilot has produced benefits for the already established centres and feedback from young people has been positive.

- It has been important to keep in contact; including thorough review meetings involving Careers Head Office and area staffs, to discuss progress and resolve issues.
- Flexible opening hours, particularly in the evenings attracts young people.
- There has been improved communication and clearer understanding between partners about roles and responsibilities.
- A flexible and informal approach to working with young people often works best.
- Surveys, which link into local youth forums, provide useful feedback for service improvement.

Relevant issues

- Procedures and policies can be quite different in separate organisations. For a joint project such as this centre it is essential that there is a common understanding and respect for those differences and a coming together of practice wherever feasible – we have learnt as we have gone along about confidentiality policies and recording policies, and adapted rapidly.
- Space is at a premium in the centre, and must be carefully managed to meet differing requirements. “Booked” career interviews must work alongside private counselling rooms, which can be needed at a moment’s notice, and other partners’ requirements fitted in alongside current incumbents! Young people must feel comfortable in the environment whether they are calling for career advice or in need of crisis counselling. There may be conflicts between the needs of adult callers for careers advice and the 14 year old who needs to talk about sexual health – do they sit in the same waiting area?
- A safety assessment of the site identified a few issues concerning the siting of equipment and of the new Personal Adviser. These are being resolved to ensure safe working practices.
- The importance of working with other local support agencies for young people (including the local Community Colleges) has been flagged. This will be worked at during the coming year.
- The precise role of the project worker funded through Connexions needed to be clarified and established.
- There have been a number of teething troubles emerging largely around whom is ultimately responsible for the premises.
- The reputation of such a facility needs to be built.
- The need for support for the Personal Adviser in detached/outreach venues is a key issue.
- Line management and supervision of Personal Advisers needs to be clear from the outset.
- Protocols for working together need to be clearly defined between key agencies.

Learning to date

Interesting leaps in learning are apparent at all levels, and examples demonstrate:

- Clear project management is essential – which agency IS responsible and what ARE the overall aims of the project; do we all sign up to them from the start? Common understanding and agreement is helpful at an early stage and an appreciation of different cultures and ways of working is essential, as well as fully committed personnel.
- Ownership of task and clear definitions of responsibility needs to be established in the early stage of such a project.
- The project has challenged values and approaches of staff involved; there has been much questioning of ethics and ways of working with young people amongst the delivery staff – “Do I automatically ask for the young person’s names as soon as they walk through the door…?” Discussion and sharing of approaches is important ‘downtime’

when two or more cultures meet.

- The centre cannot work in isolation; outreach advisers and agencies must be fully involved and complement the whole approach – all Personal Advisers and partners must have a common understanding, which takes time and effort to build.
- The Connexions agenda fits well with the voluntary/independent youth sector (and vice versa).
- Firm pledges of support need to be gained from partners to enable the successful operation of such a facility (e.g. regular and reliable allocation of staffing/attendance).
- A Personal Adviser can bridge gaps between agencies so that young people can access them more easily.
- Clarity around training, induction and line management of the Personal Advisers is key.
- Induction and training takes time and this needs to be built into project plans.

3.3.2 Referral Mechanisms

211. As the Connexions Service Pilots had only just started, there were no well-developed referrals and marketing systems dedicated to the Connexions Service. Personal Advisers had to rely on having clients directed to them by existing organisations, for example, from Pupil Referral Units, existing Personal Adviser-type workers and existent statutory and non-statutory organisations. For many Personal Advisers much of their initial work had been identifying and developing these networks and relationships rather than delivering services to clients.

212. Six Pilots were developing or enhancing One Stop Shops wherein a range of practitioners could be based to provide support, advice and referral to any young person that walked through the door. In most of these cases, these One-Stop Shops already existed and they were being integrated into Connexions Service provision.

213. An important issue has arisen concerning the awareness and capability of the agencies that Personal Advisers are supposed to refer clients to. The mapping tool is helping Connexions services and practitioners to identify 'what is out there' so as not to duplicate existing provision but also to find out what services are there that young clients might access. A common response was that *'there is a lot out there but they are not very well known'*. A further issue was the ability of these other agencies to deal with additional clients that Personal Advisers may refer to them. For example, if a Personal Adviser identifies that drug abuse is an issue with several of their clients, will the agencies be able to handle these clients as they could represent a significant increase in their workload?

3.3.3 Equal opportunities

214. Equal opportunities were of paramount importance for Connexions Pilots if they were to deliver positive, non-stereotypical support to clients including hard-to-help and disaffected young people.

215. Some Pilots had established task groups with responsibilities for developing equal opportunities statements, processes and practices so equal opportunities were integral to the Connexions Service and services. One Pilot had:

- Researched the equal opportunities policies and strategies of partner and other organisations, including the DfEE's draft quality standards for equal opportunities;
- Consulted with appropriate groups within the Pilot and outside;
- Developed an aide memoir identifying the key points of equal opportunities principles in plain language;

- Developed equal opportunities working practices, policies and a strategy for Connexions, including embedding practices within Partnership Agreements;
- Communicated these practices so that equal opportunities is mainstream to and clearly understood within Connexions;
- Trained staff; on anti-discriminatory practice, curriculum issues, promotion of diversity and empowering young people to access support;
- Developed monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that targets were being met and to feed back key issues and good practice.

3.4 Other Service Delivery Issues

3.4.1 Assessment

216. There was important work being undertaken in four Pilot areas on the use of diagnostic and assessment tools. Initial feedback, from those that have mapped existing assessment tools, shows that there were a great number. Some were widely used e.g. British Psychological Society diagnostic tools, and ones that were very specific to the work of a particular agency in a specific area. At the national level, the CSNU developed a Framework for the process of assessment, planning, implementation and review to underpin the delivery of guidance and support by Personal Advisers.

217. Lincolnshire did a lot of work on unifying diagnostic instruments. The project initially identified over 100 different assessment and diagnostic instruments being used across Lincolnshire alone with 13-19 year olds. The project, amongst other things, undertook in-depth mapping of these tools. Their report recommends:[14]

- Personal Advisers needed competence in using assessment/diagnostic instruments with clients. Personal Adviser training programmes should provide relevant levels of skills, knowledge and understanding of these instruments being used within partner organisations and the contexts these were used in with clients.
- The need to develop a valid and approved front-end assessment tool to identify client needs.
- A nationally approved list of validated assessment instruments. Issues of copyright should be dealt with centrally by the DfES to ensure equitable access by Personal Advisers to these instruments.
- However, in some areas there will have to be local flexibility e.g. rural areas may need diagnostic tools that identify rural disadvantage.
- A national lead is required to assist the development of data sharing protocols, common client consent and referral forms. The legislation surrounding these points is becoming further complicated by the fact that European legislation is being implemented in the UK.
- Assessment tools need a 'time-line' to illustrate key points of potential or actual intervention by various organisations.
- Unifying diagnostic instruments is complex; requiring further funding and dedicated staff resources.
- Accessible, 'live', interactive, user-friendly, secure and credible web based electronic systems should continue to be developed and maintained in a coordinated way as a means to deliver instruments, data and ideas within the Connexions Service.
- Joint funding possibilities should be explored with a range of Connexions partners to maintain and develop an assessment/diagnostic web-based platform in the medium and longer term.

[14] 'Unification of Diagnostic Instruments: Project Final Report', Lincolnshire Connexions Pilot.

- Further research is warranted to consider possible rationalisation of assessment instruments (particularly at the front-end initial recording stage and basic skills dimension) and the number and types of ‘action plans’ currently being used with clients aged 13-19.
- Criteria needs to be developed to establish benchmarks for the production of locally based assessment instruments.
- Regular ongoing surveys of young people and practitioner views should be undertaken to ensure that actual barriers to progress in learning continue to be adequately reflected in the Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review (APIR) Framework.

218. The Connexions Framework for Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review was designed to support Personal Advisers in their one to one work with young people. It contains guidance and supporting materials to help them identify needs, plan effectively and take action to meet needs, across a wide range of potential barriers to learning and progression from aspirations and motivation to housing and substance misuse. It has been designed to work alongside and complement existing assessment models, in particular the Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health et al) and the Youth Justice Board’s ASSET model.

219. The Connexions Framework identifies 18 factors, which have the potential to impact on a young person’s transition to adult life, which the Connexions Service must be capable of responding to. In broad terms, these factors relate to a young person’s: education and employment; social and personal development; family and environment; and personal health.

220. The Connexions Framework contained a profiling kit, which set out the range of issues across each of the 18 factors, which that Personal Adviser might find useful to guide their assessment of a young person, and to reach a view regarding the level of need. The Personal Adviser uses their expertise and skills of engagement to come to a shared understanding with the young person of their circumstances and needs. This can then be translated into a position along a five-point scale, to indicate where a young person has positive strengths on which to build and areas where there were serious or critical issues to be addressed. The Connexions Framework recommends that all of the information gathered and recorded in the profiling kit be summarised in an assessment profile.

221. Young people’s circumstances and needs change over time and so the Connexions Framework advocates a process of on-going assessment, planning, implementation and review with young people. Initial assessments and progress against plans will need to be monitored and reviewed. Updating of the assessment profile provides one practical way of gauging young people’s progress.

222. The issues relating to assessment include:

- Validity to ensure that assessors understand the concepts being used, for example, what do ‘attitudes and motivation’ mean and what indicators were used to measure it;
- Reliability; that the concepts were used in the same way by different assessors and over time. This involves training, support and review of people using the model;
- Data protection; how is the information to be held and communicated to different support professionals;
- The terminology used in the guidance (in particular the assessment profile) and by assessors: it must be positive and non-discriminatory;
- The time it takes to complete it; some assessment tools currently being used can take up to a third of a professional workers’ time to collect and record the information;

- Is it to be used for referral, and how may the client respond to this? For example, some clients may not like being referred to a psychiatrist or a special needs worker. There is also the issue of the capacity of agencies being referred to;
- How is current information incorporated into the model, and;
- The ability of the client to challenge any assessment.

223. One Pilot was exploring the use of ICTs for assessing young people. One Pilot had given its entire Personal Advisers laptops and mobile phones so they could write up and communicate casework.

224. Some Pilots were using ICTs in marketing, delivery or communication of services. Six Pilots had web sites, and were using them primarily as an information tool to highlight the existence of their services.

225. ICTs have not been welcomed in all Pilots. Personal Advisers in one Pilot preferred not to use them whilst in another, they thought that you needed to discriminate between ICT and paper based systems. The latter were more suitable for some applications. Many Personal Advisers (through custom, convenience and pragmatism) did not need ICTs when working with clients at the moment as most of their information was paper-based and not communicated (see Section 5).

3.4.2 Marketing

226. The marketing and promotion of the Connexions service raised familiar issues. For example, you had to agree what Connexions was first and ensure that partners understand it. Some partners wanted more assistance in developing marketing tools and literature at a national level.

227. In some Pilots marketing and promotion was a centralised function undertaken by a dedicated communications officer. In other Pilots, there was greater local flexibility. There were advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. A centralised function ensured a consistent message. However, there may be occasions where local flexibility is needed to provide a particular message to young people in a particular group or area. Local flexibility can help develop these particular messages but there is a danger that different messages were given out in different areas and add to the confusion.

228. Internal marketing, within Connexions and partner organisations, was also seen as important in getting understanding across to key players at a management and delivery level. Some partners wanted Chief Executives and Directors of partner departments and organisations, and national departments to get more involved. For example, the DoH could do more to promote awareness of Connexions within the NHS and health authorities, and particular programmes it funds. In another area, the Deputy Director of the LEA met with Head teachers to describe and promote Pilot activities in schools.

3.4.3 Measuring outcomes

229. According to March's monthly monitoring report, only six Pilots said that they monitored the outcomes of clients using their services. Those who did tended to mention 'soft' outcomes (e.g. improved motivation) or process issues (e.g. the number of referrals to other agencies, and taking up these options).

230. It is still very early days for Connexions Services. Few services were up and running before November and in many of those that were, Personal Advisers were still finding their feet and involved in induction training or preparation for the service (e.g. networking with

partner agencies).

231. However, impacts of the service were already clearly evident. As the interviews with clients shows (see Section 5), many clients have identified benefits from working with their Personal Advisers. Four out of five said the support had made them more interested or confident in education and training courses; 70% said that it had made them feel more confident about getting a *good* job, and three quarters said that it had helped them cope with other problems.

232. Asked if they were doing anything different as a result of these (Connexions) activities, almost nine out of ten (87%) clients said that they were. Positive outcomes included feeling happier and more confident as well as increased attendance at school, better informed about other options, and changes to their behaviour e.g. they were better behaved in class. However, it was precisely these issues that clients needed help with (see Section 5).

233. The surveys or other feedback methods that have been employed (see the good practice case study below), have raised important issues about delivering services to, in the main, hard-to-help young people. However, they all show that a very large proportion of clients value the services they were receiving and believe that they were affecting their behaviour.

234. However, it will take time before these outcomes are translated into 'headline' figures e.g. youth offending rates, attainment levels, participation in further education etc. because:

- Most Personal Advisers were working with clients who face large, and often multiple barriers;
- Other factors outside the Personal Advisers control were important determinants of behaviour e.g. the environment, particularly at home and at school;
- It will take time for important and fundamental changes on behaviour (e.g. anger control) to translate into increased attainment;
- Personal Advisers were currently only working with a small minority of the 13-18 year old age group and therefore important impacts may be lost within the wider group;
- Impacts may overshadowed by wider policy and macroeconomic factors e.g. the closure of an important local employer, a zero tolerance policing policy;
- Important outcomes, especially softer impacts, were more difficult to measure and did not take into account when clients 'stand still'.

235. Furthermore, many Pilots feel that the information burden on them to fulfil the mapping and MIS requirements was "daunting" and any further pressures will be difficult to meet. Any requirement for the measurement of impacts and outcomes should be based on information that is being collected and be focused on measuring progress to meeting objectives of the Service.

3.5 Good practice case study – the Young People's Support Service in Hull

236. As part of the research we undertook a series of case study meetings. On one visit we went to the Young Person's Support Service (YPSS) in Hull that has a city centre and a community location on the Bransholme estate on the outskirts of the city. The YPSS was a one-stop shop, which provided a range of support services to care leavers and young people at risk.

237. Face-to-face meetings were held with the managers of the YPSS in the City Centre

and at Bransholme. We also spoke with four support workers from different professional backgrounds: a former FE lecturer, health worker, family support worker and a housing worker.

3.5.1 Introduction

238. The Young People's Support Service (YPSS) is an inter-agency service for young people in Hull aged 16-21 years old assessed as "in need" under The Children's Act (1989). The YPSS works with young people who are leaving care and other young people who need additional support, such as those who are homeless, young parents and young people with disabilities and special needs.

3.5.2 Background

239. Under The Children's Act (1989), Section 24, there is a statutory duty on the part of local authorities to provide services and support to young people who are leaving care and have left care, up to the age of 21, and in some cases up to the age of 24. There is also a duty to assess and meet the needs of children and young people assessed as "in need" under the age of 18 in Section 17 of the same Act. The way that this support is provided by a local authority is not prescribed.

240. When Hull became a Unitary Authority in 1996, the statutory responsibilities to deliver services to care leavers and young people in need passed from Humberside County Council to the City Council. The City Council, therefore, had to develop provision to meet its statutory responsibilities.

241. A Social Service Inspectors Report across Humberside had highlighted the fragmented and inconsistent support that care leavers received. For example, Hull had 13 different Childcare teams each with different cultures and views of which care leavers they should support. Some care leavers received good support but some very vulnerable young people received no support whatsoever.

242. Care leavers comprise an important group in need of support. Not only are many care leavers disaffected or hard-to-help, they also constitute a large percentage of disaffected and hard-to-help young people.

243. In 1997, Save the Children undertook research into the needs of care leavers, and explored support options for care leavers through transition at age 16 and beyond. A well-respected researcher in this area was commissioned to undertake the study. A critical element of the research was that it was based on the views of care leavers themselves, and to this end peer researchers were employed to undertake much of the fieldwork.

244. The report "Which Way Now" emerged providing clear recommendations about the need for and structure of a support service for care leavers. Care leavers wanted the service to be seen to be independent, and inter-agency.

3.5.3 The development of the YPSS

245. The response of the City Council was positive. They saw that there was an opportunity to do something for these disaffected and vulnerable young people. They decided to test an inter-agency support service. This was seen as important by potential clients because they felt that they had to go from pillar to post when seeking support and advice. Furthermore, moving between agencies meant that young people were much more likely to fall through the net.

246. The YPSS started in January 1999, located in the centre of Hull. The first six months were taken up with staff training, and decorating and furnishing the City Centre location. Care leavers chose the location of the YPSS, its decorations and furnishings.

247. Staff training was widespread. It focused on how "we" wanted the YPSS to look and develop working together in an inter-agency team, and how to respect each other's professional boundaries. Having staff from different professional backgrounds meant that common procedures and practices needed to be agreed e.g. should staff smoke in front of clients, should home visits be made individually or in pairs. Training in more technical areas was also included e.g. drugs awareness and child protection.

248. The first appointments were a manager, administrative worker, social worker, welfare rights officer, housing person, youth worker, leisure person and a career adviser. Two young people were employed; one of who was a care leaver and one who had been a young person in need himself, as trainees under the New Deal programme. These trainees provided general support to clients e.g. helping clients move house, going with them to meetings at the Benefits Agency.

249. SOVA joined the Service, to set up and coordinate a volunteer mentoring scheme for care leavers, in partnership with The Princes Trust. In addition, the Hull and East Riding Health Action Zone funded a health worker.

250. The doors opened in July 1999 and since then over 1000 different young people have used the service, the majority of these are 16/17 year olds.

251. All young people who are looked after by the City Council are automatically referred to the YPSS in the month of their 15th birthday. They are allocated a worker within the YPSS who begins contact with their Social Worker and the young person. In addition to these cases the YPSS has attempted to find and offer a service to over 200 other young people who left care before the YPSS existed. The YPSS sees on average 40 young people a day.

252. The level of demand was unknown. Many clients required our help and support. There was a great demand from young people facing serious issues and staff were under a great deal of pressure.

253. A development plan was written that set out the resources necessary to meet this high level and intensive demand. Again the reaction of the City Council was positive. The following appointments were approved: an Information Officer (for data collection, monitoring and research), a receptionist, a clerk, three disability/additional needs workers, two education and training posts, another welfare rights worker, one housing, and one family support worker.

254. A great deal has been achieved in terms of developing the service. An important element was the Best Value Review. This was hard work at the time. The review took account of the achievement and progress with respect to: quality assurance, promoting the Social Services database, getting email and Internet access, reviewing our opening times etc. A Best Value Action Plan was developed to take these things forward.

255. YPSS are also working towards the MQM Chartermark. Re-application; this promotes ongoing quality analysis and review.

256. Good feedback from clients and partners confirmed that the service was on the right track. But the Best Value Review helped to focus on all the elements of business. For example, YPSS are now in a benchmarking forum.

257. The Best Value Review was critical for ongoing success and the Best Value Action Plan has provided a work programme for taking things forward.

258. Two awards were won at the City Council's "Towards Service Excellence" awards event.

3.5.4 Recruitment

259. All local authority staffs are in permanent posts at the YPSS. Staff secondment was considered but there were too many problems associated with backfilling staff.

260. The first round of recruitment concentrated on attracting local authority employees because we knew of their experience. The Welfare Rights post was also advertised in the voluntary sector, because there is a shortage of welfare rights officers locally.

261. The second round of interviewing was entirely open, with big advertisements appearing in the local press in March. There were many applications. People started working at the end of May.

262. Young people were involved in interviewing, but not in the formal interview. The City Council has a policy that people involved in interview panels should undertake a two-day course. A round table discussion allowed candidates to discuss different issues with young people, in order to test their inter-personal skills. These young people had been involved in a daylong training session to prepare them for this task.

263. Observers watched this and worked with young people on their feedback to the interview panel. In addition, all candidates undergo a Warner interview, which tests their attitudes and values.

3.5.5 The YPSS

264. The YPSS aims to:

- Offer care leavers the support they would receive from a good parent. To this end, the YPSS never 'gives up' on a young person, remembers birthdays and religious festivals.
- Deliver a service that can respond promptly, flexibly and effectively to the needs of vulnerable young people, including care leavers. To this end, the YPSS is open five days a week.
- Have a 'needs-led' approach which means that staff try and respond in a creative and flexible way to the needs of their clients.
- The inter-agency partnership structure of the YPSS ensures that there are specialist staff who can advise on very specific and complex issues.

265. The budget in the first year was £340,000 with an extra £45,000 to furnish and decorate the accommodation. The additional staff increased our total budget to about £650,000. About two-thirds of this comes from the Social Services budget.

266. The Service is easy for young people to access. Formal referrals are taken, but equally, young people can just make an appointment or drop in to see someone during the opening times.

267. The Service is advertised, and there is a high demand from young people for the Service. Some young people are referred; but some young people arrive through word of

mouth. Most young people are aged 16-19 but some are older. Under 16s are directed to appropriate agencies elsewhere.

268. YPSS try and reach people who have or are at risk of falling through the net. Caseloads vary between 18-27 young people per support worker. Every month a list of care leavers is received from Social Services and YPSS contacts them. The targets are: contact with the care leaver on their 19th birthday, four meaningful contacts per year, that clients are pursuing some sort of education, training or employment option and that they are living in suitable accommodation.

269. YPSS have active and dormant caseloads. Some young people cannot be found but this is mainly because they left care before the Service existed. A small number do not want to use the service. YPSS has "invisible" caseloads (something our Best Value Review highlighted) for young people with complex needs but who are not legally care leavers. These young people, usually aged 16/17 and have minimal family support, are often homeless and finding it difficult to manage on their own.

270. YPSS has a buzzer on the front door so young people cannot just walk in. A Triage worker meets them at reception. Staff take it in turns to do this work. This is a role developed through experience. The Triage worker would undertake an initial assessment and decide whether to signpost that young person to another service, provide them with advice and information here, provide no action or to undertake more assessment.

271. If they require further assessment then the duty officer will do this. Recently, YPSS has started using the DoH Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, which covers social and development needs, and family and parenting capacity. YPSS would then plan out what would need to happen next. It might be crisis work e.g. finding accommodation, using funds accessible under legislation (e.g. to feed someone) and a range of contacts.

272. The service is support, advice and befriending. Most young people are seen in the office but staff would visit young people at home, in prison and in placements outside of Hull. They would also accompany young people when attending appointments e.g. to see a doctor, college tutor or landlord.

273. Advice for clients covers:

- welfare rights
- housing
- health
- education and training
- basic skills
- careers
- social services
- family mediation
- leisure and informal education
- additional needs and disability

274. The YPSS has access to emergency funds because of the duty and power under the Children Act 1989. These funds are used to assist young people leaving care and young people in crisis e.g. getting them something to eat. It is very useful having access in order to provide for a client's immediate need, which that in some cases reduces petty crime.

275. A drop-in session allows anyone to walk in. (There are other drop-in facilities for young people in the City Centre, which are open all day).

276. The Learning Gateway for Hull is based within the YPSS. The YPSS is also developing a Health Area for young people, providing, for example, advice on contraception, substance misuse and an outreach GP/primary care clinic. Hull College provides a basic skill's tutor for 2 sessions per week to assess and assist young people with their basic skills. There is also a range of information available to young people, and the YPSS produces the "Hull Youth Fax" book that provides information on rights, health, housing, work, training, education and leisure.

277. The non-care leavers are predominantly homeless or estranged from their families. The main issues facing clients generally are housing, benefits, education and training, befriending/wanting someone to talk to, and health. YPSS are very good at crisis work (e.g. benefits and housing) but want to be more proactive and work harder at education and training and health for example.

3.5.6 Clients' views of the YPSS

278. Young people are regularly consulted using anonymous questionnaires. Their responses show that users are very positive about the YPSS. More than nine out of ten clients (92%) rate the YPSS as good, very good, or excellent.

279. Services who refer young people to us (e.g. Social Services, voluntary agencies working with disaffected and hard-to-help young people) have also been asked for their views about the YPSS. Again more than nine out of ten (93%) rate the YPSS as good, very good, or excellent.

3.5.7 Involving young people in design and delivery

280. Young people have been involved in the YPSS since its inception. They have been:

- involved in the initial research programme.
- represented on the Steering Group which established the service.
- involved in the recruitment of staff.
- involved in the choice of location, the office colour scheme and furniture.
- consulted regularly about the YPSS through informal discussions with staff, and also through quarterly surveys. There is also a weekly Young People's Meeting, where issues can be raised and where staff can consult with young people.
- represented on the Joint Agency Management Group for young people, four places are reserved for young people.

281. The opening times were drawn up in agreement with young people through Young People's Meetings. The opening times are being reviewed and there may be an evening session to make it more convenient for those at college, in work or other full-time education and training.

3.5.8 YPSS management

282. There is a YPSS Management Group comprising officers of Hull City Council's Social Services, Housing, Community Education, and Sports Development Departments. In addition, there are representatives from SOVA, the Health Authority, Hull College, Humberside Partnership, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, the Warren, YOT, Benefits Agency, Councillors and a representative from Northern Food, a locally based

national company.

283. There is one YPSS Manager at the city centre location and another one at the Bransholme YPSS. At the City Centre YPSS there are two team leaders who report to the Centre Manager.

284. The Best Value Review identified the need for an Operational Manager to manage the two-team leaders and funding is being sought.

285. Every Monday morning there is a Manager's meeting and team meetings are held every Friday. Also there is a training session for all staff on Thursday to look at pertinent issues, such as the needs of asylum seekers or verification systems. Days are set aside to complete administrative tasks.

286. YPSS also had an evening out because two City Council "Towards Service Excellence" awards were won. One was for the Partnership of the Year and the other was the Diamond Award for the overall winner of the awards.

3.5.9 Multi agency working

287. The problems faced when setting up and running an inter-agency service have not been as difficult or entrenched as most people imagine. The support of city councillors and senior managers from departments and agencies involved has helped enormously to resolve any problems and been a tower of strength for a newly evolving service.

288. It has been a change for people to come and work at YPSS, to think and look outside their box. Partner managers are very helpful; they have been involved in recruitment and selection and are line managers for staff from their agencies.

289. It helped that Managers knew one another from the well-established Children and Young People's Corporate Planning Group. This Group has been working together for a number of years and is a truly inter-agency planning group. The only problem was one agency took longer to second their worker so young people could not be involved in their recruitment and they have had less induction training.

3.5.10 The YPSS in Bransholme

290. Bransholme is a large estate on the outskirts of Hull. It is the 14th most deprived ward in England. The Bransholme YPSS has been open to clients for two weeks.

291. It was decided that the YPSS would be a good model in order to coordinate and deliver services in a deprived place like Bransholme. Care leavers have low achievement levels, and so is a prime target group for Connexions, so YPSS focusing on those in care, care leavers and those in need.

292. At the moment Personal Advisers have been given the names of looked-after young people and care leavers resident in Bransholme from the Social Services database. Each Personal Adviser will have a caseload of 20 hard-to-help clients. There are 6 Personal Advisers providing help to 120 young people in total. YPSS are in the process of contacting the clients and assessing whether they are priority and non-priority cases. At the moment, the YPSS referrals and caseloads will only be taken up with those from Social Services. If YPSS opened up to EWOs and YOTs there would be overload.

293. All staff went through a four-week induction-training programme. YPSS discussed and identified areas where there might be issues and developed protocols with other

agencies e.g. Social Services' Childcare Team.

294. The general approach to developing a working relationship with other agencies is to contact the Team Manager, give them a presentation about the Bransholme YPSS and Connexions, discuss models for working together, develop a model of co-operative working, discuss the model further and then agree working protocols. This is the approach taken so far with Social Services and similar exercises with other agencies are planned.

295. An important part of the Bransholme YPSS pilot is the interface between Connexions and schools. It is also planned to work with YOTs, the Youth Service, Social Services, Humberside Partnership, the EWS and the Health Service.

296. The protocols under development cover how to work together, what information both sides need and what basic referral information is needed. For example, a contract with the Social Worker defines our respective roles and responsibilities and services, and then YPSS and the young person will sign it. Again similar protocols with other agencies will be developed.

297. YPSS received an excellent response from those agencies to which presentations have been made. Because of the city centre YPSS people are aware of what a YPSS does. There is some uncertainty about the Connexions outcomes because they are concerned with education and training and a particular age group.

298. The main difference of the Bransholme YPSS is that it is based in the community. There are several other initiatives in Bransholme that YPSS want to work with - EAZ, NSF, SureStart and SRB. There is good communication between the agencies about how much and what type of funding is coming into the area. The EAZ and YPSS are preparing a framework for Connexions in schools. Bransholme does not yet have any Personal Advisers in schools, but these are planned for the future.

299. There are eight staff based here - a manager, an administrator and six Personal Advisers. The six Personal Advisers each cover areas deemed crucial to young people, as defined by the needs of clients using the City Centre YPSS. The areas are housing, family resource, education and training, welfare benefits, additional needs (learning and physical disability) and health.

300. Personal Advisers are viewed as having a generic role. A four-week induction-training programme was held during which the Personal Advisers discussed their specialist areas so everyone is aware of each other's skills. Whilst the Personal Advisers do have strengths in particular areas, the intention is to have generic Personal Advisers with broad skills covering the above six areas.

301. When YPSS recruited there were specific requirements e.g. someone with a housing and welfare rights background, but the most important element was that they had an interest in young people. It was open recruitment, nevertheless.

302. The client group has a multiplicity of problems and the Personal Adviser will be equipped to cover this range of issues. Ultimately YPSS would want the client to re-engage in education and training but for many there are a lot of rungs to climb before then.

303. The Bransholme YPSS is represented on a variety of groups that are concerned with services to young people across Hull. The Youth Networks are a key agency in Hull for the delivery of services to and issues involving young people. There are seven Youth Networks, each based on a particular area. They include representatives from YOTs, Police, schools, Connexions and community groups. The Youth Networks are not entirely clear about how

things relate to Connexions e.g. how do YOT workers and Personal Advisers work together? YPSS are discussing these issues and developing solutions. One weakness is the lack of a structure whereby the VCS can readily get involved in Connexions, but YPSS are working on this.

304. The difference that the YPSS and the Personal Adviser brings is consistent support over a longer period of time, not just when there is a problem. In contrast, EWOs and YOT workers have a specifically defined remit in terms of the level and type of support they can provide.

305. The benefit of Connexions is that if the client needs benefit advice then they don't have to be passed on to someone else who may be less supportive of young people. The support is more consistent and clients do not have to be moved from pillar to post. It is possible to build up more of a relationship and keep moving them forward.

306. The presence of the YPSS in Bransholme means that it is part of Bransholme and can be part of its regeneration. YPSS can be a part of the EAZ and the Youth Network development, and so will be responsive to needs in the area. When the Children's Fund comes on line YPSS will have SureStart, Children's Fund and then Connexions.

3.5.11 Staff views on the advantages of working in the YPSS

307. Interviews were held with four support workers from different professional backgrounds: for example, a former FE lecturer, health worker, family support worker and a housing worker.

Interview A

308. "With Connexions the emphasis is on linking; so that I can share information with other organisations (e.g. Humberside Partnerships) about what we do here and so that they can refer people to here. It wouldn't work to the same extent if it were not all in the same place.

309. When I came here it was easy to get into the work because there is a lack of territory, an open atmosphere, lots of team working, lots of support from colleagues. There are other specialists who you can refer people on to, and get information from.

310. When I came here I had 4 weeks training which covered induction, the Children's Act, data protection and confidentiality, but I had previous knowledge. There are areas I would like further training in, but these are being addressed e.g. formalising some procedures such as which under 16s we can work with. Every Friday we meet and discuss things as a team. There are more meetings than I have experienced in the past and they do stick to the point in question.

311. We take it in turns to perform the Triage role. It is to assess needs and, if necessary, sign clients on to other people and other agencies.

312. A lot of the clients I see are having problems with their parents so some of the work is family mediation. Hardship is another issue so I provide a lot of information about benefits, housing and emergency care. Often people come here for one reason and other issues emerge. There are two groups of people: people in crisis, where the issue is sorted out and they don't come back, and others where you sort out one issue and then others are raised. This is where the assessment framework is useful; it brings up other issues to be addressed.

313. Many children in Hull find the notion of further and higher education daunting. They

have grown up with the expectation that they would be leaving school at 16, so some of the work is about raising aspirations and making sure the range of college- based options are available for them.

314. The main advantage of the YPSS is that it is young-person-centred. Often when talking with a young person, there is a feeling that this is the first time they have been spoken to as an equal and that someone is there for them providing them with choices. This happens here because people have taken on new ideas, especially positive reinforcement where you give clients a focus, objectives and choices. The atmosphere of the place is well suited to this; the way young people are communicated with and thought of. We are open and honest with clients and we see a lot of people on an ongoing basis which other agencies aren't geared up to do.

315. Another advantage is that by having many people here, clients are not being sent from pillar to post. Different agencies have different attitudes. One may be very positive but another may not be so positive. This is when some clients tend to fall through the net. If clients have to go to another agency than they know that they have the option of someone going along with them."

Interview B

316. "Within our multi agency team, members carry out generic tasks but they also have their own specialist areas. I can ask other team members for advice and information in their areas or if it were a particularly tricky case then I would refer the case to them or to a specialist agency. The way we work within the YPSS means that we do become aware of each other's roles but we also learn from other team members to improve and develop our own knowledge in areas that we may know little about e.g. housing.

317. Working together as a team is helped by the fact that we are all in the same place. We are clear about each other's roles, and aware of our limitations and boundaries as practitioners within the team.

318. I am seconded so I have two managers, a manager from my source agency and the manager of the YPSS. Both these managers have clearly defined roles, so there have been no problems concerning communication. I am also clear about whom I should speak to if and when various issues or concerns arise. I feel well supported within the team.

319. As far as training is concerned, every two weeks I attend a professional practice forum, which helps me, keep up-to-date with issues in my particular specialist area. Within the YPSS, there are team meetings on a weekly basis and there is also a team training session once a week, where any training needs identified by the team or assumed appropriate are undertaken. For specific training needs within my specialist area I would speak to my manager in my source agency, but I would also discuss it with the manager here.

320. I feel the benefit of the YPSS is that the needs of a young person can be assessed and addressed holistically. When working in my previous setting I tended to concentrate on those specific issues. However, working in a multi agency team increases your awareness of other issues and services, and what signs to look for in clients. Young people are seen initially for a particular problem, but the team member will take a holistic approach assessing the client thoroughly, so additional needs may be identified and subsequently addressed. Also, the passing of clients from pillar to post is reduced by the YPSS."

Interview C

321. “I was recruited in January for a one and a quarter year secondment to work on a full time basis as a Personal Adviser in Bransholme. My current caseload consists of young people who are on the Social Services database and who have a Bransholme address. The cases are divided up between the team and allocated on a weekly basis. From May onwards the team will receive referrals from other agencies.

322. Personal Advisers are generic and so the caseloads are allocated generically. We can draw upon additional specialist information and advice from within the team and other agencies as and when required.

323. All of the team members had an induction period of two months, which involved training on relevant issues and initiatives such as SureStart and on organisations who provide services to young people such as YOTs. We spent about 5 days shadowing Personal Advisers in the City Centre YPSS and attended team meetings there. We also discussed the Connexions service in Bransholme within our own team.

324. There is also some planned training, which includes drugs awareness, area child protection training and social services training. Training needs are identified through development interviews with the manager. We also have weekly team meetings.

325. At the moment I have 15 young people on my caseload; all but one have had a social worker. One of my clients has been excluded from senior school; all the others are care leavers. I feel the advantage of a Connexions centre at Bransholme is that the team has a greater awareness of the role of other services and how these other services can be accessed to help young people.

326. Connexions allow young people to have one point of contact to resolve problems and they know where to go. Previously young people have been referred from one person to another. Therefore, Connexions can ensure there is consistency in the service provided to young people. They have a Personal Adviser who will be a point of contact that will have knowledge of their needs and their history, and knowledge of other support services so they can refer to agencies accordingly if needed.

327. For assessing young people we use the same framework as Social Services. For tracking purposes the Personal Advisers can access SIDS, which is a Social Services database. Presently, we are developing working protocols and service level agreements with social workers.”

Interview D

328. “I feel the advantage of a Connexions service at Bransholme is that there is immediate access to specialist advice and information for young people. There is joint working across the services and a greater clarity of roles of individuals from different organisations. The links with other organisations help speed up access to services for young people.

329. I had an induction period of two months, which was very useful. However towards the end of the training I wanted to get on with the work. During the induction period we helped to set up systems, which increased ownership of developing the Connexions service in the local area.

330. Clients come from the Social Services database, are aged between 13-19 and have been identified as in need. Currently I have a caseload of 20. From May, we will be taking referrals from other agencies. We want to be proactive, so it is important to catch young people before they fall through the net.

331. We are aiming to be generic Personal Advisers with a wide range of skills. One difficulty I can foresee with this is that it may be difficult to keep up to speed in the specialist area. How does someone with a housing background keep up-to-date with developing issues and legislation in this area?"

3.5.12 Key learning points

- Given the investment, there was pressure to open the doors as soon as possible. However, YPSS needed more time to develop systems and procedures, and look and learn from others that had also developed similar types of services. With more time we could have been more proactive. For example, with hindsight, YPSS would have developed a triage reception system earlier.
- YPSS had little idea of the high demand for the services and were not fully prepared for the large numbers of young people who came through the doors, especially with the sorts of needs they have. Resources and services need to be developed in line with the demand.
- Young people need to be involved at all stages, as we have done, but they need support and training, and their involvement must not be tokenistic.
- Having an inter-agency team means that there are specialists on hand and the wide range of clients' needs can be supported. Passing young people from pillar to post is also minimised, which reduces their chances of falling out of the system.
- The Best Value Review was a lot of extra work but was worth the time and energy.
- Having correct referral and initial assessment procedures are important to making the best use of your own resources and in providing a professional service to the client.
- YPSS are very good at crisis work but want to improve proactive work.
- Having access to emergency funds is very useful in being able to provide immediate assistance.

3.5.13 Key Issues Concerning Service Development And Delivery

332. Table 16 shows the key issues that partners identified concerning service development and delivery. Most revolve around partnership working, the logistics of service delivery and particular issues facing specific sub groups of young people.

Table 16 Key issues concerning service development and delivery

Key issues
Partnership working:
➢ There are anxieties about Connexions because it is such a radical shift. There is anxiety over career structures, client confidentiality, and the role of the Personal Adviser and a need to establish mutual professional trust.
➢ There is a concern from projects outside of Connexions about whether and when they become part of it, and they feel vulnerable.
➢ There is a need to complement and build on existing initiatives.
➢ Some agencies are fearful for their services. For example, Social Services are developing Personal Adviser roles for looked after young people and they fear this will be taken over.
➢ A need to clarify organization's roles, requirements and expectations within the Connexions Service.
➢ The redeployment of existing personnel and the re-branding of existing services are often discussed and need addressing.
➢ It is very difficult to involve everyone who should be involved.

- It is difficult getting other agencies to meet agreed deadlines, attend meetings and getting agreement to second staff.
- The release of staff to develop Pilot activity can be problematic.
- Some organisations are involved in a lot of Pilots and other initiatives and this adds to pressure of time to attend meetings.
- The sheer pressure of delivering other work outside of Connexions.
- As the work evolves, the complexity of existing links both between and within agencies is beginning to become apparent.
- The use of assessment tools to measure 'soft' outcomes'.
- Clarification of the linkages between assessment frameworks being devised by different Government Departments. And the agreement of common terminology e.g. 'at risk', 'vulnerable children', 'children in need' etc.

Data issues:
- Producing an acceptable consent form for agencies to use with clients in order to share data.
- The requirement to get the permission from young people in order to store and share even basic information.
- Sharing client assessment information and the potential for litigation in relation to the disclosure of information.
- The need for national guidance on confidentiality issues.
- Conflicts between different partners. For example, the Data Protection Act 1998 Guidance to Social Services implies that information provided by Social Services to Connexions should not be passed on to a third party.

Logistics of service delivery:
- The location and environment where the client accesses the Personal Adviser is important.
- Delivery of the service across large rural areas is an issue.
- Any changes to policy or budgets needs to be approved by members.
- There is a lack of capacity in participating agencies to deliver the additional work.
- Care needs to be taken that existing provision is not funded.
- As more needs are identified the demand will be greater and there is a concern over our ability to meet it.
- Avoid starting projects in August.
- The lack of provision for young people aged 18 or over, for whom New Deal is inappropriate e.g. if they are ineligible.

Issues concerning specific sub-groups:
- Looked-after young people move homes more frequently and so need greater continuity of support.
- 13 is too old and too late to start Connexions work
- 19 is too early a cut off point for young people leaving care.
- There are different definitions of particular sub-groups between different agencies. For example, who, exactly, are gifted and who are vulnerable.
- Assessing the needs of and mapping of some sub groups needs to be done sensitively.

National context:
- Central Government needs to 'join up' its own policies.
- The Government needs to send out the message to all its agencies about joint working.
- There are hundreds of good and appropriate web sites and telephone help lines available locally and nationally. Could the DfEE commission the development of a directory of them?
- Getting informal feedback from DfEE contract managers and auditors.

Providing a universal service:
- Provision must be made to safeguard the continuity of universal career information, advice and guidance.

333. The following were the main pointers of effective practice that partners had identified in developing and delivering Connexions services.

Table 17 Good practice pointers towards effective practice concerning the development of the Strategic Partnerships

Good practice Pointers

Build on Existing Practice and Experience
- Each service has a reference group and this has widened representation, which has given project managers access to a range and depth of knowledge, expertise and experience.
- Theme groups can widen representation. For example, the young carers' project has involved a VCS organisation, health service workers and also links with SureStart.
- The secondment of partners experienced in working with specific groups has been useful in developing the service.
- The Connexions Service is developing a working agreement with the YOI Pilot.
- The involvement of a Benefits Adviser and involve an EAZ and health services.
- It is extremely important to keep partners informed of progress.
- Building on grass roots, ideas promote ownership.
- Build on lots of multi-agency working is cost-effective.
- Building on previous contact with the Careers Service that was aimed at disaffected young people, this work was SRB funded and also cost-effective.
- New Start programme provided caseloaded support for poor attendees and achievers in an FE College and the Connexions Services were further developed due to this.

Work through the logistics of delivery together:
- Build on existing infrastructures where they exist and are appropriate. Be aware of overlapping activities.
- Think objectively, creatively and openly about the Connexions Service by asking the task group to think about developing a service for a hypothetical young person. They were asked to design a service for her and this approach worked well.
- Identifying need with as local as focus as possible is the key to getting projects off the ground, especially in schools.
- Recognise the need to get support and information structures in place before the Personal Advisers start.
- Workers need to recognise each other's roles and contribution
- Make the **links** to other major initiatives/requirements e.g. Quality Protects
- Developing several theoretical models on topics like the transition process between Personal Advisers and the different roles of Personal Advisers in different establishments.
- Appointing a Coordinator to develop links with a neighbouring Connexions area.

Data issues
- A protocol completed and allows the distinction of sensitive data as defined in the DPA and Professional Sensitive Data.
- Agreeing individual protocols for sharing data to accommodate paper and electronic systems.

- The development of ‘time-lines’ in assessment and diagnostic tools.
- Data sharing protocols have been updated to include the Human Rights Act.

Engage the practitioners
- Recruit peer workers for care leavers.
- Workings with agencies in delivering support to young people in-care. Involved the Independence Support Project and the Looked After Children Officer.
- Having Personal Advisers in schools helps the schools understand the range of services available to their pupils in school. Before, people knew very little about what the other agencies in their school did.
- Have a drop-in centre for looked-after young people that are staffed by a range of agencies.

Understand Need
- The needs of young people need to be researched effectively.
- Develop ‘themes of need’ within a locality or cohort so that provision can be allocated equitably and cost effectively.
- Young people have difficulty accessing support and advice concerning health (stress, depression, anorexia and self harm), relationships (especially gay), careers advice (due to the refocusing of the Careers Service), and school work (revision and course-work completion).
- Black and ethnic minority young people are clear that they want a service that is flexible, where the client is ‘us’ and that respects their culture.
- Developing a young carer’s awareness raising leaflet and teachers pack.
- The development of mentoring programmes for the ‘hard-to-reach’ population.

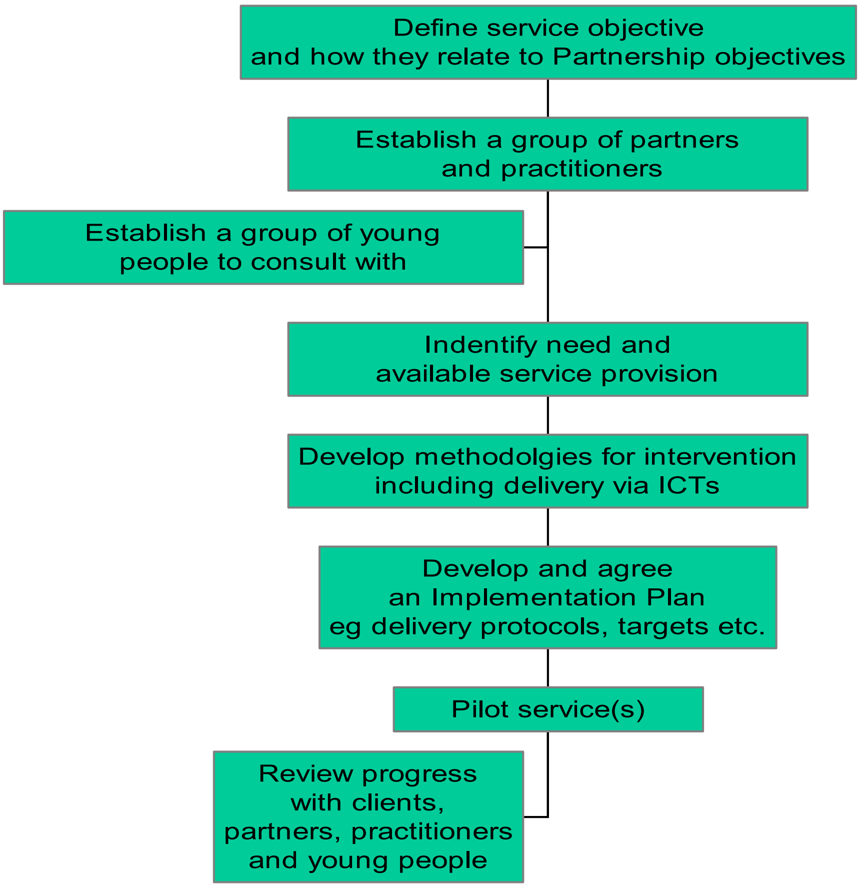
Deal with the basics first
- Services are already showing benefits. “We had a boy aged 17 in, who had not eaten for three days and we used our emergency fund to get him something to eat. Then a Personal Adviser was able to talk with him about other issues including learning.” [Money is available to assist young people in need under Section 17 and Section 24 of the Children’s Act]
- Need to link in services with Quality Protects.[15]

Establish a common bond or purpose
- All of our Pilot services contribute to the wider social inclusion agenda along with other professionals in similar fields e.g. EWO’s, Guidance Team, Youth workers and careers advisers.

334. Based on the experience of the Pilots we suggest an idealised model for developing Connexions services (see Figure 14). Some of these stages may be circumvented if there is already existing provision and structures available.

[15] Quality Protects was launched in September 1998. It is the main vehicle for delivering the aims in ‘Modernising Social Services’ of effective protection, better quality care and improved life chances for children.

Figure 14 Idealised model for developing Connexions services



335. It begins with identifying the objectives of the service and how they relate to Partnership objectives. The next stage involves establishing groups of interested people to be involved with the initial design and subsequent development of the service. In particular, clients, young people, partners and practitioners need to be involved. Next comes the mapping of need and provision and the development of an implementation plan based on need and recognition of what other services exist. The Implementation Plan may also include delivery protocols and targets. The next stage is to pilot services and incorporate continuous feedback mechanisms for including the views of young people, clients, partners and practitioners.

3.6 Conclusions

- As the Connexions Service has not been clearly defined the Connexions Service Pilots were not clear about how to operationalise the Connexions vision.
- The Connexions Service being delivered by the Pilots to date has effectively been a Personal Adviser based service delivered on a one-to-one/face-to-face basis between the Personal Adviser and client. Some Pilots were developing other types of provision e.g. peer mentoring, use of ICTs, but how Connexions Services differ from existing ones remains to be seen.
- Many fundamental issues were being actively explored. For example, what is multi-agency working and what is the role of the Personal Adviser? Different Pilots had different views of these two concepts. There was more agreement about what constitutes the core of these two elements but what it meant ‘at the edges’ was much more open to interpretation.
- There was a need to build on what was in place before Connexions.

- There is a large amount of activity, 64 services targeted at young people were being piloted. The vast majority of these involved multi-agency and multi-site working. Most agencies were being targeted at specific groups of young people, mainly young people with learning difficulties or disabilities, SENs, care leavers and young offenders. 105 organisations were involved, directly or indirectly, in the delivery of Connexions Services whilst 80 different venues were being used to deliver the services from.
- However, very few Pilots could measure the relative impact of, and outcomes from, clients using their services. This was because many impacts were 'soft' outcomes and were more difficult to measure.
- Reviewing services on an ongoing basis is important to achieving best practice.
- Data issues became more prominent throughout the year as services developed especially sharing client information.
- Underpinning the development of the Connexions Service in some areas was the triangle of need - a three-tiered model based on the needs of young people and developed from primary research.

3.7 Recommendations

336. Other sections focus on specific aspects of service delivery, for example, the role of the Personal Adviser, Connexions service delivery in schools, working with particular sub groups of young people etc. These sections contain their own particular recommendations about these elements of the Connexions Service.

- The need to identify and disseminate good practice and key learning points, for example, assessment and diagnostic tools, data sharing and recognising and measuring 'soft' outcomes.
- The need to be clear about what Connexions is and what does it mean at an operational level.
- Very few Pilots were able to provide basic information about the numbers and type of clients using the service, and what outputs and impacts had been achieved. It is essential for project management, and to measure the success of services, that this information is available.
- The need for everyone to learn from the experience of Connexions whether by best value reviews or other processes. There was a lot of learning and personal development taking place that needs to be consolidated and disseminated.
- The need to recognise that organisation's differed in their capacity to become involved in Connexions.

4 Personal Advisers

4.1 Introduction

337. This section focuses on the Personal Adviser, a position that is pivotal to the delivery and performance of Connexions services. The first half of this section looks at how service partners were developing and delivering the role of Personal Adviser. The latter part reports on the interviews with 81 Personal Advisers.

4.2 Service delivery and the role of the Personal Adviser

4.2.1 Defining the role of the Personal Adviser

338. One of the first, and most important, tasks of the Connexions Pilots was to define, develop and recruit to the role of the Personal Adviser. There were two main issues:

- Whether the Personal Adviser is going to perform a generic role i.e. dispensing careers advice and referring on to specialist agencies, or provide specific advice on issues ranging from homelessness, health and drugs.
- Whether the Personal Adviser is going to be a new role or based on that of existing, similar workers e.g. Learning Mentors.

339. The national definition of the Personal Adviser role is shown in Table 18.

Table 18 Definition of the role of the Personal Adviser

The Connexions Personal Adviser will be central to the Connexions Service. All young people will have access to a Personal Adviser whose aim will be to ensure that the needs of individual young people are met so that they are able and motivated to engage in education, training and work opportunities to achieve their full potential. The exact role the Personal Adviser fulfils for each young person will depend on the support that the young person requires. However, the Personal Adviser's role may include any or all of the following elements:

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

Source: ‘’Working Together – Connexions and Teenage Pregnancy’, CSNU.

340. However, there were still differing views as to the role of the Personal Adviser. The generic Personal Adviser role was defined by one partner:

"To offer careers advice and support, signpost, liase with parents, diagnose individual need, liase with schools, have knowledge of appropriate legislation (e.g. Child Protection) and work with other agencies."

341. Another partner felt that Personal Advisers should target the hard-to-help and provide advice and support, not just refer clients on to other agencies. As it has transpired to date, most Personal Advisers were working with disaffected and hard-to-help young people providing one-to-one counselling and advice.

342. Another important issue was whether the Personal Adviser was a new professional role in itself, or whether it was a composite of existing professionals that provide support service to young people. Partners identified a range of workers, Learning Mentors, careers advisers, youth workers, YOT and EWS staff that could perform the Personal Adviser role:

"We have undertaken a lot of locally focused activities with organisations who are identifying staff with the skills and abilities for Connexions work (including young people and communities). However, we are not sure who or what part of their time will be 'badged' as Connexions."

343. For most Pilots, the Personal Adviser is a new role and one that was being worked out. Six Pilots reported running events – e.g. workshops, seminars and conferences – with other partners and practitioners to define the Personal Adviser role. Some of these Pilots had involved young people in these discussions as well.

344. Table 19 shows how young people in one Pilot saw the role of the Personal Adviser and the main issues around it. Some of these may be contradictory, for example, the starting age, but it does show the range of personal and professional abilities required from a Personal Adviser worker.

Table 19 Role of the Personal Adviser - the view from one workshop

The Personal Adviser role:
➢ Personal Advisers should start earlier e.g. Primary schools. Teenagers have set ideas and may not be willing to change.
➢ The Personal Adviser/client relationship needs to be started early.
➢ Trust is very important in the relationship.
➢ Important to have a neutral person like the Personal Adviser.
➢ Important to have neutral person like the Personal Adviser to deal with young peoples issues/problems.
➢ A friend – (Personal Advisers) if you were being bullied. Someone to talk to.
➢ How many Personal Advisers will be available? A high number of Personal Advisers is required for the idea to work.
➢ Age 13 is okay for Personal Adviser idea to kick in.
➢ Personal Adviser idea should not duplicate current practice.
➢ Personal Advisers should be near to clients' age group – "young and trendy".
➢ Teachers should be involved.
➢ Personal Advisers should be available to all ages even if the young person does not have huge issues/problems.
➢ All young people should be entitled to have a Personal Adviser.
➢ How do we avoid labelling? Young people with or who need Personal Advisers may be labelled/laughed at.

- Teachers should not be Personal Advisers – conflict of interest.
- A mix of age groups should make up the Personal Advisers.
- Important Personal Advisers are trained! To achieve credibility.
- Young people should have the CHOICE to approach Personal Advisers.
- Issues of CONFIDENTIALITY.
- Personal Advisers should display RESPECT, EMPATHY and BE ABLE TO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.
- Personal Advisers can be there just to talk to and not necessarily to solve problems.
- Friend and Adviser.
- Checks for Personal Advisers i.e. emotional stability.
- Personal Advisers should be monitored and evaluated.
- Must have on-going training.

345. Within those Pilots that were developing Personal Adviser based services (all Pilots except Greater Merseyside), there was still a mix of views as to what a Personal Adviser should be. The majority view (in about 60% of the Pilots) was that you need *both* roles performed by Personal Advisers i.e. generic and universal. This rationale was based on the 'triangle of need' (see Section 3):

> *"Personal Advisers should primarily dispense careers advice because that is what most young people need. However, Personal Advisers working with the two lower tiers should be trained in career advice but also in advocacy and referral skills and how to identify need. Personal Advisers working with the top tier should be able to deal with a range of problems e.g. drugs or child care that have little to do with education, training and employment."*

346. Two Pilots looked at the job descriptions and person specifications of similar type of worker and developed the Personal Adviser role from these.

347. In practice, the Pilots were differentiating between different types of Personal Advisers that reflected local need, existing support agencies and services, and the demands of the job. The main criteria were:

- Background, skills and experience – Personal Advisers come from a variety of backgrounds e.g. education, youth work, careers service, probation with different levels of skills, qualifications and experience. This variety is helping to define the role of the Personal Advisers. Also some Pilots have trainee Personal Advisers and peer mentors and their roles have to be developed as well.
- Settings – Personal Advisers work in a variety of settings and locations e.g. peripatetic/'where the client is, community, schools, outreach centres, VCS agencies, and a YOI. This influences what the Personal Adviser does. For example, in one setting the Personal Adviser may focus more on research, mapping, developing networks, referral systems, and other procedures and protocols (especially where this type of support has never existed before) whereas in another these may already be established and the Personal Adviser is working directly with clients.
- Types of clients - for example, care leavers, BMEs, young offenders, asylum seekers/refugees, and young carers. Different client groups can require different skills and experience in their Personal Advisers influencing the settings they work in, the skills they require and the type of intervention required.

- Level of caseload - this tended to be dependent on the number of clients that were defined as hard-to-help and therefore require more intensive and longer term support.

348. There were three distinct Personal Adviser models that have been developed, with variations in between:

- The first model was where there has been little or no service provision of this type before e.g. Personal Advisers working with homeless young people. Some Personal Advisers were wholly concerned with researching and exploring their role and have done very little work with clients. They have been involved in mapping service provision and need. Seeking out examples of good practice elsewhere, developing contacts with support agencies in the area and asking them how the Personal Adviser role may best fit in with client need and the service they provide. Developing referral and other systems, and procedures and protocols for inter- and multi-agency working. Once the service was up and running these Personal Advisers will become either a specialist or generic Personal Adviser.
- The second model has been termed a generic Personal Adviser or a Connexions Adviser in one area. These Personal Advisers have four main functions – establishing contact and engaging with young people, dispensing careers advice and guidance, initial assessment of need, and client tracking. If a client were assessed as requiring additional support, then they would be referred on to a dedicated agency. Tracking was not just limited to monitoring information on the client but could involve ensuring that, if the client was referred to another agency, that the client had made the appointment and received a satisfactory response. A variant on this model sees the generic Personal Advisers assessing need and tracking; if clients need careers advice then they would be referred to a careers adviser in the same way as if they needed help with a substance misuse problem they would be referred to a drugs worker.
- The third model was a specialist Personal Adviser who works specifically with hard-to-help young people, for example, working with young prostitutes or providing support to teenage carers. These Personal Advisers will often differ from the second model in terms of their previous experience, skills, location and setting of work and, of course, the clients they work with. They were more likely to be linking with communities and existing support services to engage with clients from their particular client group, ensuring systems were in place for clients to access wider support and guidance networks, developing a full knowledge of client need and support services in their particular area, assessing need, providing advice and support, signposting, liasing with other support professionals (including attending case conferences), and developing procedures and protocols.

349. The latter two models were at different ends of a continuum and there can be much overlap between the two roles in the same Pilot area. In addition to their roles there were differences in the ways these different types of Personal Advisers were managed, the support they require and their training and development needs.

350. Most Pilots have been critical of the lack of national guidance on role of the Personal Adviser. As with many other aspects of the Connexions Service, the role of the Personal Adviser was being worked out in the vast majority of Pilots, but national guidance has often been perceived as too little and too late. Two partners also felt that referring to the Personal Adviser, as a 'high status profession' was also unhelpful because no one knew what this meant and it also had implications for other staff.

351. Most Personal Advisers had been in post since October/November 2000, so by March, when we held interviews, many Pilots had had Personal Advisers undertaking

Connexions work for about five months. However, three Pilots had only just recruited Personal Advisers, or were in the process of recruitment by March, so some questions could not be answered.

352. As we have mentioned before, the Connexions Service did not start afresh, and this is particularly true as far as the role of the Personal Adviser was concerned. Many support professionals were already undertaking similar duties and responsibilities that were in the job descriptions of Personal Advisers. This was particularly true of areas that had or were running New Start or Learning Gateway programmes, inherent to which were Personal Advisers. Seven Pilots were developing multi agency working and the role of the Personal Adviser from New Start, Learning Gateway and other youth support programmes. Connexions benefited from this previous work in the following ways:

- Programmes like New Start and Learning Gateway had started to develop rudimentary links, particularly between local authorities and careers services, which subsequently could be built upon, including the sharing of names, numbers and networks.
- The existence of a culture of sharing which meant that agencies were confident in working with each other and not precious about territories. In some Pilot areas there were already One Stop Shops that brought together support professionals from a range of backgrounds together in one place. In another Pilot, a Youth Service worker had been placed in the Careers Service for over ten years to respond to young people with non-careers issues.
- Existing practice of placing Personal Advisers within key agencies and in a multi-agency context was useful, especially in schools and colleges, where Connexions Personal Advisers would be based. In one Pilot, two of the Connexions Pilot schools had been involved in New Start.
- The development of support materials e.g. one New Start programme had developed its own Personal Adviser handbook which formed the basis of the Connexions Personal Adviser handbook.
- Existing working relationships with key Connexions partners e.g. YOTs, Employment Service.
- Using existing mechanisms, for example Learning Gateways, to access clients. One Pilot had located three Personal Advisers within its Learning Gateways.

353. However, Connexions was seen to be different in important respects, for example, Connexions clients were viewed, in one Pilot at least, as being more mainstream that in Learning Gateway or New Start.

354. Partners identified a number of key issues concerning the role of the Personal Adviser that needed addressing. An important concern, also expressed by schools and colleges (see later Section), was the loss of careers advice if the Personal Adviser was to focus on more hard-to-help young people.

Table 20 Key issues concerning the role of the Personal Adviser

Key issues:
➢ What are the statutory responsibilities of the Personal Adviser?
➢ Some Personal Advisers are unclear about their future role in Connexions and are not entirely committed to becoming Connexions Personal Advisers.
➢ Partners are confused about the role of the Personal Adviser and how they differ from other professional’s e.g. Learning Mentors.
➢ Whether the Personal Adviser role will be a new one, taking bits from other workers or will people keep their skills but work in a more integrated and structured way?

➢ What happens to careers advice when staff become Personal Advisers? ➢ The need to support services that Personal Advisers are recruited from. In some areas Personal Advisers are relatively well-paid jobs and attract people from Careers and Youth services. Non-Connexions support service provision may be affected by this loss of staff. ➢ Steering between the different pay and conditions of staff.

Source: Partner interviews and monthly reports, GHK

355. Partners could also demonstrate good practice in the methods they were using to define and develop the role of the Personal Adviser.

Table 21 Good practice lessons concerning the role of the Personal Adviser

Good practice:
➢ Linking our Personal Adviser theme group with the Involving Young People theme group to get a crossover of ideas. ➢ Some people had a ‘ghetto’ mentality regarding the role of the Personal Adviser, each type of practitioner thought that they had the best model. A joint-consultation exercise was held and this increased understanding of and regards for each other’s views. ➢ Workshops on the role of the Personal Adviser were held. ➢ Young people were involved in defining the role of the Personal Adviser. ➢ The Personal Adviser role is great; there is a huge gap in provision with plenty of scope for development. ➢ The testing-out of different models of Personal Advisers. ➢ Developing training courses to recruit other professional’s e.g. careers advisers, so that the provision of careers advice and guidance is not affected by the loss of staff to Connexions. ➢ The use of diaries so Personal Advisers can review the work they have been doing. In at least one Pilot there were ‘reflection’ sessions

Source: Partner interviews and monthly reports, GHK

356. The main lesson from these quotations was that the Personal Adviser role, whilst not entirely new, is a different occupation. The precise details of its role was for local people and clients to develop, based on what exists at the moment, the nature of generic and specific need in an area, and the objectives of the services they were providing.

357. An essential element in this was the mapping exercise. Three Pilots have used the results of their mapping to help define the role of the Personal Adviser, and place them to address local need.

358. By March 2001, as Table 22, shows, 241 full-time equivalent (FTE) people were working for Connexions in a variety of roles and as secondees, directly employed or sub contract workers. By far the largest category was the Personal Adviser, 168 FTE people were performing this role, and most were directly employed (59% of Personal Advisers) but a significant proportion were seconded (40%).

Table 22 Number of staff working for the Connexions Pilots[16]

FTEs	Secondees	Sub-contracted	Directly employed	Other	Total
Management	29	0	3	0	**32**
Personal advisers	66	3	99	0	**168**
Other delivery workers	11	2	3	0	**16**
Admin and clerical	4	1	5	1	**11**
Other support	6	0	0	1	**7**
Other	7	0	0	0	**7**
Total	**123**	**6**	**110**	**2**	**241**

Source: March's Monthly Report, GHK

359. Secondment, especially for Personal Advisers, covers a range of options. One option was being physically located in a Connexions setting and receiving dedicated Connexions management. Another option was support to, for example, a Youth Worker who delivers or is involved in a Connexions project for only some of their time. This can affect how the Personal Adviser sees the Connexions Service and services, and their role within it.

Table 23 Organisation staff were recruited from

FTEs	Careers Service	Youth Service	Probation Service	EWS	YOT	VCS	School/ College	Other	Total
Management	19	5	0	0	0	1	2	4	**31**
Personal advisers	66	24	1	8	2	7	13	46	**167**
Other delivery workers	5	0	0	2	1	2	0	7	**17**
Admin & clerical	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	**6**
Other support	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	**5**
Other	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	**7**
Total	**97**	**31**	**1**	**12**	**3**	**11**	**16**	**62**	**233**

Source: March Monthly Reports, GHK

360. Personal Advisers and other staff were recruited from a wide range of organisations, as Table 23 shows (this table is based on responses from twelve Pilots). Of the 233 FTE Personal Advisers for which information was available, most (40%) were recruited from Careers Services, 14% from Youth Services and 8% from schools and colleges. Over one quarter (28%) came from 'Other' organisations: in the main this was other local authority department's (Social Services, Housing etc).

4.2.2 Recruitment of Personal Advisers

361. The recruitment of Personal Advisers was by no means a straightforward exercise. There were two main approaches to recruitment – open advertising and identifying secondees from partner organisations. Five Pilots used an entirely open recruitment process and five Pilots used a mixture of two, for example, seconding career advisers for generic Personal Advisers and open recruitment of specialist Personal Advisers. Only one Pilot entirely staffed its Personal Advisers through secondment or internal recruitment.

362. The development of job descriptions and person specifications for Personal Adviser

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[16] The total figure for Personal Advisers excludes 270 people working in the Humberside Connexions Pilot; they are unable to break down their staff in this way. Not all of them were working full-time for the Connexions pilot.

workers was, often the result of consultations with partner organisations and some were based on job descriptions of existing workers.

363. Where Personal Adviser posts (and other posts, such as, area coordinators) were openly advertised a wide range of methods was used – local and national press, local radio, the Internet, job circulars of partner organisations (including the VCS). Because of the number of Personal Advisers required, and the desired special skills and qualifications, recruitment tended to be an extensive exercise. Some Pilots did not advertise widely but focused on staff undertaking a Personal Adviser role in partner organisations and then seconded them to Connexions.

364. The advantages of open advertising meant that you could attract a variety of candidates whereas a 'ring-fence' approach ensured that partner agencies were included. Secondment was attractive because of speed and also because some Personal Adviser contracts only ran to the end of the Pilot, in most cases March 2001. But secondment can affect staffing in the agencies, which the staff were seconded from, often providing valuable support services to young people. Backfilling can be used but this was not necessarily a straightforward process especially if the post only runs for a few months.

365. In one Pilot, the agencies (e.g. schools) where the Personal Adviser was working, undertook the recruitment process. To support this, the Partnership developed a Personal Adviser recruitment and support strategy.

366. Recruitment was often a lengthy and involved process. The main issues identified by the partners in recruiting Personal Advisers were:

Timescales – it took a lot longer than envisaged to recruit Personal Advisers. This was for a number of reasons:

- The need to observe locally agreed procedures, especially equal opportunity procedures. Some partners, for example local authorities, had to observe recruitment procedures (ranging from equal opportunities to endorsement by Council committee) and these could add several weeks to recruitment timescales.
- Notice periods that staff had to give. The more experienced the staff, the longer the notice period. But also if people were involved in projects they were committed to, they would not want to leave, if it jeopardised the continuity of that service.
- Holidays - some Pilots were looking to recruit in August and September and this clashed with the summer holidays.
- Definition of the role and other logistical issues. As we have seen, there was a lot of debate about the role of the Personal Adviser and even when agreed there could be a lengthy job evaluation process to draw up precise details about the person specification and job description. Cross-borough and cross-agency protocols may also have had to be agreed. For example, if a client wants to access a service that is more convenient in a neighbouring Borough, will they be able to and who pays for the support?
- The need to establish support structures, locations and office equipment etc. before the Personal Adviser can start work.
- The assessment of candidates. Because of the nature of the Personal Adviser role, some Pilots ran psychometric tests on candidates, including tests to check for "latent paedophilia". Furthermore, Pilots have to run Police checks on successful candidates.
- Many Pilots involved partners - including trade unions, Head teachers and young people - in their recruitment procedures. It took time organising the involvement of these key players.

367. In many cases, where there was open recruitment, the response to job adverts was

large. One Pilot received 400 applications (more than 20 per vacant post) but whilst this was untypical, all posts were oversubscribed. However, most Pilots did experience some **recruitment difficulties** including:

- Pay levels – in some areas, particularly the South East, there was concern that the pay rates for a post as demanding as a Personal Adviser were not sufficient, given the tight labour market.
- Problems with recruiting staff with the right skills and experience, especially in the numbers required in some Pilots. Two Pilots mentioned problems with recruiting non-Personal Adviser staff with IT skills e.g. to work on Connexions Customer Information Systems.
- Having a good response to adverts but the quality of applicants was not sufficient and so had to re-advertise the posts.
- Unwillingness to become part of an unknown entity.
- The real or perceived short-term nature of contracts and what was going to happen beyond March 2001.
- The need to 'broaden the recruitment pool from beyond white, 25-40, female, middle class group'.

368. All these issues added to the time and complexity in recruiting Personal Advisers, and the effort needed to recruit Personal Advisers with the right skills and experience, should not be under estimated.

369. At least two Pilots were looking at widening access to encourage candidates from non-traditional backgrounds e.g. non-graduates and developing access courses to widen the recruitment pool. This was seen as essential in order to avoid recruitment difficulties in future.

370. The selection process varied between Pilot areas. In some Pilot areas, there was more than one round of interviews, some Pilots asked candidates to perform additional tasks e.g. write essays, give presentations and participate in group discussions.

371. One Pilot explored and developed a variety of selection tools and systems including:

- A "latent paedophile" testing system developed by an agency with extensive experience in this field. This led to a course being put on for staff involved in recruitment;
- An Emotional Intelligence (EI) Screening Tool to identify openness, commitment, empathy, resilience. This Tool was not used in recruitment and is still being developed;
- A Connexions Adviser Selection Tool (CAST) is in its prototype stage. When candidates take this test they are asked to respond to 3 critical incidents involving young people and Personal Advisers. They are asked to respond as they would to a young person - avoiding jargon, writing for a reading age of 10/11, and keeping the response simple. These responses are assessed by young people and used to reinforce the opinions of the selection panel. So far, test performances have matched the overall observations from the interview, indicating, for example, that a candidate is able to communicate with a variety of people.

372. Young people and partners were also closely involved, the latter especially if their organisation would be hosting the Personal Adviser (e.g. a school or a VCS). The involvement of young people was problematic in some areas. For example in some Pilot's the lead partner's organisation had recruitment practices that had to be respected. For example, Partnership people sitting on interview panels had to have undertaken a two-day training course. In other areas, partners felt that it was not appropriate for young people to

be involved at this level. Some Partnerships involved young people in-group discussions. One technique used was the Warner interview whereby the young people asked candidates a series of quick fire questions, for example, how would you feel if a client started fancying you?

373. Interview panels often incorporated people from a range of organisations, such as, schools, the EWS, Social Services, and the VCS.

374. Table 24 shows the terms and conditions of the Personal Advisers as stated in the job descriptions or adverts from seven Pilots. The pay levels, experience, qualifications and other requirements varied considerably across the Pilots. This reflected the different roles and responsibilities of Personal Advisers in different areas, which type of organisation the lead partner was, and the nature of the local labour market.

Table 24 Personal Advisers' terms and conditions

Element	Range
Pay	£11,385-£26,000
Qualifications	A ‘nationally recognised qualification’ – Degree (desirable), Professional qual. NVQ III/IV (essential)
Period of employment	One year fixed term contract – permanent
Other	IT knowledge, counselling, interviewing and negotiating skills – min. 3 years experience of working with young people, experience of working with a multi-agency.

Source: Job descriptions/adverts from seven Pilots

375. Where Personal Advisers have been seconded, different people can be working to different terms and conditions e.g. holidays, pension contributions, maternity leave. Some Phase One Pilots were committing themselves to a convergence in terms and conditions of Personal Advisers and this was proving to be a complicated process. There was also an issue about how different types of Personal Advisers were paid especially trainee and probationary Personal Advisers that Pilots were working to address.

376. A typical person specification for a Personal Adviser is reproduced below. It shows the breadth of skills required and the range of potential backgrounds.

Table 25 Personal Advisers person specification

Job Title: Personal Advisor – Connexions

The Connexions Personal Advisor will require the following qualities:

- the ability to form sound and professional relationships with young people that are motivating and inspiring
- the ability to assess, prioritise, plan and review in a negotiated way with young people and partner agencies
- the ability to develop supportive partnerships working through and with others for the benefit of young people and in a way that overcomes barriers to young people
- the ability to communicate clearly at all levels orally, in writing, electronically and by telephone
- a willingness to work unsociable hours
- a preparedness to work in emotionally demanding circumstances at times in isolation

and independence
- a preparedness to handle large amounts of information, particularly on available services and their appropriateness and an ability to interpret this information
- a preparedness to champion equality of opportunity by challenging stereotypes and advocating on behalf of young people.

Typical skills will include:

- counselling
- provision of supporting information, advice and guidance
- communicating and motivating
- negotiating and persuading
- ICT literacy
- adaptability
- personal effectiveness.

Typical backgrounds and experience will include work in one or more of the following:

- Education Welfare
- teaching
- careers information, advice and guidance
- youth and community work
- social work
- medical/paramedical
- the voluntary sector, working with young people
- Youth Offending Teams
- Learning Gateway personal advisors.

4.2.3 Training and development

377. A great deal of effort has been put into developing systems of support and development for Personal Advisers. Whilst there were tremendous rewards and opportunities in the role of Personal Adviser (especially achieving positive outcomes for their clients) it was also a demanding (and in some cases isolating) job that needs appropriate support and development mechanisms.

378. Figure 15 shows the level of Personal Adviser training in March 2001. These are not cumulative figures for the year but show the level of training activity in a particular month. Most Personal Adviser training was undertaking the National Diploma. In March 1996 Personal Advisers (81% of all Personal Advisers) were undertaking the National Diploma, 29% were undertaking other occupational training directly related to the Personal Adviser role and 58% were doing some ‘other’ training e.g. health and safety, child protection.

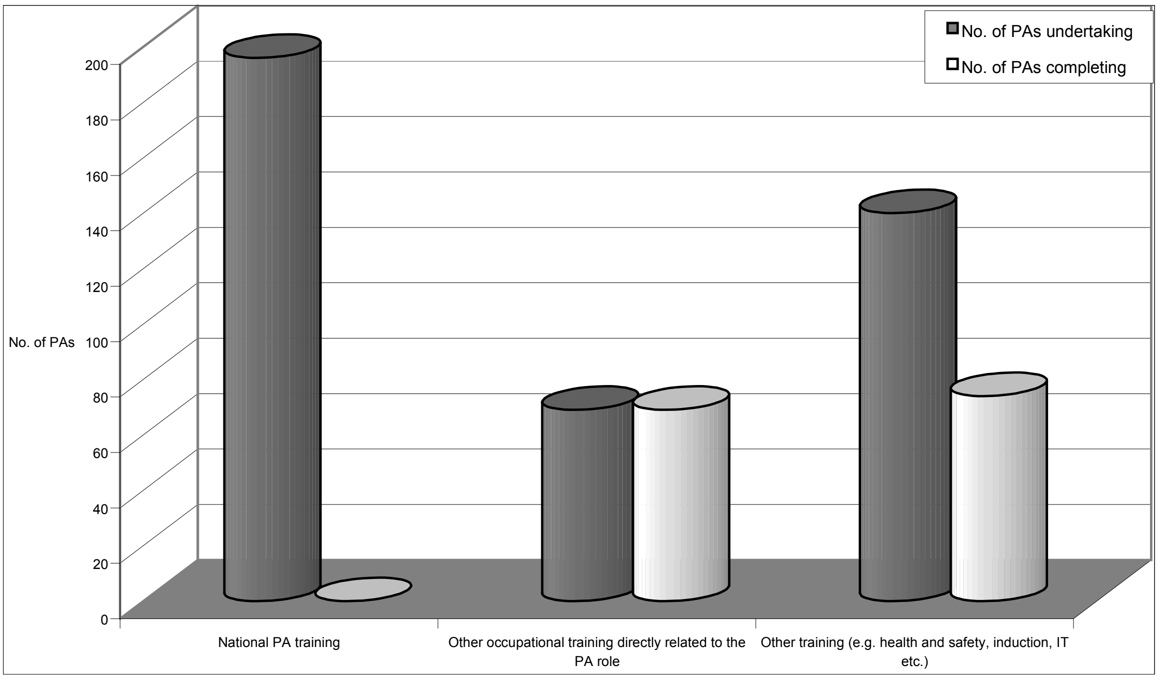
379. The most recent figure was that by May, 247 Personal Advisers had undertaken the Diploma training. No Personal Advisers had completed the Diploma training.

380. A national training course for Personal Advisers has been up and running since November, consisting of five modules. The start of the course has been staggered throughout the country; for example, some Personal Advisers began their training in November 2000 others in February 2001. The last module of the final series will begin running in August 2001. By the end of February 2001, 221 Personal Advisers from the Pilot areas should have undertaken at least the first module. The first series of trainees should have completed their training in early May 2001.

381. The national training course was based on extensive consultation with practitioners undertaking similar Personal Adviser roles. An initial course was developed and then piloted. From this emerged the national training course, currently being undertaken by Connexions Personal Advisers.

382. Some Pilots did express concerns over the late timing of the course and some experienced difficulties in getting places on the course. There was also an issue that the Diploma, and other types of necessary training, was adding to the burden of already over worked Personal Advisers. Nevertheless, the course is now up and running and the perceptions of most Personal Advisers in training (see below) were positive.

Figure 15 Personal Adviser training in March



Source: March Monthly Reports, GHK

383. The National Diploma aims to develop Personal Adviser skills in four key areas covering: information gathering and assessment; planning, intervention, support and guidance; working with other agencies; and, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating practice. It has five modules:

- **Module One:** Managing referrals, assessment and engagement with young people;
- **Module Two:** Working to secure change with young people, their parents and/or carers and practitioners in the mainstream learning environment;
- **Module Three:** Securing an optimal response from all agencies and the community in supporting a young person through change;
- **Module Four:** Evidence based practice, record keeping and communication;
- **Module Five:** Improving service delivery to young people through reflective practice in context.

384. The national evaluators interviewed Personal Advisers and asked them about their experiences of the Diploma. Their responses are given in Section 4.4.7 below.

385. Local evaluators also interviewed Personal Advisers, trainers and training managers,

and identified a series of concerns:[17]

- There was little liaison between people providing training in the National Diploma and local training managers. For example, national trainers were not aware of the range of local training, which Personal Advisers undertook. There were also no formal procedures in place for feedback by local training managers. There were, however, feedback mechanisms for people undertaking the course.
- Studying whilst working can be very difficult. Some Personal Advisers wanted an eight-week study programme rather than a five-week one.
- Training deliverers do not mark assignments and some Personal Advisers want markers to be more aware of Personal Adviser work at a local level.
- Some Personal Advisers will be undertaking the course without having studied for a long time. It was suggested that there is a preparatory study skills programme offered to Personal Advisers prior to starting the Diploma.
- There was a need to include skills training and an assessment of competencies. People completing the Diploma were not assessed as to whether they are competent in working with young people.

386. Local evaluators identified the following benefits of the training:

- Personal Advisers found the course materials to be of a high standard and very useful.
- Those Personal Advisers who had accessed the website had found it to be interesting, but some reported problems in downloading materials.

387. In addition to the national training programme, Pilots have developed their own training and development programmes to enhance the skills of, and support for, their Personal Advisers. To some extent, this reflects the diversity of skills that Personal Advisers are expected to have and that a national course can only address core or fundamental Personal Adviser skills.

388. For example, one Pilot was using its Drugs Action Team (DAT) to provide training for Personal Advisers delivering front-line work in this area. They also invited the Multi Ethnic Curriculum Support Unit of the LEA, to coordinate a joint training programme accessible to all agencies providing Personal Adviser and Personal Adviser-type workers. Another Pilot was developing a 'three-tier' training and development programme that recognised the different sets of skills and experience that different Personal Advisers have (from newly qualified to many years' experience in a variety of settings). This provided a customised training programme, which was issued on an initial assessment of the Personal Advisers' learning needs, and experience.

389. Another Pilot has developed a three-module 'Understanding Connexions' course, lasting ten days covering the objectives of Connexions and the role of the Personal Adviser within it.

390. Three Pilots were trailing 'transition' training designed to support the development of 'community' Personal Advisers. It was felt that the needs of some people are best served by developing the skills and experience of people within their local community, for example, refugee communities or asylum seekers, or people living on particular estates.

391. Furthermore, there were whole ranges of more specific training courses that have

[17] 'Evaluation of the Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions Service 2000-2001: Report No. 5', Deirdre Hughes, CeGS, University of Derby. Steve Brooking, Cornwall and Devon.

been made available to Personal Advisers. For example, most Pilots have put on courses in one or more of the following – drugs awareness, assessment tools, personal safety, equal opportunities, time and stress management, health and safety, Training on the New Deal and benefits system, legislation e.g. the Crime and Disorder Act, one-to-one counselling, group work, assessment tools, child protection, special needs, IT skills.

392. A key element of training has been induction training. About three-quarters of Pilots reported to have put their Personal Advisers on formal induction training courses. These ranged from a couple of days to a few weeks and often involved explaining the Personal Adviser role as well as the Connexions Pilot and services as a whole. Induction training was thought particularly useful, as Personal Advisers had been recruited from a wide variety of backgrounds. In one Pilot, the Personal Adviser induction training produced a vast range of practice and service development issues that fed into the business planning process.

393. The investment in training has been significant in many Pilots. It was not just the costs of training but also having to give people time off to study and study leave. One Pilot loaned laptops to its Personal Advisers to help them in their studies towards the National Personal Adviser Diploma. This helped to them to study in a more flexible way.

394. Pilots have also developed a range of support mechanisms for Personal Advisers. This involves a range of mentoring, co-listening, coaching and group work support.

- **Mentoring/non-managerial supervision** – some Pilots have developed mentoring support. The mentors come from within Connexions or from other agencies and usually meet on a one-to-one basis so that Personal Advisers can discuss with a non-team member or manager important issues that have arisen. For example, in one Pilot Personal Advisers choose a supervisor from another organisation and key issues are discussed.
- **Team building exercises** – these range from meetings between people in the same team to discuss challenges and successes. It also includes meeting between different strand teams, and between Connexions teams and those in other agencies.
- **Management and supervision meetings** – these were more formalised support meetings between a Personal Adviser and their manager or supervisor. Some Personal Advisers have more than one manager. In some Pilots this was intentional so that someone can support the Personal Adviser other than their line manager.
- **Split weeks** – this splits up the Personal Adviser's week between service delivery and development and support. This means that Personal Advisers have identified and dedicated time for team building, development and other support mechanisms. In one Pilot, Personal Advisers have been allocated split roles that enable them to work in three different environments. Part of the week was spent at the Connexions Office where Personal Advisers can de-brief and share/work through problems, access supervision, participate in training and development, and undertake administrative tasks.

395. Underpinning the training and support was a system of Training Needs Analysis, Professional Development Frameworks and Skills Needs Analysis. Most Pilots had systems whereby, on an annual or six monthly basis, Personal Advisers were formally interviewed and their training and support needs discussed. In most cases this utilised systems already in place within Careers Services and local authorities for reviewing staff needs. Some Pilots have dedicated training managers for Connexions.

396. Weekly meetings also supplement these reviews with managers where training and support issues can be raised.

397. Personal Advisers were also learning from working with other Personal Advisers from

different backgrounds and other support professionals in multi-agency settings. This was also seen as a benefit from the National Personal Adviser Diploma, which has spawned 'self help' practitioner support groups.

4.2.4 Working with specific sub groups

398. A key element in the role of the Personal Adviser was working with specific sub groups of young people, and what this role involved. Whilst most Personal Advisers were based and working in schools, mostly with disaffected and disengaged young people (i.e. the middle tier of young people), a significant minority were working with specific groups of young people with the highest level of need. For example, working with homeless young people, young offenders, drug and alcohol misusers, teenage prostitutes and others involves a particular approach and a predisposition to working with these groups of young people.

399. There were many more issues surrounding access, take-up of the service, relationship between client and Personal Adviser, the intensity and duration of support and referral procedures. Building trust with these clients was an essential part of the process but this could mean that progress was slow and initial needs assessment is difficult.

400. Usually, Personal Advisers undertaking this kind of work require more intensive support and specific training. For example, there tends to be more legislation surrounding the support of hard-to-help young people, personal safety issues may be more paramount and the dependency of the client on the Personal Adviser may be more intensive.

401. The two case studies below, from the notes of one Personal Adviser (reproduced verbatim), show the types of clients that Personal Advisers were working with and the sorts of issues that were involved.

Table 26 Personal Adviser case notes

Case 1

"My client was referred to me by a project run for women involved in sexual exploitation.

I had worked with her as a careers adviser in the Learning Gateway. She had not attended school from year 9; and had very poor literacy and numeracy skills. She had had a very unstable childhood, spending most of her time in foster care. Her mother is a heroin addict and her father had left the home a number of years ago, she has had no positive role models in her life at all.

She got involved in prostitution from around 15 years of age; she was working on the beat for around 18 months when I met her. She was also involved in substance misuse, glue sniffing. I had to build up a relationship of trust with her. I found her accommodation and furnished the house via various local charities. I supported her through coming off the drugs and finding her a job. Over the period of time I worked with her I had a good understanding at that time of issues and barriers preventing her entering into learning/training or employment.

The initial interview was to establish her current situation and what her needs were and how I could support her in my role as Personal Adviser. I did explain at this point the confidentiality procedure and that it may be necessary to pass some of this information on to other agencies in order to support her. I also explained the reason why she had been referred to me. To establish a sound working relationship we agreed some solid ground rules that we could both work to.

My client is now 18 and in a long-term relationship with a partner who has spent time in Prison. They live together. She is the victim of regular domestic violence and her partner controls her. He claims Income Support for both of them, so she has no money, he times her when she is out shopping, she has no friends. He regularly sends her shoplifting and is constantly accusing her of working the beat.

She claims she wants to start a new life, get a job and "be a respectable person". She told me she has a court appearance for non-payment of a fine, she has no money, and she has scabies. However she does not want to leave her flat, as it is the only home she has ever had. My goodness where do I start!!

It was at this stage I informed her that we needed to prioritise, as there are lots of issues we need to address and this could be a long process. I asked her where she felt she wanted to start, after discussion we decided a one-week action plan would be enough for her to handle at the moment.

1. *Register her with a GP and receive medication for her scabies.*
2. *Make an appointment with the Benefits Office, for Emma to claim in her own right.*
3. *Attend her court appearance (three days later).*

I supported her with finding a GP. I gave her the relevant phone number to contact the Benefits Agency, to make an appointment to make a fresh claim. I explained I would support her with this and help complete the forms."

Case 2

"This client was referred to me by his Learning Gateway Adviser at the end of February. He had been on the Gateway since early December. At the point of referral he had no fixed address having moved out of the parental home. The Gateway Adviser's concerns were around this issue and also that he has told her that he is a regular user of some substances although she had no detail of this. He can be aggressive and verbally abusive.

I had a brief chat with Martin who was polite and we were able to establish a two-way dialogue. He told me that his Mum had decided to move away with her new boyfriend and he did not want to go with them. He seemed very angry about the whole situation and I sympathised with him. I asked if he thought it would benefit to have some extra support and explained what my role could be. He seemed to welcome this.

As he had caused some disruption in Reception and had had a rebuke from our Receptionist, I asked if it would be better for him if I came to see him at a Youth Centre. He said that would be better for him and I arranged an appointment to see him the following week. I rang the Youth Worker at the Centre to arrange access and have a private room available.

Before this appointment time arrived, my client had been on the Youth Club premises and caused disruption and used foul language to the Youth Worker. This resulted in a total ban from him using the Centre. The Careers Adviser who was present followed my client outside to try and re-arrange his appointment with me but he was not receptive and was in temper as a result of being banned.

I turned up at the Youth Centre for the appointment two days later but understandably my client did not come. I spoke to the Youth Worker concerned about the fact that I do need a venue to work with my client and asked her to reconsider her decision to allow him onto the premised if he was accompanied by me. She was very reluctant to agree to this as they have suffered his bad behaviour over a sustained period.

I spent time driving around the town looking for my client but without success. I have been unable to contact him by his mobile number.

As a result of this set of circumstances, I have now lost touch with him. I have telephoned the Benefits office to request that they place a note on his claim that needs to resume contact with me next time he signs.

My concerns are:

This young man's bad behaviour is obviously a result of his confusion and despair at his current situation. Whilst we cannot condone and allow this type of behaviour, professionals working with young people need to recognise what is behind it. With a little bit of imagination, the above chain of events could have been avoided. I am now left with the dilemma of where I can work with this young person and will be raising the issue with my line manager."

402. The Pilot Personal Adviser role can be a demanding job, having to deal with a variety of people and very serious problems. Some Personal Advisers worked in even more extreme situations than this, where the risk of harm and even suicide of the client was very great. It involved exceptional skills, and required a great deal of support and development.

4.3 Multi-agency working

403. As we have seen (see below), Personal Advisers work in a variety of locations and need to work with a variety of agencies in delivering Connexions services. This raises a range of issues concerning the management, roles and deployment of Personal Advisers.

404. Multi-agency working was a function of the need to involve experienced agencies into the work of Connexions, and the variety of client needs that the Service must deliver to. Multi-agency working raises a whole host of issues – incorporating different organisational and professional cultures, the relationship between Personal Advisers and other professional workers, specialist versus generic roles, and team working and team building.

405. To a large extent, a lot of these issues were still being worked out. This was because whilst multi-agency working has happened in the past within the Pilots, it was nothing like the level or extent that is required for delivering Connexions services. Naturally, there was some suspicion of Connexions from both statutory and non-statutory organisations, and most Pilots have been working hard to develop good relationships and working practices with other organisations. This can be seen by the range of organisations involved in the management (Strategic, LMC and Strand or Task) and delivery (directly or indirectly) of Connexions services (see Section 2 and 3).

406. Pilot coordinators and partners were asked to define multi-agency working. Their responses covered:

- professionals working together with the same focus on addressing the needs of young people;
- recognising other professionals and agencies roles and boundaries;
- agreeing protocols and processes;
- coordinated delivery producing more efficient working thereby maximizing resources.

407. This necessarily involves a multitude of agencies and people in the management and

delivery of support services to young people. In some Pilots this involved the coordination of over 100 agencies.

408. Multi-agency working has covered: strategic management and planning; service planning, management and delivery; development of assessment tools; mapping; exchanging client information; communications; involving young people; recruitment, professional development, training and support; quality assurance, and ICT systems.

409. As we mentioned above, multi-agency working within the Connexions Service has benefited from a history of cross-organisational working in the past. Some of this was a response to particular initiatives (e.g. New Start and Learning Gateway) but many Pilots had close working relationships anyway.

4.3.1 Management and supervision

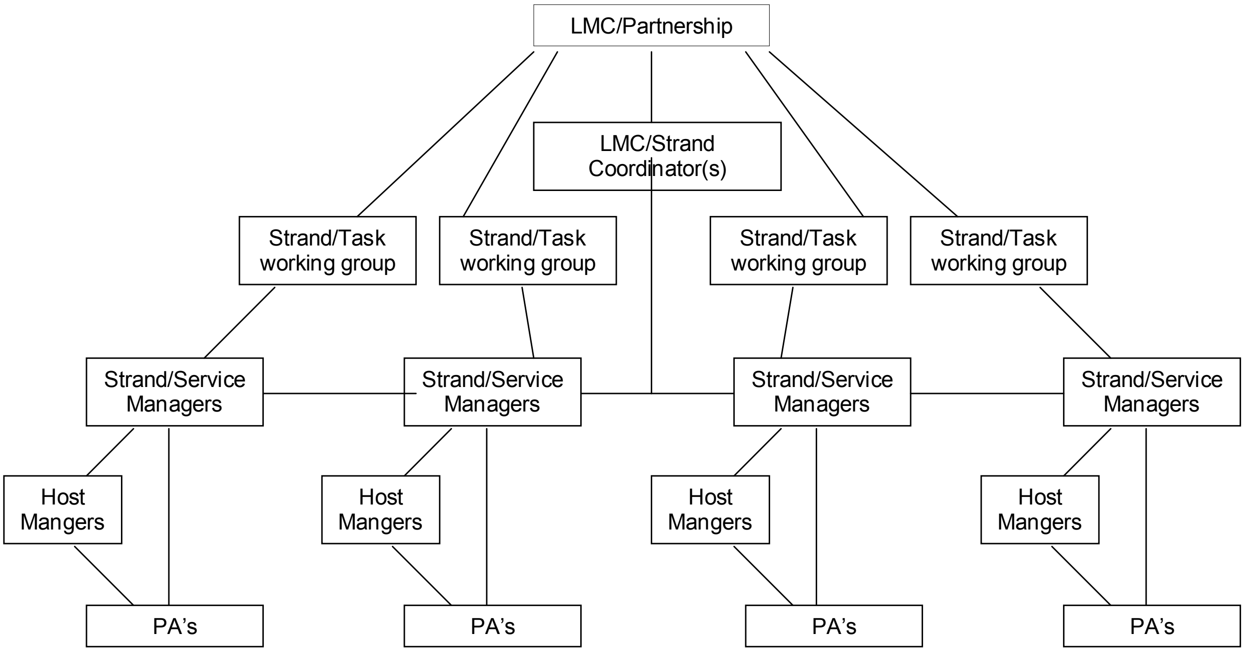
410. Management and supervision in a multi-agency environment was raised as an issue at the start of the study. Supervision of Personal Advisers, especially those working with hard-to-help young people, was seen by many as essential. Pilots have developed a range of methods, including mentoring and counselling to support Personal Advisers (see above).

411. Most Pilots have adopted a management structure as shown in Figure 16.

412. Below the LMC/Partnership level there was usually one or more LMC or strand coordinators. They worked with, in most cases were responsible to, Strand/Task or Thematic working groups. For example, in one Pilot there were several Strands. The Universal Strand had a working group that included Head teachers, the Careers Service, Youth Service, EWS etc. Another strand was working with young people with SEN includes Social Services, the LEA, health authority, careers Service, Youth Service, VCS, Parent Family Forum, College Principal and Head teachers.

413. The precise balance of management between the coordinators and the working groups is being worked out. But generally the coordinator would have day-to-day responsibility and report to the working group, and the working group would discuss more general parameters of working within that particular strand.

Figure 16 Service delivery management structures



414. Below the coordinator/working group level would be Strand or Service Managers. Generally, these managers would report directly to the coordinator but may also sit on the working groups to provide first hand information on issues and progress.

415. Personal Advisers would be managed by the Strand/Service Managers and, if they were working in a host organisation like a school or VCS organisation, they would usually also be managed by someone in the host organisation. Again the precise weights attached to different managers vary between services within Pilots and across Pilots. Typically, the Service Manager would have been involved in the Personal Adviser’s recruitment, defined the particular role and location, measure performance, and provide/facilitate training and support. The Host manager would typically be responsible for accommodation and referral issues within the host organisation. Less frequently, the line management responsibility would be with the Host manager.

416. There would be frequent meetings between the Personal Adviser, Service Manager and Host Manager where any issues could be raised and discussed. The main issues in the balance of this relationship at service level were:

- defining and agreeing precise management and supervision arrangements;
- defining and agreeing precise Personal Adviser roles;
- agreeing funding across the service and between agencies;
- which clients the Personal Adviser would/should work with;
- recognising and respecting existing services and support;
- recognising and respecting existing inter agency working;
- accommodation within the host organisation;
- location of the Personal Adviser with regard to other professionals;
- raising and seeking to address weaknesses in existing provision;
- responsibility for monitoring and evaluation;
- agreeing on actions with clients (e.g. out of school activities);

- communication of information, especially confidentiality and consent and;
- training and support within that particular environment.
- There was also an issue of people having the time to attend meetings.

417. Resolving these issues requires a proactive and responsive approach based on effective and frequent communications.

418. An important tool in the service delivery relationship between Connexions and the host agency were Service Level Agreements (SLAs). These can generate an involved process but the end result is clarity and agreement on the delivery of the Connexions Service and the role of people within it. An example of the key elements of a SLA from one of the Pilots is given below. It defines the roles and responsibilities of each organisation and is signed by the Personal Adviser, Connexions and the host agency.

Figure 17 Example of the key elements of a Service Level Agreement

Notes for all Service Providers

The Connexions Pilot seeks to bring together a wide range of organisations and individuals to encourage and to support young people to remain in education or training and to achieve the best of which they are capable.

All providers of services to young people must be committed to the eight key principles, which underpin the service, namely:

- Raising aspirations: setting high expectations.
- Meeting individual need: overcoming barriers to learning.
- Reflecting young people's views: in planning and delivery.
- Inclusion: keeping young people in learning and in society.
- Partnership: achieving more together.
- Community: drawing on resources, both staff and provision.
- Equal opportunities: influencing provision to help all succeed.
- Evidence based practice: doing what works.

In seeking to work with young people as part of the Hertfordshire Connexions Pilot, you are asked to complete the attached pro forma.

4.3.1.1 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

NB. This SLA is for the duration of the pilot project only (1st April 2001 to 31st March 2002). It does not imply that a similar level of resource will be available subsequently.

Objectives will be closely monitored throughout the project and if there is evidence that they are not being met, Connexions reserves the right to withdraw funding.

Name of Project/Project Code:

Aim of Project (overall):

Name and address of your organisation

Key personnel

Details of costs

How will young people be involved in determining and evaluating the activities in this

project?

It is important to demonstrate that Connexions funding does not replace existing funding streams. If your agency or organisation is in receipt of Connexions funding for a Personal Adviser or other personnel, how will you demonstrate that this will build capacity and not replace an existing service or role?

In submitting this proposal, we

Confirm our commitment to the Connexions principles.

Agree to work with Connexions personnel or others to evaluate the planned activities.

Agree to provide any information necessary for auditing purposes.

Agree to share the outcomes of the activity for the wider benefit of the Connexions Service.

Signed …………………………………………………………… Date ……………...
(Connexions Local Manager)

Signed …………………………………………………………… Date ………………
(Project Representative/ Line Manager)

Designation ………………..………………………………………

Signed ……………………………………………………………… Date ………………
(Personal Adviser)

Roles and Responsibilities

Partners in receipt of Connexions funding: To undertake specific monitoring and evaluation of delivery and outcomes of the project in conjunction with the Connexions Partnership and report back within agreed timescales and formats to Connexions Local Managers.

Specifically, partners/partner agencies will:

- Collaborate in the development of effective local monitoring with the Connexions Partnership and report back (where possible) on:
  - The involvement of stakeholders in the project area
  - The development of links with other agencies
  - The number of Personal Advisers and their caseloads (where appropriate)
  - The use of staff time within the project, including Personal Adviser's (where appropriate)
  - The new initiatives the project is adding to current provision in their area
  - Emerging issues to address
- Set specific objectives and measurable outcomes for young people with whom the project works, in line with Connexions objectives.
- Monitor progression of young people with whom the project works against the criteria agreed with the Connexions Partnership, to include:
  - Collection of data to enable tracking of young people referred to and involved in the project

Involvement of Young People in developing and evaluating the usefulness to them of the work of the project

Attendance and participation of young people in the project

- Provide a minimum of 2 case studies to illustrate the work of the project, and the outcomes of young people's involvement in the project (one good practice; one identifying emerging issues)
- Submit invoices on a monthly basis (where appropriate) or provide details of expenditure at monthly intervals to the Connexions Manager.

Where Personal Advisers are delivering Connexions work:

- Provide support and supervision for Personal Adviser/s within your agency/organisation.
- Enable Personal Adviser to undertake nationally recognised training when available and support them in achieving the award and assist with the evaluation of this.
- Facilitate access to other locally organised training in line with identified needs through their Performance Management.
- Performance manage Personal Adviser/s in collaboration with the Local Connexions Manager (where appropriate)

Connexions Unit - Hertfordshire will provide support

i.) Through the Local Connexions Manager who will:

- Provide overall management oversight of Connexions project
- Review and monitor targets within the project
- Develop the project
- Contribute to the performance management of the Personal Adviser in collaboration with the Personal Adviser's line manager and directly line manage during school holidays (where appropriate)
- Provide support for partners contribution to the evaluation of the project (where necessary)
- Report to Connexions Manager on the project

ii.) Through the Connexions Unit that will:

- Take responsibility for the monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the project
- Develop quality procedures and guidelines for use within project
- Provide local training and development opportunities including the opportunity to access Nationally recognised Connexions training
- Provide travel expenses (and mobile phone to ensure safe working conditions for Personal Advisers where appropriate).
- Offer supporting processes for the project (e.g. Three Steps Up, Extended/other work experience placements,)
- Provide branded Connexions stationery and supporting publicity materials

Roles and responsibilities of Connexions Personal Adviser/Project Aims & Objectives

Key Accountabilities/ Activities	Objectives	Targets (including statistical & soft outcomes)	Timescales	Links to Connexions agenda

Signed ……………………………….. Date……………
(Personal Adviser)

Signed ……………………………….. Date…………………
(Line Manager)

Signed……………………………………………. Date:…………………….
(Connexions Local Manager)

4.3.2 Developing consistent provision

419. There were many examples of Pilots instituting team-building exercises for their teams of Personal Advisers. However, less frequent were examples of team exercises that included all support professionals (Connexions and non-Connexions) within the same organisation.

420. Pilots were trying to develop consistent service provision across the range of support services. For example, many Pilots were using the same Professional Development Frameworks with all Personal Advisers and other staff. They were also exploring the use of consistent diagnostic and assessment tools. But it was still early days as far as much service delivery is concerned.

421. One example of the difficulties in achieving commonality was in data sharing. Different agencies have various ICTs at their disposal, some use e-mail whilst others don't, there were different existing protocols for data sharing, getting agreement on what information to share and the use of meetings to discuss progress and raise issues. Some Pilots were more advanced because many had already begun work on these issues through multi-agency working for e.g. the Learning Gateway.

4.3.3 Conclusions

422. There were many issues to be worked out in the development of the Connexions Service as a multi-agency service. Pilots were working them out using a range of tools and effective communications systems.

423. However, the main benefits of multi-agency working that have occurred already are improved:

- openness and sharing;
- knowledge and expertise of each other;
- ICT systems;
- communications;
- information;
- optimisation of resources;
- diversity of approach.

4.4 Survey of Personal Advisers

4.4.1 Introduction

424. Throughout December, January and March, one-to-one, face-to-face interviews were held with 81 Personal Advisers in twelve Pilot areas (excluding Greater Merseyside who do not have Personal Advisers because they were focusing on developing a Connexions Customer Information System). This represents about one-third of all Personal Advisers in post. Group discussions were also held with a further eleven Personal Advisers.

425. Some Personal Advisers interviewed in December were very new to the role and some had not met any of their clients, either because they had been training or because they had been networking with other agencies and professionals. Around two-thirds (62%) of Personal Advisers we spoke with had been in post since October, and about one quarter (27%) had started work in November.

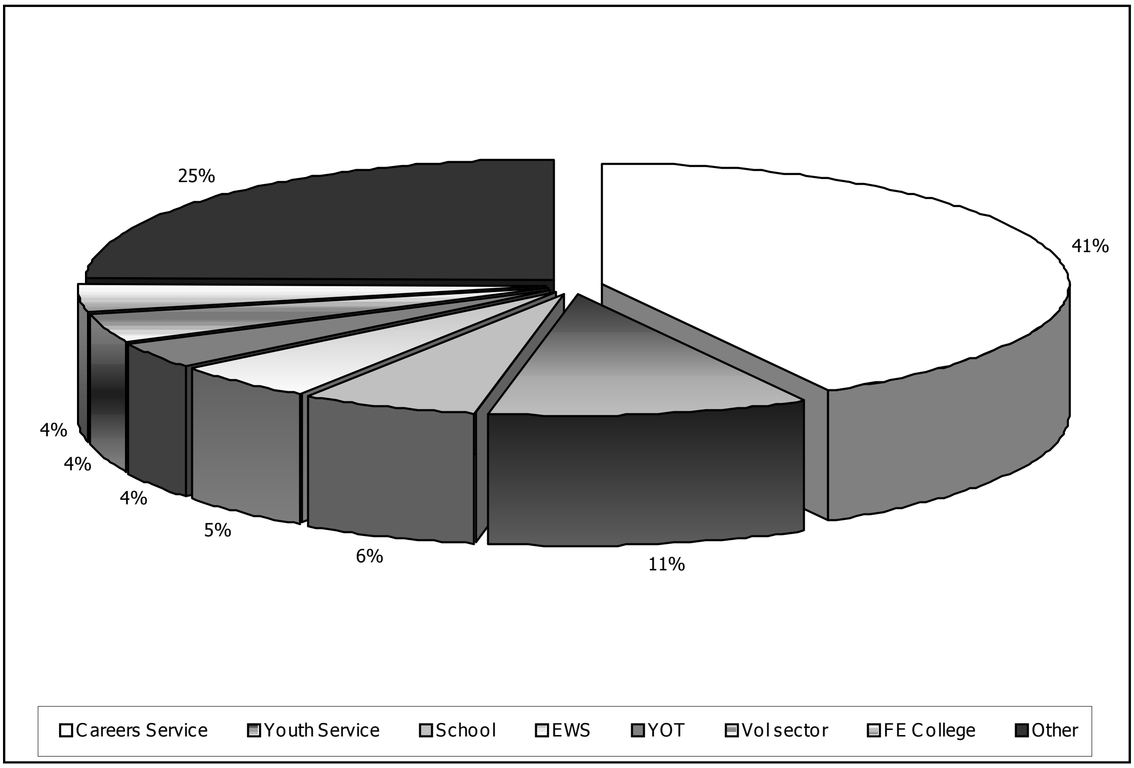
426. The questionnaire covered all aspects of the Personal Adviser role. This made it quite lengthy, often lasting more than 1½ hours. In some cases sections of questions had to be omitted because the Personal Advisers had to leave to meet clients, attend training sessions or meetings. Thus, the response to some questions was relatively low. The interviews covered the Personal Advisers previous working background, their views of the Connexions Service, multi-agency working, referral mechanisms, assessment, service delivery, training and support, management, location, and information and communication.

4.4.2 Profile of Personal Advisers

427. Most respondents (42%) had been recruited to Connexions from a Careers Service, 11% from a Youth Service, 6% from schools and 5% from the EWS. These proportions are very similar to those in Table 22.

428. One quarter had been recruited from a wide range of other organisations including YOTs, the VCS, FE Colleges, the Probation Service, other local authority departments and Universities. In all, respondents mentioned 22 previous organisations including the Inland Revenue and the Millennium Dome.

Figure 18 Previous organisation



Source: Interviews with Personal Advisers, GHK

429. Just under two-thirds (65%) were directly employed and 30% was seconded. Nine out of ten Personal Advisers were working full-time.

430. The main recruitment method was ‘told by my boss that the position existed’ (35%), newspaper (35%) and internal advert (26%). Newspapers covered Portico (the ICG recruitment paper), national and local papers and Eastern Eye (a newspaper aimed at Asian readers). Several Personal Advisers had to give lengthy notice; for example, those that had been teachers had to give one term’s notice.

431. Personal Advisers were asked why they had decided to apply for their current job. There were five main reasons:

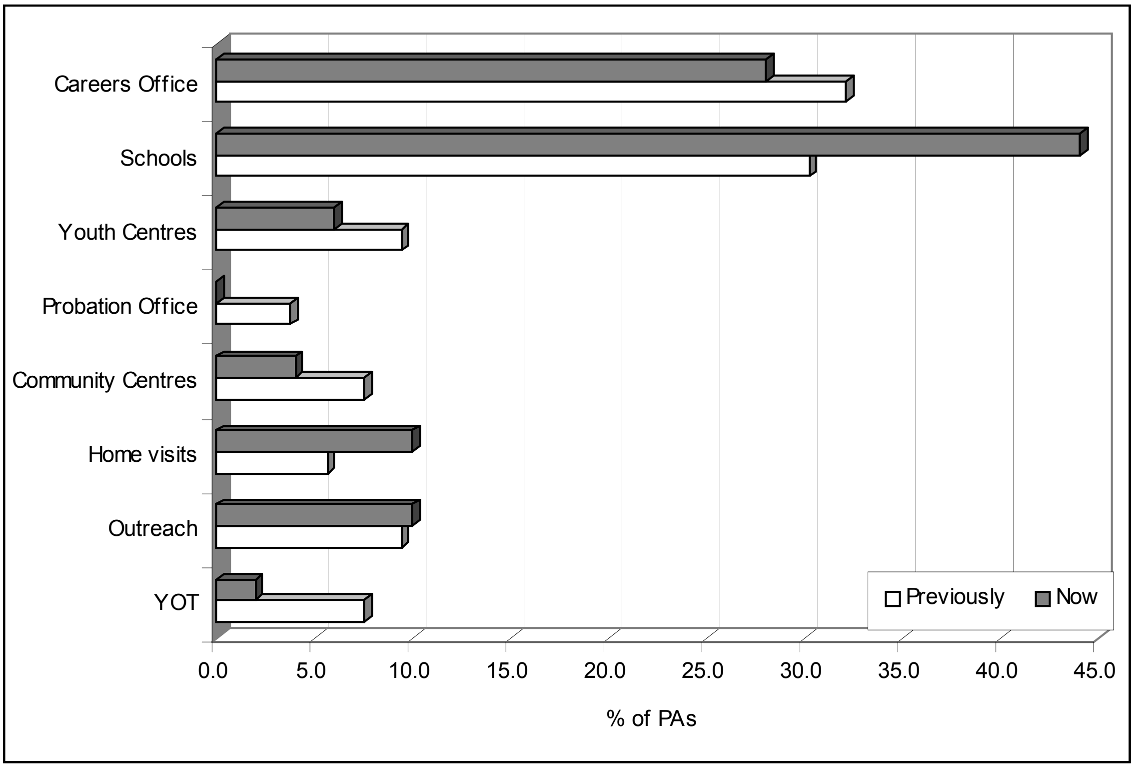
- A desire to work with young people (36% of respondents): *“I wanted to be more involved with young people, I used to work at a Jobcentre as a careers adviser but that was mainly with adults.”*
- It was an extension of their previous work (21%): *“I have been leaning towards this type of work for about seven years but I have not had the opportunity to work more in-depth with young people.”*
- A desire to work with particular client groups (17%): *“I have worked with homeless people in the past and saw what gaps in provision there were. So it was a great opportunity for me to work with Connexions and see how it could address these gaps.”*
- Attracted to the concept of the Connexions Service (15%) – *“The Connexions Strategy is the way that things should have been done in the past but you couldn’t do this as a careers adviser. It is exactly what I wanted to do, Connexions is pushing back the boundaries.”*
- Miscellaneous reasons (12%) including *“I had no choice”*, to a fear that that their current post would disappear with Connexions.

432. Most respondents (60%) had worked with young people in the past, particularly the 16-19 year age group. About two-thirds (63%) had worked with disaffected people in the past, including adults e.g. offenders, homeless, unemployed etc. The remainder had worked with a variety of clients in terms of ages and needs.

433. In the main, the age group and needs of clients was very similar to the client group that Personal Advisers had previously worked with. In terms of working with particular sub groups of young people, the ones most identified by respondents that they were currently working with were the disaffected, care leavers, poor attendee's, those with behavioural problems, permanently excluded, with special educational needs, teenage prostitutes, homeless, young mothers, those with learning disabilities and SEN, those with a disability, unemployed, young carers and offenders.

434. Three quarters of respondents said they were working with young people who could be defined as disadvantaged, hard-to-help or disaffected and the remainder said they worked with a particular age group (e.g. 13-16 year olds) irrespective of their needs.

Figure 19 Location of Personal Advisers



Source: Personal Adviser interviews, GHK

435. Figure 19 shows that Personal Advisers were more likely to be based in schools, in outreach centres and make home visits than in their previous jobs. Previously 32% of Personal Advisers were based in careers offices compared 28% now.

436. Most Personal Advisers were working 9:00-5:00 Monday to Friday, much as they did in their previous jobs.

437. Respondents were asked whether other elements of their job had changed. There were a variety of changes, of the 49 people who responded to this question, one quarter said more targeted work (for example, with a specific client group); about one-fifth mentioned increase multi-agency networking, and 15% said it was more in-depth work. One-fifth said that there were changes in their working environment and practices e.g. more flexible

working and more developmental work. The final one-fifth said that the new job involved less networking or less in-depth work with clients; however, for some of these respondents this was because they had just started work,

438. Personal Advisers were asked what their expectations of the job were when they applied for or started the job. Most felt that the post would involve around advice and support (including careers guidance), much more multi-agency and multi-disciplinary work and some said they *"didn't know what they were letting themselves in for."* Asked if the post lived up to these, mostly positive, expectations, 45% said it was too early to tell, 42% said it did live up to expectations and 12% said it did not.

439. Those Personal Advisers who felt it did not live up to expectations felt that there was much more developmental work involved in their post (e.g. networking) and others mentioned the lack of a Connexions infrastructure for their work.

440. The Personal Advisers identified a range of barriers that they felt their clients were facing. These included drugs, offending behaviour, home and family problems, mental health, lack of skills, lack of opportunities, motivation/confidence, rural isolation and the curriculum. Some Personal Advisers referred to the lack of existing support or the lack of appropriate support for young people, and a handful mentioned general disaffection or issues relating to the curriculum.

441. Respondents felt that the way that services were delivered in the past did not satisfactorily address these issues. As far as services to young people as a whole was concerned, 65% of Personal Advisers felt that services had not been satisfactory and 68% felt that this was the case with services aimed at specific sub groups of young people. The main limitations were not enough services available, lack of access to services, the lack of multi agency working, resources and the lack of holistic support.

442. Two thirds (66%) of Personal Advisers felt that the Connexions Service was satisfactorily addressing issues for young people as a whole and 70% felt that Connexions was satisfactorily addressing issues for specific groups of young people. The main reason for this was that Connexions promotes multi-agency working, which reduces fragmentation, and it can support work of agencies that are over burdened. The additional resources that Connexions brings was also a factor, mainly because to leads to lower caseloads.

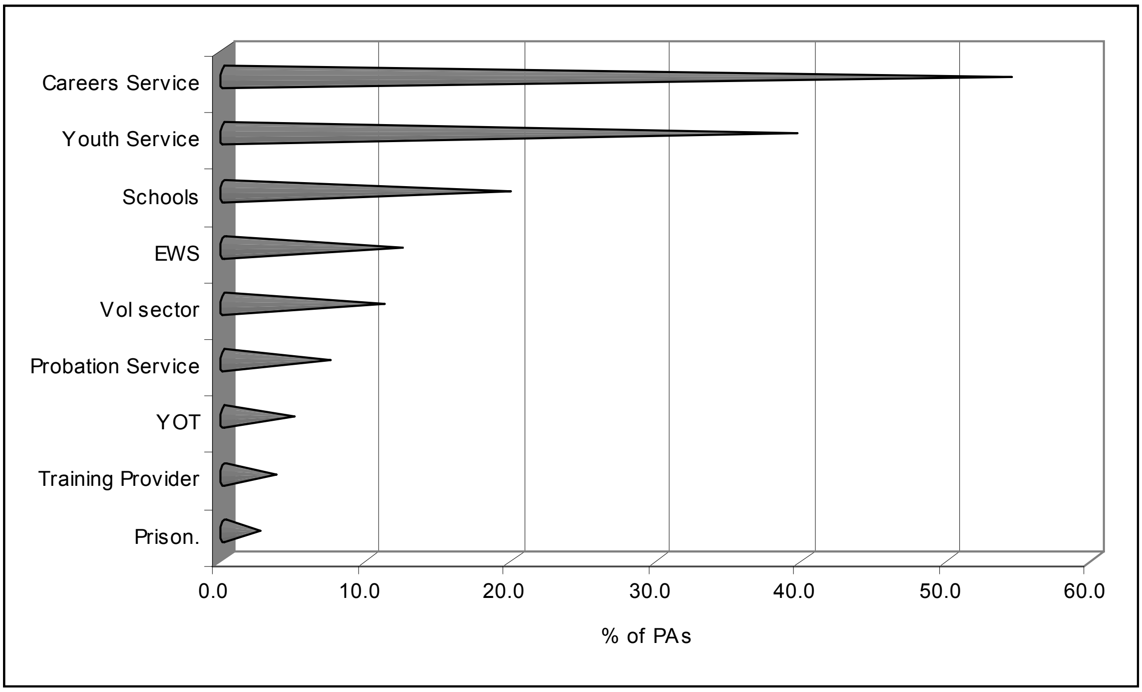
4.4.3 Multi- agency working

443. A key element of Connexions was the extent and nature of multi-agency working. And this has been identified as a key issue, by Personal Advisers themselves, as important in delivering services to young people.

444. Almost three-quarters (70%) of Personal Advisers believed they were working for the Connexions Service and 30% felt they were working for another organisation, usually the host organisation e.g. the Careers Service.

445. However, only 42% of Personal Advisers felt that the Connexions Service was managing them. Almost one-third (30%) said that they were being managed by some other organisation and one quarter said Connexions and another organisation. 71% of respondents said their current manager was not the same person that had managed them before. Only one Personal Adviser said a school or college was managing them.

Figure 20 Organisations colleagues were recruited from



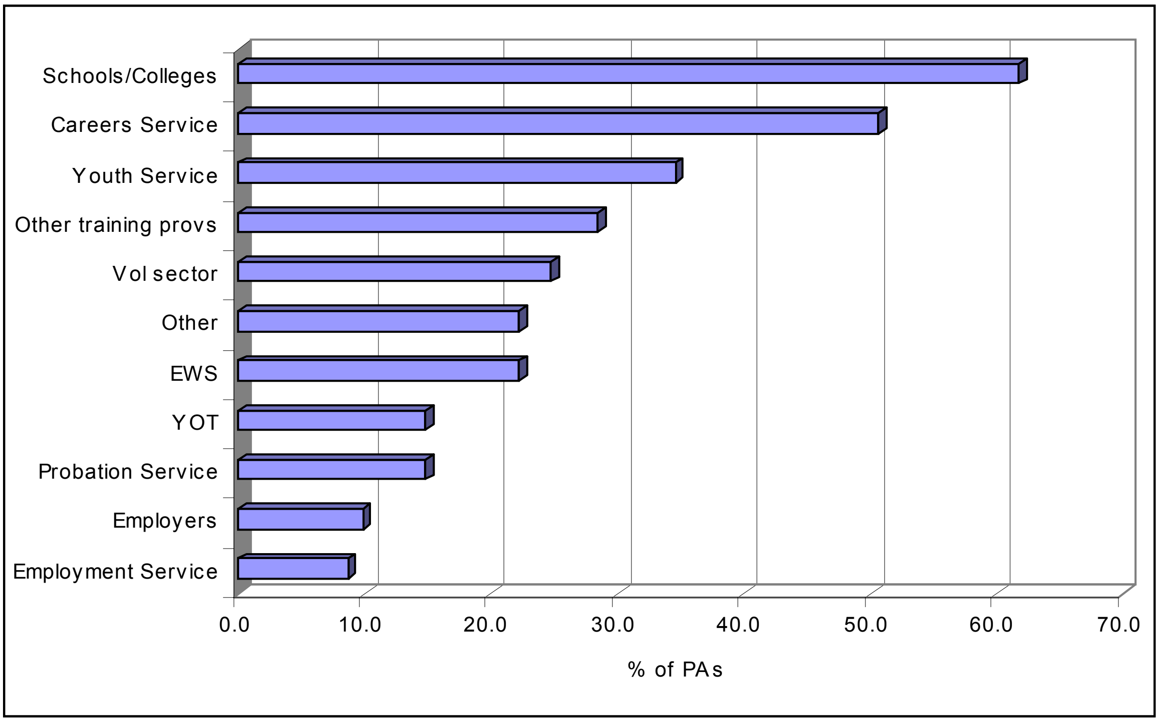
Source: Personal Adviser interviews, GHK

446. The vast majority of Personal Advisers (92%) said they felt they were working in a team, a team that included a wide range of professionals from different organisations, (Figure 20). Most Personal Advisers worked in teams with colleagues from Careers and Youth Service backgrounds. A number also worked with colleagues from schools and EWS teams.

447. Personal Advisers work closely with a variety of organisations on a daily basis, as shown in Figure 21. Schools and colleges (62% of respondents), Careers Services (51%) and Youth Services (35%), and other training providers (28%) were the most frequently mentioned organisations. One quarter of Personal Advisers worked closely with VCS organisations and 10% with employers. YOTs and the Probation Service were each mentioned by 15% of Personal Advisers. Personal Advisers also mentioned a wide range of other organisations covering a range of issues e.g. health, housing, or drugs.

448. Compared to their previous jobs, respondents were more likely to work with schools, other training providers, the Police, health authorities, employers, the EWS the VCS and YOTs. They were less likely to work with the Probation Service and worked about the same amount of time with Careers and Youth Services.

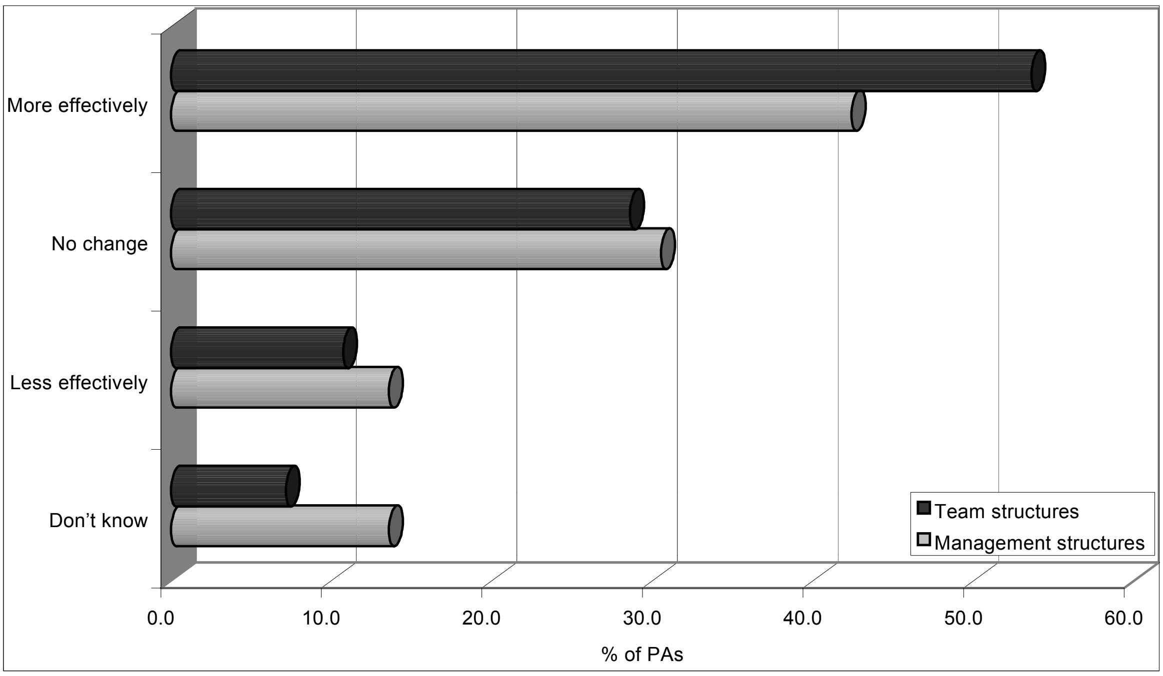
Figure 21 Multi-agency working



Source: Personal Adviser interviews, GHK

449. Figure 22 shows that Personal Advisers did recognise an improvement in management and team structures from their experiences in their previous job. Forty two percent said that the new management structures helped them perform their job more effectively and only 14% said less effectively, 31% said it was about the same. Some people felt more isolated and independent than before but for others this was an advantage.

Figure 22 Are management and team structures helping you perform your job



Source: Personal Adviser interviews, GHK

450. Over half (54%) said the new team structures were helping them to perform the job

more effectively and only 11% said less effectively. The main advantage was that Personal Advisers were able to recognise other people's roles and discuss issues with them.

451. Personal Advisers reported frequent management and team meetings. Team meetings tended to occur at least once a month (49%) or weekly (39%). One Pilot had instituted weekly meetings but switched them to fortnightly because of the amount of work they had to do. All Personal Advisers had had individual meetings with their manager to discuss how the service was performing. Over half (52%) said these happened once a week and 31% said they happened 'as and when required'.

452. Nine out of ten Personal Advisers found team meetings and meetings with their manager to be useful, the remainder were not sure. Team meetings were seen as good opportunities to exchange views, experiences and information, keep up-to-date developments, share good practice, and find out what was happening on a wider basis.

453. Only 36% of Personal Advisers said that they received any other professional support e.g. access to a mentor or non-managerial supervisor.

454. Personal Advisers were asked whether they felt they were integrating more effectively with other professionals and organisations than before – two-thirds said they were, 22% said they were not sure and 12% said 'no'.

4.4.4 Service delivery – referrals

455. The vast majority of Personal Advisers were dependent on referrals from schools (65%) and other organisations (12%) for making initial contact with clients. Very few Personal Advisers directly sought out clients themselves or had clients directly approach them. Respondents were happy with these methods. Some services deliberately did not have an open door policy for fear of being overcome with clients.

456. But it must also be remembered that services have not been up and running for very long, so there has been little opportunity to promote the service. In some cases the current caseload was sufficient so that Personal Advisers were not seeking out more clients (but they would not turn people away if they turned up). However, some Personal Advisers wanted to develop their own referral systems, rather than be dependent on existing structures.

457. The majority of Personal Advisers (53%) felt that the referral systems were similar in effectiveness to what they had been used to, 47% felt they were better and none felt that they had got worse.

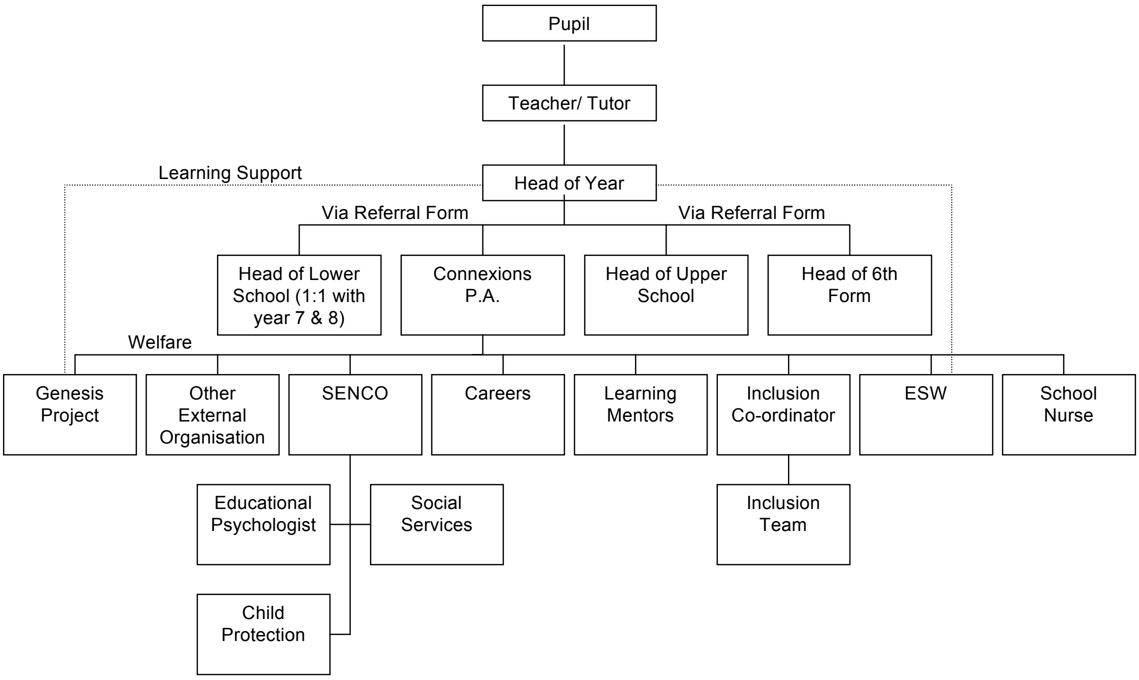
458. Personal Advisers said that they were able to make successful contact with two-thirds of clients referred to them. The remainder could not be contacted e.g. because they did not attend school.

459. The main issues regarding referrals were the appropriateness and volume of clients e.g. some Personal Advisers with a specific function may be sent clients who were generally disaffected.

460. Figure 23 shows an example of a referral system within a Pilot school. It shows the range of agencies and support services available to clients. A pupil would access learning support services via a teacher and then Head of Year. The Head of Year would, using a referral form, refer the pupil to the appropriate person, academic or welfare. The Connexions Personal Adviser would be the first point of contact with the range of welfare services available in the school, including careers advice. Depending on the client's need

the Connexions Personal Adviser would refer on to one or more welfare support services. They would also be responsible for tracking these interventions (e.g. did the pupil attend) and reviewing progress (e.g. what effect did that intervention have).

Figure 23 Example of a referral system in a school

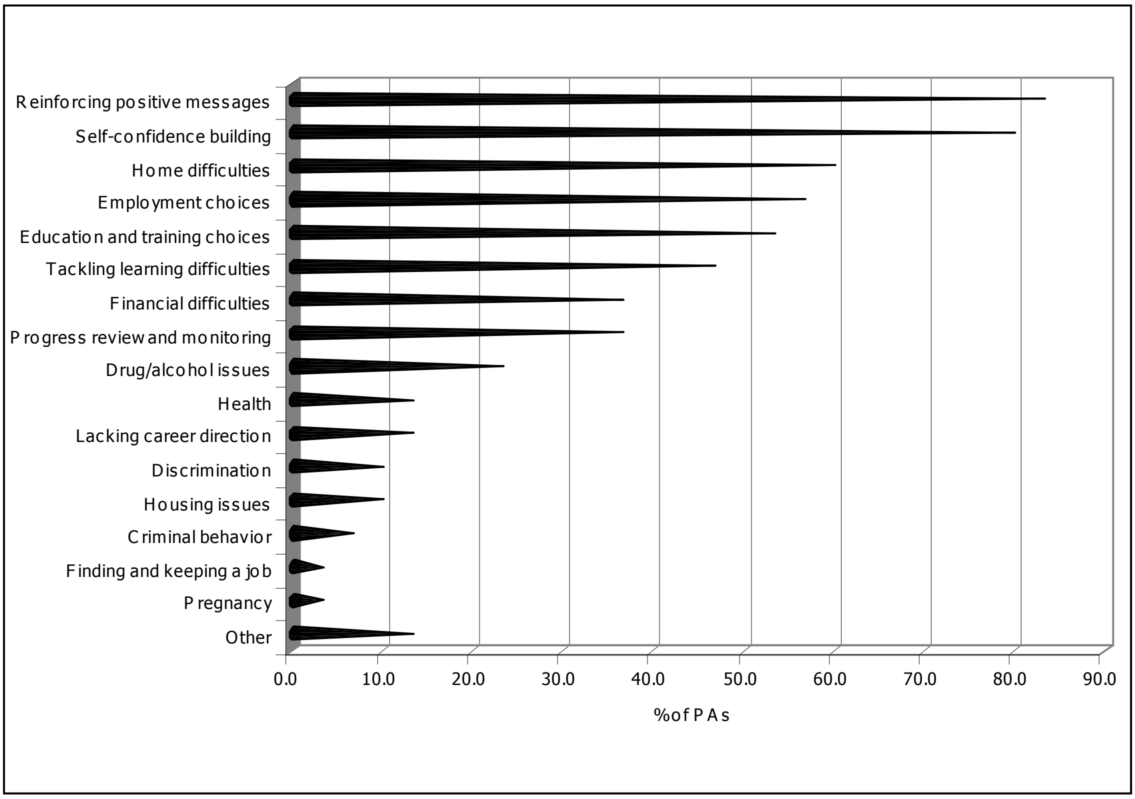


Source: Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions Service

4.4.5 Service delivery – assessment and delivery

461. Personal Advisers thought that the main element of the service they provided was information and advice (61%) whilst 40% thought it was counselling (more than one response was possible). Some Personal Advisers described their role as an 'independent advocate' whilst another said that the key issue was 'getting them to do something'.

Figure 24 Main issues clients want advice and guidance on



Source: Personal Adviser interviews, GHK

462. Figure 24 shows the main issues that clients wanted advice and guidance on (based on the responses from 30 Personal Advisers). The two main issues were concerned with self-image – reinforcing positive messages (83%) and self-confidence building (80%). Home difficulties, employment, and education and training choices were also mentioned by over half of the Personal Advisers (who could give more than one response).

463. Whilst 92% of Personal Advisers said that they undertook an initial assessment process with their clients, this tended to be very informal and tailored to individual needs. In some cases it was a lengthy chat, in others it was based on limited information e.g. exam grades, or to talking to other professionals working with the client (including form teachers). One quarter of Personal Advisers used more formal assessment tools e.g. homelessness assessment and forms in the Youth Justice system. Some statutory functions do require a formal assessment process. However, as most Personal Advisers were not involved with such services there were very few formalised assessment procedures in place.

464. Most Personal Advisers (84%) tried to develop some sort of action or development plan with their client. This plan mostly contained baselines, action points, goals and targets. Progress towards these goals was then reviewed at subsequent meetings. As with the assessment process, action plans varied widely in their formality. Ones used in the Youth Justice system can be very formal whilst those worked out between a client and a school based Personal Adviser maybe simple action points. Only two Personal Advisers (who said

‘it depends’) said that the plan was agreed and reviewed with their client.

465. Only one in five clients were referred on to a specialist agency. For example, to further help people with housing needs, offending behaviour, drugs problems. This was probably not because the Personal Advisers were providing this support themselves but rather because their clients do not require additional support. Of those Personal Advisers who could or did refer clients 80% were happy with this process. The main issue raised about the referral process was that it tended to be very informal.

466. Personal Advisers were asked to rank how aspects of the Connexions Service have changed since the inception e.g. management, quality of service. Some Personal Advisers did not respond because they had not been in the job long enough and others could not comment on some aspects e.g. those not providing a service to specific groups of young people.

Table 27 Has the Connexions Service improved...

Percent	Improved	Stayed the same			Worse
	1	2	3	4	5
Management of the Connexions service (N=36)	11.1	41.7	36.1	11.1	0.0
Marketing of the Connexions service generally (N=24)	4.2	25.0	58.3	8.3	4.2
Marketing of Connexions to specific groups (N=20)	15.0	20.0	65.0	0.0	0.0
Access to the service for specific groups (N=22)	13.6	40.9	36.4	4.5	4.5
Quality of the Connexions Service generally (N=22)	0.0	63.6	27.3	9.1	0.0
Quality of the Connexions Service to specific groups (N=25)	8.0	52.0	8.0	12.0	20.0
Involvement of young people in design and delivery (N=22)	36.4	45.5	13.6	4.5	0.0

Source: Personal Adviser interviews, GHK

467. Table 27 shows that most Personal Advisers felt that the quality of the service and the involvement of young people had improved over time within their Connexions Service, at least 60% ranked these aspects as a 1 or 2. However, one third of respondents felt the quality of the service to specific groups of young people had worsened. On balance many felt that the management and access had improved although 36% felt it had stayed the same. Most Personal Advisers felt that the marketing of the Service had stayed the same.

468. The main findings under each of these headings were:

- **Management of the Connexions Service**. The positive points were that there was greater inter agency involvement, more freedom to develop the service, and a greater focus on the needs of young people. Some Personal Advisers felt that communications could be improved as well as links with other agencies. Some felt that management structures were now more confused. They had several line managers, and they were concerned about what happened beyond March 2001.
- **The marketing of Connexions**. Most Personal Advisers felt that the marketing could be improved; there was a low awareness of the service amongst partners and clients because little marketing had been undertaken. There was also little to give people at the moment so if clients, parents or other professionals asked them about the service they had no leaflet or hand out to give them.

- **Access to Connexions**. The only comment on access was for more outreach work. Generally access was not an issue as many services were delivered in schools.
- **The quality of the service**. Personal Advisers felt that service quality had been improved because more people were now in post, and roles and protocols were now better defined.
- **Involving young people**. Most Personal Advisers were very positive about this aspect of Connexions.

4.4.6 The role of the Personal Adviser

469. Respondents were asked what they saw as the key elements of their work, 55 responded. The most commonly used words were advocacy and brokerage as well as support, empathy and engagement. One Personal Adviser summed it up as "*…brokering and assisting them getting access to resources so that they can explore different avenues to fulfil their aspirations."* For about one-third the key element was providing support whilst young people make important decisions or are going through a difficult period. For example, *"To support the young person to make decisions that will be beneficial to themselves, to motivate them and increase their aspirations and access to other agencies, and to provide information so the young person can make informed decisions."* For the remainder, the key elements were providing advice (especially for the transition beyond compulsory education), being non-judgmental and understanding and providing a consistent and dependable service.

470. The vast majority of Personal Advisers (88%) felt that they were able to tailor their services to the needs of each individual client. But one Personal Adviser qualified this, saying *"within reason, because we do meet the extremes here, from housing to offending needs."*

471. The average caseload of the Personal Adviser, on the day they were interviewed, was 20 (based on the response from 51 Personal Advisers) and the average since they started the job was 19 (based on 43 responses).

472. Of these, 71% of the Personal Advisers described their caseload as hard-to-help or having additional needs. Personal Advisers felt that about 70% of their caseload was 'active' i.e. they were 'actual' rather than 'potential' clients. This compares with caseloads of 40 for Probation workers and 20 for YOT workers (as mentioned by a partner from a Probation Service).

473. Most Personal Advisers were not concerned with the levels of the caseloads but rather their characteristics, especially given the extent and intensity of some of their problems, the fact that Personal Advisers were new to the job and some were undertaking training as well. Also some Personal Advisers had to develop their service from scratch, developing links with partner organisations, designing referral protocols etc. A caseload of between 10 and 15 was felt to be sufficient for those working with hard-to-help clients.

474. Despite the size of their caseloads, 81% of Personal Advisers felt that they were making a material difference to the lives of the clients by preventing them from falling through 'the net', broadening the range of options available to them and helping them to access them. The remainder said 'for some clients yes, for some clients no' or they did not know what impact they were having (especially if they had just started working as a Personal Adviser). For some Personal Advisers this observation was based on the feedback from clients but for others it was their own perception of their impact.

475. Personal Advisers were asked how they would measure the impact of their services.

The most common response was to measure the progress of clients against what had been agreed between the client and the Personal Adviser e.g. as agreed in their action plan. Some Personal Advisers mentioned feedback from clients whilst others proposed 'harder' measures such as whether they re-offend and post-16 destinations.

476. Most Personal Advisers (85%) do have performance targets to work towards. Most targets tended to be quantitative, such as caseload levels, number of meetings, contact with clients, outcomes, attendance and exclusions. Whilst other Personal Advisers indicated softer, more qualitative targets, such as, regular discussions with a line manager, reports from other professionals etc.

477. Personal Advisers were asked to rank the improvement in aspects of the service they provide since it started e.g. the quality of education, training and employment advice etc. Some Personal Advisers did not respond because they had not been in the job long enough and others could not comment on some aspects e.g. those not providing a service to specific groups of young people.

Table 28 Improvements in aspects of the role of the Personal Adviser...

Percent	Improved	Stayed the same			Worse
	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of careers advice generally (N=20)	5.0	40.0	55.0	0.0	0.0
Quality of careers advice to hard-to-help (N=21)	9.5	28.6	57.1	4.8	0.0
Quality of other advice generally (N=19)	5.3	47.4	47.4	0.0	0.0
Quality of other advice to hard-to-help (N=13)	7.7	38.5	53.8	0.0	0.0
Contact with other support professionals (N=21)	14.3	47.6	38.1	0.0	0.0
Support provided to young people generally (N=19)	10.5	52.6	36.8	0.0	0.0
Support provided to hard to help young people (N=20)	15.0	35.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Personal Adviser interviews, GHK

478. Hardly any Personal Advisers felt that aspects of their service had deteriorated but many felt that it had not improved. The quality of other advice generally, contact with other support professionals and support provided to young people generally were the areas Personal Advisers felt they had most progressed on.

479. The main issues that were raised under these aspects, usually in comparison with their previous jobs, were:

- **The quality of education, training and employment advice**. Personal Advisers were finding that they could now offer a dedicated resource to their clients, there was better access to (and understanding of) information from other agencies and it was more targeted at individual needs.
- **The quality of other advice and guidance**. As above, Personal Advisers were finding that there was better access to (and understanding of) information from other agencies and it was more targeted at individual needs. They also felt that they were able to provide more holistic advice and information.

- **Contact with other professionals**. Personal Advisers identified improved communication between and working with other agencies, as well as better identification of appropriate organisations.
- **The support Personal Advisers provide**. Personal Advisers felt that they were able to provide a more in-depth and longer-term service.

4.4.7 Personal Adviser training

480. As we have seen, the Pilots were planning and developing a wide range of training support for their Personal Advisers. At the forefront of this was the national Personal Adviser training course. Of the Personal Advisers we interviewed, half were undertaking this training at the time of the interview. Respondents were asked to identify the best aspects of the training.

481. The best aspects were the ability to network with other Personal Advisers and agencies and discuss ideas and experiences, as well as broadening knowledge and understanding of the Personal Adviser role, other agencies and the Connexions Service. Personal Advisers also mentioned that they got a greater understanding of learning materials they could use with their clients.

482. Personal Advisers were also asked to provide details of any aspects of the course that were not relevant or that they knew already. In the partner interviews, three people said that the national course needed to include more APL or else it risked alienating experienced and skilled Personal Advisers. This was echoed by some Personal Advisers who felt that it covered a lot of ground they were familiar with (especially if they had a Diploma in Social Work) and it was not flexible enough to focus on their particular roles e.g. working with specific client groups.

483. But many Personal Advisers felt positive about the training. Of the two-thirds of those Personal Advisers who were undertaking the National Diploma, nine said that they would recommend it to a friend. However, four added the caveat ‘but not if they were experienced’.

484. The vast majority of Personal Advisers (92%) had undertaken induction training or was about to. Over one third (35%) said that the induction training focused on their new Personal Adviser role, 28% said it focused on the Connexions Service and 13% said that included both of these elements and 15% said that they were about to start their induction training.

485. The length of the induction training varied considerably from one day to three weeks. It tended to cover information about the institution Personal Advisers were working in, the role of the Personal Adviser, relevant partner and referral agencies, statutory training (e.g. child protection) and other specific training elements e.g. drugs awareness. In some cases, it was developed by a dedicated training function, in others by the line manager.

486. Just under three-quarters (71%) of Personal Advisers had undertaken some other form of training since they started their job. This tended to be one off training focusing on a particular issue. The training covered a wide range of areas – suicide awareness, sexual abuse, child protection, motivational training, interview techniques, IT, equal opportunities, assessment tools, advocacy and mentoring. Seven Personal Advisers were also undertaking the Diploma in Careers Guidance.

487. Three quarters of respondents (73%) were asked whether there was any other training that they would like to do. Child protection, advocacy, counselling skills and drugs

awareness were the areas of training mentioned the most.

4.4.8 Information and communication

488. Personal Advisers reported that they received a range of information about clients on referral from another agency. For example, Asset forms (used with young offenders), attainment and attendance information, details of past interventions, basic personal details, reason for referral etc. Case notes from the referral agency and school reports were the most used sources, along with more formal care plans, existing personal development plans and pastoral support plans.

489. There was little criticism of this information. Most Personal Advisers (82%) found the information useful, informative, accurate and the right amount, and it provided a useful background and context to their client. One fifth of Personal Advisers (22%) said that there was too little client information supplied to them.

490. Three quarters of Personal Advisers (74%) thought there was adequate access to educational information and 85% said there was adequate access to behavioural information.

491. Most Personal Advisers (77%) thought they were fully aware of the issues involved in the Data Protection Act, but one fifth said they were not. Asked to define ‘data protection’, most Personal Advisers mentioned preserving confidentiality to client information and being careful in sharing information. Three quarters of Personal Advisers (76%) obtained permission from the client before they pass information on to another person. Most Personal Advisers thought that this was essential if they were to establish trust with the clients.

492. Over half (54%) of Personal Advisers did use ICTs to send and receive client information. One Pilot has issued its Personal Advisers with laptops so they can input information, whilst another was developing a website. 47% of Personal Advisers use paper based systems. For many, this was an appropriate mechanism but for some it provided a barrier especially the speed of access to information.

493. The only major concern that arose regarding client information was from one Personal Adviser working in a school. The Personal Adviser was asked by some teachers to relay back information about his clients. He refused to do this but felt pressure was being put on him to comply. Some schools see their role as in *loco parentis* and would want to know, for example, if a pupil was pregnant or had been drunk. If the Personal Adviser knew this would they be correct in alerting the school? This issue, in this particular Pilot, has now been resolved through discussion using the criteria of whether the health and safety of the pupil is put at risk by not telling others. In many cases the Personal Adviser would formally tell the client under what circumstances they would have to pass on information to other agencies.

494. Just over half of Personal Advisers (54%) said that there were mechanisms in place for clients to express their views, 35% did not and the remainder was not sure. Most of these were questionnaires, or similar forms that clients could complete. However, these did not tend to be scientific surveys and more like ‘happy sheets’. Other methods involved focus groups. Generally, feedback mechanisms did not appear to be formal, sophisticated or regular.

495. Less than one fifth of Personal Advisers (18%) collected monitoring statistics (e.g. client’s gender, ethnic origin, special needs etc.) on their clients.

496. Most Personal Advisers did have mechanisms for reviewing their work. These

involved feedback forms, meetings with line managers or other Personal Adviser's. The regularity and formality of these methods varied between Pilots. Some were formal 'peer review' sessions whilst others were more informal.

497. Finally, Personal Advisers were asked to specify the one thing that they would change to improve the quality of their service to young people. Their responses are presented in full in Table 29.

Table 29 If there was one thing you could change...

More resources to:

- fund particular services e.g. respite care for young carers;
- finance emergency budgets e.g. for housing and meals for at risk young people;
- fund other agencies, so they can increase their resources and staff;
- reduce caseloads and undertake more outreach work e.g. basing Personal Advisers where the clients are;
- increase the number and range of Personal Advisers.

The message and marketing:

- a clear direction from Government so Personal Advisers, clients, partner agencies and professionals know what they are to expect from Connexions;
- improved marketing material for Personal Advisers to give to clients, parents, other agencies and professionals;
- generally more marketing of Connexions to increase public awareness.

Management and supervision:

- have management structures and support mechanisms in place before the Personal Advisers start work;
- more support for Personal Advisers at their place of work;
- spend less time on administration;
- more networking with other Personal Advisers.

General:

- more emphasis on the formative aspect of the work e.g. build relationships with clients and other agencies;
- not to be based in schools especially if working with non-attendees;
- more multi agency working and information sharing;
- more consultation with young people;
- improve the accuracy and level of information about young people;
- better targeting of funding at the students/communities that need it most.

4.5 Good Practice Case Study: the Role of the Personal Adviser – North East Lincolnshire Connexions Service part of the Humberside Pilot

498. As part of the good practice case studies, a visit was made to the Northeast Lincolnshire Connexions Service part of the Humberside Pilot. Face-to-face meetings were held with the Pilot manager and four Personal Advisers.

4.5.1 Background

499. When Connexions was first announced, more of a steer was expected nationally.

But what the Government was saying to the Pilots was, here is the concept and the vision for the Connexions service, now go and build it locally. This provided an opportunity to deliver a service that could respond to local needs and circumstances.

500. They began by discussing, within the Careers and Youth Services, what the vision of a local Connexions service in Northeast Lincolnshire should look like. This developed into a consultation paper, which was presented to their partner organisations. These included Social Services, the YOT, the VCS, and the LEA etc. They responded with their view of a local Connexions service. This consultation process culminated in a large, one-day conference with partner agencies. There were a large number of workshops to discuss various aspects of the Connexions service and how to go about piloting it. One of the outcomes from this conference was that a multi-agency team of Personal Advisers should be piloted. The Conference was a great success especially because it made attendees excited about developing a Connexions service locally.

4.5.2 Developing the role of the Personal Adviser

501. Two types of Personal Advisers were required – school based and Link Personal Advisers. The view was taken that the Personal Adviser role should be distinct from that of a Careers Adviser. A Careers Adviser serves a specialist function, a role that Personal Advisers can refer clients to in the same way that they would refer someone to a drugs worker or a counsellor etc.

502. The pilots view of the Personal Adviser role is someone who:

- assesses client need
- orchestrates a range of services for the benefit of their client, based on that need
- manages information held about the circumstances and needs of that young person
- maintains contact with the young person, especially follow-up after crisis interventions
- ensures that the client gets a seamless, holistic service from a range of specialists (one of which may be careers advice and guidance)
- communicates with other agencies so they understand what the Connexions service and the Personal Adviser role is, and
- networks and brokers services between partner agencies.

4.5.3 Recruitment

503. The Personal Adviser team is 10 strong. Three Personal Advisers were seconded from Humberside Partnership (the careers service in Humberside), four from the Youth Service, one from Social Services, one had been an outreach worker and one was formerly a classroom assistant.

504. As the time-scales were so short and people were needed in post quickly, it was decided that the secondment of staff to the Connexions service was the most viable option, rather than have a fully open recruitment procedure. Advertisements were only placed within partner organisations.

505. There were separate job descriptions/person specifications for the school based and Link Personal Advisers. The host partner organisation (in which or with which the Personal Adviser would be working) sat on the interview panel e.g. senior managers from schools, Social Services, Housing organisations.

506. Within the secondment process, the interview was open. There were no pre-determined notions of how many Personal Advisers were wanted with different backgrounds.

The best candidates available were selected.

507. The only issue that arose during the recruitment process was the reluctance of one partner to circulate the advert. They feared losing skilled staff whom would then be hard to replace. Part of this problem, was that Connexions was then seen very much as an external organisation. If the process were repeated now this organisation would have changed their view of Connexions.

508. Backfilling tended to be a problem generally. The Pilot was aware of this because several career advisers became Personal Advisers. This meant that key staff had to be replaced in order to meet core and non-core contracts. The approach to backfilling was two-fold. New staff were recruited to replace the secondees but also an NVQ 4 Guidance Course was developed along with Huddersfield University (with whom strong links have been maintained) to train new staff. Using both these strategies it has been possible to backfill the posts and deliver on contracts.

4.5.4 The location of Personal Advisers

509. All Personal Advisers have dual location. They have a desk in the Connexions centre and a desk in their host organisation. A key element in developing the Personal Adviser service was choosing a dedicated site at the Connexions Centre to house all the Personal Advisers and provide them with IT, clerical, administrative and management support. This is about two miles from the centre of Grimsby. This has been crucial in developing a Connexions Personal Adviser team identity. It also provides Personal Advisers with an independent base.

510. Humberside Partnership’s Career Development Centre in the centre of Grimsby has a room for Connexions that Personal Advisers can use. They can meet clients there, individually or in groups. It contains a range of information leaflets and books and has a computer.

4.5.5 Management of Personal Advisers

511. All Personal Advisers have dual management. Dual management has not been an issue. It is very similar to the way in which careers advisers have been and are managed. The Personal Adviser is line managed by a dedicated Connexions Personal Adviser manager, with a manager to provide “Counselling Support” from the Youth Service. They are also managed by someone within the host organisation who supervises and supports the Personal Adviser when they are based in the host organisation be it a school, Social Services, YOT etc.

512. The style of management varies between host organisations. The Connexions Personal Adviser manager works closely with host management teams to ensure continuity.

513. What Connexions has brought is a more clearly defined relationship between Connexions and the host organisation based on negotiated and agreed protocols. The Pilot works with host organisations and explains the concept of the Connexions service and the role of the Personal Adviser. How the Personal Adviser would best operate within that organisation is discussed. The issues raised are the needs of the clients, the range of services and other professionals already there, statutory responsibilities, and the requirements of the host organisation. These are then written up a into a service level agreements (SLA).

4.5.6 Partnership Agreements

514. The roles and responsibilities of Personal Advisers are discussed with the host organisation's senior managers, agreed and then embedded in Partnership agreements. Personal Advisers have a base in their organisation and a base at the Connexions Centre that is a key to its success. The experience of Learning Gateway Personal Advisers was that organisations tended to ask their Learning Gateway Personal Advisers to undertake non-Learning Gateway tasks.

515. Having Connexions Partnership Agreements means that everyone is clear about the roles and responsibilities of the Personal Adviser. This is not a static agreement but develops over time and can be modified in the light of experience. For example, Doorstep (a host Housing organisation) found that they did not want the Personal Advisers to become involved in initial meetings between a young client and a landlady. So the role of the Personal Adviser was changed accordingly. The issue was highlighted, discussed between the Personal Adviser, host manager and staff and Connexions, and procedures were revised accordingly.

4.5.7 Personal Adviser training, development and support

516. Every Personal Adviser went through induction training. This comprised two stages. Firstly, the standard induction procedures for Humberside Partnership staff which covers systems, procedures, health and safety etc. There was also Connexions specific induction training. This consisted of a dedicated day, out of the office where the managers and Personal Advisers sat down and discussed the role of the Personal Adviser, the Personal Adviser team and the Connexions service.

517. The Pilot undertook a skills needs assessment and skills gap analysis for the Personal Advisers. A HR specialist from Humberside Partnership developed a profile of the skills needed by a Personal Adviser and then assessed the skills of our Personal Advisers. By comparing the two it was possible to identify individual and group development needs. The pilot is now in the process of instituting the necessary training.

518. The Pilot also has fortnightly meetings between all of the Personal Advisers. These usually last for half a day. Personal Advisers can raise issues, discuss success stories, highlight any problems etc. The Connexions and Learning Gateway Personal Advisers also meet once a month and there are also informal get-togethers.

4.5.8 The role of the Link Personal Adviser

519. There are four link Personal Advisers – Social Services, EWS and YOT, Housing and Leisure, and Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Counselling.

520. The role of the Link Personal Adviser is to:

- explain what Connexions is to partner agencies
- establish working relationships with partner agencies
- develop working relationships with partner agencies
- raise awareness of the Connexions service, and
- develop inter agency protocols, systems and referral mechanisms.

4.5.9 The Social Services Personal Adviser

521. Humberside Partnership had already established links with Social Services concerning mentoring of young people and the development of pathway plans for care leavers. This particular Personal Adviser was chosen because she used to work in Social Services with care leavers. Once appointed she went out and gave presentations about the Connexions service and the role of the Personal Adviser to Social Services managers and staff. The Pilot then worked out how best to utilise the Personal Adviser resource in this context. Since then she has been establishing referral mechanisms and protocols with Social Services for working with looked after young people and care leavers.

522. For example, in Grimsby, schools do not always know which pupils are looked after. The Link Personal Adviser has been working with Social Services, and now all pilot schools have a list of which pupils are in care. This means that Personal Advisers and other support professionals are aware of this fact if that young person ever needs support.

523. The Personal Adviser is also involved in Resource Allocation Meetings (to see if a young person should be taken into care).

524. The Link Personal Adviser is strengthening the relationship between schools, the LEA and Social Services. The Pilot is investigating having personal development plans for young people in care and this has developed links between Social Services and the LEA. Open events have been held for foster parents.

4.5.10 The EWS and YOT Link Personal Adviser

525. This EWS and YOT Link Personal Adviser work across these two organisations.

526. The Personal Adviser has a desk in the YOT in addition to the one at the Connexions centre. The Personal Adviser works together with YOT workers. They liase about which clients the Personal Adviser should work with. Placing the Personal Adviser in the YOT to increase the range of options open to the client especially regarding reintegrating the young person into education and training.

527. One issue of Personal Advisers working within YOTs is the use and transfer of information. The only way that the Personal Adviser can access information is in-situ within the YOT. The YOT have appointed someone to work alongside the Personal Adviser in exploring this issue.

528. The relationship with EWS is developing. There are more issues to explore because of the potential overlap between the role of the Personal Adviser and EWO. It has not been possible to physically place a Personal Adviser desk within the EWS team because there is no space.

529. YOT and EWS workers both have punitive roles. It is important in developing the Personal Adviser role alongside these workers that one is not seen as a ‘Mr Nice’ and the other as ‘Mr Nasty’.

4.5.11 The Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Counselling Link Personal Adviser

530. Work that the Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Counselling Link Personal Adviser has undertaken includes:

- Any referral to the YS counselling service will now go through the Link Personal Adviser. This saves other agencies lots of time because the Link Personal Adviser improves the referral process.
- Discussing links with the Shaw Trust (an organisation working with people with mental health problems). They have an SRB funded project worker who works with people aged 16-25. The project worker and the Personal Adviser are discussing and identifying their respective roles so they can complement the work of each other.
- Working with the Child and Family Unit (that works with families where parent and child are not relating to each other). The Pilot has never had such strong links before and is looking at developing these links and referral methods.
- The Community Psychiatric Team and the Self-Harm Team (self-harm is a considerable problem in Grimsby. The Link Personal Adviser is explaining Connexions and the role of the Personal Adviser, and developing working relationships and referral methods.
- Closely linked to Impact, a drugs counselling service.
- Working with GPs, especially with Primary Care Nurses with a focus on mental health.
- The Pilot is represented on the Drug Reference Group and the Alcohol Sub Group, both within the DAT.
- The Pilot is represented on the local Mental Health Forum.

4.5.12 The Housing and Leisure Link Personal Adviser

531. The Housing and Leisure Link Personal Adviser has:

- Established links with a range of statutory and VCS housing organisations such as Oasis, Splash, Positive Futures, the Hostel Liaison Group. The Benefits Agency, the Housing Department, Housing Associations, Foyer Projects, the YMCA, and the local Landlords and Landladies Association.
- They are feeding into and providing a Connexions perspective on the Northeast Lincolnshire Housing Strategy.
- They are working with agencies to establish protocols if young people are at risk of being thrown out of their accommodation, for example, there has been a delay in their benefit payments.
- This Link Personal Adviser provides an additional resource at the Careers Centre. Clients with housing queries can be referred to the Personal Adviser.

4.5.13 The added value of the Link Personal Adviser

- The ability to focus on broader issues e.g. developing careers advice and guidance for care leavers
- The ability to focus on broader client groups e.g. much of the focus of Social Services work with young people is with the 16+ age group. The Personal Adviser can work with younger people before they meet the transition age at 16.
- Personal Advisers can spend more time with the young person assessing their need and planning out options.
- Undertaking follow-ups work with clients especially after a crisis intervention.
- Providing more extensive links to, and knowledge of, other services and service providers.
- Work with partner agencies and influencing their strategies.

- Establishing procedures and beneficial working arrangements between agencies so that services are more holistic and seamless.
- Enabling more time and dedicated support to be allocated to developing all of these things.

4.5.14 The role of the schools based Personal Adviser

532. Personal Advisers have been located in three schools and a Behavioural Unit. There are one and a half Personal Advisers in each of the three schools plus one outreach worker who works across all four organisations. Of the three schools, one is in the green belt with high achievement and post-16 participation levels, one has mixed achievement/participation levels and one is in an Education Action Zone.

533. All Personal Advisers have the same role and responsibilities but their day-to-day work is different depending on the needs of the schools and young people.

534. Once recruited, a schools panel was assembled (including the school senior managers) to allocate the Personal Advisers to the schools. There were no problems with this process. In the future, the Pilot will allocate Personal Advisers to schools themselves in the way that careers advisers are allocated at the moment.

535. Before Personal Advisers started work, a series of meetings were held with the schools to prepare them for this new service. Firstly, someone visited the schools and explained the notion of Connexions to them. The two Co-Directors of Connexions carried these out for NE Lincs. Then the schools Personal Adviser manager went along and discussed the day-to-day practicalities.

536. Before the Personal Advisers started work, the Pilot also met with other partner agencies, such as the EWS, Educational Psychologists and the Police to explain and discuss the Connexions service and pre-empt any issues that may have arise.

537. A Connexions Development Plan (a service level agreement) was developed with each school. These needed a lot of work and thinking through. Some elements of the Personal Advisers work were the same in each school, for example, to map the provision in each school and to undertake development work with other agencies. But some functions varied. For example, one school wanted the Personal Adviser to work closely with the Pastoral Support Team and focus on the PHSE curriculum. Another school wanted the Personal Adviser to focus on young people in Year 9 that were excluded or risked facing exclusion from school.

538. An induction programme was established for the Personal Advisers in each school. This focused on the role of the Personal Adviser within that particular school.

539. The core role of the school based Personal Adviser in working with clients is establishing the profile of the service, assessment, managing information, signposting and referral. The work with partner agencies and professionals is networking and brokering.

540. The first thing the Personal Advisers did was to go into lessons and explain whom they were and what they did to the pupils. They familiarised themselves with the school environment, the catchment area, other professionals working within the school and what services were available to pupils in that school. Personal Advisers have set a profile of Connexions within the schools putting up banners and posters. Each Personal Adviser has a Connexions room in the school that is their base and where they can meet clients.

541. Every six weeks the Personal Adviser, the school line manager (usually the Deputy Head) and the Personal Advisers manager meet in the school. The Pilot discusses practical issues, establishes protocols (e.g. for taking pupils out of lessons), development plans and any problems that have arisen.

542. There are issues around working with other professionals in schools, such as, the overlapping of roles and responsibilities, and some politicking. But when these issues have arisen, these are discussed at school meetings and they are worked through. In one school the SENCO would not release pupil information (this has not been a problem in the other schools). The Pilot sat down together and discussed this and came up with a compromise.

543. At the moment most referrals come from Deputy Heads, Year Heads and self-referral. The Pilot used the referral form promoted in the National Personal Adviser training. Most clients are in the disaffected and hard-to-help categories. The main issue's which young people need support on are Child Protection, sexual health, problems at home, drugs, bullying and bereavement.

544. Signposting is an important function, one that has been greatly enhanced by having Link Personal Advisers. So if someone requires counselling, advice about substance misuse, mediation with their parents, then the appropriate Link Personal Adviser has already instituted links with these service providers. Both signposting and referral processes are much more formalised, organised and integrated.

545. Personal Advisers have met with the Schools Council in each school. Members of the Schools Council have provided views and opinions of what the service should be like. They are also used to finding out ways of improving the service.

546. A lot of Personal Adviser work is crisis work so instituting follow-up mechanisms is important. In the past, agencies may have addressed the crisis e.g. a problem between child and parent but not been able to provide follow-up support. This is a role that the Personal Adviser should provide, so we are working on developing follow-up mechanisms.

547. Personal Advisers are setting up workshops on exam pressure relief and body image. They hold monthly theme quizzes around issues such as sexual health. This not only raises awareness of these topics but also enables Personal Advisers to spot a lack of knowledge or understanding of particular issues.

4.5.15 The added value of the school based Personal Adviser

- An additional resource within schools whose role reflects the needs of the pupil and the school.
- Providing a new service that assesses need, manages client information, and provides more holistic and seamless support and referral.
- Enhanced networking and brokering with partner agencies and professionals.
- Enhanced signposting and referral, especially when working alongside a Link Personal Adviser. Signposting and referral processes are much more formalised, organised and integrated.
- The involvement of young people, through Schools Councils, in the design and delivery of the service.
- More time spent with the young person assessing their need and planning out options.
- Undertaking follow-ups work with clients especially after a crisis intervention.
- Providing more extensive links to and knowledge of other services and service providers.
- Working with partner agencies and influencing their strategies.

- Developing consistent provision across schools. For example, developing Child Protection protocols with the schools, in the past addressing this issue within schools would have been patchy.
- Enabling more time and dedicated support to be allocated to developing all of these things.

548. All Link and school based Personal Advisers are able to access two important services that we have developed:

- The pilot has an emergency fund worth £1,000 a year that Personal Advisers can draw on. This is for those times when you have explored all the options but still draw a blank and have to fund short-term crisis provision yourself. For example, if in the case of a homeless client all our usual referral accommodation is fully booked or we feel it is inappropriate (e.g. if only male accommodation were available but the client was a women); in this instance the Personal Adviser could draw on the money to pay for over night accommodation.
- The Pilot has a clothes bank because sometimes clothing can be an important short-term barrier. For example, one client became pregnant and stopped attending her training course. Not because of the pregnancy but because she had outgrown all of her clothes and had nothing to wear.

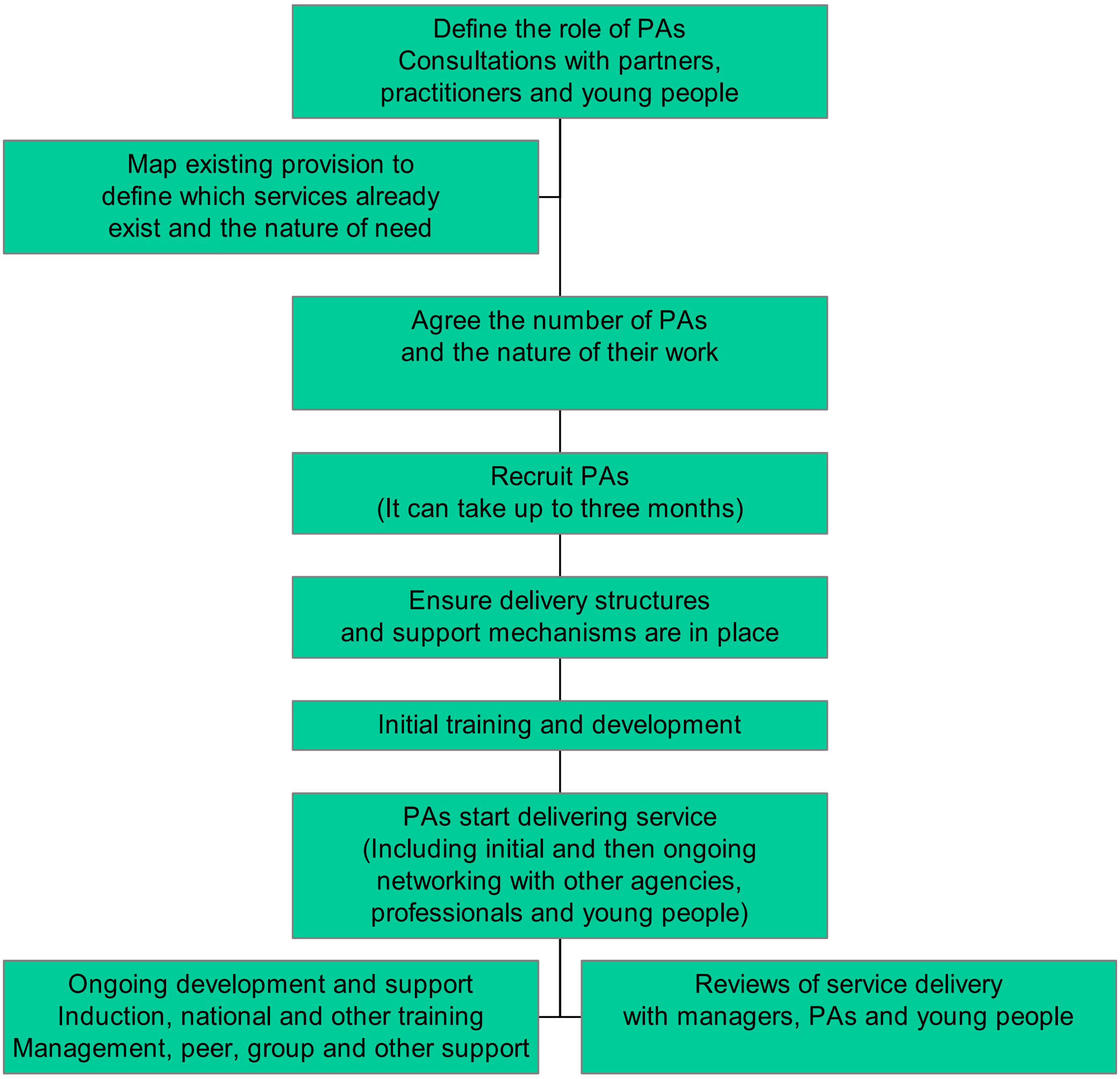
4.5.16 Key learning points

- The key to the Personal Adviser role is having the right people as Personal Advisers, the right managers, resources and training. If you get the people, infrastructure and support right then the rest will follow.
- It is important to locate Personal Advisers within partner organisations but still retain independence.
- Partner agencies and host agencies, in particular, need to have a clear understanding of Connexions and the role of the Personal Adviser. Clear guidelines need to be developed about the role of the Personal Adviser in each particular host organisation. Once these are agreed then written protocols need to be put in place, which everyone can refer to.
- Personal Advisers can feel isolated in schools so appropriate support mechanisms need to be developed.
- Health and safety. A considerable amount of work has been put into health and safety because of the environments that Personal Advisers can find themselves in. Health and safety is a standing item on senior management meetings. The Pilot was also proactive with this issue. A dedicated health and safety specialist has interviewed the Personal Advisers, looked at the environments Personal Advisers were or could be working in and developed a series of procedures. For example, Personal Advisers were not permitted to transport clients in their cars. Instead we have an account with a local taxi firm if ever clients and Personal Advisers need to be transported by car.
- The development work of the Personal Advisers is very important.
- Gaps in provision have been identified and services developed to fill them.
- It is important to have review mechanisms with Personal Advisers and host organisations where issues can be raised, discussed and acted upon.
- Connexion managers have development needs as well as Personal Advisers. This role had never been undertaken before and the development work has been a steep learning curve. The Personal Advisers have a national course; couldn't there be a similar one for Connexions managers?

- It would have been useful to be able to contact managers from the other Pilots to discuss and share issues and findings.
- At the moment managers do caseload supervision but we feel that there is a need for this to be a dedicated task undertaken by one worker.

549. Based on the interviews with partners and Personal Advisers an idealised Personal Adviser development model has been developed based on the good practice identified.

Table 30 An idealised Personal Adviser development model



550. It first involves defining the role of the Personal Adviser through consultations with partners, other professionals and young people and mapping current provision and need (further mapping will need to take place in future to keep abreast of developments). Once the role has been agreed and the mapping has been carried out, is it necessary to decide on the number of Personal Advisers and the nature of their work?

551. Time must be allowed to recruit Personal Advisers of the right calibre, to meet equal opportunity and other agreed procedures and standards, and to undertake security checks. Before appointment, it is important to ensure that other delivery and support mechanisms and structures are in place.

552. Initial training is important too, especially induction training to Personal Advisers

explaining the Connexions Service and the role of the Personal Adviser, especially where Personal Advisers come from a variety of backgrounds.

553. Once appointed, Personal Advisers will begin delivering the service. This may involve initial networking with other agencies, Personal Advisers and potential clients and other young people. Networking, training, development and support need to be ongoing. The Personal Adviser service needs to be reviewed regularly involving managers, Personal Advisers and clients and other young people.

4.6 Conclusions

- A variety of different models of the Personal Adviser were being Piloted working with different types of clients and in different locations e.g. Personal Advisers in schools, One Stop Shops, working within partner agencies to deliver services to hard-to-help young people, networking etc.
- There was general agreement about the core role and competencies of Personal Advisers (see the person specification Section 4). But there were differing views as to the wider role, and these views will change over time.
- The Connexions Service was effectively a Personal Adviser based service delivered on a one-to-one/face-to-face basis between the Personal Adviser and client. This very much reflected the roles of other professionals the Personal Adviser was based on, particularly career advisers.
- Very few Personal Advisers were piloting the universal service, as we understand it. Even when the service was called this, Personal Advisers work mostly with disaffected young people. This may be because Personal Advisers work alongside career advisers in schools and have not replaced them.
- Personal Advisers working for the Connexions Service in the main meet with young people, assess need, develop action plans/targets and work with the young person to achieve them. Pilots were developing other support mechanisms including ICTs, mentoring, group work, training and more extensive referral.
- There was true multi-agency working in terms of the backgrounds of Personal Advisers, the locations they worked in and the organisations Personal Advisers worked with on a daily basis. Any issues that arose from bringing a variety of professionals' together (different backgrounds, cultures, perceptions) were gradually being worked through. However, whilst many Personal Advisers felt that they were working for the Connexions Service, few felt they were being managed by it.
- The Pilots have developed extensive training and support programmes for Personal Advisers. This was essential to achieve the necessary skill sets required of Personal Advisers, and to support them in what can be a very challenging job. Views of the National Training Programme were generally positive. One of the criticisms levelled against the course was that it covered a lot of ground that skilled and experienced Personal Advisers knew already and there was a need for more APL. Also there needs to be more communication between local and national trainers, an assessment of skills and competencies, less distance assessment, and preparatory study support for those new to or who haven't studied for a long time.
- Induction training was seen as very important both in introducing people to the Connexions Service and to the role of the Personal Adviser.
- Recruitment can be a lengthy and involved process, especially if this is an open exercise. There were a wide variety of issues to address from attracting applicants from different backgrounds to checking the probity of recruits.
- One of the main areas that Personal Advisers felt could be improved was the marketing of the Connexions Service.

4.7 Recommendations

- Pilots would like more guidelines and good practice examples on:
  - the wider, non-core role of the Personal Adviser;
  - recruitment, including how to encourage people who are more representative of the client group to apply for Personal Adviser posts; the need for more access training;
  - vetting procedures of recruits.
  - the best means of involving young people in the process of recruitment.
  - assessment and diagnostic tools.
- Other issues were:
  - The need for effective supervision for Personal Advisers, especially those working with hard-to-help clients.
  - The need for continuous professional development, and also the use of reflective practice because Personal Advisers have a lot of experience to pass on.
  - More APL in the National Diploma, the linking of national and local trainers and a better understanding of the status of the National Diploma.
  - The need to develop resource banks of materials e.g. assessment tools and learning materials that Personal Advisers can access.

5 Views of Clients

5.1 Introduction

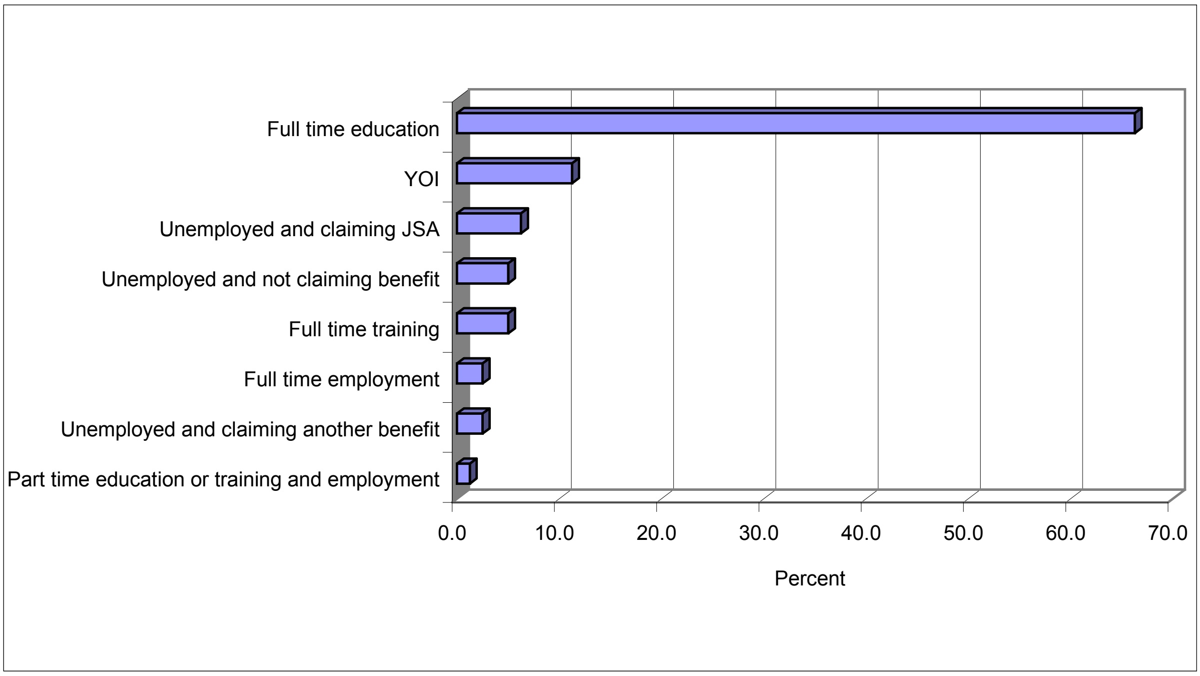
554. One-to-one, face-to-face interviews were undertaken with 80 clients in 12 Pilot areas. This analysis combines all of the interviews undertaken throughout the life of the project in December, January, March and April.

5.2 Profile of clients

555. Just over half of clients interviewed were male (54%), and over two-thirds (69%) were aged between 14 and 16 years old. Four out of five respondents (84%) were of White ethnic origin and 84% said they did not have a long-term health problem or disability.

556. Figure 25 shows the economic status of clients we interviewed. Most (65%) were currently in full-time education, 16% were in a YOI and 6% were unemployed and claiming JSA.

Figure 25 Economic status of clients[18]



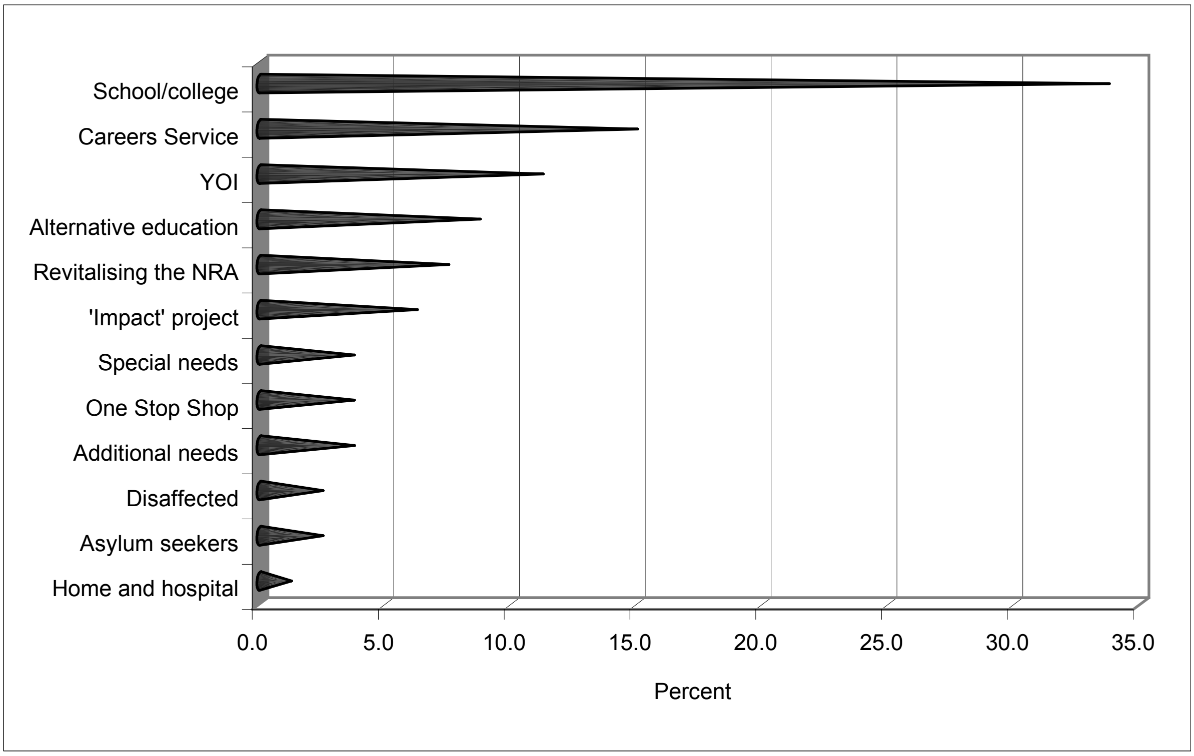
Source: Connexions Client Interviews, GHK

557. Figure 26 shows the name or type of service that clients were using. One-third were using the Connexions Service at their school or college, and 15% were accessing it through a careers service. One-in-ten were in a YOI and 9% were involved in an alternative education or curriculum programme e.g. aimed at clients excluded from or disaffected about school.

558. Whilst all clients were using the Connexions Service, most (56%) did not know it by that name.

[18] In this section the number of respondents in each graph and table is 80 unless otherwise stated.

Figure 26 Name of service



Source: Connexions Client Interviews, GHK

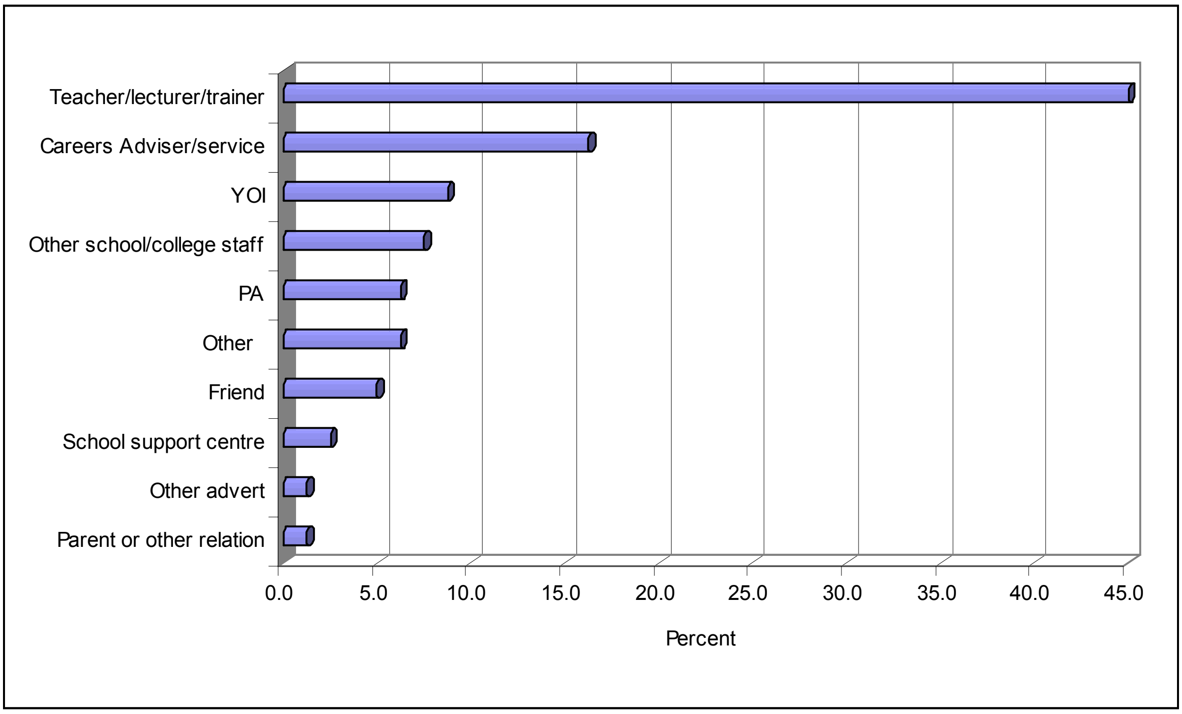
5.3 Involvement in and awareness of the Pilot Connexions Programme

559. Clients had been using their service for an average of two months but the length of time ranged from one week to three years (if the Pilot service was an extension of a previous service e.g. Learning Gateway).

560. Figure 27 shows that the main way that respondents had heard about the service was through a teacher or lecturer (45%) and 16% had become aware through a career adviser or their Careers Service. Almost one-in-ten (9%) had heard through staff at the YOI, 8% from other school/college staff (including school and college Support Centres), 6% from the Personal Advisers themselves (e.g. some Personal Advisers would introduce themselves and Connexions at school assembly) and 6% by another means (e.g. a New Deal Adviser).

561. In most cases (78%), the person or agency above made the first approach. Few respondents approached the Personal Adviser or service themselves. However, many services were based in institutions (schools, colleges a YOI etc.) and this indicates that Connexions was being proactive.

Figure 27 How did you hear about Connexions?



Source: Connexions Client Interviews, GHK

562. Most clients (80%) were happy being sent to use the Connexions Service. Only 14% said that they were unhappy about being sent to use the Service. Clients were happy to use the service because they saw it as useful to their needs in providing information, guidance and support on issues that were important to them. The main reason people were unhappy about being referred to Connexions was that they were unsure about what the service was for. As one respondent said *"I though I was being singled out for bad behaviour"*. Most clients, who felt unhappy at first, soon overcame these reservations when they understood more fully what the role of the Personal Adviser was.

563. Whilst most found the information they were first given about the Connexions was sufficient, 43% said that they would have liked more information about the Connexions Service in particular or support services generally. Over half (57%) of young people were not told about other support services available to them. Given that many clients face multiple barriers, improving the presentation of the service (especially what Connexions can and cannot do) and giving information about other support services to them is an area that could be improved.

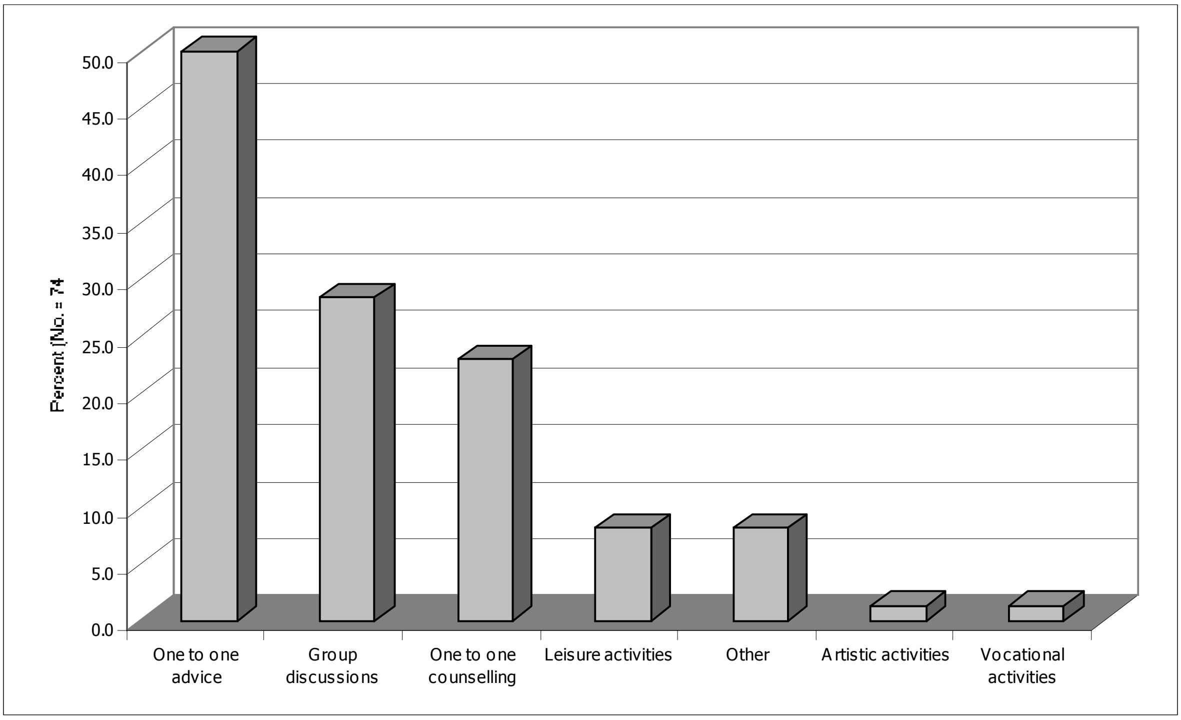
564. Very few clients had received incentives for using the service. And in most cases the incentive was limited to travel expenses. So the fact that Connexions was perceived to be relevant to client's needs and was well located were perhaps the biggest enticements for using it.

5.4 Usefulness of the service

565. Respondents were asked what they initially had expected to get out of the service. Most (59%) mentioned general advice, information and support e.g. careers, benefits and other advice. Some went along 'for a chat'. One in five mentioned that they wanted help with work and work experience, and the remainder mentioned assistance with behavioural issues e.g. anger management, drugs etc.

566. Figure 28 shows what activities clients were involved in as part of the Service (more than one response was permitted). Half of all respondents said that they were involved in one-to-one advice sessions with their Personal Adviser, 28% were involved with group discussions and 23% said one-to-one counselling. Very few were involved in leisure, artistic or vocational activities.

Figure 28 Content of the service

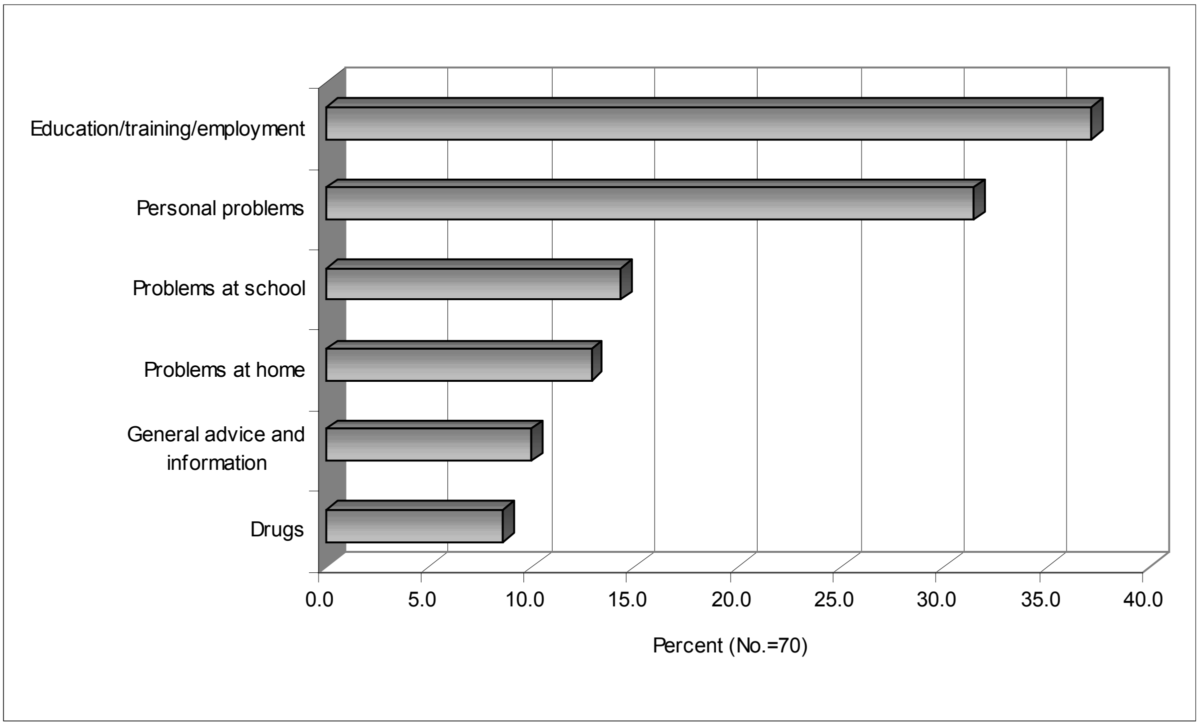


Source: Connexions Client Interviews, GHK

567. Clients had met with their Personal Adviser on average 12 times. This ranged from once to 160 times (in this latter case meetings took place every day). Meetings lasted, on average for 50 minutes, but this depended on the nature of the discussion. The vast majority (94%) of meetings mostly took place at the base location i.e. the school, One Stop Shop or YOI.

568. Clients were asked about the things they talked about. Figure 29 shows that the main topics were advice and information about education, training and employment (37%). The next most common issues (31%) were personal problems e.g. anger management, offending behaviour, pregnancy etc., followed by problems at school (14%) and problems at home (13%).

Figure 29 What clients talked about with their Personal Advisers



Source: Connexions Client Interviews, GHK

569. Asked were these sessions useful, the vast majority of clients (96%) said that they were. Only two clients said that they had not found the sessions useful and one replied 'don't know'.

570. Asked why they found these sessions useful, 80% mentioned that it was because they could discuss their, sometimes very personal, problems with someone who would listen to them and understands them:

> *"I am able to say things to the Personal Adviser that I can't discuss with anyone else."*
>
> *"He talks to you like he's your age, he understands me and is more positive than the Learning Mentor."*

571. The other main use was the quality of the advice and information clients received "I have been given information on the options available to me and I know there is support ready if I need to follow any of them up."

572. There was only one negative comment and that was 'It is good to talk to someone, they are friendly but nothing concrete comes out of them'.

573. Clients were also asked about their impressions of the location used to meet with their Personal Adviser. All but four respondents were positive about the location especially its convenient location, the resources there and the atmosphere. The critical comments were that one client wished the Personal Adviser would come and visit them sometime. The location should be more visible (in the school), that it was a temporary location and so would move in the near future. Another did not like going to the venue because *"…there are drug users who will talk to you and may hassle you."*

574. Very few clients (10%) had become involved in another activity as a result of meeting with their Personal Adviser. Three clients had become involved in other agencies e.g. a drop-in centre for young unemployed people, two were undertaking courses e.g. behaviour

management, and two were meeting with other support professionals e.g. youth workers. One client said:

> *"I see other agencies, sometimes in school time. I used to truant a lot, I was only there about 25% of the time. Now I am up to 80% and the only time I am off is when I am sick. I use some of the time that I used to be off truanting, going to see other people."*[19]

575. Over one-third of clients (37%) developed some sort of action or other development plans with their Personal Adviser. However, these tended to be very formal and could be no more than, as one respondent put it: *"1 – behave; 2 – work harder; 3 – be polite"*. In other cases it was a more involved plan leading to a goal e.g. one respondent wanted to be a mechanic and so the development plan was geared to progressing to this goal. One client said:

> *"They are sort of action points. I do not like Action Plans because I cannot stick to them. So we work on targets and ways of getting there but if I don't achieve them then we look at other ways of getting there and sometimes they work."*

576. All respondents (who had one) said that they were happy with this action or development plan. A large majority (85%) said they had been useful and the remainder said that they didn't know or it was too early to tell.

5.5 Client views of the service

577. Respondents were asked, in meetings with their Personal Adviser, whether they felt their views were seen as important, 97% said 'yes'. One client said *"He always asks us what we want to know, and then he sorts it out for us. Afterwards he asks us what we felt about the session"*. Only two respondents said 'no', and they felt that the meetings had been impersonal and routine.

Table 31 How clients rate aspects of the service

Please rate:	Very good				Very poor	Don't know	No. of respondents
	A	B	C	D	E		
The way you were told about the service	16.9	40.7	20.3	5.1	13.6	3.4	59
How easy it is for you to travel to the service	58.3	37.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	48
How easy is it for you to make use of the service	61.4	29.8	3.5	1.8	0.0	3.5	57
How useful you have found the information and support	66.7	27.3	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	66
How quickly you can get help from your advisor if you need them	65.2	22.7	4.5	1.5	0.0	6.1	66

Source: Connexions Client Interviews, GHK

[19] By 'other' people, the client meant getting assistance from other dedicated support workers.

578. Respondents were asked to rate various aspects of the Connexions Service, for example, the usefulness of information and advice, and access to it. Table 31 shows that on most aspects, clients thought the service was ‘very good’. More than 87% of respondents felt that travel to the service, ease of use, usefulness of information and support, and getting hold of a Personal Adviser when they needed one was ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

579. The only area of criticism was in the way people were first told about the service, just under one-in-five (19%) felt this aspect was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Some clients thought that they were in trouble and that was why they were being sent to see the Personal Adviser, others thought that the Personal Adviser was a Special Needs worker and this had negative connotations, and others just did not know why they had been referred.

580. Comments from clients about the service they received included:

> *“I didn't used to come in on Tuesdays cos. we have Maths, Science and German. But now we come in cos. of the session. “*
>
> “Although I already know a lot of the information, it's useful to go over stuff, and I did learn some new stuff, like I didn't know women could get a contraceptive injection.”
>
> *“She is always available on the mobile.”*
>
> *“The Personal Adviser will see clients outside of hours if required.”*

581. One client did raise the issue that the Personal Adviser at their school was not full-time, Personal Advisers only came in two days a week and so there was a problem with access outside of these days.

5.6 Impacts of the service

582. Respondents were asked whether the help they had received had had an impact on their interest in education, being more confident of getting a *good* job, and coping with other problems.

583. Figure 30 shows that 79% said that the help they had received had made them more interested in education, 13% said that it had not and 8% said they did not know or it was soon to tell:

> *“Not interested in school because I am too old but I am more interested in FE. If I had been younger* [when she received the advice] *then maybe in school.”*
> *“I wasn't aware of training before meeting the Personal Adviser, we both filled in the application forms together.”*

584. Over two-thirds (70%) said that the help they had received had made them feel more confident about getting a *good* job, 12% said it had not and 18% said they did not know or it was soon to tell:

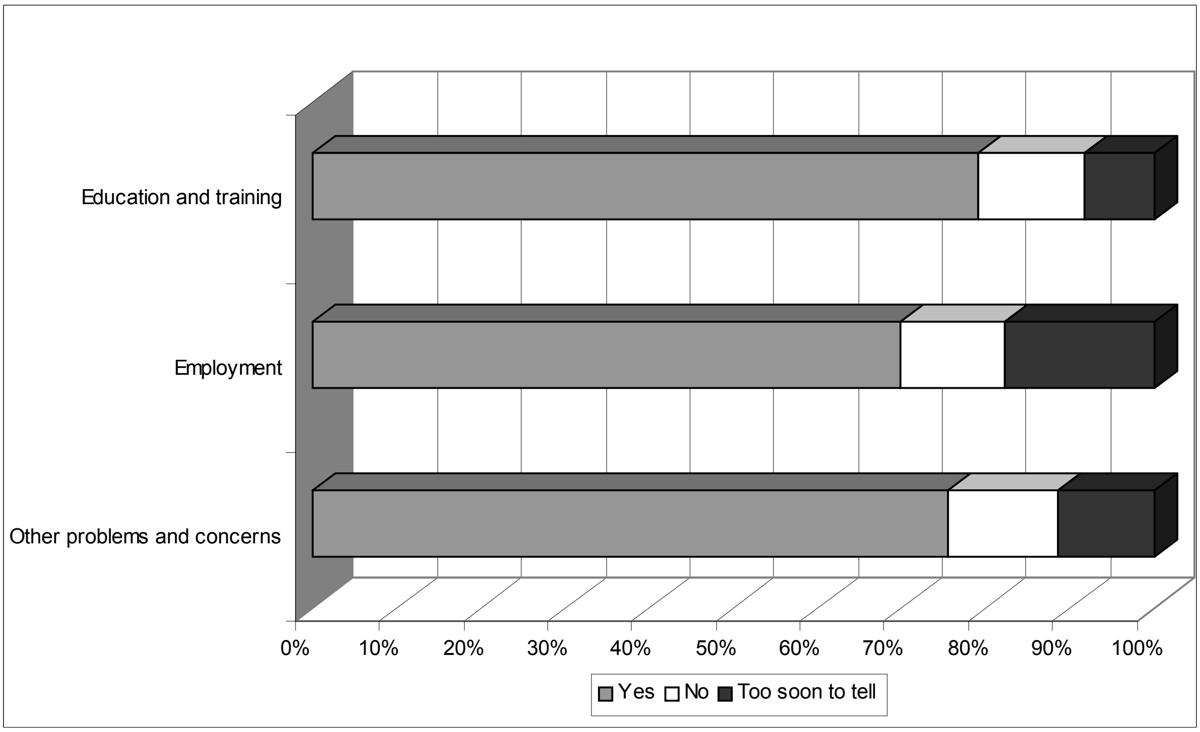
> *“I am more confident and believe that if I put my mind to it I can do it.”*
> *“You need good communication skills to become a hairdresser, which is what I want to be. My communication skills have got better through this project.'”*

585. One client, however, said that they had been put off what they wanted to do because the Personal Adviser thought he should be more ‘realistic’ in his aspirations.

586. Finally, three-quarters said that the help they had received had helped them cope with other problems, 13% said it had not and 12% said they did not know or it was soon to tell.

"I have been given information and support in finding new accommodation and different benefits I can apply for."
"I have a problem with Christmas because it is when my dad died and the Personal Adviser has helped me cope with this better."
"Our teachers and mates call us thick and stupid cos. we're the core skills group. The Personal Advisers are teaching us to ignore it, because if we retaliate it will get worse."

Figure 30 Impacts of the service



Source: Connexions Client Interviews, GHK

587. Clients were asked whether they did anything different as a result of the meetings. Only one in ten (11%) respondents said that they were not and one client said that it was too early to tell. But almost nine out of ten (87%) said that they were doing something different as a result of the Connexions Service.

588. This covered behavioural, education, training, employment and attendance impacts. For example:

"I used to get sent out of lessons a lot. But with the Personal Advisers I can say what's on my mind, get it off my chest, and feel calm for the next lesson".

"I've learned to say stuff instead of letting it all build up. At the beginning I would always think 'I don't want to do that', but now I think 'why not?'"

"I am more aware of options available and benefits available. I know the qualifications required for different jobs, we have discussed the possibility of re-sitting my GCSE's on a part time basis."

"I attend school a lot more (up from 25% to 80% attendance) I am a lot more positive and self satisfied and I have a meaning in my life. I am going on to college.

"Before meeting the Personal Adviser I only applied to one college, but after talking to her, I have now applied to another to keep my options open."

589. Many clients said that they felt 'happier' and 'more confident' and also that they were

‘better informed’. So across a wide range of issues, from careers advice to changes in attitudes and behaviour, clients were benefiting from the Connexions Service.

590. Clients said that the best thing about using the service was that it created opportunities for them, to simply discuss things with people they trust or practical opportunities in terms of employment and courses. Most (45%) said that there was now someone who they could talk to who they can trust and was positive about them and their future:

> *“The Personal Adviser is like a friend, she made it clear to me that I do not have to cope with everything on my own, that there is help if I need it. The Personal Adviser acts whereas others just talk.”*
>
> *“They give you more time to think. They talk to you and show you what to do, instead of just telling you and making you get on with it.”*

591. Other clients (24%) mentioned increased opportunities to learn and this had helped them practically:

> *“Helping me with the education was the best thing, she helped me choose the courses. I am now doing an IT course.”*
>
> *“They help with my writing, because I've only got a spelling and reading age of a five year old.”*
>
> *“She found me things to do, painting and decorating, and key skills courses. I do work and get out of myself and I like doing it anyway. Without it I would have stayed in the cell.”*

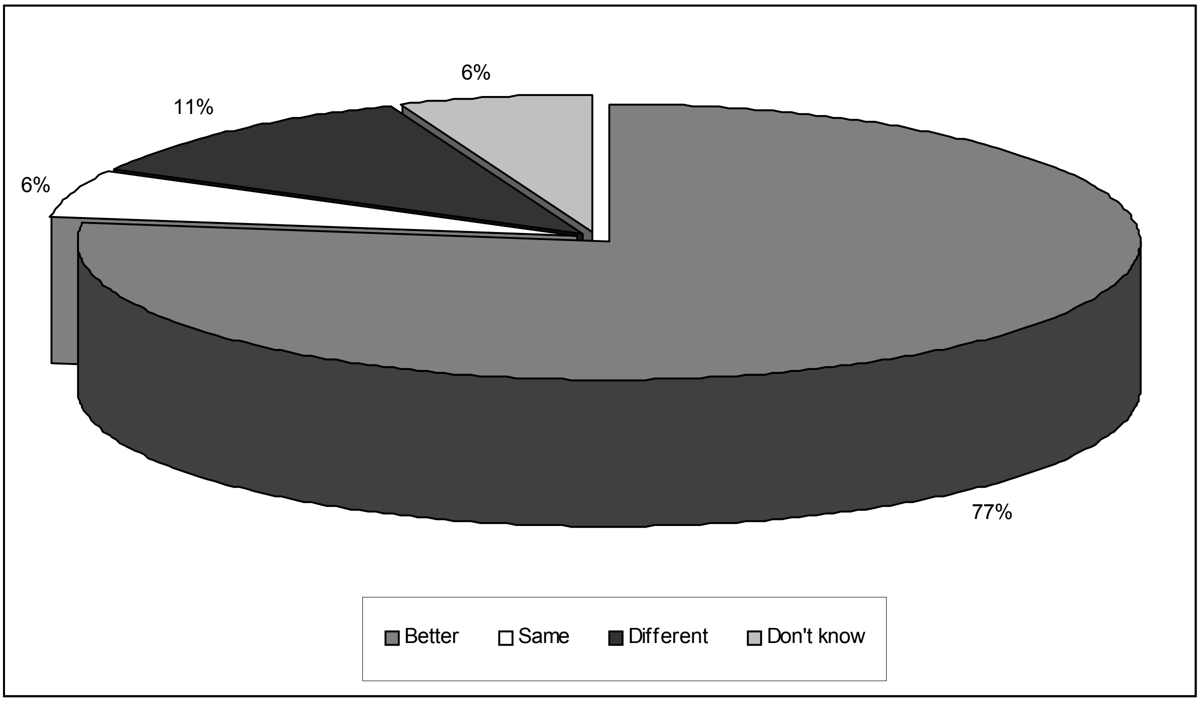
592. Others mentioned the fact that they had now more motivation and confidence to go on and do things like school work and general support e.g. in one case the Personal Adviser accompanied the client to a meeting at the Benefits Agency.

593. When asked if there was anything they would have liked to have been offered but weren’t; only five clients mentioned something. One client said travel expenses, one client mentioned money for food and another client said incentive vouchers for attending. Two clients said that they would like the Personal Adviser to profile their abilities and then link this to employment, training and education options.

594. Clients were asked if they planned to stay in touch with their Personal Adviser or the Connexions Service. Almost nine out-of-ten clients (89%) said that they planned to stay in touch with their Personal Adviser and 3% with the service. This shows that for clients the Personal Adviser *was* the most important element of the Connexions Service. For some clients this question was not appropriate because they were in a YOI. Some clients at school raised the issue of continuation of support from a Personal Adviser (they trust and have built up a relationship with) when they have left school at 16?

595. Figure 31 shows that compared to other sorts of advice and assistance clients had received in the past (from people like social workers, teachers, careers advisers etc.) the support young people were receiving at the moment was better (77%). One in ten (11%) said it was ‘different’, 6% said it was the same and 6% did not know. Only 35 people responded to this question mainly because many clients had not received support in the past and so had nothing to compare it to or because the support they were presently receiving was not a new service and was continuation of existing support.

Figure 31 Compared to other sorts of advice and assistance received in the past is your current support...



Source: Connexions Client Interviews, GHK

596. Those clients for whom their existing support was based on an existing service (28 respondents) were asked how it now compared under Connexions. Three-quarters had not noticed any changes and, of the remainder, half thought the service was the same and half thought it had got better. None felt it had deteriorated.

597. Finally, respondents were asked whether they would recommend this service for a friend to use. The vast majority (95%) said that they would, 4% said they did not know, and only one respondent would not recommend it to a friend.

5.7 Conclusion

- The clients interviewed were using a range of services from school based to more specific services targeted at hard-to-help young people. Most were in full-time education.
- Most clients were happy to be using the service and found the information they were first given about the service to be sufficient. Some clients initially felt they were being sent to the Personal Adviser because they had been badly behaved.
- For most clients, the Connexions Service involves general advice, information and support provided by a Personal Adviser on a one-to-one basis. The most common topics discussed with the Personal Adviser were education, training and employment, followed by personal problems e.g. anger management, offending behaviour, and pregnancy.
- The large majority of clients felt that the Personal Adviser was someone who listens to their problems and understands them.

- The location of the service was not a problem.
- On a range of measures, clients were very happy with the Connexions Service (see below).

5.8 Impacts of the Connexions Service

598. On a wide range of measures the Connexions Service was rated a success by its clients:

- 96% said that they found their sessions with the Personal Adviser were useful;
- Just under nine-out-of-ten clients rate access to the service, ease of use, usefulness of the information and support and getting hold of the Personal Adviser when they wanted to was ‘good’ or ‘very good’;
- 79% of clients said that they were now more interested in education and training as a result of the service;
- 70% said they felt more confident about getting a ‘good’ job;
- 75% said it had helped them cope with other problems;
- 87% now did something different as a result including improved attendance and participation, and feeling more motivated and confident;
- 89% of clients would like to stay in touch with their Personal Adviser, and;
- 77% said it was better than the support they had received in the past.

6 Involving Young People

6.1 Introduction

599. This section reports on the work of Pilots in involving young people in the design and delivery of the Connexions Service and in specific services, a key aim of the Connexions Service. It is based on interviews with lead and other key partners, monthly reports, and visits to workshops and conferences. It provides an overview of activities and issues within the Pilots.

6.2 Priority given to involving young people

600. Involving young people in the strategic direction, design and delivery of the Connexions Service was being undertaken in each pilot area. It was one of the principles underpinning the Connexions Service, specified in the Prospectus, that it should be *"Taking account of the views of young people – individually and collectively, as the new service is developed and as it is operated locally"*.

601. The Prospectus further states that local Connexions Partnerships:

> *"…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."*

602. Thus the involvement of young people in the Connexions Service should be intrinsic, inclusive and continuous.

603. These were sentiments with which most Pilots would agree. Eleven Pilots said that the involvement of young people in their Pilot was a strategic objective. Some Pilots (e.g. Greater Merseyside) were not involving young people, because of the nature of their pilot service. However, young people were still asked their opinion.

604. There was little or no opposition among Pilots to the concept of involving young people in the design and delivery of their services (many were already doing this in Careers and Youth Services etc). But there was disagreement about who should be involved, through what mechanisms, when and at what levels.

605. Table 32, based on responses from 12 Pilots, shows how high (a rank of 5) or low (a rank of 1) a priority Pilot coordinators and other key partners gave to the involvement of young people across various aspects of the Connexions Service, from strategic management to staff training. The lowest priorities were for involving young people in strategic management and staff training. On both these aspects only two Pilots ranked it as a 4 or a 5.

606. Much greater priority was given to involving young people in service delivery, service design, monitoring and evaluation, and service planning. On each of these aspects at least nine Pilots ranked it as a 4 or a 5.

607. On staff recruitment there was a divergence of opinion. While six Pilots scored young people's involvement as a high priority, six scored it at less than 4.

Table 32 Priorities for the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of aspects of the Connexions Service

No. of Pilots=12	No. of Pilots	Low priority 1	2	3	4	High priority 5
Strategic management	12	3	3	4	1	1
Service planning	12	0	0	3	4	5
Service design	12	0	0	2	2	8
Service delivery	12	0	0	1	2	9
Monitoring and evaluation	12	0	0	2	3	7
Staff recruitment	12	2	2	2	0	6
Staff training	9	2	2	3	0	2

Source: Interviews with Pilot coordinators and other key partners

608. While all respondents agreed with involving young people per se, most qualified that commitment:

> *"It is very important that young people get involved in evaluating what is there, but I am not sure if they are able to construct a strategic service. I am not being patronising here, but most of the young people are not equipped to do that. We have to ask young people the right questions… In terms of involving young people in the delivery of the services, it depends on the specific service, peer mentoring is one example."*

> *"It has to be a good thing. A service is better if it is delivering what those on the receiving end want. There needs to a balance between consulting and involving because there are resource issues at stake. My instinct is that it is good to involve."*

> *"As a previous head teacher, I know that young people can and want to take on more responsibility than we sometimes think. It can be a good learning experience for them. The process has to be, of course, well managed."*

609. Thus while there was agreement in principle, the involvement of young people needs to be well managed, supported, resourced, meaningful and not tokenistic.

610. Table 33 shows the intensity of involvement of young people in the design and delivery of the Connexions Service. Not all respondents replied to this question, either because they had not so far involved young people in their Pilot or because they could not give a response.

611. The involvement of young people has been most intense in service design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation, staff recruitment and service planning. It has been less so in strategic management and staff training. Nevertheless, three Pilots said that there was or will be higher intensity of involvement in strategic management issues. Three Pilots have involved young people on Partnership Boards or LMCs. But one Pilot said that young people had withdrawn as they wanted to focus on developing a kitemark quality standard for

services to young people.

Table 33 Intensity of involvement of young people in the design and delivery of aspects of the Connexions Service

No. of Pilots=8	No. of Pilots	Low priority				High priority
		1	2	3	4	5
Strategic management	5	1	1	0	2	1
Service planning	4	0	0	0	3	1
Service design	8	0	0	0	2	6
Service delivery	7	0	0	1	1	5
Monitoring and evaluation	4	0	0	0	1	3
Staff recruitment	7	2	0	1	0	4
Staff training	4	1	3	0	0	0

Source: Interviews with Pilot coordinators and other key partners

612. The involvement of young people in the design and delivery of support services is not a new concept. Pilots were thus able to build on a wide range of existing initiatives:

- Young People's Council, organised by the Careers Service to give young people formal representation in the careers advice process. Investing in Children, led by the VCS, involved consultation with young people, specifically with SEN and disadvantaged children.
- Local youth forums/councils that fed into a citywide youth forum. Block grant committees that offered the chance for young people to bid for small grants.
- Youth Parliaments.
- The use of Viewpoint software by the Youth Service to evaluate their services.
- Mechanisms for care leavers to inform service providers.
- Drop-in centres in isolated rural communities, used for consultation.
- An annual youth debate organised at the chamber in the council, to discuss issues considered important by young people. A range of young people were involved in this event.
- A Young People's Day and a youth conference.
- A Youth Partnership that works for and with young person. It has been used as a forum for all strategic discussions with young people.
- A network of youth councils across the county.
- Schools Cabinet whereby a group of young people were consulted in the council's decision-making process.
- Consultation with young people as part of the New Deal for Communities and Action for Jobs programmes.
- Schools Parliament, and a Youth Service Question Time based on the television programme.

- Voluntary agency peer-worker programmes. Projects that encourage young people to give presentations and role-plays to agencies, and write articles about issues that affect them.
- Youth forums and youth consultative groups, supported by a youth development worker who was developing both groups.
- Youth councils linked to the town council in one area. Also a youth information project run by young people, which has been used to research young people's views on Connexions.
- Existing consultation mechanisms in place as a result of the New Start programme (for pre-16 young people) and a similar TEC-funded programme (for post-16 young people).
- Annual Youth Survey, which has been used to inform the Youth Service as well as having youth councils and school councils.
- Discrete research projects into specific issues, e.g. services for care leavers, which have involved young people as peer researchers and in discussions about the conclusions.
- Social Services Youth Forum and youth action groups.
- Development of community forums, in which young people will be involved in a sub-forum.

613. One Pilot area had already developed an Investors in Young People (IiYP) standard. The Youth Service working within the Connexions Pilot undertook this. The Pilot was insisting that all Connexions services should attain IiYP status (see good practice example below). The principles of IiYP are that services should be anti-oppressive, operate in 'young person friendly' environments, and be accessible and transparent to young people. Young people are formally involved in the assessment process and have been trained in auditing and as mystery shoppers. The IiYP will be used as a quality standard for Connexions Services.

614. In another Pilot, six youth participation workers had helped to ensure that existing school, college and community-based youth participation projects had been incorporated into Connexions. Through these networks, it was hoped that young people would play an active role in the LMCs and business planning process. The youth participation workers had been allocated one day a week to set up panels (each with five young people on it) as a means of consultation.

615. Another pilot area used the existing Youth Information Project to carry out research with over 300 young people. They also asked professionals from the Youth Support Service to attend a meeting and bring along a young person they know or work with. This resulted in the creation of a focus group.

616. Therefore, there has been much activity in most areas that Connexions could build on. Four Pilots began the process of involving young people by auditing the amount of activity that already existed, either through the mapping exercise or as a specific exercise.

617. However, as one respondent said "…though young people have been consulted on various aspects of e.g. Youth Services in the past, there is nothing on the same scale as Connexions." In most Pilot areas, Connexions was giving a greater impetus to the involvement of young people.

6.3 Methods used

618. A variety of methods were used to elicit the views of young people and formally involve them in decision-making structures. Figure 32 shows the ways in which the Pilots had involved young people in the design and delivery of services; it is based on responses

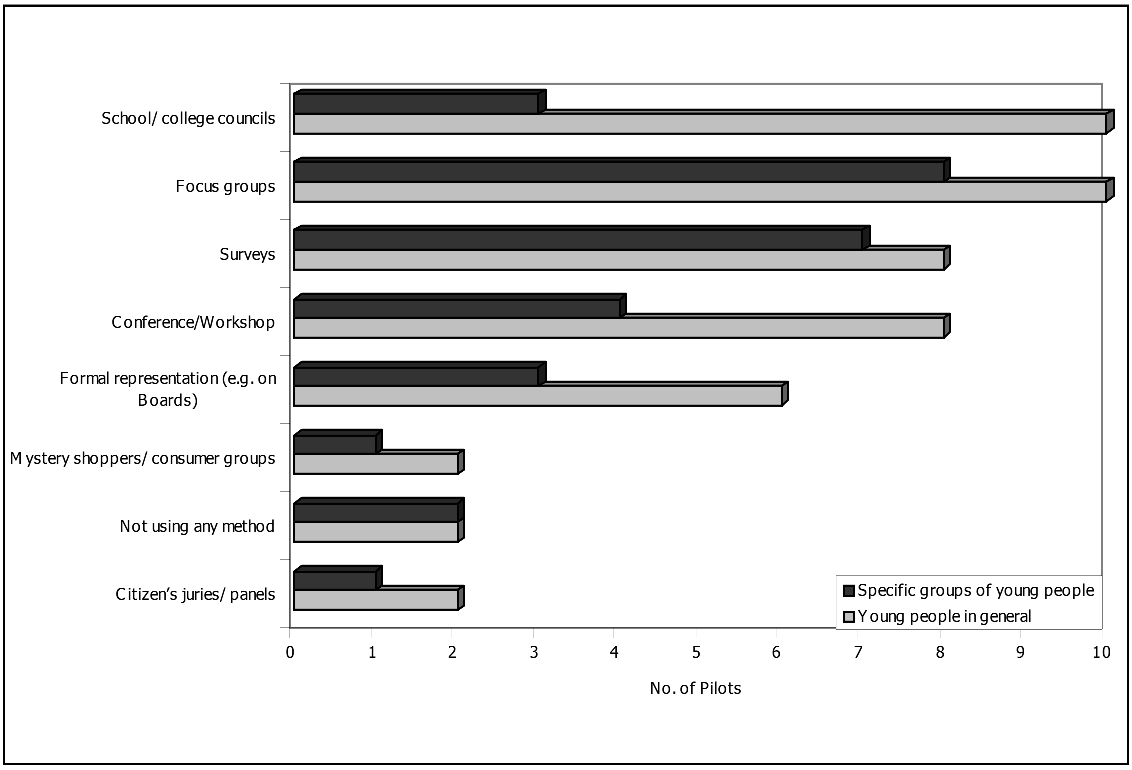
from 12 Pilots.

619. School/college councils and focus groups were the most commonly used methods for capturing the views of young people in general (10 Pilots). Eight Pilots used surveys and conferences/workshops.

620. For specific groups of young people (e.g. care leavers, minority ethnic young people), focus groups and surveys were the most commonly used methods.

621. Six Pilots said that young people were formally represented on boards (including LMCs and task/strand groups), while three had formal representation from specific sub-groups of young people.

Figure 32 Involvement of young people in the Connexions Service



Source: March's monthly reports, GHK

622. Table 34 shows the methods used to elicit the views of young people on various aspects of the Connexions Service. As it is based on coordinator and partner interviews, the totals may not tally with Figure 32, which is based on the monthly reports.

Table 34 Methods used to elicit the views of young people on various aspects of the Connexions Service

No. of Pilots=11	Formal representation	Focus groups	Surveys	Conference/workshop	School/ college councils	Mystery shoppers/ consumer groups	Citizen's juries/ panels	Other
Strategic management	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	2
Service planning	5	3	3	2	4	0	2	3
Service design	5	4	6	3	6	0	2	5
Service delivery	3	6	7	4	7	0	1	4
Monitoring and evaluation	3	2	1	1	2	0	0	2
Staff recruitment	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	2
Staff training	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Source: Interviews with Pilot coordinators and other key partners

623. Table 34 shows that a wide variety of methods have been used to elicit the views of young people about service planning, design and delivery. Surveys, school/college councils and focus groups were the main methods used. Input from formal representation was most frequently through strand or task groups, which also involved a range of support service managers and professionals.

624. 'Other' activities included the use of peer researchers, and programmes that encouraged young people to express their views about Connexions services through videos, photographs and writing articles.

625. No Pilot used mystery shoppers or consumer groups. However, Pilots did use peer researchers openly to assess service provision.

626. Pilot coordinators and key partners were asked to give their views on the advantages and disadvantages of these particular mechanisms. Table 35 shows the advantages and disadvantages of using different methods of involving young people.

Table 35 Advantages and disadvantages of different ways of involving young people

Formal representation	
Advantages:	**Disadvantages:**
– young people are involved centrally in decision-making; – it is a learning experience for board members and helps their professional development; – it can be linked to the citizen curriculum; – it raises the esteem of the representatives and this can raise achievement.	– more difficult with hard-to-help young people; – opposed by some partners – young people will be overawed; – 'tokenism'; – involves time and commitment; – has to respect equal opportunities policies and practices; – requires additional support structures and training.
Focus groups	
Advantages:	**Disadvantages:**
– provoke detailed discussion; – useful with hard-to-help young people; – are good at focusing on particular issues, e.g. transport for teenage mothers; – can develop over time; – personal contact enables the facilitator to probe, develop and clarify responses; – are informal and can be undertaken in a variety of locations convenient to the young people.	– may work best with articulate groups of young people with good interpersonal skills; – can be dominated by one or two young people; – only provide a 'snap-shot' if not part of a continuous process; – can take time to organise; – may not be able to explore very personal issues, e.g. sexual health; – can be 'tokenistic'; – dependent on the skills of the facilitator; – involve commitment of young people's time.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Surveys</th></tr>
<tr><th>Advantages:</th><th>Disadvantages:</th></tr>
<tr><td>– cover a large number of young people;
– cover a wide range of issues;
– can ensure good representation of different types of young people;
– if self-completed, can explore personal issues;
– useful with hard-to-help young people;
– can use ICTs, so beneficial in isolated areas; also do not necessarily have to be word-based, can use audiovisual formats to ask questions and get responses;
– useful starting point;
– can achieve representative sample of views;
– cheap and quick.</td><td>– provide only a snap-shot;
– achieving representative views is dependent on the structure of the sample;
– issues of data protection if responses put on computer;
– need to address literacy and language issues;
– questionnaires cannot be too long;
– not flexible if other important issues arise;
– difficult to get good qualitative information;
– are not interactive, so cannot develop issues.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Conferences/workshops</th></tr>
<tr><th>Advantages:</th><th>Disadvantages:</th></tr>
<tr><td>– provoke detailed discussion;
– useful forum to discuss the outcomes of other methods, e.g. surveys;
– useful with hard-to-help young people;
– views can be challenged and developed;
– can target specific aspects and issues;
– can involve a wide range of young people in a short period of time;
– flexible, because can change the focus of discussion;
– can develop issues over time;
– can focus on specific issues.</td><td>– more difficult with hard-to-help young people;
– small groups can disrupt them;
– need to arrange them on young people’s own ground;
– practical issues in arranging venues;
– tokenism, need to ensure representative involvement;
– require effective organisation and facilitation;
– can be boring;
– some young people reticent about speaking in groups;
– cannot discuss personal issues;
– involve commitment of young people’s time.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Mystery shoppers/consumer groups</th></tr>
<tr><th>Advantages:</th><th>Disadvantages:</th></tr>
<tr><td>– immediate and direct feedback on service quality;
– focused on service delivery;
– can use with hard-to-help young people;
– give a young person’s perspective.</td><td>– added burden on hard-pressed services;
– subjectivity;
– require training and support.</td></tr>
</table>

School/college/youth councils	
Advantages:	**Disadvantages:**
– provoke detailed discussion; – can feed directly into the school/college-based Connexions Service; – can involve a wide range of young people; – may already be established.	– more difficult with hard-to-help young people; – some participants may defer to peers; – can be dominated by a couple of people; – may not be representative; – do not involve non-school/college attenders; – not necessarily representative of all young people; – may not exist in all areas; – if they already exist, may have to change their objectives.
Citizens juries/panels	
Advantages:	**Disadvantages:**
– established structures and support may already be in place; – can attract wide representation; – can focus on particular issues.	– require effective support from professionals; – take time to establish.
Other methods, e.g. making videos	
Advantages:	**Disadvantages:**
– can be undertaken on the young people's terms; – are fun; – good with hard-to-help young people; – can explore personal issues; – do not have to be word-based; – flexible in terms of locations and issues addressed.	– require effective support from professionals; – need training and support, e.g. in how to use a software package or video camera; – some young people may not like the method, e.g. recorded discussions; – take time to establish.

627. Thus the main issues involve the representativeness of various mechanisms; providing adequate support; ensuring the validity, reliability and inclusivity of the methods; and including mechanisms that can identify and develop views over time.

628. Respondents also made some general points. Firstly, if young people are involved, the type of young person and the effectiveness and method of involvement should be evaluated over time. Also, including some young people may exclude others. Secondly, young people should be involved in discussing and developing the methods of their involvement; for example, mystery shoppers should not be excluded if service managers do not want them but clients do.

629. There were advantages and disadvantages to all of the above methods. For example, while formal representation puts young people at the heart of decision-making, it may not give a true representation of young people. Similarly, surveys can be less costly, speedy and representative ways of capturing views, but they only provide a snapshot.

630. The Pilots were developing a variety of ways to overcome some of these disadvantages:

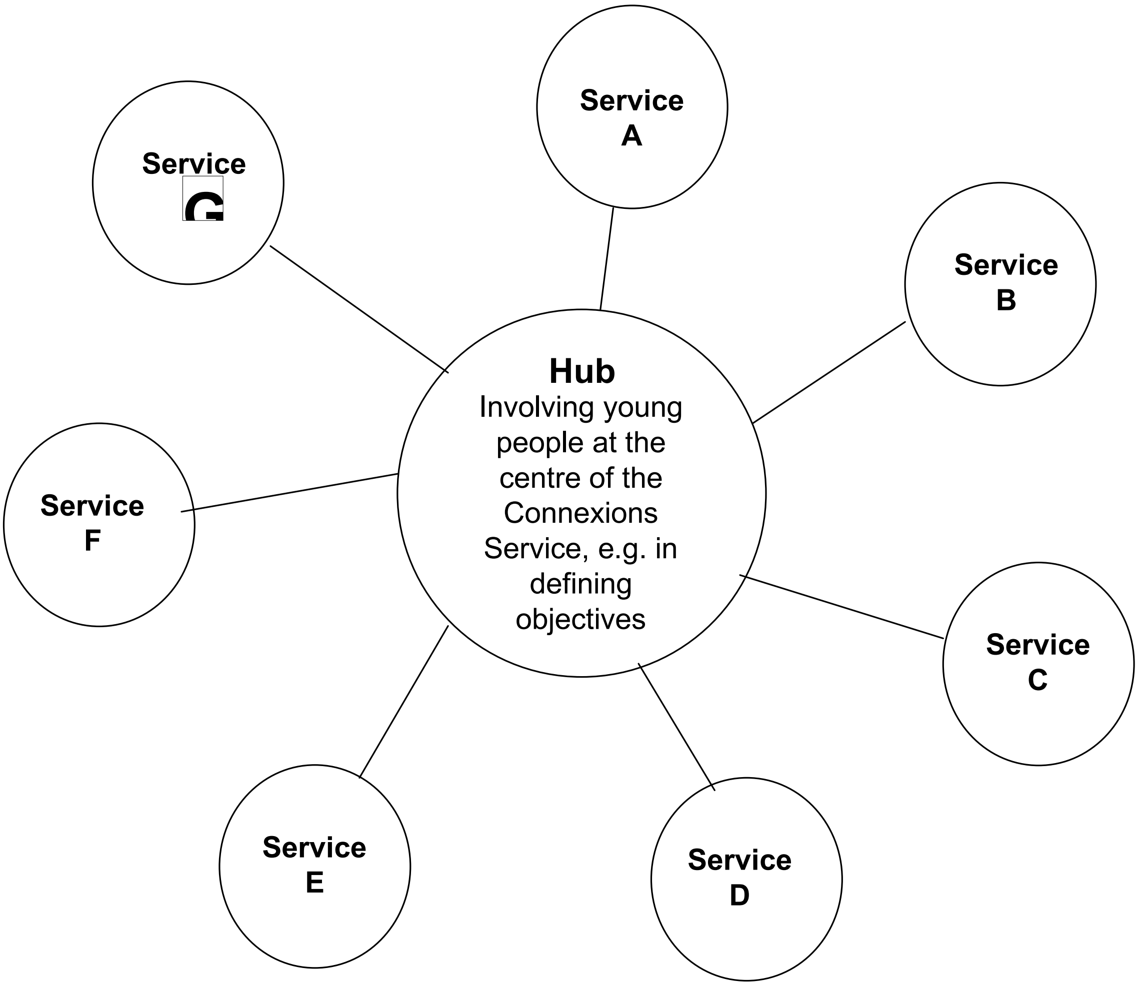
- **Training and support for young people** – Pilots were training young people to become involved. Some Pilots have employed/involved youth workers to support the participation of young people; others were employing young people to represent the client group, thus providing incentives for attendance.
- **Using more than one method** – one Pilot surveyed 4,000 young people and then used focus groups to develop the issues that emerged.
- **Involving hard-to-help young people** – using youth workers to encourage their participation, providing incentives for participation, using 'acceptable' agencies (e.g. the VCS).
- **Using ICTs** – useful with young people with literacy problems, and in canvassing the views of young people in isolated areas.
- **Other** – ensuring that the language and concepts used are understandable. Adults in Connexions need to be trained to understand what the involvement with young people implies and that young people sometimes ask difficult questions.

631. One Pilot has adopted a 'hub and spoke' model for involving young people in the design and delivery of services. Figure 33 shows that there were two basic levels of involvement. At the centre or hub, young people are concerned with the overall nature of the Service – e.g. helping to define objectives, quality standards, recruitment procedures, data-sharing protocols and so forth. This may be via their involvement on strategic boards or LMCs, on shadow forums or through existing institutions such as Youth Parliaments. Young people's analysis may also be based on methods such as focus-group meetings and surveys of young people.

632. Outside the hub, there is further consultation on particular services. For example, young people would be involved in informing the design and delivery of particular Connexions services e.g. to BME young people. Young people may sit on task or strand management groups or shadow forums, participate in focus groups and develop feedback mechanisms to Personal Advisers.

633. This model is still in its development stage, and issues about how involvement at the spokes relate to involvement at the hub were still being worked through.

Figure 33 Hub and spoke model for involving young people



Source: South Yorkshire Connexions

634. Examples of specific methods of involvement devised by Pilots are given in Table 36.

Table 36 Specific methods of involving young people

➢ Survey of 4,000 young people and then a series of focus groups to discuss the issues arising. ➢ Focus groups with young people excluded from school, young people with learning difficulties, and teenage mothers. ➢ Young people's conferences. ➢ One Pilot has a Youth Forum that links in with the LMC. ➢ Election of young people on to service task groups. ➢ Face-to-face interviews with young offenders in a YOI. ➢ Focus groups held with four young carers, six detached young people, 11 living in a rural area, 35 year-10 pupils, and 55 in a Youth Parliament. Structured interviews with five young offenders. Surveys of six excluded pupils, 11 living in a rural area, 35 year-10 pupils, and 55 in a Youth Parliament. ➢ Using foyers, compact clubs and youth councils. Face-to-face interviews with hard-to-help young people and a youth survey. ➢ Developing a forum for young people that is led by young people, involves 20 young people and meets monthly. ➢ Getting young people to develop a questionnaire to be used to survey Personal Advisers.

- Involvement in the recruitment of Personal Advisers.
- Project proposals which have been driven by the views of young people, e.g. the Connexions Mobile Unit proposal – an innovative converted bus which aims to reach those young people who would not normally access services, and those in rural areas.
- Developing models of the Connexions Service and roles of Personal Advisers, and then getting responses from young people.
- Involving young people in the development of client consent forms.
- Appointing dedicated project workers to develop the involving young person strand.
- Mapping of existing initiatives.
- Dedicating £10,000 in each LMC area to involving young people.
- Developing an interactive web site specifically aimed at young people.
- Using the Viewpoint software package, which is specifically designed to elicit the views of young people.
- Developing self-help packages to canvass the views of young people, including ICTs that do not require literacy skills for their use.
- Dedicated research projects focusing on particular groups of young people and including peer researchers; others include reports written by young people.
- Recruiting an arts and media organisation to work with a group of young people, to lead to the production of a CD-ROM for a launch and awareness-raising event.
- Production of a video that shows the work of Personal Advisers in school.

6.4 Incentives and support for involving young people

635. Seven Pilots said that they provided specific incentives to facilitate the involvement of young people. Table 37 shows the range of incentives, from reimbursing travel expenses to paying for people's time. This table is based on direct quotes from the Pilots. It is important to realise that some young people may have to stop work to be involved, for instance in workshops and conferences. Not all incentives were cash based. Residential events, days out, meals and interesting activities were all involved.

636. One Pilot was specifically not paying cash incentives because "…it was felt this could be construed by the young person or others as a bribe. It also goes against the Youth Service principles of voluntary participation."

Table 37 Examples of incentives for involvement

- Incentives differ by LMC and depend on what activities young people are involved in. For example, payment in some cases only extends to expenses, but sometimes includes vouchers. One LMC pays £10 plus expenses and an hourly rate is paid for residential courses.
- Travel expenses to meetings, £10 cash for participating in the recruitment process, and lunch.
- Vouchers have been provided for some young people who have been involved.
- Instead of giving individual incentives or rewards for participation, the Pilot did things for participants like: subsidising a youth group's next awayday activity; taking a group to McDonalds for the consultation exercise; and reimbursing a young woman's wages for her attendance at a Saturday workshop instead of her Saturday job.
- Residential events for young people. Those who were involved in the Personal Adviser selection panel were paid cash.
- Interesting activities to provide an inducement to young people: e.g. video project, photo project, web site challenge, and radio project.
- Young people developing a presentation on Connexions meet once a week and get a

meal paid for by Connexions. The activity also counts for community voluntary service.

637. Table 38 shows that a range of training and support was also available and is based on direct quotes from the Pilots. Seven Pilots mentioned this. Most of these Pilots have employed (or used existing) youth support workers to assist them in giving presentations, running workshops, creating video diaries and so forth. There has also been a range of informal and formal training sessions.

Table 38 Training and support measures for the involvement of young people

- Youth participation workers offer training on a one-to-one basis. Briefings are also offered. The intensity of support depends on the type of meetings that young people are attending.
- Introductory sessions are held on recruitment and selection, using a version of the Youth Service training (e.g. on equal opportunities). In addition, there is general personal development training (e.g. understanding problem-solving).
- An induction for the young people to be involved in the strategic partnership.
- Young people gave a presentation on their needs and impressions of delivery; support was provided for them.
- Two training sessions were run for the Youth Council group to prepare them for facilitating a peer workshop. These were ineffective because far more training sessions were required to prepare them properly for the role.
- Young people have received training in all aspects where they have been involved.
- Youth workers have facilitated the development of a presentation by and for young people.
- Young people have received video training to go out and ask other young people about Connexions. A youth worker also supports them.
- Young people were supported by IBM workers while developing the web site.

6.5 Added value and further development

638. Pilot coordinators and other key partners were asked what they felt was the added value of involving young people. It is clear that young people have been influential across a wide range of areas within the Connexions Service. Young people have:

- been involved in defining the role of the Personal Adviser;
- part-written the Personal Adviser's job description;
- informed the recruitment process;
- developed the type of guidance and information that Personal Advisers provide;
- informed the location of support services;
- assisted in the interior design of service bases;
- been involved in the planning of services for young people;
- informed marketing materials;
- highlighted issues not previously considered by service managers and workers, e.g. opening times;
- clarified ideas and options that had been identified;
- challenged ways of thinking; and
- developed 'young person friendly' products and services.

639. Pilots were keen to develop the involvement of young people still further, as in the following examples:

- It has been recommended that the thematic group looking at involving young people should stay in place during Phase 1 (and beyond). It was crucial to the success of Connexions in so many ways. At the same time, each LMC will have increased responsibility for involving young people, and the thematic group will continue to act in an advisory capacity to ensure good practice and consistency.
- Developing area coordinators/Connexions neighbourhood groups and a democracy project.
- Progressing the concept of youth councils.
- Identifying where to build further links with young people.
- Unpacking what is required at a strategic level regarding the role of involving young people.
- Mapping the structure of the local groups.
- Supporting young people above and beyond Connexions; training young people to engage effectively to go beyond consultation towards participation.
- Holding a youth conference to focus on how Connexions should work in our area.
- Developing a web site for young people. It will be a means to promote Connexions and consult with young people. We chose this option because it is a rural area.
- Building up young people's confidence and esteem so that they can be involved in the next stages of consultation to discuss how services might be tailored to meet the needs of young people generally. Mechanisms for involving young people were being built slowly so that young people can participate effectively, while ensuring that sufficient support is available to them during this process.
- Developing training in group-work skills for Personal Advisers.
- Testing out the use of Viewpoint on laptop computers, so that young people can be consulted in their own environments.
- Involving young people in developing the Young Person's Charter for the Connexions Partnership.
- The youth development worker will play a lead role in developing and coordinating structures for young people's consultation and involvement.

640. From the above it can be seen that the involvement of young people was a dynamic part of the Connexions Service in many areas, and central to its success.

6.6 Involving young people case study: Oldham

641. Partners in Oldham, particularly the Youth Service, had already begun to explore and develop meaningful ways of involving young people in the design and delivery of youth support services. This is taken from the local evaluator's report for Oldham.

6.6.1 Introduction

642. The Youth Service believed that they had a substantial contribution to make in this area. To some extent this belief was based on their general professional experience, but in particular they believed that Dream (a Youth Service-sponsored organisation) would provide a very effective channel for securing the views of young people. Dream members were consulted extensively during the Pilot, and two Dream members occupied positions on the Connexions Steering Group.

643. It was generally acknowledged that the Careers Service and the Youth Service had differing approaches to working with young people, with the Youth Service having more experience of directly involving young people in the development of services and provision.

The Careers Service appeared happy for the Youth Service to take the lead on this matter, although some in the Careers Service expressed concerns about the feasibility of involving young people in the recruitment of trainee Personal Advisers.

644. Young people were able to make a contribution to many aspects of the Connexions Pilot. They participated in the recruitment of trainee Personal Advisers, but were also involved in the development of the One-Stop Shop, Beacon Centres and a promotional video.

645. Involving young people was a new departure for some in the Careers Service, and it was evident that they did not necessarily share the same definition of 'involvement' as some in the Youth Service. In many respects, this disagreement over definition was also apparent among young people themselves. For example, those who became involved through the Youth Service appeared to have higher expectations of having their ideas implemented than those who were involved through the Careers Service. Some young people felt disappointed that their ideas for the One-Stop Shop were not taken up and implemented; others felt that it had been worthwhile just to have the opportunity to express their views and work with the designers.

646. In spite of the differing views over definitions, it was generally felt that young people had made an important contribution to the development of the Connexions Pilot. The Careers Service is now more aware of the benefits of involving young people, and acknowledges the importance of the Youth Service in this respect. Several in the Youth Service draw satisfaction from this development, but some have a sense of frustration because the involvement of young people has not been as extensive as they would have liked.

6.6.2 Achievements

Involving young people in the development of Connexions

647. This was a distinctive feature of the Connexions Pilot, and was clearly an area where the Youth Service could make an important contribution. Two young people from Dream were appointed to the Steering Group, and representatives drawn from local schools and Dream were involved in the recruitment of the trainee Personal Advisers and in the development of such initiatives as the One-Stop Shop, Beacon Centres and the promotional video.

648. Even though the Careers Service had a history of consulting with young people through focus groups and other evaluative methods, the deeper involvement of young people during the Connexions Pilot was a new departure for them. Most thought it was a worthwhile activity and were grateful to be able to draw on the experience of the Youth Service. Some concerns were expressed, however, over exactly how far young people's influence should stretch; this is clearly an area that requires further discussion. In particular, it is essential for young people to be clear about the boundaries and possibilities of their influence. For example, there was some variation in how young people envisaged the extent of their contribution. Data provided elsewhere in this [i.e. the local evaluator's] report shows that young people's satisfaction with the experience of being involved appeared to be related to how they had perceived their role.

Clarifying the extent to which young people can be involved

649. This important element of the Connexions strategy was widely supported, but it was clear that it had been interpreted differently by people in the Youth and Careers Services. Furthermore, the main message gained from interviewing a range of young people involved in this process was that their experience varied according to their initial perceptions of what

would be involved and the extent to which their views were likely to be implemented. For example, members of the Dream organisation, who had considerable experience of management by young people, assumed that they would have had more influence over final decisions than they believed they actually did. On the one hand, they felt that their views had been listened to, but on the other hand they were disappointed that some of their suggestions were not put into practice.

650. In contrast to this, students drawn from schools found the involvement process more satisfying. Their main experience had been one of consultation rather than decision-making, and they thought their contribution to such developments as the One-Stop Shop was very productive. They entered into the process assuming that their views would have to be balanced against a set of limitations and constraints.

651. The involvement of young people was one of the central themes of the Oldham Pilot, and a wide range of interviewees regarded it as a success. However, different interpretations of what involvement actually meant in practice were a source of some tension. This issue would certainly benefit from further discussion and consideration.

Linking new approaches to existing structures and practices

652. This was a lesson learned mainly by those in the Careers Service. To an extent, the national launch of Connexions and the associated publicity had concerned some careers advisers, who felt that their professional expertise had not been sufficiently acknowledged and considered. An extreme version of this was the concern expressed by some that careers advisers would be required to ‘retrain’ as Personal Advisers and take on a welfare role working mainly with disadvantaged young people.

653. However, during the course of the Pilot, two developments helped to restore some calm among previously concerned Careers Service staff. The first was the obvious need for a variety of Personal Advisers to take on the wide-ranging work of a Connexions Service. Consequently, it was likely that some Personal Advisers would have job descriptions that would be very close to that of careers advisers. Secondly, after a time it was more fully appreciated that some of the central elements of the Connexions Service were already under development in Oldham Careers Service. The guidance community is a good example. As one careers adviser explained: *“Many of the ideas associated with Connexions have been developing in the Careers Service for some time”.*

654. One benefit of the Pilot was that it enabled some in the Careers Service to see more clearly the links between the new strategy and existing structures and practices.

655. Source: ‘Involving Young People’, local evaluator’s report for Oldham Connexions, Paul Davies, University of Lancaster.

656. There are six good-practice pointers for involving young people in the design and delivery of the Connexions Service, as shown in Table 39.

Table 39 Pilot’s Good practice pointers concerning the involvement of young people

- Involve young people in designing the methods for their participation, e.g. designing questionnaires and web sites, running focus groups and workshops themselves.
- Involvement must be meaningful – the biggest incentive is worthwhile involvement.
- Recognise and build on existing methods.
- Provide adequate training and support.
- Use young people to assess the quality standards of services.
- Consulting with young people can provide positive feedback and make service managers and deliverers feel that their work is valued.

657. Pilots raised a series of issues concerning the involvement of young people, as shown in Table 40.

Table 40 Pilot's key issues concerning the involvement of young people

- Connexions should identify and respect existing consultation mechanisms and build on these rather than developing new ones.
- Young people should not be pressured into becoming involved.
- Should young people be paid for their involvement? If 'yes', at what point and how much?
- There is a need to clarify issues before you involve young people. For example, how can you ask young people about the role of a Personal Adviser if you do not know yourself?
- There is a need to be clear about the parameters of young people's involvement. If young people are consulted, then consultation needs to be influential, otherwise it is tokenistic.
- Involvement may mean a serious commitment of time.
- It is necessary to work at the pace of young people.
- Full representation needs to be ensured.
- Mystery shoppers will be going into agencies that are already under-resourced and under pressure.
- It is necessary to choose appropriate locations.
- Client-friendly language and images should be used.
- Young people's involvement needs to be creative and interesting.

658. These issues cover a range of important concerns that need to be addressed if young people are to have effective, full and representative involvement.

6.7 Conclusions

- A lot of consultation mechanisms already existed prior to Connexions. Most Pilots were developing this work, but it must be undertaken sensitively and add value to what already exists.
- As with many other themes discussed in this report (such as the role of the Personal Adviser), the involvement of young people is something that is still being worked out. The Pilots were developing a wide range of methods and levels of representation. Most methods exist to comment on and develop specific services. It will be interesting to see how young people's involvement develops strategically, so that it is fundamental and inherent to the development of the Connexions Service.
- There were advantages and disadvantages to the range of methods of involvement that Pilots were employing. In recognition of this, many Pilots used several methods, especially regarding the involvement of hard-to-help young people.
- Training and support for young people involved in the decision-making process is essential.
- There were important debates about the level of young people's involvement. There is some opposition by a significant minority of partners to the formal involvement of young people on decision-making boards or committees.
- Involving young people has to be appropriate in terms of the location, the methods and language used.

6.8 Recommendations

- Establish mechanisms to identify and disseminate good practice and key learning points based on Pilot's experiences of involving young people.
- Develop a resource bank of materials and software, which can be used to engage young people in interesting and creative ways.
- The effort and commitment that has been shown in involving young people needs to be sustained. If promises are made about the level and extent of commitment they need to be sustained, or young people will become cynical.
- Link the involvement of young people with monitoring and evaluation, and auditing of services (e.g. undertaking annual client surveys, developing quality standards).

7 Connexions in schools and colleges

7.1 Introduction

659. This chapter focuses on the ways in which the Connexions Service was delivered in schools and colleges, and by training providers. Evaluating this strand was the responsibility of local evaluators and we received local evaluators reports from Cornwall and Devon, Coventry and Warwickshire, Lewisham, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire.[20]

660. It is based on interviews with lead and other key partners, monthly reports, local evaluator's reports and materials from workshops and conferences. It provides an analysis of the activities that have taken place within the Pilot areas and of the issues that have arisen as a result of these activities. Also the role of Connexions in schools, colleges and other training providers was the focus of two workshops at the Connexions Interim Report workshop held in May.

7.2 Context

661. National guidance defines the role of Connexions in schools. The essence of the service is set out below.[21]

- Most young people under the age of 16 are likely to have access to Personal Advisers based in schools who will have a complementary role to that of learning mentors being introduced in Excellence in Cities areas. Personal advisers will also be accessible through further education colleges and community and voluntary organisations, which will be particularly relevant to those young people who are disengaged from education.
- Personal advisers will provide support for teachers and others in developing careers education, personal, social and health education, special educational needs transition processes and the provision of relevant information. Such information includes the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and advice on labour market developments. This will ensure that all young people based within schools and colleges have access to high quality information, advice and guidance.
- Personal advisers will support these institutions in promoting a culture that values diversity and an environment in which young people from all backgrounds can participate and progress. This will involve the Personal Advisers in developing an advocacy role where necessary to support the needs and aspirations of young people.

662. There is a separate document addressing Connexions in colleges (but not other training providers).

663. Connexions in schools and colleges will, within the overall work of the institution, support:

- Learning opportunities that introduce students to the world of work;
- Access to information, advice and guidance on a wide range of issues of concern to young people, direct or through Connexions Direct (currently being Piloted), including impartial careers advice on further learning options;

[20] The local evaluator(s) for Cornwall and Devon was Steve Brooking, for Coventry and Warwickshire and Lincolnshire Deirdre Hughes, Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS) University of Derby, for Lewisham Thinking for a Living, and for South Yorkshire, Simon Bysshe also of the CeGS.
[21] 'Establishing the Connexions Service in schools', DfEE, November 2000.

- A coordinated approach to the school/college's programme of careers education and personal development, and the school/college's pastoral support system.

664. Within this service, the role of the Personal Adviser is to:

- Manage the transition at 16 including offering guidance on career and learning options to those who need it;
- Assess clients' overall needs (using the Connexions integrated framework where appropriate) leading to an individual action plan;
- Provide one-to-one mentoring (including community mentors where appropriate);
- Facilitate group or peer support and personal development activities;
- Referral to specialist services in and outside the college (health, social services, study support etc.);
- Work with parents and carers;
- Arrange packages outside the school/college, such as links to suitable accommodation for young people who are homeless.

665. Schools, colleges and training providers were important elements in the delivery of Connexions services because about two-thirds of young people aged 13-19 were in education and training and could therefore most easily access services based at their school, college or training provider.[22]

7.3 Involvement of schools, colleges and other training providers in the Connexions Service

666. Schools, colleges and other training providers sit on seven Pilot Boards and LMCs in nine Pilot areas. Personal Advisers were based at schools, colleges and training providers in nine Pilot areas. According to March's monthly report, based on all 13 Pilot areas, Connexions Pilot services were being delivered in eight schools, eight colleges and two training providers. Furthermore, schools and college councils were an integral part of involving young people in the design and delivery of the Connexions Service. As such, schools, colleges and training providers were very important to the delivery of Connexions services.

667. Schools were invited to express an interest in participating in the Pilots either by the LEA or the Connexions Service. All of the schools and colleges volunteered to be involved and none of the Pilots reported difficulties in engaging schools and colleges. Many of these institutions had existing experience of hosting and managing the Personal Adviser function (for example through New Start). Applications were judged by a panel, which typically included key partners and representatives of the LEA. The number of schools and colleges that expressed an interest in talking part in the Pilot varied significantly; one Pilot reported 66 applications (over a third of schools in the area) and another reported 12. One Pilot sought to ensure that school's and college's expectations of Pilot participation were effectively managed through a series of 'clarification meetings'. Some Pilots developed 'partnership agreements' between the host institution, the Connexions Service and, in some cases, the Personal Adviser. Partnership agreements are very similar to Service Level Agreements (for an example of a SLA see Section 3). Careers Services had already developed SLA/Personal Advisers with almost all schools and colleges, to define their roles and responsibilities, what type and level of the service the school should expect, and the division

[22] Labour Force Survey March to May 2000.

of management responsibility between the Head teacher and the adviser's Careers Service Manager etc. Many Connexions Partnership Agreements were based on those developed in the past by Careers Services.

668. Personal Advisers working in schools, colleges and other training providers were recruited from a variety of professional backgrounds including careers, youth work, voluntary sector, as well as the education sector. A relatively small number (approximately one-in-ten) of school, college and training provider-based Personal Advisers had previously worked in, or had contact with, the institution in which they were based for the Pilot.

669. In one Pilot area, partner organisations (for example the Careers Service and the Youth Service) were asked to designate one or more members of their existing staff to be seconded to the Personal Adviser role. A multi-agency panel then determined which applicants were most suitable for the role and assigned them to schools and colleges. In the same Pilot area, an explicit decision was taken not to include Head teachers in the Personal Adviser recruitment process. However, in most Pilots schools and colleges were afforded the autonomy to interview and recruit Personal Advisers from a list of individuals who had volunteered for the role.

670. Schools and colleges viewed this level of involvement in the recruitment process positively. Interviews were conducted by a multi-agency panel chaired by a Head teacher or Principal. In some Pilot areas, young people were involved in interview panels. However, one strand manager commented on the difficulties of making individual schools comply with this requirement.

671. In some Pilot areas, the Personal Adviser role in schools, colleges and training providers constitutes a distinct strand or project. In others, Personal Advisers were based in these institutions as part of wider strands or projects that were concerned with distinct sub-groups of clients (for example young people with Special Educational Needs).

672. Schools/colleges and training providers anticipated that having advisers based within their institutions would deliver the following benefits:

- (Re)engaging young people who are disaffected or at risk of disaffection;
- To provide coherent and personal support and advocacy for young people;
- To support transitions (particularly at 16);
- To establish more effective processes, systems and relationships with other professionals and school staff;
- Increased contact with parents;
- To increase the level of awareness of young people of the support services available to them;
- Provision of additional resources for support work

7.4 Management of Personal Advisers and the Connexions Service in schools, colleges and training providers.

7.4.1 Initial concerns

673. Initially, there was a significant level of concern amongst interviewees regarding the management of Personal Advisers in schools and colleges:

- **Lack of awareness on the part of schools, colleges and training providers regarding the role of the Personal Adviser** – in part, these concerns stemmed from logistical problems (e.g. getting the relevant people to attend meetings) and/or issues of continuity (e.g. some schools had acting heads). Furthermore, some senior managers within schools and colleges felt that they were "ill-informed" about Connexions in the early stages owing to a lack of clarity on the part of partner organisations.

- **Lack of awareness of roles and responsibilities** – following on from the previous point, there was also early evidence to suggest that many institutions were not aware of their own roles and responsibilities regarding Connexions. As a result, they were not making the necessary preparations (e.g. making rooms available and providing administrative support).
- **Deployment of resources** – some interviewees were concerned that Head teachers and Principals would see Personal Advisers merely as an additional resource to support existing activities including careers advice and support for hard-to-help pupils.
- **School context** - some interviewees felt that Connexions means different things to different institutions because the issues faced by different schools, colleges and training providers vary markedly. For example, schools sending a significant number of pupils to Oxbridge need different types and levels of support than schools with catchments covering seriously deprived areas.

7.4.2 Pilot activities

674. Pilots were involved in a wide range of activities that were seeking to address the issues outlined above. Many Pilots were being proactive and seeking to develop clear and consistent communication channels with schools, colleges and training providers.

675. Across the Pilots, schools, colleges and training providers had access to different Personal Adviser resource allocations. Some institutions had a designated full-time Personal Adviser, in other institutions Personal Advisers were peripatetic and worked with two or more schools. In one Pilot area the Personal Advisers were responsible for an entire LEA. The apportionment of Personal Adviser resources between schools and colleges was a cause of considerable disquiet within one Pilot area. Members of staff in certain institutions were disappointed that, despite the fact that they were located in deprived areas, they were allocated the same level of Personal Adviser resources as local grammar schools.

676. The vast majority of schools, colleges and training providers viewed the Personal Adviser as an additional resource for the institution. However, there were concerns in one area that Personal Advisers were performing a 'dual role' in some institutions whereby they may be delivering services that were previously available (for example careers advice and guidance and support with Special Needs). One partner felt that the Pilots might increase expectations, because the full service would not be able to dedicate one Personal Adviser per school.

677. As some schools, colleges and training providers did not have a full-time Personal Adviser, but part of one that covered two or three schools, colleges and training providers, some respondents raised concerns over the access to Personal Advisers on the days when the Personal Adviser was not there. Some Pilots had addressed these issues by giving Personal Advisers mobile phones so that they could be contacted any time, other Personal Advisers were agreeing to meet some clients outside of school time.

678. Broadly, three forms of Personal Adviser line management structure were observed among the Pilots. In some Pilot areas, Personal Advisers were managed exclusively by a member of staff from the school or college within which they were based (typically the Head teacher or Principal, another member of the Senior Management Team (SMT), the Careers Manager or the head of pastoral support). Conversely, in at least one Pilot area, schools and colleges had no responsibility whatsoever for Personal Adviser line management.

Rather, the Personal Adviser was managed directly by the Connexions project manager.

679. Finally, in some Pilot areas, Personal Adviser line management was a shared responsibility between the Connexions Service and a nominated individual within the school or college. In this situation, the school, college or training provider was responsible for day-to-day management with Connexions having ultimate line management responsibility. This joint management approach appeared to be working well and Personal Advisers reported adequate levels of support from both within the institution in which they were based and from Connexions more broadly.

680. Some Pilot Coordinators, partners and local evaluators felt that there were not sufficient resources within schools, colleges and training providers to provide adequate supervision of Personal Advisers and that this was an issue that urgently needs to be addressed.

681. One local evaluator found that where joint management works well there were:

- detailed planning and implementation processes in place;
- regular meetings scheduled between the line manager and Personal Adviser to review progress and monitor caseload;
- transparent and positive working relationships developed across the institution;
- clear communication channels in terms of seeking to explain and clarify the Personal Adviser role;
- clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities, underpinned by written Partnership Agreements;
- systems in place to identify and prioritise young people for the Personal Adviser to work with;
- clear frameworks for referral;
- agreement on how students progress is recorded and fed back to appropriate staff within institutions, and;
- weekly timetables of Personal Adviser activities, which were used as part of the review, process.

682. Table 41 shows the good practice pointers concerning the management of the Connexions Service in schools, colleges and training providers. They all revolve around the need to invest a lot of initial time to work with schools, colleges and training providers to ensure that they understand what Connexions is generally, and how it relates specifically to the needs of the particular institution. And the need for this relationship and communication to be ongoing so that the Service can develop to respond to client need and other (e.g. programme) developments.

Table 41 Good practice pointers concerning the management of Connexions and Personal Advisers in Schools, colleges and training providers

- In one Pilot, the Deputy Director of Education contacted all Heads to confirm the support the LEA was giving to Connexions. - The progress on all discussions concerning Connexions in schools was confirmed to Heads in writing. - Head teachers were involved in operational groups in two Pilot areas. - Several Pilots were developing Service Level Agreements (SLA) for Connexions services within individual schools. This meant that the Connexions Service in that school reflected the needs of the school and the nature of the clientele. Whilst these take a lot

of time to negotiate, it was felt that this investment was worth it. It was essential to be absolutely clear about the relationship between the school, the employer and the contract holder in jointly planning and managing the service and the Personal Adviser.

- Three Pilots had regular review meetings between project leaders, Personal Advisers and school staff.
- One Pilot was developing a code of practice (similar to a SLA but less detailed) with post-16 learning providers. Another had agreed Statements of Working Arrangements with Heads.
- One Pilot developed a questionnaire to be used in initial meetings with schools so that there was a consistent message and discussion. Another developed briefing notes to bring schools up to speed.
- One Pilot is working with its local Association of Secondary Head teachers to place Personal Advisers in schools where there is the greatest need and where they would add most value.

Source: Monthly Monitoring Reports, GHK

683. Table 42 shows the main issues concerning the management of the Connexions Service in schools, colleges and training providers. In some ways it is a mirror image of Table 41 and reflects the importance of ensuring a clear and consistent message is sent about the Service, and that the specific service in a particular school, college and training provider is negotiated with their managers, meets the needs of clients and dovetails with existing support work.

Table 42 Main issues concerning the management of Connexions and Personal Advisers in Schools, colleges and training providers

- The importance of keeping in touch with school managers to review progress and differences between their perceptions and ours.
- Schools are very confused about the national direction of Connexions. We have agreed a strategy for identifying those schools where we will Pilot the work of the Connexions Adviser. We have a representative Head teacher on our Operations Group but Head teachers in general remain confused. We are attempting to clear the air and establish the current situation.
- Schools and colleges wish Connexions to pay for delivery of services to some difficult to reach young people.
- Where schools and colleges have taken on Personal Advisers themselves, the issue will be the management of their Connexions funded work in relation to their other work and how the local managers, who have responsibility for monitoring the Connexions funded work, will interact with their line managers. To be continued!
- Time Management, how do Personal Advisers share time between institutions.
- Head teachers line managing Personal Advisers and the potential for conflict.
- Communications messages around Connexions need to go to teachers/tutors in addition to heads and Principals.
- The need to develop new partnership agreement formats with schools and colleges involved in Pilot activities.

Source: Monthly Monitoring Reports, GHK

684. Despite the efforts put in, one local evaluator reported that people in SMTs felt that they had not been consulted enough about demarcation of responsibilities especially regarding appraisal, time management, impartiality, home visiting, holiday and leave arrangements, and the time allocated and remuneration for the management of Personal

Advisers. Also, within schools and colleges, key staff were unsure about the management boundaries and where responsibility for decision making lay.

685. The management and support for Personal Advisers was seen as a critical issue in this Pilot and it was reported that one-third of schools and colleges in the Pilot had threatened to withdraw because of the lack of management support for Personal Advisers

686. The experience from the Pilots was that this initial work was time very well spent in the long term. It was essential that schools, colleges and training providers understood what the Connexions Service was and that its specific implementation in each organisation is negotiated so that managers, Personal Advisers, teachers, and other support professionals understand the Service and how it complements existing activities.

7.5 The role of the Personal Adviser

687. There was considerable initial confusion and a lack of understanding regarding the role of the Personal Adviser. One partner felt that this was because there were changes in national guidance as to the role of the Personal Adviser in schools. Some Head teachers initially thought that Personal Advisers would work solely with hard-to-help young people. Others were concerned about the loss of careers advice. Others still felt that as the service needed to reflect the nature of the client group in each institution, then the profile and role of the Personal Adviser would vary between institutions (for example, some Personal Advisers may need to undertake more outreach work).

688. In terms of developing the role of the Personal Adviser at the level of the individual school, college or training provider, significant levels of flexibility were observed. This meant that, within the constraints of Personal Adviser job descriptions and partnership agreements, institutions were able to develop the Personal Adviser role in a way which best met the needs of individual clients within the target group. Various styles and ways of working with young people were evident both between and within Pilot areas. These can broadly be attributed to differences in the professional background of Personal Advisers and the different local contexts of the institutions in which they were based. Typically, Personal Advisers worked with clients on a one-to-one basis. Other forms of delivery included small group work (which proved popular among Personal Advisers and clients alike), home visits and work in the community (for example at local community centres).

689. The role of the Personal Adviser was piloted within mainstream schools, SEN Units and Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) schools. In some Pilots, the Personal Adviser was intended to provide universal support and guidance to all pupils and students within the Connexions age range. However, it was more common for institutions to identify a target group of young people who were seen to require intensive support (typically those who are disaffected or at risk of disaffection). Young people within the target group were generally identified by Head teachers or Principals, members of the pastoral team or EWOs. This was partly because these referral mechanisms were already in place and seen to be appropriate but also because Personal Advisers had not had time to develop their own. Some Personal Advisers felt that there might be potential problems with having to depend on the institutions own referral mechanisms as they could then define which type of client sees the Personal Adviser. So some Personal Advisers were developing their own referral mechanisms, in consultation with the school and other agencies therein, so clients were more able to choose if they wanted to approach a Personal Adviser.

690. Key Personal Adviser responsibilities were seen to include:

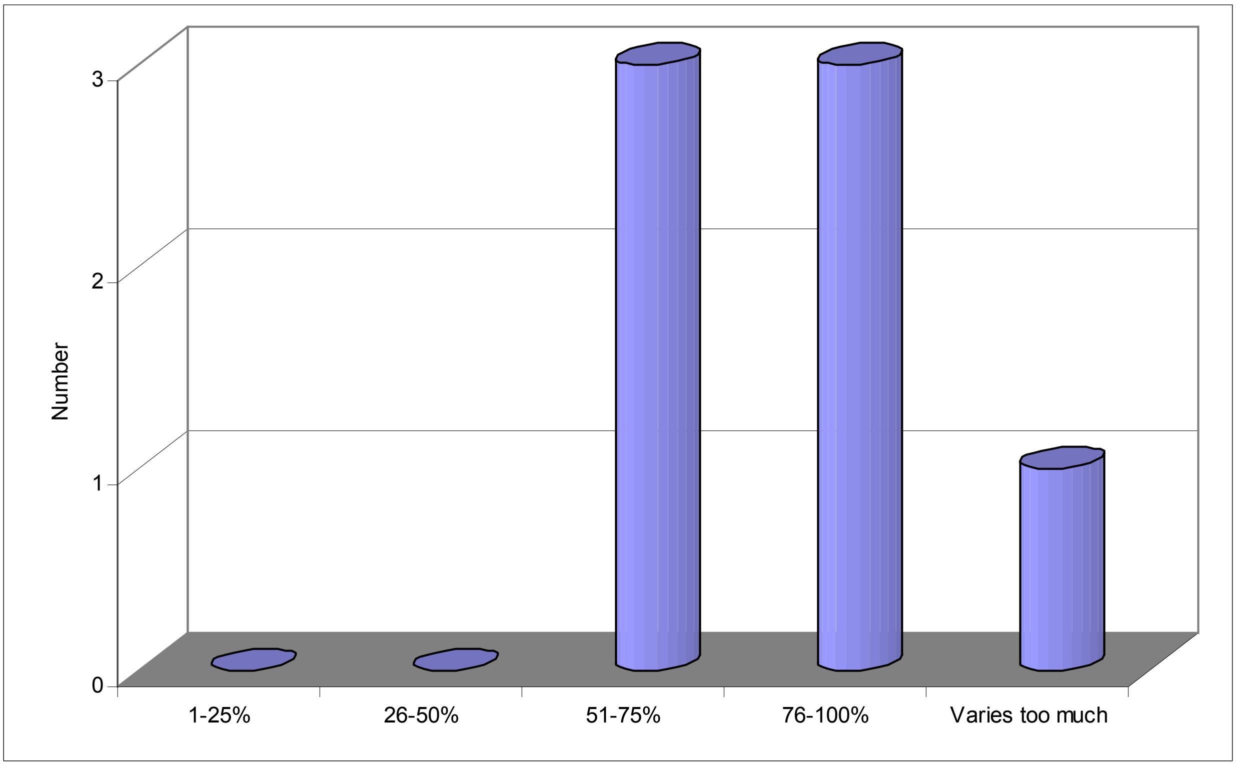
- Supporting young people who are making a transition;
- Developing practical methods of increasing young peoples' self-confidence and skills;

- Developing internal and external networks to ensure that the most appropriate form of support is provided;
- Advocating on young peoples' behalf (particularly within the school environment).

691. One interviewee (a member of the SMT in a Pilot school) felt that although Personal Advisers with a youth work background are adept at developing networks with other agencies, it was important to have more emphasis on careers advice and guidance in terms of the Personal Adviser role within schools.

692. The position of the Personal Adviser relative to the institution in which they were based was seen to play an important role in determining young peoples' perceptions of their Personal Adviser. Several interviewees mentioned the importance of highlighting that the Personal Adviser was not a member of school staff. Indeed, some young people said that one of the things they most liked about Connexions was that their Personal Adviser was independent of the school and impartial in their judgement.

Figure 34 Amount of time school, college and training provider-based Personal Advisers spend in their respective institutions



Source: March's Monthly Reports, GHK

693. In their monthly monitoring reports, Pilots were asked to identify the amount of time that school, college and training provider based Personal Advisers spent in these settings. Figure 34, based on responses from seven Pilots, shows that school, college and training provider- based Personal Advisers spend more than half their time in their respective locations or that it varies too much between different institutions.

694. Table 43 shows the good practice pointers concerning the management of the role of the Personal Adviser in schools, colleges and training providers. Pilots were testing a range of Personal Adviser roles within schools, colleges and training providers but they were also trialing the work of Personal Advisers across different agencies and key transitions points in young peoples lives (e.g. at age 16). They were developing flexible Personal Adviser roles

so as to fit in with the specific needs of clients and the specific requirements of that particular school, college or training provider. Much work has also gone on in clarifying the role of the Personal Adviser, in some schools the Personal Adviser has initially been perceived as being for ‘thick kids’.

695. There was also a lot of work undertaken to supervise and support Personal Advisers (e.g. providing them with independent counsellors) particularly because of the serious issues that many clients face. However, some local evaluators have found this to be sporadic, informal and of varying quality. Finally, there was good practice surrounding the involvement of young people and their parents/guardians in the design and delivery of the service.

Table 43 Good practice pointers concerning the role of the Personal Adviser in schools, colleges and training providers

- Pilots were involved in testing a range of Personal Adviser roles including looking specifically at transition issues between schools and colleges, having Personal Advisers covering several schools rather than just based in one.
- Involving school staff in Personal Adviser training sessions as well as operational groups.
- Developing materials based on discussions with school and college staff that defines the role and responsibilities of Personal Advisers.
- Developing provision based on the experience of working in schools, colleges and training providers. For example, one school wanted more career advice in the Personal Adviser role, so the role was developed to include this.
- Three Pilots said that they were defining the role of the Personal Adviser based on the needs of the pupils in individual schools.
- Some schools and colleges are doing their utmost to ensure that young people see Personal Advisers as separate from the school system.
- Ensuring professional supervision is available for Personal Advisers to enable them to talk through traumatic cases with an independent counsellor.
- One Pilot is providing additional resources for young people so detached they are not even accessing Pupil Referral Units e.g. because they are agoraphobic or scared of attending school for fear of bullying.
- Working with young people to build self-esteem and motivation first and then move on to other topics, such as, education and training issues.
- Do not assume limited aspirations. One Pilot took pupils to a University as part of their raising aspirations work and got positive feedback from the young people.
- Undertake regular surveys of clients to see if the service is being effective e.g. are barriers to learning accurately reflected in the assessment and diagnostic tools?
- One Pilot is experimenting with parent open evenings at a local community centre.
- Assisting Learning Mentors with information on support from external agencies and developing this as a resource database.
- Making links with Learning Gateways to involve Gateway Personal Advisers in Connexions activities.

Source: Monthly Monitoring Reports, GHK

696. Table 43 shows the main issues concerning the management of the role of the Personal Adviser in schools, colleges and training providers. An important issue was whether the Personal Adviser will affect the level of existing services within schools, colleges and training providers especially careers advice. Another issue was ensuring that the Personal Adviser (in their different manifestations) responds to the actual needs of clients in different settings. A big concern was the workload of Personal Advisers, they have clearly

generated a lot of demand for their services and their caseloads need to be monitored so that they can perform their roles effectively. The presence of a Personal Adviser can also actually increase the workload for all other support professionals within schools, colleges and training providers.

Table 44 Main issues concerning the role of the Personal Adviser in schools, colleges and training providers

- Raising expectations because they have a full time Personal Adviser. This is unlikely to happen when the full Connexions Services goes live.
- Establishing a realistic workload.
- We do not have learning mentors in our area and this eases the confusion but it does mean that Head teachers have nothing to compare Personal Advisers with.
- Schools and colleges wish Connexions to pay for delivery of services to some difficult to reach young people.
- Schools and colleges wish Connexions to provide additional careers guidance.
- The need to develop new partnership agreement formats with schools and colleges involved in Pilot activities.
- How best to identify young people who would benefit from having a Personal Adviser.
- Each individual institution has its own set of needs and demands, and this is reflected in the roles each Personal Adviser is undertaking. But there is a need to build consistency into the role across the Pilot Personal Adviser team, yet also ensure that they can respond to differing situations.
- The reputation of the Personal Adviser in School has led to an increase in internal and external referrals of clients to the Personal Adviser. The workload of Personal Advisers needs to be monitored so that they can perform their job effectively.
- The pilot quoted "The different types of Personal Advisers (Connexions Personal Advisers, Connexions Advisers and Specialist Advisers) and how their roles will vary and how they will work together within the school, college and training provider."
- Establishing a realistic workload.
- Raising expectations through full time Personal Adviser, unlikely to be able to resource when Connexions Services goes live.
- Connexions and the role of the Personal Adviser needs to be communicated more effectively within schools and colleges. Staff feel that information does not filter down below the level of the SMT.

7.5.1 The relationship between the Personal Adviser/Connexions and other professionals and services

697. There was a range of support professionals and services' already operating in schools e.g. Learning Mentors, EWOs, CRISS, On Track and specific SRB programmes etc. These people, programmes and agencies may have negotiated their own partnership agreements with the school or college, and these must be respected by any new service. There was also a lack of awareness of Connexions and the Personal Adviser by these agencies and professionals and this may cause friction as they could also be working with the same client group as Personal Advisers.

698. Perhaps the most critical relationship and main cause for concern was the relationship between the Personal Adviser and the careers adviser. Some Schools, colleges and training providers perceive that Connexions – and specifically the role of the Personal Adviser - implies a diminution of careers guidance service.

699. Other tensions were reported among Personal Advisers and teaching staff. In some cases, teaching staff resented the fact that they had to 'try again' with pupils who have

previously caused trouble in their classes and who had been excluded as a result. Some staff interpreted the Personal Adviser role as recognition that current teaching styles were not effective or as a reward for badly behaved pupils.

700. One partner said that one school did not want the Personal Adviser involved in diagnosing need as they felt the school could do it better themselves. This may well be true, because schools may already have existing (and perfectly good) assessment policies and procedures that have arisen out of other initiatives e.g. CRISES. Another school said that they welcomed Personal Adviser support to pupils but did not see the need for their multi-agency work.

701. In several cases, initial concerns that the management of Personal Advisers within schools has the potential to compromise the role of Personal Advisers and their relationship with young people have been confirmed. Several Personal Advisers reported that staff from the schools in which they were based frequently asks them for information regarding individual pupils and students. Indeed, several schools felt that they should be informed of issues such as drug abuse and pregnancy among pupils. The decision as to if and/or when to inform parents of such situations had also caused some disagreement between schools and colleges on the one hand and Personal Advisers on the other. Pilots that had not experienced problems in relation to confidentially were aware of the potential difficulties. As such, many Pilot areas and individual schools were working to develop internal polices in relation to confidentiality. The issue was resolved in one school by a meeting between the Connexions manager, the Personal Adviser and the Deputy Head that discussed the issue and worked out when information should be passed on. The criteria were based on whether the well being of the client would be affected if information were not passed on. The Personal Adviser would tell clients that any information the client gave them was subject to this agreement.

702. Beyond the school or college, some institutions have a history of sharing information with other agencies (for example EWS, Careers Service) whilst others were in the process of developing protocols to facilitate this process. In general terms, information was passed between schools and colleges and other agencies in the following ways:

- Paper-based systems (however, not all schools and colleges keep detailed records);
- Verbally;
- Multi-agency meetings.

703. There was little evidence of the use of ICTs in the work of Personal Advisers in schools, colleges and training providers.

704. Very few barriers to sharing information with other agencies were reported. However, one Pilot cited Social Services as being less disposed to sharing information than most other agencies.

705. Broadly, there was a recognition that consultation with the key partners was vitally important. Not only can Connexions add value to existing provision, existing programmes can add value to Connexions and Pilots have recognised this.

706. Table 45 shows good practice pointers concerning the relationship of Personal Advisers with other professionals and services already in schools, colleges and training providers. The main good practice point is that Connexions can and will add value to existing support provision but it needs to fit in with what exists already. Initial work in discussing and communicating the role of the Personal Adviser in individual institutions with other agencies and developing a delivery model appropriate for that setting will be a key

element in the success of the Connexions Service.

Table 45 Good practice pointers concerning the relationship of Personal Advisers with other professionals and services already in schools, colleges and training providers

- One Pilot has used Connexions to extend social inclusion activities in schools. Two schools now have a social inclusion team and 'On Track' was operating in half of them. Another had a DfEE funded project focused on the early identification of need and Connexions has enabled it to be expanded into four more schools. Another said that they were building on the experience of a service in a forerunner school that was working with 60 young people at risk of dropping out.
- One Pilot held 'identification' meetings with the Education Welfare Service to discuss respective roles and responsibilities and develop formal protocols to define these services.
- Several Pilots have sought consciously to improve communication between heads of year, other pastoral staff and SENCO.
- A Pilot held meetings with a range of organisations that service schools including the Youth and Education Welfare Service. From this they developed partnership plans. An added bonus was that this was the first time that schools had an overview document describing the roles and provision of each agency supporting their school.
- Form tutors were involved in Personal Adviser training in one area to help them understand the role.
- One Pilot has established a multi-agency group that has helped to improve communication and remove barriers to joint working.
- Other Pilots ensure that key staff e.g. careers coordinators, pastoral teams, and school senior management was kept fully informed and involved.
- One Pilot envisaged a coordinating role for the Personal Adviser. However, through consultation with schools, it was not recognised as a role for the Personal Adviser or as one that needed to be carried out.

Source: Monthly Monitoring Reports, GHK

707. Table 46 shows the main issues were the time that the Personal Adviser spent in schools and how that related to the amount of careers advice support pupils could expect. Another issue, raised in a local evaluation report, was if Personal Advisers were in school for only a couple of days a week, how would this affect team building with other professionals. Another issue was whether the Personal Adviser would be an additional resource or simply the re-badging of another service. A related issue was that some other support professionals in schools felt very vulnerable about the arrival of a Personal Adviser, fearing that it would overlap with, and threaten the existence of, the work they did. It was critical that any such fears are identified and addressed.

Table 46 Main issues concerning the relationship of Personal Advisers with other professionals and services already in schools, colleges and training providers

- Whether Connexions will provide additional resources to the school, or whether existing supporting agency staff will be re-named as Personal Adviser.
- Whether the one-day of Personal Adviser time will need to include careers adviser/careers specialist work, or whether it will be in addition to the careers adviser's time in the school/college.

Source: Monthly Monitoring Reports, GHK

7.5.2 Training and support

708. All Pilots took training and support for Personal Advisers very seriously. Personal

Adviser work can be very isolated where, for example, they were the only support professional in a school. Also, since the role of the Personal Adviser is a new one in many of the Pilot areas, Personal Advisers may need to explain their role and develop relationships with other professionals and staff in the school.

709. Pilots were developing a range of training and other support mechanisms to address these issues including induction training on the role of the Personal Adviser, particularly as it relates to working in schools, colleges and training providers.

710. In most Pilot areas, regular review meetings were held (typically during half-term) between Personal Advisers and Connexions managers or the nominated manager within the institution. These meetings were seen to be important not only in terms of monitoring the performance of the Personal Adviser but also in terms of Personal Adviser professional development. In some institutions, Personal Advisers kept reflective diaries which formed part of the review process.

711. Relationships between Connexions Personal Advisers working in different institutions have been established and developed through a range of methods including:

712. Team meetings – such as project or strand meetings and cross-strand meetings (particularly important in terms of disseminating good practice).

- Training events – both formal and informal.
- Existing personal contacts.

7.5.3 Pilots' assessment of the Personal Adviser role in schools, colleges and training providers

713. Pilot Coordinators were asked, in the monthly reports, to rank various aspects of delivering services in schools, for example, the relationship between the Personal Adviser and the Head teacher or Principal. Based on the response of six Pilots delivering school, college and training provider based services, Table 47 shows, that Pilot Coordinators were pleased with these aspects of service delivery. No Pilot Coordinator ranked any of the aspects as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Although one Pilot said they varied too much between different institutions to rank.

714. However, compared to December's report (which was included in the Interim Report) there has been a slight diminution in the Pilot Coordinator's views of Connexions in schools, colleges and training providers. There has been a slight shift from ranking as 'very good' to 'good' on all aspects except the planning of the work of the Personal Adviser (which remained constant).

Table 47 Satisfaction with delivery of Connexions in schools, colleges and training providers

	Very good				Very poor	Varies too much
	1	2	3	4	5	
Relationship between the Connexions Service & the Head Teacher/ Principal	3	2	0	0	0	1
Relationship between the Personal Adviser and the Head Teacher/ Principal	0	5	0	0	0	1
Relationship between the Personal Adviser & other professionals working in the school/ college/ training providers	1	3	1	0	0	1
Planning the work of the Personal Adviser in schools/colleges/ training providers	1	4	0	0	0	1
Delivering the work of the Personal Adviser in schools/colleges/ training providers	0	4	1	0	0	1
Access of young people to the service in schools/ colleges/training providers	2	3	0	0	0	1

Source: March's Monthly Reports, GHK

7.5.4 Added Value

715. Despite issues concerning the role and management of the Personal Adviser, Connexions was seen to be adding value to support for young people in schools, colleges and training providers in the following areas:

- Making support for young people better, more appropriate and more accessible.
- A more coherent and cohesive approach to working with young people.
- Development of new and innovative ways of working with young people.

7.5.5 Key Learning Points

716. But achieving value takes much planning, negotiation and communication about the role of the Personal Adviser in schools, colleges and training providers as Table 48 shows.

717. Pilot Coordinators identified the following key learning points:

Table 48 Key learning points for developing Connexions Services in schools, colleges and training providers

- Striving towards effective partnership working is essential.
- Effective relationships between Connexions, and schools and colleges rely on a mutually agreed agenda that is clearly recorded within a partnership agreement.

- The partnership agreement must reflect institutional planning and targets as well as existing internal processes.
- Effective partnership working requires time and enthusiasm and effort on the part of all involved.
- The skills, experience and appropriateness of the Personal Adviser are critical not only to the success of Connexions, but to the effectiveness of the relationship between schools and Personal Advisers.
- The Personal Adviser role is a highly skilled one. Remuneration packages should reflect this.
- Personal Advisers' performance should be reviewed regularly. This is important for both the institution and the Personal Advisers themselves.
- Continuity within the Personal Adviser role is important for the host institution and young people. In particular, sustained contact over time between a Personal Adviser and a client is seen to improve the overall relationship.
- The use of group sessions can help to develop rapport and trust between young people and Personal Advisers.
- It is vitally important for the Personal Adviser to be seen as distinct from the school or college within which they are based. It is also important that the Personal Adviser is perceived to provide a confidential service.
- Evaluation is an important exercise in terms of developing the role of the Personal Adviser.
- It is important to capture and disseminate success stories at all levels.

Source: Local Evaluator Reports

7.6 Good Practice Case Studies

718. The work of Connexions in schools, colleges and training providers was the focus for two good practice case studies, one in Lewisham and one in Cornwall and Devon.

7.6.1 Good practice case study: Working in schools and colleges – Lewisham Connexions Pilot[23]

719. The first case study reports on the work of the Connexions Service with schools and colleges in Lewisham. It is based on reports from the local evaluator and interviews with project managers, partner agencies and Personal Advisers.

7.6.1.1 Background

720. The Connexions Pilot in Lewisham focused on testing the delivery of Connexions in educational institutions. The Pilot proposed to work in a selected number of secondary schools and Lewisham College.

721. Every school in the London Borough of Lewisham was invited to take part in the Pilot. Four institutions put their name forward and were chosen for the project. A fifth school, threatened with closure, was included later in the Pilot, which also later linked with a Department of Health initiative to work alongside young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties. The project is now working with pupils in two special schools in the borough to test the benefits a Personal Adviser can provide.

7.6.1.2 Developing the role of the Personal Adviser

[23] Based on the Lewisham Connexions Pilot local evaluators report produced by 'Thinking for a Living', and interviews with the Partner Agencies, the Project Managers and Personal Advisers.

722. Within the Pilot, Lewisham aims to test the delivery of a universal service in education. It was originally envisaged that this would supplement related student support services. Personal Advisers would work alongside Learning Mentors, Careers Advisers, Youth Workers and other professionals, with the task of pulling together services provided for young people.

723. Initial discussions with Head teachers received little support for a Pilot ending in March 2001. Rather, it was suggested that Pilot last the entire academic year, finishing at the end of the 2001 summer term.

724. A job description and person specification for Personal Advisers in the Pilot was designed by partners from Careers Service, the Local Authority and Lewisham College. Discussions with Head teachers and senior staff from the educational institutions on the role of Connexions and the Personal Adviser was also reinforced by a survey of young people on the quality, skills and experience a Personal Adviser should have.

725. All Personal Advisers would have the same job description, irrespective of whether they work in a school or a college. The partners took the view that Personal Advisers needed to be experienced people, who could work in difficult circumstances in under-performing schools.

726. Personal Advisers should:

- work with the institution in which they are based;
- assess, plan and review student needs;
- provide advice, support, information, guidance and advocacy to students;
- provide a point of contact to young people, and;
- refer students to specialist agencies where necessary.

7.6.1.3 Recruitment

727. A total of 14 Personal Advisers have been appointed. Five were previously employed by the Youth Service, three by the Education Welfare Service, one by the Youth Offending Team, two by schools and three by colleges. The aim was to create a team of Personal Advisers with varied professional backgrounds and experience, who would be able to complement each other's skills.

728. Applicants needed to be skilled, experienced, properly qualified and able to work unsupervised. Lewisham Connexions was also looking for people who could "hit the ground running".

729. The posts were first advertised during August. It was an open recruitment process, with advertisements placed in the local press, the Guardian and the Voice. There was a healthy amount of interest shown: 400 application packs were sent out and 40 applications were received.

730. The interview panel included representatives from the three Pilot partners, but the selection process was informed by consultations with Head teachers and the survey of young people (see above).

731. It was hoped to fill 12 posts, but in the event only five applications proved acceptable. Consequently, a second recruitment round had to take place to fill the remaining posts. This meant that the initial timescale for all Personal Advisers to start work in September slipped back. The first Personal Advisers took up their posts in November 2000 and the full team

was in place in January 2001.

7.6.1.4 The location of Personal Advisers

732. All 14 Pilot Personal Advisers are based in the institution in which they work. Most of their time is spent within these institutions, but they have the opportunity to use the One Stop Shop for Young People, which is also the base of Lewisham Connexions.

733. The college hosts four Personal Advisers, working as a team, but assigned to different schools within the college. In contrast, school-based Personal Advisers mainly work individually. There is one Personal Adviser working full-time in each school, with the exception of one where there are two.

734. A key issue was to equip each Personal Adviser with their own personal computer and to provide a ready work environment when they started work. It was not always possible to ensure this in the Pilot, but it was necessary to allow Personal Advisers to operate effectively right from the start.

7.6.1.5 Management of Personal Advisers

735. All 14 Pilot Personal Advisers are managed and supported by the Connexions Pilot Project Manager, but they also report and provide feedback to senior staff within schools and the college. The appointment of a deputy manager is being considered, in order to reduce the high workload for the Project Manager and to provide sufficient support to all Personal Advisers.

736. Within the College, the Personal Advisers ultimately report to the Head of Learner Service, with the Head of Student Service and Guidance Team leader giving day-to-day support. In most cases, deputy Head teachers at the schools have taken on the role of line managers. Although schools were happy for Personal Advisers to be managed by Connexions initially, the schools have shown increasing interest in taking on more control in managing Connexions Personal Advisers.

737. In reviewing monthly progress, three-way meetings between the Personal Advisers, the Project Manager and School/College Line Manager take place. The Pilot Managers also meets the Personal Adviser team separately on a regular basis.

7.6.1.6 Partnership Agreements

738. There were no Partnership Agreements originally planned for Lewisham. The result of discussions between senior management in schools/college and the Project Manager were summarised in a work plan for Personal Advisers. For all school-based Personal Advisers, the work plan also included a mini-mapping exercise of support services within their workplace.

739. Shortly after taking up their posts, some of the Personal Advisers drew up a Partnership Agreement of their own, in order to provide a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of all involved parties. The Agreement sets out the principles of the Connexions Service, the role and duties of the Personal Adviser within that particular school, and procedures for student self-referral, staff referral and service review. It also provided copies of the referral form for students and staff.

740. Although an understanding of roles and responsibilities of Personal Advisers between Connexions and the institutions existed from the beginning, other Personal Advisers felt later that it would be beneficial to formalise these agreements. The Pilot is now in the process of drawing Partnership Agreements with all schools and the College.

7.6.1.7 Personal Adviser training, development and support

741. Once the full Personal Adviser team was in place, the Project Manager ran a short skills assessment of all Personal Advisers to identify gaps. As a result, training has been organised in a number of areas such as Careers Education (no Personal Adviser in Lewisham has a Careers background), Drug Awareness, Racial Awareness and Equal Opportunities. To provide this training the Project Manager was able to tap into Connexions Partners' existing training provision.

742. The team of 14 Personal Advisers meets regularly with the Project Managers at the One Stop Shop to review their work and share good practice. The College-based Personal Adviser forms a natural team, helped by their location, and they meet regularly. A working group for school-based Personal Adviser has been created to allow them to share good practise more easily.

7.6.1.8 The role of the Personal Adviser in schools and colleges

743. The needs of the schools involved in the Pilot are very different, as is their previous involvement in the communities where they are based. Lewisham College is a Beacon College.

744. Head teachers and senior staff requirements had been taken into account throughout the selection process, but Personal Advisers were not recruited to work in a particular school.

745. Before the Personal Advisers took up their posts, meetings between Connexions and senior management from the school and colleges took place to agree a common understanding of the role of the Pilot Personal Adviser. These discussions were summarised in a work plan.

746. This work plan provided the starting point for individual Personal Advisers, but their brief was also to develop their own role, bringing in existing experiences into their work environment.

747. During the first few weeks, Personal Advisers introduced themselves to young people, as well as tutors and other professionals. All school-based Personal Advisers embarked on a mini-mapping exercise of school support services to ensure they would build on existing work and avoid duplication. In one school the Personal Adviser was able to build on a "pupil audit" on the effectiveness of non-academic support within the school, which enabled the Personal Adviser to target pupils' "perception of need".

748. School-based Personal Advisers have also set up referral processes for tutors and students. At the start, only tutors referred students in the college, but the Personal Adviser team has now set up drop-in sessions to give students an opportunity for self-referral.

749. The Pilot's aim has been to test a universal service in schools, though it was recognised that the individual circumstances of each institution would lead to variations in the role of the Personal Advisers. As an additional resource the role of the Personal Advisers would reflect the needs and demands of each school and college, as well as the existing level of support within these institutions.

- As a result, some school Personal Advisers provide a more universal service, others target students with multiple and more intensive needs.
- In the school that will be closed at the end of the academic year, the Personal Adviser had a very specific brief: to support all pupils through the transition process by working with them and their parents.

- The role of the college-based Personal Advisers is influenced by the profile and needs of students on individual courses. For example, the school which includes English as a Foreign Language, teaches several asylum seekers - some of these client's issues, therefore, will not be encountered by other Personal Advisers, whose potential clients might not include asylum seekers.

750. Until now most work with young people has been through face-to-face meetings with students. As was anticipated, advocacy has been a strong component of the Personal Advisers work.

7.6.1.9 The added value of the Personal Adviser

- The Pilot Personal Advisers provide an additional resource to the school or college and have made efforts not to duplicate work
- Personal Advisers take a pro-active approach in supporting young people.
- Personal Advisers are able to identify the individual needs of a young person through intensive, ongoing personal contact.
- They support other professionals, e.g. with information on support from external agencies.
- Personal Advisers have eased students back into school after exclusion and long term absence, working and negotiating with parents and schools.
- They have provided useful information to schools, e.g. through research undertaken with students in Years 12 and 13 to pinpoint why the dropped out.
- Personal Advisers identify gaps and inadequacy of existing service provision within and outside an institution.

7.6.1.10 Key learning points

- The Pilot has aimed to build consistency in the role of the Personal Advisers, but recognise that different needs and provision of institutions will lead to differences in what role Personal Advisers' play.
- The development of the role of the Personal Advisers is a big challenge, if it is to lead to something new (although Personal Advisers need to be able to bring in existing good working practice).
- Personal Advisers need a bedding-in period, particularly in larger or more complex institutions, to establish trust between parties.
- Some areas need more development and consolidation e.g. the use of existing assessment tools and referral forms.
- There is a need to provide supervision to Personal Advisers who deal with young people with complex needs. The Pilot is now considering this.
- The need for clear task descriptions, outcomes and reporting structures, possibly set out in an SLA or partnership agreement, are vital.
- There are not enough Personal Advisers to satisfy demand.
- The majority of Personal Adviser time is taken up by those most in need.
- The work of Personal Advisers highlights existing gaps and inadequacies, but an individual Personal Adviser will find it difficult to change this situation.

7.6.2 Good practice case study: The role of the Personal Adviser in schools and colleges in Cornwall and Devon[24]

751. The second case study reports on the work of the Connexions Service with schools and colleges in Cornwall and Devon. It is based on reports from the local evaluator and face-to-face interviews with young people, Personal Advisers, members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) in schools and colleges and representatives of Connexions partner organisations.

7.6.2.1 Background

752. The role of the Personal Adviser was piloted in Cornwall and Devon for six months during the autumn and spring terms of 2000-2001. However, Pilot arrangements will continue to be supported by the LMCs until the end of the summer term. Only a small proportion of Personal Advisers in Cornwall and Devon are not located in schools or colleges. These are predominantly based in drop-in centres.

753. Schools and colleges were invited to submit expressions of interest in hosting a Personal Adviser by July 2000. In total, 66 of the 180 schools and colleges in the area expressed an interest in taking part in the Pilot. The selection panel, which included representatives from LEAs within the area, decided that 14 schools and four colleges should be involved.

754. 12 Personal Advisers were appointed to the Pilot from September 2000. In some locations, schools and colleges worked together through consortia arrangements whereby a single Personal Adviser was responsible for providing support in more than one institution. Personal Advisers were seconded from numerous agencies and organisations including the voluntary sector, education business partnership, youth service, the education sector and the careers service.

7.6.2.2 Developing the role of the Personal Adviser

755. A Personal Adviser theme group was established as part of the Cornwall and Devon Pilot, which was lead, by the Director of Development at Cornwall and Devon Careers. All of the Personal Advisers involved in the Pilot were invited to attend this group. The theme group was involved in developing the job description and person specification for the Personal Adviser role and in designing and developing local training for Personal Advisers.

756. Within the parameters set out by job description and person specification, Personal Advisers and school or college staff were given the autonomy to develop the Personal Adviser role within a local context. Most Personal Advisers made good progress in developing the Personal Adviser role. This could be related, in part at least, to the fact that 8 of the 10 Personal Advisers that were interviewed had previously worked in the school or college in which they were located during the Pilot and were therefore known to staff and students. Indeed, evidence suggests that the Personal Advisers who were new to a school or college found it more difficult to establish themselves and experienced feelings of isolation at the beginning of the Pilot.

757. To some extent, young people were also involved in developing the role of the Personal Adviser. Although this process could, perhaps, have been more inclusive, partners broadly feel that the Pilot has been successful in developing the role of the Personal Adviser

[24] Based on the Cornwall and Devon Connexions Pilot local evaluators report Cornwall and Devon Connexions Pilot: Personal Advisers in Schools and Colleges' produced by Steve Brooking, and interviews with clients Personal Advisers, members of SMTs and Connexions Managers.

around the needs of young people.

758. Other factors are also seen to contribute to the way in which the Personal Adviser role was developed in individual schools and colleges:

- **School context** – for example, resource allocation, the level of student representation and consultation, the nature and extent of pre-existing collaboration activities, involvement in previous initiatives (such as New Start) and curriculum issues (particularly in relation to Key Stage 4).
- **Professional background of the Personal Adviser** – of the 10 Personal Advisers interviewed as part of the local evaluation, three had previously worked as careers advisers in the school in which they were located for the Pilot. Of the remaining seven Personal Advisers, five had previously worked in a non-teaching role in the schools in which they were based. Within the cohort of Personal Advisers, characteristics were evident that concur with the overall objectives of the Connexions service, there was a strong commitment to the school or college serving the community and to encouraging young people to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

7.6.2.3 Recruitment

759. The Personal Adviser theme group circulated the draft job description for the Personal Adviser role to schools, colleges and partner organisations. A total of 55 people from various organisations expressed an interest in the role. Senior Managers in schools and colleges were then given the discretion to appoint a Personal Adviser from the list of applicants.

760. It was a requirement for young people to be involved in the process of recruiting Personal Advisers. However, there is a general feeling that not all schools adhered to these requirements. For example, several schools are reported not to have included young people on their interview panels.

7.6.2.4 Management of Personal Advisers

761. Cornwall and Devon Careers drew up a secondment agreement between the secondee, the employer and themselves in order to clarify the responsibilities of each party.

762. In each school and college, the management of Personal Advisers was undertaken by a member of the Senior Management team, usually the Head teacher or a senior member of the pastoral team. In most cases the importance of joint management and good communication with the Connexions service was recognised by Head teachers.[25] Some Personal Advisers felt it was important to have a supervisor or manager outside of the school or college to allow them to off-load and to prevent 'burn-out'.

763. Schools and colleges then entered into a performance agreement that outlined targets and objectives for the Pilot. Some agencies are not used to working in a performance culture and found it difficult to accept targets. One Personal Adviser from a less contract orientated background originally held concerns about the use of targets but has subsequently found them to be useful in terms of caseload management.

764. Interviews with young people indicated that it is incredibly important that the Personal Adviser is deemed to be independent from the school. Many students commented upon the differences between their teachers and their Personal Adviser: "He [the Personal Adviser]

[25] However, some concerns have been expressed in relation to the deployment of Personal Adviser resources within the school or college. For example, some Head teachers resent the fact that Personal Advisers are line-managed by Connexions and feel they should have responsibility for all the resources within their school or college.

has more time for me", "S/he [the Personal Adviser] doesn't judge me like teachers do".

7.6.2.5 The Location of Personal Advisers

765. Within schools and colleges, it is important for Personal Advisers to have a permanent base. This brings obvious benefits in terms of privacy and access. Personal Advisers also feel that it is important for their accommodation to have an appearance which is conducive to developing an appropriate relationship with young people. The location of the Personal Adviser can also be used to heighten the profile of existing facilities in schools and colleges. For example, one Personal Adviser with a background in Careers Advice has used the Pilot as an opportunity to raise the profile of careers information within the school by moving the careers library (where he is based) into the main library.

7.6.2.6 Partnership Agreements

766. Very broadly, partners feel that a key element of good practice is the openness of communication between partners and their willingness to be flexible in terms of delivery. Personal Advisers must be able to facilitate a team of professionals from numerous organisations to work together effectively for the benefit of a young person. This requires the Personal Adviser to have the confidence and credibility to work with other agencies.

767. The Personal Advisers that were involved in the local evaluation reported that a significant number of young people that are referred to them also have contact with other professional helpers.

768. Although it is difficult to generalise about the agencies with which Personal Advisers work on young people's behalf, they are most likely to include EWOs, Social Services, Health Services, local voluntary and community-based projects and the Benefits Agency.

7.6.2.7 Personal Adviser training, development and support

769. Cornwall and Devon Careers have a track record in developing training for the Personal Adviser role. Experience gained through Learning Gateway and New Start (where Personal Advisers were also based in schools and worked in a multi-agency context) facilitated the induction process greatly. As mentioned above, local training was developed jointly through the Personal Adviser Theme Group by Cornwall Youth Service, Cornwall and Devon Careers and the College of St Mark and St John. Training takes the form a four-day introductory course. This provision is seen to include important local contextual information.

770. A Personal Adviser Handbook was developed for Connexions which is heavily based on previous versions developed for New Start and the Learning Gateway.

771. The need for Personal Adviser support is widely recognised by both Cornwall and Devon Careers and the Personal Advisers themselves. Historically, this form of support has been provided to Personal Advisers employed by Cornwall and Devon Careers through an arrangement with Devon County Council.

7.6.2.8 The role of the Personal Adviser

- **Communication and promotion** - most Personal Advisers have made clear efforts to promote their role within the institution, to both staff and students alike. All Personal Advisers held meetings with key members of staff shortly after their appointment and continue to attend pastoral team meetings (in schools). However, although many of the Personal Advisers were well known within the schools and colleges, many reported difficulties in explaining Connexions concisely.
- **Referrals** – in all cases, it was initially agreed that a key member of the teaching staff would act as a gatekeeper for the Personal Adviser. In some cases, referrals to Personal Advisers can only be made through senior pastoral staff. One Personal

Adviser has taken a more proactive approach and, together with senior teaching staff, has monitored data that is readily available within the school (for example absences and achievement) to identify which students may not be progressing as well as could be expected. Some students have also self-referred themselves to the Personal Adviser. Self-referral is seen to be important in terms of engaging students who do not display the behavioural or attitudinal problems that instigate teacher referral.

- **Assessment** – some Personal Advisers have developed their own versions of an action plan which enables them to monitor and record progress. Formal assessment techniques have not been used during the Pilot.
- **Caseload** - the optimal size for a Personal Adviser's caseload maybe as a low as six clients where intensive support is required. Some young people are reported to need between 30 and 40 hours of Personal Adviser time before a 'breakthrough' is reached.

772. All Personal Advisers recognised the importance of working closely with parents or carers where possible. One Personal Adviser visited a local community centre on a regular basis to allow parents to make contact with him outside of school hours.

773. Young people feel that the following factors distinguish Personal Advisers from other professionals with which they have contact:

- institutional independence (particularly from schools);
- ability to give time;
- ability to help deal with problems themselves as opposed to just signposting them to another agency.

7.6.2.9 The Added Value of the Personal Adviser

774. In general terms, young people talked positively about their relationship with their Personal Adviser and the support, advice and guidance they had received from them. In particular, young people identified the importance of:

- being able to talk to someone about their problems and concerns on a continual basis;
- the accessibility and availability of Personal Advisers;
- receiving help and making or implementing personal and career plans.

775. Several young people identified that their relationship with their Personal Adviser had lead not only to tangible outcomes such as improved attendance and achievement and a careers direction, but also to a range of 'softer' outcomes such as increased motivation, confidence and self-esteem.

776. Personal Advisers have acted as advocates for students within the education system. All of the Personal Advisers involved in the local evaluation referred to cases where they had brokered the relationship between a student and a subject teacher.

777. Teachers recognise the importance of Personal Advisers having time to spend with young people. According to the local evaluator's report, teachers in particular, notice changes in the nature of their relationship with certain students including:

- changes in the body language and behaviour of students working with a Personal Adviser;
- changes in their attitudes to teachers both inside and outside school;
- improvements in attendance;

- improvement in class work, homework and course work.

778. In some cases, teachers have recognised that the Personal Adviser has helped the school to achieve particular objectives, which may not have been possible in the absence of a Personal Adviser.

7.6.2.10 Key learning points:

779. The following key learning points were identified in the Connexions Pilot monitoring reports:

- A diverse cadre of Personal Advisers is seen to be important (in terms of background, skills, experience and approach).
- Some of the 'best' Personal Advisers have no or few formal qualifications.
- Trust is a key element of the relationship between a client and a Personal Adviser.
- Partner organisations must develop a mindset whereby targets and resources are seen to be pooled and the advantages of this approach are recognised.
- While training is imperative, managers need to consider how best to release staff for training while maintaining the accessibility of the service.
- The task that Personal Advisers are undertaking should not be under-estimated by managers and other professionals. Personal Adviser salaries should reflect the fact that Personal Advisers are required to have a considerable skill base and to take on high levels of responsibility.
- Confidentiality is a key issue and Personal Advisers need to be aware of the protocol of the organisation within which they are based and how this relates to that of Connexions.
- The perception that a Personal Adviser is independent of the school or college in which it is based is important to young people.

7.6.2.11 Client case study

780. Sonia (not her real name) became pregnant in Year 10. She decided to keep her baby and wanted to focus on developing a career that would support them both. Careers advice lead Sonia to consider a range of options that were available to her.

781. She decided to take a GNVQ in Health and Social care with the ultimate objective of becoming a midwife. Sonia was introduced to Connexions by the head of pastoral support but already knew her Personal Adviser (who had formerly worked as a Careers Adviser in the college). Since Sonia is part of a supportive family, she has chosen to focus discussions with her Personal Adviser on career prospects. She has applied to, and been accepted by, a nearby University and is looking forward to starting a degree in nursing in September 2001.

782. She particularly valued help from her Personal Adviser in identifying and applying for suitable courses. Sonia felt that she "wouldn't have known where to start" without this help. Her Personal Adviser has also helped her to organise a work experience placement in a local hospital. In terms of less tangible outcomes, Sonia feels that her confidence and communication skills have developed as a result of her involvement with Connexions. One of the aspects of Connexions that she liked most was the way in which her Personal Adviser was realistic about the options open to her in terms of careers. Despite the good relationship that Sonia has developed with her Personal Adviser, she feels that she won't need to keep in touch once she starts university.

7.7 Conclusions

- Most Pilots were working with schools and colleges but few were working with training providers.
- Schools, colleges and training providers were involved in Connexions at all levels – Board level, operational groups, staffing and location.
- The fact that the vast majority of the schools/colleges and training providers that took part in the Pilots volunteered to do so helped to alleviate difficulties in engaging these institutions with the concept of Connexions. Some of the Personal Advisers had previously worked in non-teaching roles in the institutions in which they were based which helped them to develop or build upon relations with young people.
- Overall, the relationship between the Connexions Service, and schools and colleges seems to be working. Pilot Coordinator's rankings in their monthly reports and interviews with Personal Advisers suggest that they were more than satisfied with this relationship. However, most schools and colleges were volunteers and this may affect perceptions.
- The nature of the Personal Adviser role varied both within and between Pilot areas. These differences primarily reflected the local context within which the institution was operating (for example the extent of deprivation in the surrounding community) and the skills, qualities and background of individual Personal Advisers.
- Very broadly, young people were positive about their relationship with their Personal Adviser. Young people mentioned the following aspects of the service when asked what they liked best about Connexions and their Personal Adviser: the Personal Adviser's independence from teaching staff; the accessibility of the Personal Adviser (in particular, the fact that they were located within the school or college); the continuity of support and the fact that the Personal Adviser has both the time and the inclination to help them. The most common forms of support that young people requested from their Personal Adviser was help with specific problems and help with planning for the future (particularly in relation to careers).
- Teaching staff and members of the SMT also expressed positive views about the work of the Personal Adviser in their institution. Although much of the evidence was anecdotal at this stage, there were plenty of good news stories. In many cases, schools reported that the Personal Adviser role had helped them to achieve institutional objectives that they may not otherwise have managed.
- One area of concern was the access of clients to the service. It appears that, initially, Personal Advisers have had to rely on PRU's, SENU's and members of the pastoral team for many of their clients. The school, therefore, was managing the main referral mechanisms. As the Pilot has progressed, there was some evidence to suggest that Personal Advisers were seeking to identify prospective clients themselves. This requires the Personal Adviser to have at their disposal a significant amount of school data (for example SATs, absentee rates, and tutors' reports). It also necessitated closer inter-agency working on behalf of the Personal Adviser.
- Another key concern that lasted for the duration of the Pilot was the issue of confidentiality between Personal Advisers and clients. Some partners and Personal Advisers felt that schools wanted too much information fed back to them about some clients. This placed Personal Advisers in a compromising position and had the potential to undermine the independent position of the Personal Adviser in the eyes of young people.
- Some of the initial concerns that arose early on in the Pilot (in relation to the management and role of Personal Advisers, training and support, and the relationship between Personal Advisers/Connexions and other professionals/services) have (1) either not come to fruition or (2) been avoided or tackled through proactive, innovative and inclusive ways of working which recognised and built upon existing provision.

- The joint management of Personal Advisers by a designated individual within the school/college/training provider on the one hand and Connexions on the other generally worked well. This was particularly likely to be the case where careful planning and effective communication occurs in relation to: the role of the Personal Adviser; working relationships; referrals; and information sharing. Partnership Agreements serve to embed these processes.
- However, some people feel that there are issues, especially the management of Personal Advisers within schools that need continuous monitoring. They may not have arisen yet because of the nature of the Pilot (e.g. schools getting more resources) and because most institutions volunteered. Some schools have initially been hostile to the idea because of 'initiative overload' and the pressures on school SMTs to manage another service.
- There was a concern that the investment within schools, colleges and training providers in the Pilot cannot be sustained in the Phase One and beyond. People's expectations have been raised by Pilot activities (e.g. the provision of a full-time Personal Adviser within their school) and may have to be revised when the full service goes 'live'.
- There was significant evidence of good practice among the Pilots. It is important that this information is captured and communicated effectively at all levels.

7.8 Recommendations

- A lot of effort has been put into engaging and working with schools, colleges and training providers, and this effort needs to be maintained and broadened as the Connexions Service becomes more widespread.
- The credibility of, and trust in, Connexions and the Personal Adviser, needs to be established and maintained especially in relation to other initiatives that have been around for longer.
- There was a strong feeling from some, that schools, colleges and training providers should not manage Personal Advisers. This is so that Personal Advisers can be seen as impartial and able to exercise their role effectively e.g. advocacy on behalf of clients, should not manage Personal Advisers.
- The most demanding young people occupy the vast majority of Personal Advisers time and this has resource implications for the provision of a Universal Service. Personal Adviser's workload needs to be monitored.
- With limited resources and a limit to the numbers of Personal Advisers, it will be important to explore other ways of Service provision to young people in schools.
- There is still a need to communicate effectively the role and responsibilities of Personal Advisers based in schools and colleges. In some pilot areas there was much confusion as to the nature of the Personal Adviser role among partners, other professionals, school and college staff and young people.
- There is a need to understand and work with agencies and services already delivering in schools, colleges and training providers. It needs to complement these services and agencies.
- Partnership or Service Level Agreements are an important tool in defining and formalising the relationship between Connexions and schools, colleges and training providers and should be developed.
- The need to build on and extend quality standards.
- School staff, especially teachers, need to become more aware of Connexions and the role of the Personal Adviser.
- CSNU should identify where gaps in information exist (and where there is too much), what the most effective way is of informing all relevant people and devising a strategy for improved sharing and cross fertilisation of good/interesting practice.

- The access of clients to the service needs to develop as, in some cases, the school was managing the main referral mechanisms to Personal Advisers, which may compromise their independence.
- The issue of confidentiality between Personal Advisers, clients and schools needs to be addressed. Under what circumstances should Personal Advisers pass on information when the school (or any other organisation) requests it.
- The management of Personal Advisers within schools needs continuous monitoring to identify and address any issues that may arise.

8 Working With Sub-groups of Young People

8.1 Introduction

783. This section reports on the work that Pilots had done with specific sub-groups of young people. This strand was within the remit of local evaluations and is largely based on local evaluation reports from Central London, Coventry and Warwickshire, Huntercombe, Lewisham, Lincolnshire, and South Yorkshire.[26] It also uses good practice case studies of services delivered to young offenders and teenage parents, and information from the monthly monitoring reports, all undertaken by the national evaluators.

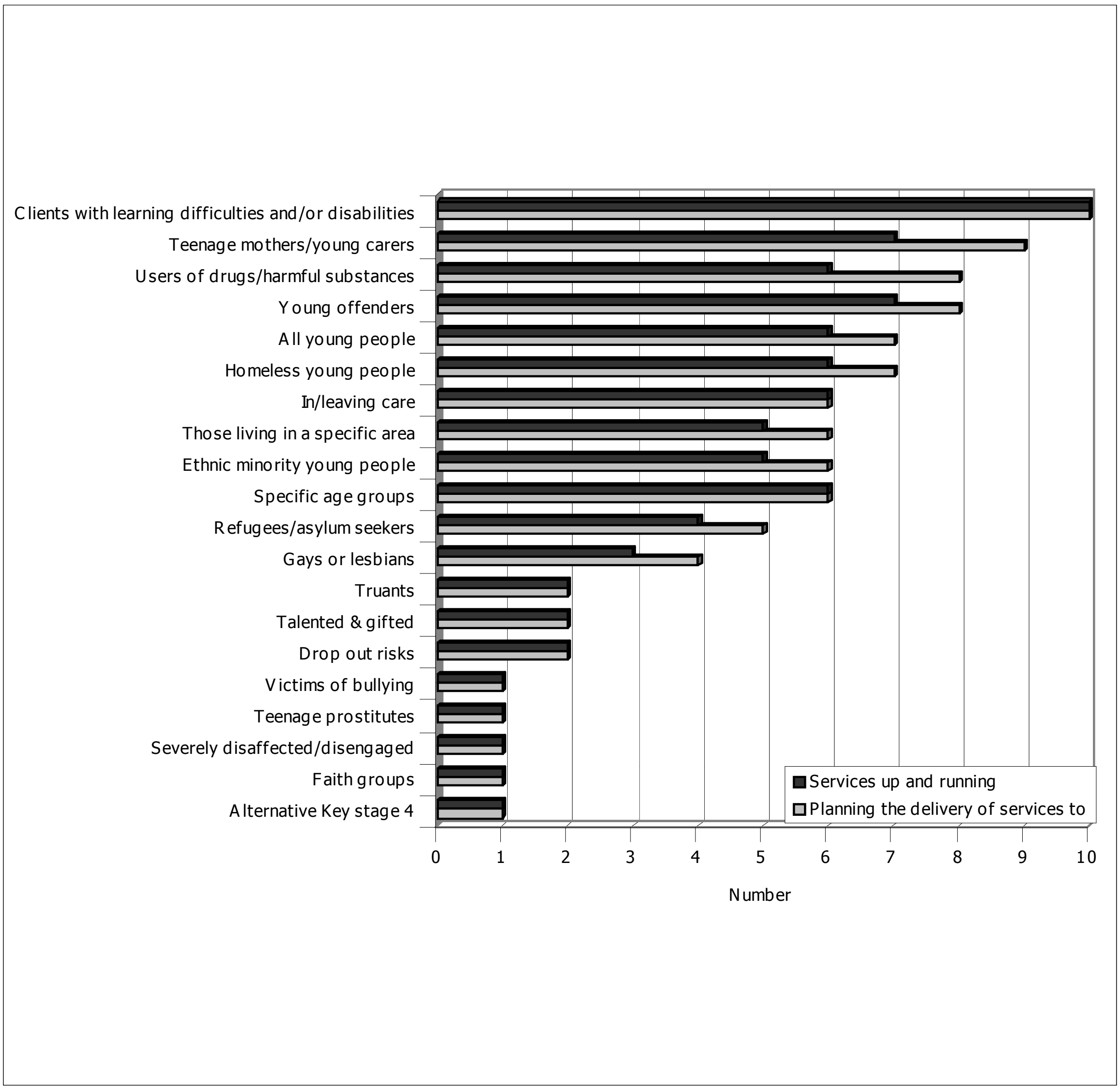
8.2 Background

784. The Connexions Pilots are delivering a wide range of services to different sub-groups of young people, as Figure 35 shows.

785. In the monthly monitoring reports (beginning November 2000 and finishing March 2001), Pilots were asked to choose, from a list, which groups of young people they were targeting their services at and whether these services were presently up and running. The list excluded some groups of young people that some people felt were in need of targeted support. The most obvious group omitted from the list were services to care leavers and young people in care (see Section 3 for a good practice case study of a service directed specifically at care leavers).

[26] The local evaluators are, respectively, Central London, Deirdre Hughes, Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS), University of Derby, Elaine Cox and Linet Arthur of the Westminster Institute for Education at Oxford-Brookes University, Tim Barnes of Thinking for a Living, Deirdre Hughes CeGS, and Simon Bysshe also of CeGS.

Figure 35 Connexions services to sub-groups of young people



Source: March's Monthly Monitoring Report

786. Table 49 plots the development of services to disadvantaged groups of young people throughout the Pilot. By March, there were a total of 65 distinct services up and running across the Pilots. Clients with learning difficulties or disabilities and teenage mothers/carers were the sub-groups that saw most developments in services.

Table 49 Focus of services on groups of young people

	November		December		January		February		March	
	Planning to deliver	Up and running	Planning to deliver	Up and running	Planning to deliver	Up and running	Planning to deliver	Up and running	Planning to deliver	Up and running
Clients with learning difficulties/ disabilities	4	4	7	7	9	8	10	9	10	10
Homeless young people	4	4	5	5	8	7	8	6	7	6
All young people	6	5	6	5	8	6	7	6	7	6
Refugees/ asylum seekers	3	3	4	4	7	7	5	5	5	4
Specific age groups	3	3	5	5	6	6	7	7	6	6
Young offenders	4	4	6	6	6	5	5	5	8	7
Black and Minority Ethnic young people	4	3	5	4	5	5	6	6	6	5
Teenage mothers/ young carers	4	3	4	3	4	3	7	6	9	7
Those living in a specific area	4	3	3	2	4	3	5	4	6	5
Young lesbians and/or gays	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	3
Users of drugs/ harmful substances	3	3	3	3	2	2	5	5	8	6
No. of Pilots	10		12		13		13		13	

Source: November to March's Monthly Monitoring Report

787. This section focuses on services delivered to the following sub-groups of young people:

- clients with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;
- homeless young people;
- young offenders;
- refugees/asylum seekers;
- young Black and Minority Ethnic people;
- teenage mothers/young carers;
- young users of drugs and harmful substances.

788. However, many of the issues faced by these groups apply to other disadvantaged groups of young people as well, especially the balance between a universal and targeted

service, which is another feature of this section.

8.3 Working with sub-groups of young people

8.3.1 Introduction

789. Many Pilots were working with particular issues facing specific sub-groups of clients. For example, one Pilot was focusing on Black and ethnic minority 13-16 year olds who are excluded or at risk of being excluded from mainstream education.

790. Few Pilots were able to identify (at the time of interview) the size of many specific groups they were focusing on and what proportion their service was focusing on. This was because many had not completed their mapping exercise or, for those who had, accurate information was not available.

791. One Pilot was able to count the number and proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic young people, clients with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, teenage mothers/young carers and homeless young people (in one LMC area). It was not able to provide a figure for young lesbians or gay people or refugees/asylum seekers. Information about young offenders and users of drugs/harmful substances was being collected at the time but wasn't available.

8.3.2 Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

8.3.2.1 Introduction

792. Two Pilot local evaluators had evaluated services to young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDDs). One Pilot was focusing on providing continuity of support for 13-19 year olds, particularly at points of transition as well as testing out systems for supporting young people with Learning Difficulties in mainstream schools (this involved four Personal Advisers). The other Pilot had placed a Personal Adviser in a Special School.

793. The main resource elements in these services were the Personal Advisers themselves, and their management training and support.

8.3.2.2 Specific requirements of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

794. The evaluation identified a series of requirements for various facets of supporting clients with LDDs:

- **Delivery** – the need to provide high quality information, support, guidance and advocacy on behalf of the client group. For some pupils (especially EBDs) the fact that they are in school is a barrier for them. Health and safety issues affect delivery venues and techniques (e.g. transporting young people and home visit rules). There is a diversity of needs within this client group and a diversity of venues where clients are found (e.g. special schools, integrated resource and mainstream schools). It needs central management/co-ordination to provide flexible, responsive support.
- **Access** – ensuring systems are in place to enable Personal Advisers to attend transition reviews and to share responsibility for the implementation of the transition plan with Head teachers, integrating service delivery as several agencies can be involved, and developing systems which facilitate ongoing involvement.
- **Nature of the service -** providing access to an independent, impartial, supportive, individualised service to all young people within the client group. In the special schools there is no real 'catchment' area so geographical activity is harder to organise. Information <u>is</u> available about the range of support/services and support is available to access them, providing advocacy and brokerage support regarding employment,

education and training opportunities.

- **Tracking** - understanding the role of the various agencies etc. and providing appropriate advocacy/brokerage on behalf of the individual clients.
- **Inclusion in service design** – is essential but may be limited by communication difficulties in an open/group situation, it is better on an individual basis. However, in one LMC area clients with LDDs have been involved in service design and development through focus groups, participation projects and direct involvement with decision-makers.
- **Representation** – achieving appropriate representation for young people, giving them opportunities to represent themselves and/or a choice in who represents them, and meeting the need for appropriate training and support in order to increase the effectiveness of their representation.
- **Marketing** - developing awareness of the Connexions and Personal Adviser role amongst professionals in the multi-agency network. Using oral rather than written communications, and considering the effect of Data Protection legislation and Human Rights legislation on marketing.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – appropriate follow-up and regular contact. The type of materials used, the use of third parties to advocate/support/interpret, and subjectivity in analysing the results. Other agencies want to track clients up to the age of 25 rather than 19.
- **Communication** – using appropriate systems and materials which are accessible to clients (e.g. language level, format – Braille, audio, signs and symbols), developing relationships of trust between clients and parents/carers. Working with and gaining access to parents is an issue. Communicating with school staff and pupils will need to be handled sensitively.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** - management support and appropriate training programmes need to be developed to support the work of Personal Advisers and a short, concise job description would assist in networking with other agencies. Personal Adviser training needs to be targeted at appropriate levels. Management support in one area is provided by a SEN practitioner/specialist, and Personal Adviser training has covered anger management and counselling.

8.3.2.3 Overcoming barriers for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

795. Various ways have been developed to address these issues:

- **Delivery** – developing links with LEA, Social Services, Health Services, Parents/Carers and clients, and developing a multi agency framework to support transition planning which clearly defines the role of Connexions.
  Practical things to improve delivery and take-up include greater advocacy and brokerage on behalf of clients. Comprehensive mapping of provision is leading to more consistent access to a wider range of provision, including social inclusion opportunities, trying to develop out-of-school activity, using different approaches to meet individual need, structured activity as well as drop in/counselling support, referral and inclusion of other agencies (voluntary, community and statutory), the use of mentors, using job and FE course 'taster' sessions, the involvement of pupils (Personal Advisers were developing school councils in each school), building relationships with pupils and key staff with influence in school (meeting in schools between Social Service workers and other support professionals), organising interesting trips and activities (e.g. Youth Club, girls group, Earth Environment Centre and pottery), and investigation of LEA systems and how they can be added to by Personal Adviser role.
- **Access** - developing the role of Personal Adviser in Special Schools to work on transition and subsequent reviews, and developing the Personal Adviser role with individual clients and parents/carers in school.
- **Nature of the service** - providing impartial information and guidance on opportunities post 16+, identifying a wide range of support available (e.g. from the VCS, Social

Services, health services etc.), broadening opportunities for social inclusion via links with the Youth Service and young carers project, and generally working across schools and the other strands. Involving young people in planning, networking between colleges, the Careers and Youth Services, use of peer mentors, post-16 'tasters' and in-depth information, advice and support.
- **Tracking** - making information and support available via one-to-one contact with the young person and parents/carers, involving parents in advisory groups together with developing links with other agencies, and using ASPIRE.
- **Inclusion in service design** – there has been a longitudinal study of previous year's school-leavers focusing on what support they feel they needed, focus group with previous year's leavers, focus group with current Year 10s and 11s, parents/carers involved in Pilot advisory group, use of Viewpoint (a software package developed specifically to work with clients with LDDs).
- **Representation** - encouraging more effective involvement, building skills to increase confidence, and much work being undertaken to ensure the representativeness of youth forums etc.
- **Marketing** - involvement in a multi-agency group focused on providing written information about transition planning, multi-agency training, especially regarding roles and responsibilities. Making representations to a range of forum e.g. parents/ carers/guardians groups, SENCO's meetings and in other partner agencies.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - looking at the issue of continuity and support through to age 25. Planning schools evaluation and parents evaluation in some institutions, evaluation base lining exercises completed in a Special School, ongoing monitoring through joint management arrangements, and developing an MIS.
- **Communication** - production of written materials and a training framework, development of formal and informal networks, with parents at SEN reviews, student meetings, newsletters to schools, reviews with school staff and joint meetings with other agencies.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** – the current Diploma training needs to be developed to include a greater focus on clients with LDDs, specialist training on LDD issues must be developed. Induction and other in-house training for Personal Adviser have been undertaken.

8.3.2.4 Added value to services for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

796. The added value identified through working with clients with LDDs were:

- using art as a medium for change, previously staffing levels would not have enabled this;
- additional resources in school to alleviate pressures on teaching staff;
- the mapping of needs and gaps in provision is being fed back into service providers and will lead to better provision;
- the strengthening of multi-agency links and better understanding between partners;
- the development of alternative curriculum in a non-threatening manner;
- recording of positive outcomes onto a Record of Achievement;
- enhanced awareness of post-16 issues;
- developing links to other supportive organisations and providers of services to enhance and complement each other's work.

8.3.3 Homeless young people

8.3.3.1 Introduction

797. Two Pilots' local evaluators had evaluated services to homeless young people. One Pilot had placed a Personal Adviser within homelessness projects. The other Pilot focused on 'structural' and systematic issues i.e. how to get existing agencies to work <u>for</u> young people, and to help 'fast track' the homeless. One Pilot had nine full-time Personal Advisers

working on this strand and the other had one and a half FTE Personal Advisers.

8.3.3.2 Specific requirements of homeless young people

798. These Pilots highlighted the specific issues raised in delivering services to homeless young people:

- **Delivery** – providing appropriate and up-to-date information about the range of services available (e.g. a bed bank) and the requirements of legislation (e.g. assessment under the Children's Act), effective partnership working and involvement of clients to highlight gaps in provision, raising awareness of the needs of this subgroup, and the development of systems and structures, protocols and training for this particular subgroup.
- **Access** – developing an area-wide service that is based in the city centre but accessible to all homeless young people.
- **Nature of the service** – providing an independent, impartial, supportive environment to provide motivational triggers to re-engage, and developing a service that is not based on one agency but works in partnership to develop a 'needs-led' service.
- **Tracking** - to understand what different services/agencies provide, problems in tracking particular groups of homeless clients e.g. 'sofa surfers', developing protocols to identify young people as they become homeless and then get housing across a range of agencies and reduce the risk of double counting.
- **Inclusion in service design** - creating opportunities for young people to influence the direction of the service. The make-up of the group will be fluid as young people are temporarily homeless and then move to permanent accommodation.
- **Representation** - to allow homeless young people to have the opportunity to represent themselves and have a choice in their representatives, and having effective representation to address choices and issues.
- **Marketing** – the most effective would be local word of mouth.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - continual assessment because of the fluid nature of the client group.
- **Communication** – to deal with a fluid client group that has no fixed address, addressing e.g. literacy issues, and the maze of housing needs.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** – for Personal Advisers to understand and be able to contextualise information around this client group. To be well informed in this specialist area, addressing the levels of varied support required. Co-ordinating different services, being able to arrange and engage with the client in a range of environments, and assessing need in a holistic manner.

8.3.3.3 Overcoming barriers for homeless young people

799. Various ways have been developed to address these issues:

- **Delivery** – establishing a multi-agency agreement between Connexions and agencies that support homeless young people, having partnerships and protocols that ensure a diversity of delivery to meet a diverse need, and basing specific projects in appropriate locations e.g. a centre for homeless young people.
- **Access** - identifying a base that would deliver a service that would be impartial of other housing projects, to meet clients on their own ground, providing in-depth counselling, ensuring there is city-wide provision, and developing multi-agency approaches.
- **Nature of the service** - to deliver a service that is impartial and supportive, and to promote the needs of homeless young people through negotiation with agencies from the VCS through to the statutory sector, ensuring a multi-agency strategy towards support for homeless young people, and providing in-depth information, advice and support.
- **Tracking** - investigating previous tracking mechanisms (i.e. from shelters, housing projects), building on existing protocols between housing, health and education,

analysing how Connexions Customer Information Systems and protocols could be implemented across the age range, and using the ASPIRE client system.

- **Inclusion in service design** - developing a partnership between two youth hostels, and developing a youth focus group. Young people working with a homeless project have produced a training pack on "being homeless" (aimed at staff and elected members and used to help induct/train new Personal Advisers). The Homeless Project Manager drafted the homelessness section of mapping exercise.
- **Representation** - analysing a process so that a young person could voice their own needs to the advisory groups, and those of their peers.
- **Marketing** - mapping current provision and the services available, having marketed the Pilot area to housing projects through meetings and networking, and involved Social Services, Probation Service, Youth Service and Careers Service so they are aware of what we are doing.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - developing a Model of Delivery that would be ideal to the development of a youth homeless strategy, developing practical, monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure what works is kept in place and what doesn't is revised, and the use of MIS and other data so there is ongoing monitoring through joint management arrangements.
- **Communication** - developing a system and structures framework in partnership with the local authority and voluntary sector housing, producing a Connexions Newsletter, developing the client focus groups, held reviews with project staff, and joint meetings with partner agencies.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** – need to address the fact that current training does not cover the Personal Adviser role for this client group, need to analyse the role of the Personal Adviser in working with homeless young people, and have used a training pack developed by homeless young people (see above) for Personal Adviser induction training.

8.3.3.4 Added value to services for homeless young people

800. The added value that the work of the Connexions Pilots has had on homeless young people has been in the area of multi-agency working, improving the level of awareness between the various agencies, developing support networks and enhancing existing Connexions Customer Information Systems. Homeless young people were also receiving more one-to-one support, including counselling, especially in negotiating the complexities of the benefits and housing system.

801. The following case study is based on a report from a Personal Adviser working in a Foyer in a Pilot area.

Case Study: Personal Adviser in a Foyer

Progress to date

The Personal Adviser took up her post at the Foyer at the start of December. A full induction took place during December for the Personal Adviser to familiarise herself with Foyer policies, staff and residents, to gain an insight into the role of the Careers Service and Connexions, and to begin to network with other agencies.

In January, the Personal Adviser commenced work with a caseload of 17 Foyer residents aged 16-18 year old. Four of these young people have considerable difficulties that have a profound effect on their lives. She is working very closely with these young people on a 1:1 basis.

The Personal Adviser has started to work with other Foyer staff to identify a wide range of life skills, education, training and leisure and cultural needs that are presented by the young people. She is working with other staff to set up a range of activities and events designed to meet these needs. The young people are also actively involved in this process.

Good Practice

- The Personal Adviser understood the importance of gaining the trust not only of the young people but also of the other staff. Some of the Personal Adviser's clients were transferred to her caseload from their key workers.
- Although developing specialist knowledge and skills in working with the 16-18 age group, the Personal Adviser has also recognised a need to link with young people in their early twenties. This could lead to some valuable peer education work.
- The Personal Adviser is working closely with the Foyer Training and Employment Officer to develop the life skills provisions and to seek to reduce the number of unemployed residents, currently 1:3 of the wider age group.

Relevant Issues

- Establishing a clear role for a 16-18 year old Personal Adviser within a Foyer setting.
- Working with colleagues to agree professional remits and any boundaries.
- Getting to know the young people, listening to their wants and needs and actively involving them in the whole decision-making process.
- The extent to which the Personal Adviser can and should network with agencies in the accommodation and housing sector and with other support agencies in the wider network. This is still under review within the project.

The Learning So Far

- The Foyer itself provides a safe place for live-in accommodation that is of a good standard.
- The Personal Adviser has been received positively by staff and the young people.
- A Personal Adviser is on site to support young people in the many and varied issues that arise and which cannot necessarily be resolved by other team members. This is a valuable addition and could further extend the current services available.
- It is vital to involve the young people in the choices of activities and events that are open to them.

8.3.4 Young offenders

8.3.4.1 Introduction

802. One Pilot's local evaluators had evaluated services to young offenders. This was in addition to the work which was being undertaken (and evaluated) at Huntercombe Young Offender's Institute (YOI).[27] The work of Connexions at Huntercombe YOI was the focus of a good practice case study and is written up as such below.

803. In Huntercombe, two Personal Advisers have been attached to the Casework team. In the second Pilot, three Personal Advisers have been based within a YOT and in supporting 'safe driving' initiatives.

8.3.4.2 Specific requirements of young offenders

804. These Pilots highlighted the specific issues raised in delivering services to young offenders:

[27] The Connexions Pilot at Huntercombe is being evaluated by Elaine Cox and Linet Arthur of Oxford-Brookes University.

- **Delivery** – there are a variety of other agencies involved with their own roles and responsibilities, including statutory powers, and there is the issue of access if clients are sent to a YOI. Clients tend to have a range of other needs as well e.g. drug abuse, the need for awareness of the particular issues affecting this subgroup, and relationship between support professionals at the different stages of a DTO.
- **Access** – delivering services in a YOI, the movement of young offenders out of their community.
- **Natures of the service – the vast majority of clients are** 'hard-to-help'. The 'stigma' attached to young offenders by some other young people and professionals, the need for partnership working, the need to recognise other systems especially the YJS, and provision of a client-focused service that can address multiple disadvantages.
- **Tracking** – following the client between different agencies and institutions, and the different needs of various institutions.
- **Inclusion in service design** – the client group is fluid as they offend, serve the DTO, go back to their communities, do not re-offend or do re-offend, the short period of time they are involved with a YOT or a YOI.
- **Representation** – the need for effective representation given the hard-to-help and disaffected nature of many in the client group and their fluid nature.
- **Marketing** – has to be effectively marketed to partner agencies and other support professionals.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - continual assessment because of the nature of the client group.
- **Communication** – addressing e.g. literacy issues, the fluid nature of young offenders.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** – for Personal Advisers to understand the YJS and the role of other professionals and agencies, to work in an unusual environment with particular circumstances (e.g. in a YOI the rate of suicide is much greater than with many other client groups).

8.3.4.3 Overcoming barriers for young offenders

805. Various ways have been developed to address the particular needs of this client group:

- **Delivery** – delivering through YOTs and in a YOI, and working with motor projects.
- **Access** – placing Personal Advisers within YOTs and the YOI.
- **Nature of the service** – providing in-depth information, advice and support, using YOT and other YJS assessment tools, utilising multi-agency approaches already established in YOTs and the YOI, and undertaking outreach work.
- **Tracking** – using ASPIRE, and exploring the possibility of creating a shared database.
- **Inclusion in service design** – young people have been surveyed about the development of a Connexions Certificate as a means of accrediting work undertaken and achieved by YOT clients, there has been a survey of young offenders in the YOI to incorporate their views into service design and delivery.
- **Representation** – co-ordination of community-based youth action groups, and surveys of clients to obtain feedback on the quality of the service provided.
- **Marketing** – promoting within partner organisations, presentations to other support professionals, and producing leaflets for young people and their parents/carers explaining the role of Personal Advisers within the YJS.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - evaluation base-lining exercises completed by the local evaluators, ongoing monitoring through joint management arrangements, use of MIS, and existing mechanisms e.g. training reviews.
- **Communication** – creating a newsletter for schools to explain this aspect of the Connexions Service, and joint meetings with partner agencies.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers -** induction joint training with Careers Service and YOTs, induction to explain the YJS and the YOI, and specific ad hoc training e.g.

suicide awareness, health and safety etc.

8.3.4.4 Added value to services for young offenders

806. The added value that the work of the Connexions Pilots has had on young offenders has been in providing additional resources and services, especially regarding careers advice and guidance to this particular group. Greater linkages between the different stages of the YJS. Enhanced multi-agency working that has improved the level of awareness between the various agencies including regular multi -disciplinary team meetings held within the YOT and the YOI. The development of practice guidance relating to the disclosure of information for all staff. Added value of joint case working to ensure that all YOT clients have access to someone who is familiar with their case. Increased working between Connexions, YOTs and YOIs.

8.3.5 Good Practice Case Study: delivering the Connexions service to young offenders – Huntercombe YOI Pilot

807. One Connexions Pilot was focusing on developing the role of the Connexions Service within a Youth Offending Institution (YOI). The case study is based on the local evaluators report, and interviews with clients, Personal Advisers, the Pilot Co-ordinator and key Pilot partners.

8.3.5.1 Introduction

808. Huntercombe is a Young Offenders Institute (YOI) located in Oxfordshire, near Henley-on-Thames. Huntercombe YOI is the focus of a Connexions Service Pilot focusing on the delivery of the Connexions Service to young offenders in a YOI.

809. Huntercombe YOI is within the Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Connexions Partnership area (MOB). MOB Connexions began as a Phase One service in April 2001, it was not a Pilot area.

810. The Management Board provides overall supervision. It includes representatives from Huntercombe YOI, Oxfordshire and Lambeth YOTs, Thames Valley Police, Thames Valley Partnership, CfBT Careers Service and Oxfordshire Youth Service. The Board has an independent Chair. The Pilot is also considering including a housing representative, as this is an important area of concern for young offenders.

811. The catchment area for Huntercombe YOI is all of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Berkshire, parts of Northamptonshire, and about half of London. The average custodial part of the sentence is 5 months.

8.3.5.2 The Youth Justice System

812. The Youth Justice System, which covers all juveniles aged 10-18, is managed and administered by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). Every local authority has a Youth Offending Team (YOT) and they would follow the young person through the Youth Justice system. The YOT is a statutory service ultimately reporting to the YJB. It is funded partly by partners and by the YJB.

813. YOTs are themselves multi-agency teams. For example, one YOT within Huntercombe's catchment area comprises three Police Officers, five Social Workers, one drugs worker, one education worker, one Probation Service worker and two administrators, as well as having access to other support workers e.g. a specialist dyslexia worker.

814. If a young person is charged, the Police must notify their local YOT who will assign a YOT worker. The YOT worker supports the young person after they have been charged,

through their appearances in court, being sentenced, at the YOI and when they return to their local community. A YOT worker would assess the young person at various stages of this process, completing a pre-sentencing (PSR), a post-charge (PCR) and Assett report. YOT workers also undertake other work with young people, for example, working with young people who are at risk of offending.

8.3.5.3 Huntercombe YOI

815. Huntercombe is a vocational training centre, a prospective 'secure college'.[28] All inmates are referred to as trainees, all trainees are male. It hosts 360 15-18 year olds, most of whom have been served Detention and Training Orders (DTOs).[29] It also hosts more serious young offenders who, had they been an adult, would have served sentences of 14 years or more, these offenders are called Section 91s. About 85% of trainees are serving DTOs, the remainders are Section 91s. The Pilot deals mainly with DTOs.

816. The YOI runs a large education and training programme. The training programme's range from vocational training in construction, engineering and motor vehicle repair trades through gardens, and library skills (mostly NVQ 1 and 2). Trainees can choose GCSE courses in English and Maths as well as other education courses e.g. Art and Design, Spanish, Social and Life Skills. There is also a large Basic Skills programme as many trainees have literacy and numeracy problems. There is also a range of work experience options as well.

817. When a trainee arrives at Huntercombe, their general support, education and training needs are assessed. Huntercombe has developed its own 'toolkit' of assessment tools including the Morrisbury Psychometric test, the Basic Skills Agency test, the Suffolk Reading Test and the NFER Maths test.

818. An action plan is then developed with the trainee, their parent/guardian, their caseworker/Personal Adviser (see below), YOT worker and any other professional that may be appropriate e.g. a psychologist. If the objectives of this action plan were agreed the trainee would then begin working towards this plan.

819. Whilst in Huntercombe there are regular meetings between client and caseworker/Personal Adviser, and with their YOT worker and parent/guardian to review progress towards the action plan.

8.3.5.4 Connexions in Huntercombe

820. The objective of the Huntercombe Pilot is to pilot the delivery of a Connexions service within a YOI. Within this its operational objectives are to develop:

- the role of the Personal Adviser working with young people in a YOI.
- the relationship between the Personal Adviser and other support professionals (especially YOT workers, caseworkers and Personal Wing Officers).
- more effective systems so that information about young offenders can be more effectively communicated between support professionals and agencies.
- Connexions Customer Information Systems to assist support professionals as trainees move between home and the YOI.
- means by which trainees can be effectively involved in developing and designing the Connexions Service.

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[28] Secure College is the name of a bid to the YJB to fund additional and better accommodation, facilities and staff time for trained education and training.

[29] A DTO is served in two parts. Half of which is spent at a YOI under the supervision of prison staff and half of which is spent back in the trainee's community under the supervision of a YOT worker. For example, if a trainee was sentenced to a DTO of 12 months, the first six months would be spent at a YOI.

821. The project, which will run to September 2002, employs a full-time Project Manager; two Personal Advisors, an Administrator and an IT Project Worker. There is also a Youth Service worker seconded to look at how trainees can be involved in the design and delivery of the Connexions service.

8.3.5.5 Support for young people at Huntercombe

822. Huntercombe already employs a Casework team, which provides many of the functions of a Personal Adviser. The caseworker is a role unique to Huntercombe. At most other YOIs, a Personal Wing Officer, a Prison Officer, would meet the support needs of trainees. The drawback with this system is that the Personal Wing Officers are Prison staff and they have other Prison duties to perform; they are also wing based so if a trainee moves to another wing they cannot continue with that support.

823. Caseworkers are dedicated support workers usually with no other duties e.g. Prison duties. Caseworkers can also move between Wings with trainees. However, they do not receive additional dedicated training in their role as caseworkers.

824. The two Connexions Personal Advisers are based within the Casework team. This team is 21 strong, 17 have a criminal justice background and four (including the Personal Advisers) have a civilian role. All caseworkers are full-time. The Caseworker team comprises:

- 11 Prison Officer caseworkers
- three YOT caseworkers (with a remit for child protection)
- three Probation caseworkers (who do group work as well)
- two Civilian caseworkers (with a psychology background and no security remit)
- two Connexions caseworker Personal Advisers.

825. The Connexions Personal Advisers are members of two teams, Connexions and the Casework team. They attend Connexions and Casework team meetings and also have two managers.

8.3.5.6 Personal Advisers

826. Two Personal Advisers were appointed through an open recruitment process. One Personal Adviser has a career service background (including working in a Learning Gateway) and the other, who is more experienced, used to work in the Probation Service. The two best candidates were chosen; the recruitment panel was not looking for this particular split in experience and background.

827. Training has been a critical element in the development of the Personal Advisers. They underwent an initial two week induction session which introduced them to Connexions and the role of the Personal Adviser, as well as the Youth Justice System and the rules and procedures of the YOI. There have also been one-off dedicated training sessions in, for example, working with victims of abuse, suicide awareness and break away (from an attacker) training. Both Personal Advisers are also undertaking the National Diploma.

828. The Personal Advisers have initial caseloads of 13 trainees each, whilst undertaking the Personal Adviser Diploma. This will increase to about 15 once this training has been completed. Prison Officer caseworkers have caseloads of about 25 trainees each, whilst YOT workers deal with about 5 cases each.

829. The main element of a Personal Adviser's work with clients is to provide one-to-one support and assistance to their clients. They are also involved with the monthly training plan, review meetings between the trainee, his parents/guardians and the YOT worker.

Personal Advisers also have a research role, which is to develop the Personal Adviser role in a YOI by exploring what happens elsewhere and identifying good practice.

8.3.5.7 The Connexions Personal Adviser Model

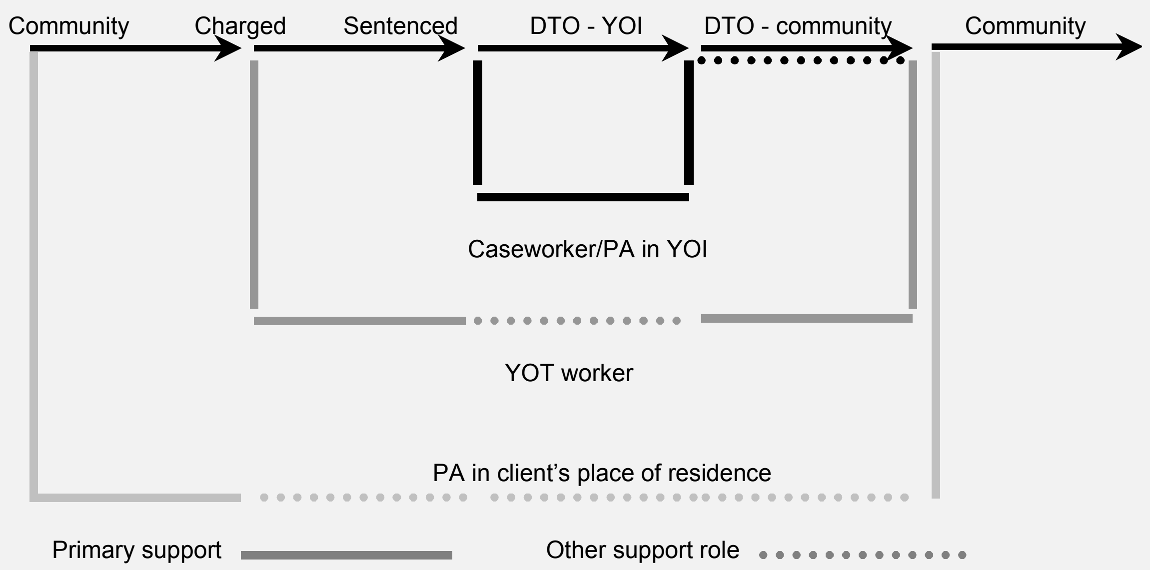
830. The Personal Adviser model in Huntercombe has been described as a caseworker plus model. One of the limitations of caseworkers (Prison Officer, YOT etc.) is that they have other roles and responsibilities. For example, if there is a shortage of Prison Staff on a particular shift then Prison Officer caseworkers may have to perform non-casework tasks. Similarly, the YOT workers are not full-time. However, the Personal Advisers are dedicated to their role, which they perform full-time.

831. Another difference is that Personal Advisers receive far more training (and dedicated training) in their role as a Personal Adviser caseworker. Personal Advisers also have more time to attend community reviews and this may help in the transition of the trainee from the YOI back to the community.[30]

832. Finally, part of the Personal Advisers function at Huntercombe (and of the Connexions Service there generally) is to explore further the role of the Personal Adviser within a YOI. Also the key points of transition within the Youth Justice System and the various other professionals i.e. when the young person is charged, sentenced, sent to a YOI, returns to the community, finishes the DTO and beyond.

833. The diagram below shows a young person's progress through the Youth Justice system and the main support professionals involved at each stage.

Young person's progress through the YJS



Source: Huntercombe YOI Connexions Pilot

834. When a young person is charged with committing an offence they are assigned a YOT worker (a YOT worker may be involved before this stage e.g. if a young person was a previous offender/at risk of offending and they were involved in a YOT offending prevention

[30] When the custodial part of a DTO is served a trainee will be returned to his community to serve the second part. In the first month there is a community review including the YOT workers, the young person, the parents/guardians and the caseworker. However, it is unusual for a caseworker to attend this meeting because of pressure of work.

initiative).

835. The YOT worker assesses and supports the young person at this stage. If served a DTO and sent to Huntercombe YOI, the principal support responsibility would pass from the YOT worker to the caseworker/Personal Adviser. However, the YOT worker would still be involved with the young person at monthly review meetings etc. (indicated by the dashed line).

836. When the YOI part of the DTO is concerned the support passes back to the YOT worker, but the caseworker/Personal Adviser would still be involved at the first community review.

837. The young person would receive support outside the YJS from a Personal Adviser as any other client would receive universal or targeted support e.g. in schools, in youth centres etc. But they would have to link in with the YOT worker and the caseworker/Personal Advisers whilst the young person is in the YJS. This is one of the fundamental issues that the Pilot is trying to address is how Connexions within a YOI relates to Connexions in the wider world and vice versa. Two models are being explored:

- firstly, Connexions Personal Advisers work within YOT teams in a specialist advice and guidance role (i.e. as careers advice and guidance specialists in the same way that there are drugs workers); Personal Advisers provide this specialist function but also serve as a link between the YOT and the wider Connexions team developing communications, protocols and raising awareness of the Connexions service and the wider support network as a whole. They may also develop community or school/college based Connexions/YOT services for young people at risk of offending, re-offending or at risk of being a victim. They would continue with this support (although necessarily at a distance) whilst the young person is in a YOI in association with the YOI caseworker/Personal Adviser and the YOT worker.
- a second model (which may be in addition and complementary to the first model) is a dedicated Youth Justice System Personal Adviser within the Connexions service. They would have the responsibility for liasing and linking in with the YOT and supporting the young person (from a distance) whilst they are in custody, and is there when the young person returns to the community.

838. A key issue is what happens at the transition points? For example:

- Does a YOT or other support worker have to notify the community based Personal Adviser if a young person is charged in the same way?, as the Police have to notify the YOT worker.
- Which information do support workers have to pass on to each other and in what forms? Personal Advisers and caseworkers within the YOI are not allowed to take paperwork out of the YOI e.g. to community review meetings. Do support workers have to meet face-to-face, with or without the young person?
- How do the different systems (YJB and Connexions) relate to each other outside and within the YOI? The YJS has its own defined procedures and processes.
- What are the potential areas for confusion when at least four professional support workers are involved at various stages?
- What is the relationship between the community or school based Personal Adviser when the DTO has been served? If the Personal Adviser becomes aware that their client may be at risk of re-offending should they notify the YOT worker?

- How and when are other support workers (e.g. family mediation workers) brought into the process? What happens if different professionals have varied views on the support needs of the young person?

839. Many of these issues are not confined to young people in the YJS but apply to other areas especially when clients and potential clients have multiple support needs e.g. care leavers that involve other support professionals.

840. The Huntercombe Pilot is that they are exploring these issues in detail. For example, a Personal Adviser is working with Lewisham YOT to discuss a transition model; there are plans to experiment with overlapping models of transition, structured programmes of one-to-one intervention and a Connexions assessment tool.

8.3.5.8 Supervision and Support

841. Personal Advisers and caseworkers at Huntercombe work with clients who often face multiple disadvantages. Support and supervision is essential to the success of this role. As far as the Personal Advisers are concerned, they have regular Connexions and Casework team and management meetings. They also have a supervisor who they could discuss casework issues with. The Personal Advisers have received induction and other specific training as well as the national Diploma. There is also counselling available via the Home Office.

8.3.5.9 Involvement of young people in design and delivery

842. The Huntercombe Pilot is also looking at ways of involving trainees in the design and delivery of the service. The Pilot appointed a dedicated worker to explore these issues who has been seconded from her role as Citizenship and Democracy Worker from the Oxfordshire Youth Service.

843. The work to date has mostly focused on interviewing about 100 trainees in structured one-to-one interviews:

- to gain young people's views on the current caseworker/Personal Adviser system;
- to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the caseworker/Personal Adviser role in the context of working with young people in a YOI;
- to observe how young people's views on the caseworker/Personal Adviser system develop over time.

844. The involvement of young people in design and delivery at Huntercombe YOI is believed to be unique for a YOI. There is little evidence of this work being undertaken elsewhere. It is considered vital that results from the survey are fed into the Pilot and that a mechanism is in place to ensure information gets used by the Pilot in their planning and thinking about the future of the custodial Personal Adviser role.

845. Trainees will be interviewed again in two months time, by phone if they have left. Focus group meetings with trainees are planned to discuss the survey results and take the process further.

846. The involvement of young people in design and delivery faces particular challenges in a custodial context, for example:

- many trainees are only there for a few months;
- security needs can make access to trainees difficult, and;

- how will recommendations be implemented, especially if they involve external services and agencies external to the YOI.

8.3.5.10 Tracking

847. The Huntercombe Pilot is also looking at Connexions Customer Information Systems for young offenders. As we have seen, much information is collected about and assessment undertaken with young offenders, so how is this information to be communicated, especially given the particular demands of the YJS. Some information is vital to the young person's well being, for example, trainees are assessed about suicide risk. If there were a possibility of suicide the personal Wing Officer would undertake special supervision.

848. The development of this aspect of the project has been hindered by the difficulties experienced in appointing an IT person to undertake the work. Tenders are currently being received for this aspect.

849. The Connexions Customer Information System developed has to be:

- robust and reliable enough to accommodate the various transition points;
- address the lack of consistency across local areas and the timing of the Connexions launches in other areas of the country;
- flexible to meet the different needs of different sub-groups of young people, especially whether the Huntercombe system will be appropriate for female young offenders;
- valid and reliable enough in dealing with many agencies from far a field, and;
- able to accommodate the varied provision in different YOIs.

8.3.5.11 Key issues and learning points

- The need to explore the implications of the Connexions Service working within another institutional framework. For example, what happens if the support that a Personal Adviser suggests is difficult to access because the client is based in a YOI? Also there are distinct issues of confidentiality, security and the interruption of activities due to security risks.
- Adequate resources are necessary to perform the job. Not just in giving Personal Advisers an appropriate caseload so that they can undertake a wider role e.g. attend community review meetings but also in terms of the resources can dedicate to clients. For example, Personal Advisers have benefited from having appropriate and up-to-date materials to work with clients, such as, addressing their offending behaviour. There is a need to explore such materials that cover other behavioural areas like substance misuse, self-image etc.
- There are particular recruitment and human resource development issues at a YOI e.g. ensuring that Connexions workers understand the processes and procedures of the YOI and YJS.
- The need to effectively communicate what the Connexions service is and isn't, especially in a multi-agency environment where other professionals may be concerned as to its impacts on their roles. Team building and inter-agency liaison are essential components here.
- The need to link in Connexions at a YOI with the wider Connexions Service.
- Who funds the Connexions service in a YOI? Is it via the YJB, direct to the YOI, by the Connexions Partnership area that the YOI is based in, by the Connexions Partnership areas that are part of its catchment area?
- How will Connexions ensure a consistent provision for young offenders nationally, especially if funding is delegated in the future?

- There is a potential for confusion when placing Personal Advisers closely to support workers providing a similar service. For example, it is difficult to explain the role of the Personal Adviser as distinct form the caseworker to clients and other professionals if the Personal Advisers are placed in the casework team and refer to themselves as caseworkers.

8.3.5.12 Good practice

- The Huntercombe Pilot is exploring a wide range of issues surrounding the Connexions Service in a unique and challenging setting. The role of the Personal Adviser in a multi-agency setting and how Connexions operates within another institutional system are key issues.
- The Personal Adviser role is well supported financially and in terms of training and support. Personal Advisers are also accessing and developing working materials for use with clients. Training and support need to be monitored to ensure that there are no gaps.
- The Pilot is exploring a range of models of Personal Adviser work especially how community and YOI based Personal Advisers relate to other support professionals at the key transition points.
- The Personal Advisers have been successfully integrated into the Casework team.
- The Pilot has developed a ‘distance travelled’ indicator to measure progress with clients.
- Personal Advisers are developing questionnaires to explore the views of YOT workers in terms of their relationship and liaison with Huntercombe.
- The need for effective communications. The Connexions service had developed a ‘flyer’ to send to other workers in the YOI. The project manager to the Casework team formally presented the role of the Personal Adviser and the Connexions service in Huntercombe.
- The use of an Independent Chair has made Board meetings more focused and has helped impartially resolve inter agency difficulties.
- The view of the vast majority of clients is that the Personal Adviser service is providing benefits in terms of increased confidence and motivation. It is too early to measure ‘harder’ impacts e.g. levels of re-offending.

8.3.6 Young refugees and asylum seekers

8.3.6.1 Introduction

850. Four Pilots were delivering services to young refugees and asylum seekers. However, none of these services had been the focus of a local evaluation. Nevertheless, we can provide a case study example of the work with this particular client group from one Pilot.

Planning Pilot services to meet the needs of Asylum Seekers

This case example is an illustration of the range of issues that need to be addressed in designing and planning inter-agency working and specifically working with young asylum seekers. The following is the outcome from the first meeting of the Pilot working group; looking at service delivery in one of the LMC areas. Please note that the following was generated by three Personal Advisers and two managers from Careers, Social Services and Youth Services who did not have a history of close joint work previously.

Objective

- Overcoming barriers to education for young asylum seekers – which could include a whole range of educational and non-educational issues, such as, dealing with trauma.

Criteria for Client Selection for the Pilot

- Important to stay focused for the purposes of the Pilot, so **Asylum Seekers only**.
- **Mix of sex** – but as the majority of young asylum seekers, (especially unaccompanied young people) tend to be male, it was acknowledged that the majority of clients for the Pilot are male.
- **Age 13-17** – a spread of age ranges was used. It was also noted that when an asylum seeker reaches the age of 18 and they arrived in the UK after July 2000, they are then referred to NAS for potential re-location outside London. In addition, asylum seekers in care, once 18, are not entitled to the same level of service as other care leavers. Consequently, it was decided to truncate the age range to a maximum age limit of 17 for the duration of the Pilot.
- **Spread of ethnicity** – the majority of Asylum Seekers in the Borough are Albanian speakers (Kosovan). Other groups include Somalis, West Africans, Eritreans and Ethiopians, and Romanians. The group decided not to set a percentage from each group as they did not want to limit their choices of young people for the Pilot.
- **Preferably living in the Borough** – although this was recognised as an issue. Young people and their families often had to be placed in housing or homes throughout the North London area as the local authority could not afford to house them within the Borough.
- **Preferably educated in the Borough** – again, as some young people may be living outside the Borough, they may not be in school/college within the Borough either. This is a potential issue, as the Connexions Pilot/Service is not operating in all the other London Boroughs. Additionally, if young asylum seekers are over 16 then they are usually attending ESOL courses in a college. If under 16, then there is a significant problem of finding young people a school place, especially the 13-15 age range because of GCSE timetable and school league tables etc. The Careers Service worker suggested she would need training/assistance in the process of getting young people into school as this was outside her normal realm of responsibility and experience.
- **In need, including disaffected or 'at risk'** – the group used the Learning Gateway list of need to which they added no/minimal English language skills and potentially coping with trauma. They agreed to look at the list of potential cases to develop the criteria further.
- Assessment of whether **the young person is ready and willing to work with a Personal Adviser**.

Referral ONTO Connexions

- Agreed an initial caseload of two young asylum seekers each for the Pilot, which would be reviewed over time.
- Step 1- Conduit is Social Services where all asylum seekers are referred initially.
- Step 2 - Social Services to undertake first cut on case selection of a sample of young people using the criteria as specified.
- Step 3 - Case Allocation meeting – where three Personal Advisers and managers review the proposed cases and allocate amongst themselves.
- Step 4 - Personal Adviser from the Social Services tells the young people about Connexions and their Personal Adviser.
- Step 5 – Personal Adviser from Social Services does the initial introduction between the young person and their own Personal Adviser.
- All three Personal Advisers to share resource centres/meeting rooms for meetings

with young people – thus enabling access to a mix of venues from formal to informal (youth services) facilities.

- Group agreed that each young person should have a home visit but that Personal Advisers should visit homes in twos for personal safety reasons.
- The group agreed to share their knowledge of referral contacts e.g. education and training, education welfare, housing, health etc.

Service Delivery Issues

- The group acknowledged the difficulty of establishing a rapport with young people who may not speak English. The Group agreed to work through translators and Social Services agreed to make their interpreter contacts/provider details available.
- On assessment they will initially use the forms contained in the Connexions Personal Adviser training pack but some reservations were expressed. Consequently they will look at adding Social Services assessment of minors, a health assessment component, (possibly through school nurses), language assessment, which for post-16 is accessible but for pre-16 is more difficult, and use Connexions' additional funding to access educational psychologists. The main principle agreed on was to gain access to specialists as required, provided the young person was in agreement.
- This Pilot had also established a Kosovan group at the local college. The young people themselves designed its aims and objectives.

8.3.7 Young Black and Minority Ethnic people

8.3.7.1 Introduction

851. Two Pilots' local evaluators had evaluated services to young Black and Minority Ethnic people (BME). In one Pilot, a well-established VCS was developing this service, which in one LMC area was focusing on transition issues. In the other Pilot two Personal Advisers were delivering this service.

8.3.7.2 Specific requirements of young Black and ethnic minority people

852. These Pilots highlighted the specific issues raised in delivering services to BME young people:

- **Delivery** - access to appropriate up-to-date information on the range of support available is essential. To identify need, and provide appropriate and well-respected support, information, advice, guidance and counselling.
- **Access** - community-based i.e. using places that are seen as safe and comfortable for young people to use and that is appropriate to working with a Personal Adviser. In one particular school the place of residence of BME young people is not in the same local authority area as the school they attend.
- **Nature of the service** – to be perceived by clients as being independent and impartial, to provide an environment and suitable support to enable young people to re-engage, to provide opportunities through residential experiences to identify peer support and reduce isolation. Attitudes to education, and levels of participation and attainment differ greatly between various BME communities, and, in one area, there was a long history of mistrust of authority and "experts" with their own agency's agenda; consequently young people refused to participate in the prescribed action.
- **Tracking** – young BME people have been isolated and alienated from other agencies and "experts", and they have been unaware of what is available/where /when and how.
- **Inclusion in service design** – young BEM people feel little ownership of current services and do not identify with them or see them as relevant; there is a need to develop creative opportunities for young people to get involved in the design of

Connexions, especially at the initial planning stages.

- **Representation** – young BME people often feel disempowered because solutions are "imposed" on them and decisions and judgements are made without giving them the right to challenge them effectively. There is a need for BME young people to have the opportunity to represent themselves, or to choose a representative for themselves because there is nothing similar in the sub-region.
- **Marketing** – young BME people and their communities already have their own communication network that young people trust and maintain. There is a need to tap into this network to ensure the Connexion's Personal Adviser becomes part of the network not isolated from it. Establishing and maintaining local "word of mouth" networks amongst local young people, as well as maintaining appropriate corporate publicity (e.g. young people focused material in terms of the language, images and style used).
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - only overall results have been measured so there is a need to monitor progress, for example, the monitoring of smaller steps.
- **Communication** – BME young people are generally unaware of current provision and opportunities; they have <u>not</u> got clear messages and accurate information, therefore they may make false assumptions about services etc.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers -** Personal Advisers need to be flexible and accessible but there also needs to be clear boundaries to their role, Personal Advisers need to have credibility to gain young people's trust, support must be impartial and influential, and seen to belong to and represent young people.

8.3.7.3 Overcoming barriers for young BME people

853. Various ways have been developed to address the particular needs of young BME people:

- **Delivery** – establishing a main community base with ICTs and client Connexions Customer Information Systems, installing mechanisms for provision of up-to-date information, and active networking between Youth Workers and other agencies. Some Personal Advisers work to a flexible pattern (hours and location) and with a relatively small target group, they have instituted peer support mechanisms, and recruited Black role models to work as Personal Advisers.
- **Access** – bases have been chosen because they are known and used by young people and other community projects. There is flexible access created using Youth Workers, Personal Advisers and other partner agencies. The focus for delivery is within the communities themselves and less focus on support via school, and the use of residential programmes.
- **Nature of the service** – the Connexions' principles enable Personal Advisers to focus on the needs of young BME people and respond to their agenda. A key aim of the Personal Adviser service is to develop a working relationship that enables young people to make effective, considered choices and are supported to achieve them.
- **Tracking** – the Personal Adviser has become the focus point for links to other agencies to share tracking data that is being developed.
- **Inclusions in service design - constant discussions and conversations with individuals and groups of young people have helped shape** delivery of the service and continue to inform its design. Young people were involved in Personal Adviser recruitment.
- **Representation** – the Personal Adviser acts as a representative at College/School disciplinary hearings, and as the interface between the client and other professionals to maintain constant level of support, no matter how many "experts" get involved.
- **Marketing -** establishing satellite bases to reflect each community, and each target group's needs e.g. young Asian women, and using local Youth Workers.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – an action plan is used where appropriate and is then reviewed as part of an ongoing process.

- **Communication** – young people have developed confidence in working with Personal Advisers because of the appropriateness of the service they provide. They are developing positive working relationships via the wider community networks (e.g. resident groups, community forum etc.).
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** – extensive networking with other professionals. Personal Advisers must be informed and able to communicate with clients, and establish clear boundaries regarding the Personal Adviser's role, relationship and access.

8.3.7.4 Added value to services for young BME people

854. The added value that the work of the Connexions Pilots has had on young BME people has been in removing barriers between BME young people and guidance and advice services, the development of specific, relevant and targeted provision, more flexible, adaptable working, increased support, and use of peer mentoring opportunities. Evidence from a residential session found that the quality of provision has improved for this client group.

8.3.8 Teenage mothers and young carers

8.3.8.1 Introduction

855. One Pilot's local evaluators had evaluated services to young carers and teenage mothers. A service to teenage mothers was also the focus of a good practice case study in Cornwall and Devon.

8.3.8.2 Specific requirements of teenage mothers and young carers

856. Two of these Pilots highlighted the specific issues raised in delivering services to BEM young people

- **Delivery** - to encourage young carers' to recognise their own needs, general awareness raising of young carers issues with agencies and educational establishments; and the need to deliver the service in an appropriate setting, especially community outreach work.
- **Access** – referrals are likely to be self-referral or via a third party. There is a need to deliver in a range of settings e.g. schools, the community and special projects. There is a perception that services are bureaucratic and difficult to access.
- **Nature of the service** – to create a supportive environment to facilitate access to Connexions Service, immediate response to needs, and having Personal Advisers in appropriate setting to enable and encourage access.
- **Tracking** – following clients through the maze of agencies and organisations offering support.
- **Inclusion in service design** – to identify specific needs of young carers and their perceptions of service provision.
- **Representation** - to have opportunities to represent themselves and their needs as young carers, and a choice in who represents them in their absence.
- **Marketing** - young carers often labelled in more general terms (e.g. non attenders).
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - young carers experience isolation as a result of caring responsibilities so there is a need for regular contact between Personal Adviser and client.
- **Communication** – young carers have been unaware of specialist support available to them in the past (i.e. projects, support groups, individual professionals).
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** – the need for adequate management structures to support the Personal Adviser/client relationship, and a need for 'two-tier training' to respond to different starting points.

8.3.8.3 Overcoming barriers for teenage mothers and young carers

857. The particular needs of young carers and teenage mothers have been met in the following ways:

- **Delivery** - one to one support, guidance and links with outside agencies; awareness training: with schools, careers advisors and specific projects; Personal Advisers working in appropriate settings (i.e. where young carers meet); and working and establishing referral procedures with a VCS project dedicated to young carers.
- **Access** - developing referral forms, encouraging self-referral and referrals from schools; meeting with young carers at a young carers project to promote the service and develop relationships.
- **Nature of the service** – providing one-to-one support to discuss client's issues and Personal Advisers acting as the interface between the young person and advice, guidance, information and support.
- **Tracking** – IT system is in its infancy but is being developed. There is a need to develop information-passing protocols.
- **Inclusion in service design** - existing focus groups are used for consultation on the expectations of service, and to identify specific needs of young carers, a linking with the 'engaging with young people' strand for joint work.
- **Representation** - participation in the advisory group meetings of the 'universality strand', and reporting to management on needs, gaps, and correct provision.
- **Marketing** - discussions with professionals and other agencies to raise awareness of particular issues affecting young carers.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - careers advisors have access to a designated Personal Adviser for referral to or for appropriate information.
- **Communication** - awareness raising using leaflets.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** - developing skills in fostering and maintaining relationships with young carers.

8.3.8.4 Added value to services for teenage mothers and young carers

858. The added value that the work of the Connexions Pilots has had on services to teenage mothers and young carers has been in providing individual support and referral to young carers where they feel comfortable. Other benefits are improved communication with clients and other agencies, increased awareness of young carers issues, and increased levels of inter-agency awareness and co-operation.

8.3.9 Good Practice Case Study: Teenage Parents Project – Torbay, part of the Cornwall & Devon Connexions Pilot

859. This case study report is partly based on a Project Report compiled by the Cornwall & Devon Connexions Pilot Teenage Parents Project Worker, in April 2001. This report focuses on progress up to January 2001. Progress since then has been captured through face-to-face interviews with the Project Manager, Project Worker, training providers and a teenage parent who has been involved in the project.

8.3.9.1 Background

860. The Teenage Parents project operated throughout the duration of the pilot in the Torbay LMC area. A key component of the success of the project was the accurate identification of need in the Torbay area. Statistical evidence and learning from New Start 3, indicated that the levels of teenage pregnancy in certain wards in Torbay were among the highest in the country. More generally, the rate of teenage pregnancies in the area is nearly

twice the national average.[31] The project was also able to build on existing experience of the needs of young parents.

861. The project was originally intended to be solely research-based. However, through her work with young parents, the project worker recognised that some were in need of intensive and/or on-going support and guidance. As such, it was agreed that the project worker would act as Personal Adviser to some of the young people that took part in the research.

862. The specific objectives of the project are outlined below:

Initial Objectives of Project

- Identify at least 20 young parents aged 13 to 19, and ensure a Personal Adviser interview's each one.
- To develop a local practitioner group including key partners based on the existing Connexions group. To add new partners involved with teenage parents in Torbay.
- To map existing provision for young parents to contribute to the overall Connexions mapping exercise.
- Construct 10 case studies drawn from the 20 young parents contacted.
- Create, with partners, a needs assessment questionnaire for use with young parents.
- Engage young parents in discussion about how they feel their needs are best met and record these ideas in a report.
- Liase with local employers and training providers regarding the needs of young parents in the workplace and to report on these findings.
- To hold group-counselling sessions with teenage parents (minimum 6 groups of 6).

Extent to which the Objectives have been met.

- 20 teenage parents have been identified. Project Worker, acting as Personal Adviser, has interviewed each one.
- Practitioners group formed and four meetings have been convened. New partners joined practitioners group.
- Mapping of all existing provision (advice and support) for teenage parents completed.
- 20 Case studies of young parents have been constructed.
- Questionnaire compiled and completed by all 20 teenage parents.
- Needs and ideas recorded, following discussion with young parents.
- 12 local Employers and 3 Training providers surveyed, and report completed
- Group counselling sessions held with teenage parents.

8.3.9.2 Research Methodology

863. The following research tasks were undertaken:

Mapping exercise:

- Identification of the number and range of local and national providers for teenage parents.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire:

- In terms of targeting young people, a combination of direct contact with individuals on the Cornwall & Devon Careers databases and other agencies' networks were used.
- Questionnaire completed by 30 teenagers – 23 were parents and 7 were pregnant.
- Themes included in the questionnaire were Sex Education, Contraception, Medical

[31] Nationally, approximately 30 girls under the age of 18 become pregnant each year. The equivalent figure for Torbay in 1997 was 58 girls per 1000. Statistics also indicate that although girls from low income families are more likely to become pregnant, pregnant teenagers from wealthier backgrounds are more likely to have an abortion.

Advice received, Family, Housing, Benefits, Training, Education and Employment

- Completion of the questionnaire has enabled the Personal Adviser to help with issues raised from the answers given. This has ranged from housing and training issues to a need for general support.

Case studies

20 Case Studies were compiled from information given by young parents. The views and experiences of young parents have informed the development of:

- Teenage Mothers and Babies Group;
- Young Mothers to Be pack;
- Additional support required during pregnancy;
- The buddying system.

Group discussions with young parents

- Meetings held with small groups of Teenage mothers.
- Views and ideas taken from the meetings to improve services.
- The main topics raised were similar to those relevant to teenagers without children.
- Discussions also enabled individuals to talk about their experiences openly. This helped them to share their feelings and overcome feelings of isolation.

864. The original budget for the project was £20,000 but this has subsequently been reforecast to approximately £16,500.

8.3.9.3 Delivery

865. Teenage parents receive varying levels of support from family and friends. One learning point is that many young parents are not seeking any form of additional help from the public and voluntary sectors. Nevertheless an occasional phone call from a Personal Adviser was seen to be the minimum level of support that should be offered. With (prospective) young parents with greater support needs in mind, the following 'services' were developed by the project:

- **Teenage Mums To Be Pack** – Partner agencies will contribute to a pack for pregnant mothers which will be issued when a pregnancy is confirmed. The pack will contain information about relevant local services (which have been identified through a mapping exercise) and will be funded by the Connexions marketing budget and the Health Authority's Teenage Strategy Unit.
- **Young Mums To Be Course -** The project worked closely with a local training provider which has developed a specific course for young and expectant mums. The course is based on pre-existing materials developed by Prospect Training in Gloucester. Core components include visits from relevant professionals (e.g. midwives), IT training, numeracy and literacy and problem solving. The emphasis of the course is on preparing for parenthood. There are plans to accredit the course so that it can contribute to an NVQ. The rationale for a dedicated course for young parents or parents-to-be is not only to provide specific life-skills-type training but also to overcome the fact that the client group often feels alienated by their peers. The course lasts for 14 weeks and operates on a roll-on, roll-off basis.
- **Buddying** – Teenage mothers stated that they would like the opportunity to speak with another teenage mother while pregnant. Some young mothers have subsequently been identified to act as buddies or peer mentors for support and practical guidance purposes. For example, the project found that prospective young mums feel uncomfortable about taking part in many of the activities that older prospective parents attend (for example ante-natal classes and parent and toddler groups). This form of peer mentoring is seen to be an important element of project service delivery.

- **Teens with Tinies Group** – Given the aforementioned reluctance of young parents to attend Mother and Toddler groups, a separate group has been established specifically for teenage mothers.

866. The ‘services’ outlined above will continue to be delivered through the Connexions Service.

8.3.9.4 The role of the Project Worker / Personal Adviser

867. A significant advantage to the project was the extent of the project worker’s relevant experience of working with lone and young parents as a New Deal for Lone Parents Personal Adviser within the Employment Service.

868. The Project Worker became the Personal Adviser for a number of young parents. This role focused on providing:

- Consistent support
- Advice and guidance, specifically in relation to benefits entitlements and accommodation;
- Advocacy;
- Practical help – for example by driving the young person to key appointments.

869. The project has achieved real progress with many of the young parents that took part. Broadly, the following outcomes were achieved:

- 3 teenage parents with housing difficulties have been re housed.
- 4 teenage parents are now attending college part-time.
- 2 teenage parents will commence college in September.
- 7 pregnant teenagers have been placed on the caseload of a Personal Adviser.

8.3.9.5 Project and Personal Adviser Management

870. Torbay LMC piloted the role of LMC Manager. As such, the project benefited from a full-time, dedicated Connexions Manager who was seconded from Cornwall and Devon Careers. Several elements of good practice were recognised in terms of project management, most notably:

- An understanding of the extent of teenage pregnancy in the area and the specific issues facing this sub-group of clients (gained in part from previous programmes such as New Start).
- Significant involvement and interest in the project.
- Facilitation of the Personal Adviser role – affording the project worker a relatively high level of autonomy and flexibility.
- Effective working relations with the project worker.
- A commitment to multi-agency working.
- Awareness of the necessity to capture learning from the project to inform the development of the Connexions Service.

8.3.9.6 Partnership Working and Agreements

871. The geographically compact nature of the Torbay area has facilitated strong multi-agency working in the past. To an extent then, the Teenage Parents project was building upon strong, pre-existing partnership working practices. The Employment Service’s secondment of an NDLP Personal Adviser to the project is testament to the spirit of

partnership working that embodies the project.

872. Close work with a variety of local partners has identified the range of sources of information, advice and support available to young parents.

873. Needs Assessment Questionnaire - Full partner involvement added real value to the design of the needs assessment questionnaire used with young parents. A number of local partners with relevant expertise became involved during the consultation process to better assess its suitability for the target group.

874. Practitioner Group – Since the Project Worker was only seconded to the project for the duration of the pilot, a vehicle for taking forward the work of the Teenage Parent Project was needed. A Practitioner Group, which meets monthly, was assembled to act as a forum for the exchange of views and information about each other's services. The Group, which reports to the LMC, has acted as a catalyst for increased inter-agency work.

875. Initially 8 Practitioners were invited to join; because of the enthusiasm of the group there are now 17 practitioners attending. Membership is comprised of the following organisations and individuals:

- NHS Primary Care Trust (Chair)
- Community Education (which has responsibility for Youth Workers)
- Local training provider
- EWO
- Health Visitor
- Foster care
- A young Mum
- Social Services
- Checkpoint (contraception, pregnancy an housing and benefit advice)
- Acorn Community Centre
- Head of Maternity Unit
- Chilled Out Café (Connexions)
- Employment Service Under 18 Adviser
- Hillside Family Centre
- Homeless Persons officer – Torbay Council

876. The Group's first output was the formation of a teenage mother and baby group which is held each week at the Acorn Youth Centre. This enables young mothers to meet and provide each other with informal information, support and guidance. The Groups was also central in developing the contents of the Teenage Mothers To Be Pack.

877. The Project Worker has contributed to the **Teenage Pregnancy Strategy** (Torbay Council).

8.3.9.7 Involvement of Young People

- All of the young people with which the project successfully made contact completed the needs assessment questionnaire and discussed the issues raised from the answers given.
- One teenage mum attends the Practitioners Group.

- 7 teenage parents attended a meeting to decide what form of information will be included in the Teenage Mums-To-Be-Pack. The Practitioners Group developed the initial contents of the pack but this was revised following significant input from young parents.

8.3.9.8 Added value

- Demonstrated that Torbay has a large number and range of providers of services for teenage parents.
- Enabled details of all providers to be collated for Personal Advisers use.
- Stimulated links and information exchange between different providers of services to young parents most notably through the Practitioner Group.

8.3.9.9 Key learning points:

878. In relation to the circumstances, perceptions and needs of **pregnant teenagers and young parents**:

- **Sex education and contraception** – The majority (77%) of young parents who participated in the project had received sex education at school and were fully aware of the forms of contraception available to them.
- **Becoming a parent** – Overwhelmingly, young people have made a positive decision to become a parent (either before or after they became pregnant), often in an attempt to raise their level of perceived self-worth. Indeed, many of the teenagers that were interviewed felt that abortion was not an option for them.
- **Partners and families** – Half the teenagers had supportive partners, although only a quarter lived with their partner. The majority (80%) of young parents were part of supportive families and did not wish to take part in the project and/or did not need additional support help.
- **Medical advice** – Generally, young parents perceived the support offered by doctors, midwives and health visitors to be good. The main complaint was that doctors did not provide adequate verbal explanation of the choices available to the young person when they confirmed the pregnancy.
- **Education** – Most teenage parents have a low standard of educational attainment or leave school before the age of 16. This was seen to lead to low self-esteem and aspirations. A high number (70%) of teenage parents said they would like the opportunity to continue in education. Between 13 and 16 years, teenage parents can continue with home tuition. However, there are limited resources available for this form of support and evidence suggests that it has limited effectiveness. Steps Cross, a local school, has been given the resources to allow young parents to continue with education during pregnancy and after the birth. At present this unit has one Teenage Parent attending. Many 16 to 19 year olds who become pregnant do not continue with further education.
- **Benefits** – 25 of the 30 teenagers were claiming benefits in their own right. 4 have partners claiming benefits on their behalf and 1 was not receiving benefits (the project worker is addressing this).
- **Housing and accommodation –** There is a shortage of suitable and affordable housing in Torbay. This situation is particularly acute for teenagers under the age of 18 who cannot legally hold a tenancy.
- **Employment and training** – 10 would like to return to college, 2 would like to gain GCSEs, 6 would like to undertake training and 3 were currently attending college. 24 young people felt that they did not have the necessary skills to gain employment. Only 5 felt that they did. Once they feel settled and providing they have support, many teenage parents want to return to education and training.

- **A feeling of isolation** - Most teenagers want to go out and have fun, which is not always possible if they are parents. Teenage parents can feel isolated from friends and family can become estranged (often due to accommodation pressures).

879. In relation to **providing information, support and guidance** for young parents, key findings that have emerged from the project include:

- There is a need to raise awareness of the range of existing services for young parents.
- Many agencies cease contact with young pregnant women 13 weeks before the expected birth date of their child. This is often due to benefit system regulations and inevitably leads to a withdrawal of support.
- When asked which forms of advice and support they would like at various stages, young people provided the following responses: *During pregnancy* – someone to talk to (perhaps another teenage mother), training; *After the baby is born* – more visits from health visitors, benefit advice, advice on housing, childcare support, help with job search, increased general support.
- Pregnant Teenagers felt it would be beneficial to receive the support of a designated course or programme whilst pregnant. Gaining skills on childcare, budgeting and access to education are seen to be important.
- Most liked the idea of a Personal Adviser they could call upon when a problem arose.
- Teenage Mums wanted to be treated in the same way as other pregnant women. Unfortunately they felt that some people looked at them with disapproval. This often stopped them from attending Parentcraft and other facilities for mothers and children.
- Personal Advisers will need to establish and retain (some form of) contact with young parents in the 13 – 19 age range, and in some cases beyond to ensure that support is available to them.
- Required support varies from a general chat to supporting them with issues such as dealing with benefits agency, college, childcare, housing or accompanying them to a provider.

8.3.9.10 Recommendations

880. The project Worker's report highlighted the following recommendations:

- Practitioners Group to continue in Torbay, convened and supported by several partners. Primary Care Trust, which is responsible for the reduction of Teenage Pregnancy, is now included in Practitioners Group.
- Personal Adviser support will continue throughout pregnancy and parenthood for 13-19 year olds. Some may need intense support, others simply an occasional contact.
- Acorn Centre to continue to run 'Teens with Tinies' group for teenage mums and children. Personal Adviser will be able to drop in to give advice and support.
- Continued active support towards engagement in learning. At present once young mum reaches 11th week before expected birth, both Carers and Benefits Office cease contact. Connexions Personal Adviser to stay in contact. This will enable the young mum to move forward with training or education, when this is appropriate.
- Young Mums-to-Be Course to be delivered as a Life Skill option under the Learning Gateway by Dartington Tech. Personal Adviser working with teenagers who find themselves pregnant should be able to refer them to this course and support them throughout. This will lead to more active support through Connexions and help the young mum progress towards mainstream learning.
- Connexions centres to have facilities to accommodate teenage mums and their children (including baby-changing facilities).
- Personal Adviser(s) to be given a dedicated remit to link with teenage parents – e.g. attend /convene Practitioner groups, act as the Personal Adviser for pregnant teenagers and young mothers etc.

8.3.9.11 Client case studies

881. Gill is 17 and has a one-month-old son. She is living at a supported housing project Devon.

I had a call from the manager of the supported housing project to say Gill was not being very co-operative and needed some help. The manager had discussed my project with Gill and suggested meeting me and having a chat. Gill agreed. I met Gill and she seemed very angry and anti outside agencies. I let her talk about her experiences and about her baby. She felt at this time that she was not coping very well.

Her mother put Gill, at the age of eight, into care along with her seven brothers and sisters. Gill had been in several foster homes, and until she came to the supported housing project had been in bed and breakfast. After discussing some of her problems, she decided to get some counselling and also to settle in at the supported housing project.

I have seen Gill twice since, and she has become a model tenant and is settling down. She is hoping to move into her own self contained flat in two weeks time. She also helps new mums when they move in. Her relationship with her baby has improved greatly.

882. Tracey is nineteen and expecting a baby in April.

Tracey contacted me in February because she needed somewhere to live before the baby was born. Tracey lived with her elderly grandparents who are in their 80's and very frail. Tracey's mother died when she was 9 months old and she has lived with her grandparents since. However they are not able to cope with a young baby in the house.

Until recently Tracey was in a stable relationship and both her and her partner were working.

I contacted a Housing Association funded supported housing scheme for mothers and children. All the forms were completed and Tracey was put on the waiting list.

Tracey has a GNVQ in Health and Social Studies She wants to train to become an Office Administrator after she has had the baby. Tracey has now moved into the supported housing scheme and is awaiting the birth of her baby.

883. T is seventeen and was referred to the Personal Adviser in February. She was four months pregnant.

T had recently left her Life Skills course because she was continually being sick. She had received no training money due to her lack of attendance.

T lives with her mother and stepfather plus two younger brothers. When I visited her she was still being very sick and was not getting any benefits. Her family is receiving Working Family Tax Credit; the family is not receiving any benefits for T because of her age. They were struggling to support her and provide her with the food she needed.

I contacted the Benefit Office and arranged to have the appropriate forms sent to her. Two days later I helped T complete the forms and followed up her application two days later with my contact at the benefits office. Tracey is now receiving Income Support and getting support from a Personal Adviser.

8.3.10 Young users of drugs and harmful substances

8.3.10.1 Introduction

884. Two Pilots' local evaluators had evaluated services to young drug users.[32] Drug users received dedicated Personal Adviser support.

8.3.10.2 Overcoming barriers for young drug users

885. The particular needs of young drug users have been met in the following ways:

- **Delivery** – support is individually focused, guidance has been produced to encourage referral to specialist agencies, and support involves outreach work.
- **Access** – open to all, via Careers Centres and community-based organisations.
- **Nature of the service** - clients can self refer or be identified by teachers as being in need of support. In-depth information, advice, guidance and support is available to clients from Pas. Service involves multi-agency working between the Careers Service, Youth Service, Probation Service, Employment Service and VCS organisations.
- **Tracking** - tracking and the recording of particularly sensitive information is kept to a minimum. CORE and ASPIRE systems are used to share information between agencies.
- **Inclusion in service design** – clients have been consulted through one-to-one discussions and group work sessions.
- **Representation** - interviews with clients to obtain feedback on the quality of the service provided.
- **Marketing** – awareness raising amongst partner agencies and other support professionals.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – there is ongoing monitoring of client progress by the Personal Adviser.
- **Communication** – has included reviews with local Community Drug Teams and other agencies, and joint meetings with appropriate agencies.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** - the Personal Adviser may be the first point of contact, so they will have to be sensitive to clients' needs. The role will include guiding and supporting whilst the youngster reaches a point where they are willing to access professional support. Personal Advisers have been involved in drug training. Release undertook a one-day training course for participants in the first induction course.

8.3.10.3 Added value to services for young drug users

886. The added value to services for drugs users has been additional individual and confidential support at locations where the young person feels comfortable. There has been complementary provision developed in line with the Drugs Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) and Community Drug Teams approach i.e. the Probation Service has an Employment Service project aimed at adult drug abusers. Consultations with clients and partner agencies have improved tailored provision for young drug users.

8.3.11 Disaffected young people

8.3.11.1 Issues affecting services to disaffected young people

887. Disaffected young people in one Pilot were identified by the local evaluator as having the following needs

- **Delivery** – the need for a range of support including one-to-one and group sessions, including guidance, support and advocacy, and stratifying the work e.g. creating girls groups.
- **Access** – those disaffected due to the school environment will require support in non-

[32] When we refer to drug users we include other users of harmful substances as well.

school environments.
- **Nature of the service** – the need for alternative accreditation, transition planning, and advocacy, as well as support and guidance, need for outreach work and home visits. Support has involved work on raising self-esteem, the use of peer mentors, direct support in order to achieve higher attendance, and the use of alternative curricula.
- **Tracking** – the use of BROMCOM (an electronic Connexions Customer Information System in schools to assist attendance)
- **Inclusion in service design** – disaffected young people evaluate and review the service as part of target setting, and the use of a 'young-person-friendly' questionnaire, to get feedback on services.
- **Representation** – the need for appropriate support.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – young people have been involved in evaluating the service through ongoing discussions, reviews, and completing 'child-friendly' questionnaires.
- **Role and training of Personal Advisers** – has covered child protection, handling difficult situations, personal safety and counselling.

8.3.11.2 Added value to services for young drug users

888. The added value to services from the Connexions Service has been identified as improved transitional support for Year 11s; brokering young people's learning barriers with staff; engaging with disengaged young people; enabling clients to access appropriate services, make choices, address barriers to learning, and improve attendance.

8.4 Case studies of Pilot work with other specific groups of young people

8.4.1 Raising aspirations

889. The following case study is taken from the raising aspirations strand of a Pilot area and has been written by the strand manager.

Case study – raising aspirations

The aim of this Pilot service was to increase the aspirations of young people by extending activities that focus on improving motivation/aspiration particularly with under performing and/or disadvantaged young people.

Key findings from the mapping exercise

- Compared with the County norm, there are higher levels of 'at risk' behaviour in this particular borough that may lead to disaffection and lower aspirations.
- The mapping exercise showed that there are numerous programmes and schemes being used across the area, all claiming to raise the aspirations of young people. However, there is little hard or measurable evidence to substantiate these claims.
- There is no co-ordinated response to the programmes available. Many professionals are trying out different programmes, but there is no conduit for the sharing of good practice across the different agencies.
- There were no apparent long-term measurement strategies in projects to record and track the aspirations of young people and measure development over time.

Key lessons

- In designing a questionnaire to be used with young people to measure the raising of aspirations, a base-line measurement must always be taken.
- The measurement tool must be as simple as possible for both young people and staff to complete and collate and yet still provide the information required.
- Some projects had particular strengths in one or more of the 7 'Raising Aspirations' criteria that were used. These could be considered by Personal Advisers when attempting to help young people access relevant opportunities.

- There was a wide range of quality provision identified in areas such as leisure. However, the brief of these projects was not explicitly about ‘raising the aspirations of targeted young people’. As a high degree of self-motivation was usually necessary to get the most out of these resources, the target group would be unlikely to access or be able to engage with this provision.

Issues

- A variety of educational and personal development products are available for practitioners to use with under-performing and/or disadvantaged young people. However, in many cases these are expensive and/or time-consuming, therefore organisations need to be highly selective in their chosen approach(es).
- Accreditation for young people, particularly those ‘hardest-to-help’ needs to be addressed in order to ensure that their progress is recognised and duly rewarded.

Recommendations

The Connexions Service should:

- Target the areas identified as being most likely to have high levels of disengagement from formal learning opportunities when extending the work done or considering any future developments.
- Consider the development of programmes already identified through this pilot for further trial e.g. Pacific Institute programmes and ‘Widening Participation’.
- Further develop measurement tools for aspirations (both long and short term). The input from a psychologist may be required in their design. Any such measurement tools are then offered to projects across partner agencies to ensure that evidence-based practice is encouraged.
- Link measurement of aspirations to the general diagnostic work that Connexions will be undertaking and its pooling and tracking function.
- Agree county/national measurement systems to prove the effectiveness of projects. Further research and development is required into the area of raising aspirations and programmes that can positively develop this.
- Identify a specialist role for the co-ordination of schemes that raise young people’s aspirations.
- Provide Personal Advisers with training in the personal development of young people. Personal Advisers require a toolkit of opportunities plus a resource directory. This could link in to other resources e.g. a network of agency contacts and roles.
- Use the National Record of Achievement; co-ordination should take place with the accreditation and recording of aspirations. This should also help avoid the repetition of work with young people.
- Allow for the fact that programmes affecting aspirations take time and need to be able to develop in line with young people’s needs. Projects can take a good deal of time to set up, as a key factor is the positive relationship between the young people and the group facilitator. This has been evidenced through the pilot project and reporting the final outcomes will need to take place at a later date.
- Further extend the projects to involve work with parents. Research would be valuable here to explore the aspirations that parents have for their daughters/sons. Projects such as the widening participation university visits could also involve taking parents to explore their pre-conceptions about HE.
- Offer training to staff on various programmes and facilitated ‘best practice’ conferences.

8.4.2 Care leavers

890. The project manager of a care leaver project in a Connexions Pilot area wrote the following case study. There is an overview of a one-stop shop service developed principally for care leavers in Section 3.

Progress to date

- The project commenced in September with the appointment of a Project Co-ordinator. Appointments to an Apprentice post and an Information Resource worker followed during October. A Youth Association (YA) employs the staff.
- A multi-agency Management group has been established and met on three occasions so far. This acts in an advisory and support role to the project. It has representation from Careers, Lifelong Learning, Social and Housing Services, the Youth Enquiry Service, NCH, the Employment Service and the YA.
- Seven peer educators have been recruited to the project, four men and three women, all with experience of living in either residential or foster care.
- Residential experiences are planned for February/early March for the peer educators and they are to be matched with peer mentors for support purposes.
- Peer mentors have also been recruited to the project but interest has been slow and disappointing. The idea to bring on board older people from a care background into these roles is being widened to any people with an interest. Links are being made with other mentoring schemes in the area to generate interest.
- The youth apprentice, following consultation with young people has developed publicity materials. These have been disseminated far and wide.
- The Information Resource worker is developing the audit of services available to care leavers with a view to identifying gaps that can inform future development. This will build on work previously carried out by other agencies in the city.
- Case studies of young people will emerge from the project. Their views on who they would choose as a Personal Adviser and why, will also be canvassed.

Good practice

- It has proved essential for Pilot funds to be linked into a wider project, looking at the transition to independence issues for young people in the area and working in a multi-agency context.
- The appointment of project staff and subsequently peer educators (albeit lower than the targets set) has been a positive experience. Training and support processes for the peer educators are now in place.
- The publicity materials produced are excellent.
- Liaison with other agencies, particularly Social Services, has been important to ensure safety and security of the peer educators prior to residential activities.
- Other unseen opportunities have arisen, such as to contribute to the development and introduction of resource materials on independent living for care leavers and to enable peer educators to train in interview and recruitment skills.

Relevant issues

- There were some delays in recruiting the team of project staff, which inevitably delayed some of the project milestones. This in turn has meant we have to be patient in securing significant learning to inform Connexions.
- Following up and securing interest from the client group has proved a taxing and lengthy process.
- Interest in the peer mentor role has been disappointing leading to changes in the criteria for involvement.

The Learning So Far

- A joint project is the right way forward, dealing with the complex needs and issues presented by care leavers. Learning will accrue for all agencies.
- Peer education in this area of work can operate well.
- Training and support processes are vital ingredients and take time to set up and get right.
- Given the Care Leavers Act that places new duties on Social Services and the setting up of a Connexions Service, this project, along with other developments in the city of Plymouth, will enable a more coherent support package to be developed for the benefit of care leavers.

8.4.3 Gifted and Vulnerable

891. The following case study was written by the project manager of a project aimed at gifted and vulnerable young people in a Connexions Pilot area.

Progress to date

- Project Workers have been appointed and the project plan is in place.
- A target group of 50 young people has been identified and case-study work has commenced.
- Motivational interviewing has commenced.
- Two master classes for young people have taken place.
- Contact has been made with relevant agencies/individuals.

Good practice

- The definition of 'vulnerable' includes pupils with little support from home, those with emotional or psychological difficulties, those whose ability presents them with a complexity of choice which could result in poor decisions, looked-after young people and those with health problems or disabilities.
- Pupils are presenting a range of comments about the experience of being a bright pupil that are being collated and fed back to the institution on request.
- Contact has been established with the local authority's Co-ordinator for able pupils in education.
- Motivational interviews focusing on career/educational aims have been well received by pupils who were previously held back by their lack of clear goals.
- One school has planned a cascading system following a master class, where pupils who attended the master class pass on their knowledge to other pupils.
- 100% of the participants in master classes rated this intervention as either helpful or very helpful. Six or eight was judged as being the right number of participants. The end of the first term in year 12 was deemed to be the right time.
- The choice of two project workers sharing the post has added value – between the two of them they have experience in working across the majority of the education institutions in the area; they are already well-known in most of the schools.

Relevant issues

- Different education institutions use different objective measures for giftedness.
- The success of master classes in some institutions has led school staff to suggest the extension of this initiative across all year 12 pupils, which will obviously have time and other resource implications.

- It has been difficult to source a direct provider for motivational interviewing; both of the project workers have attended motivational interview training themselves and have therefore carried out this method of intervention with the target group.

Learning so far

- Two distinct issues are emerging: (1) In a selective system there are pressures on the individual to meet the high level of expectations and often this is not matched by a sufficient knowledge of careers and higher education information. (2) In other schools the opposite is almost true, where pressures to conform to peer group standards often suppress career and educational aspirations. In both cases there is a need for careers information, advice and guidance.
- Many able pupils have unclear goals for the future or do not have a belief in themselves to enable them to achieve their desired career. Clear explanation of the steps required to achieve these goals plus the encouragement to believe that this is achievable can help to motivate and unlock potential.
- Some institutions have been re-engaged in the Connexions agenda through the work of this project.
- The concept of trying "something new" has been valued by most institutions.

8.4.4 At risk

892. The following case study was written by the project manager of a project aimed at young people at risk in a Connexions Pilot area.

The aim of the project was to build on the activities of an existing project designed to identify 'at risk' students within the primary phase, and to extend the work into additional schools and areas.

Key lessons

- Schools want to be involved in this work. All schools, both secondary and primary, see the potential and value of the early identification of "at risk" students. Additionally, once identified the liaison between the schools should continue and form the basis of tailored individual learning plans for students.
- Tracking students through KS3 allows the opportunity to address individual "at risk" student's needs effectively.
- The timing of the work is vital to success. The work must start in the final term of Year 6 or earlier. This allows time for primary and secondary schools to co-ordinate their responses to transition. The transfer of key data can be achieved and initial discussions can take place regarding individual students.
- Student views on transition can be captured and used by the secondary school to plan possible changes and amendments to transition preparations.
- The use of curriculum materials in KS2 such as the 'Make It Real Game' offers considerable benefits in terms of the preparation for transition. Where it can link to the 'Real Game' programme in KS3 it has significant potential.
- The work leads to an increased focus of resources and staff awareness on these students. Schools can utilise existing schools processes in order to support students as well as introduce new techniques and programmes.
- Careers Advisers and Personal Advisers are well placed to facilitate and drive forward this work. The role of other professionals can be integrated and delivered under project processes.
- Students who are potentially "at risk" can be identified early and then supported. This has been achieved in all project schools. In fact work with primary schools

suggests that some "at risk" students can be identified much earlier. The early identification and support of "at risk" students enables the opportunity to, in some cases, reduce the chance of students becoming "at risk".

8.4.4.1 Issues

- For this process to work effectively, work in the primary phase must start in Year 6 or earlier. This has implications for the Connexions 13-19 year old strategy that currently precludes work in primary schools.
- Joint staff involvement in both phases is essential and should be underpinned by relevant staff training.

Recommendations

- That the work of the project under the Connexions Pilot is continued next term in order to chart the success of the full process in pilot schools and its impact on individual pupils.
- The work of the project is disseminated to all schools in the area as a model for consideration.
- Discussions take place with LEA representatives to ensure the benefits of early interventions are understood and their active support obtained.
- Connexions commit to extending this work.
- That the policy of Connexions to work with students 13 to 19 be reconsidered to allow key identification of "at risk" students in KS2/3.

8.5 Conclusions

- The Connexions Service has to provide generic, universal support to all 13-19 year olds. For most young people this will involve advice and support with employment, education and training choices. However, as this section has shown, there are important groups of young people with particular support needs that require a different and targeted service.
- Reports from local evaluators, national evaluators, interviews with Personal Advisers and comments from Pilot co-ordinators in the monthly monitoring reports have identified the main issues regarding the delivery of services to specific sub-groups of young people:

- There are large resource issues associated with providing both a universal and a targeted service.
- Services have to be flexible to deliver tailored provision for targeted young people with specific or multiple barriers.
- There are considerable implications for the caseload level for Personal Advisers.
- Effective communications and marketing is needed amongst young people, parents and staff to avoid confusion regarding whom the service is for.
- Some services have been marketed as being ‘open to all’ but some young people often perceive that it is for young people with ‘problems’.
- There is a need for effective referral mechanisms so Personal Advisers are not sent inappropriate clients.
- Schools and colleges are keen to retain the current level and expertise of their career advisers but they need to recognise what the Personal Adviser role is.
- There is a need for particular additional support mechanisms e.g. the development of alternative curriculum for disaffected young people.
- There are important implications for developing universal assessment forms, Connexions Customer Information Systems, monitoring and evaluation etc.

893. There were a series of issues in developing services to specific sub-groups of young people. The ways that Pilots have sought to address them are:

➢ **Delivery and access**

- developing multi-agency frameworks and agreements which define the role of Connexions in relation to other agencies and the particular sub-group of clients;
- including in the role of Personal Advisers advocacy and brokerage on behalf of clients;
- mapping of provision and need;
- developing flexible delivery e.g. out-of-school activities;
- developing the role of the Personal Adviser in various locations appropriate to the needs of the client group;
- using different approaches to meet particular needs;
- having structured activity as well as drop in/counselling support;
- using peer mentors and group role models;
- using job and FE course 'taster' sessions;
- involving young people in design and delivery;
- organising interesting trips and activities;
- establishing a community bases with ICTs and Connexions Customer Information Systems;
- installing mechanisms for provision of up-to-date information;
- active networking agencies and support workers;
- working with a relatively small target group.
- identifying a bases that would deliver a service that would be impartial of other projects;
- ensuring there is city-wide provision;
- developing multi-agency approaches and bases that are trusted by clients;
- flexible methods of access;
- use of non-school support mechanisms
- providing impartial information and guidance on opportunities;
- identifying a wide range of other support agencies available;
- involving young people in planning;
- delivering a service that is impartial and supportive, and promotes the needs of the client group;
- focusing on the needs of clients;
- developing services that enable young people to make effective, considered choices and supporting young people to achieve them.

➢ **Monitoring and evaluation, and tracking**

- involving parents and clients in advisory groups;
- developing links with other agencies;
- investigating previous tracking mechanisms;
- building on existing protocols;
- analysing how Connexions Customer Information Systems and protocols could be implemented across the age range;
- using existing systems e.g. ASPIRE;
- using the Personal Adviser as the focal point for links to other agencies to share tracking data.
- looking at the issue of continuity and support through to age 25;
- doing evaluation base lining exercises;
- ongoing monitoring through joint management arrangements;

- developing a MIS. And the use of this MIS and other data for ongoing monitoring measuring progress towards action plans.

➢ **Inclusion in service design**
- using client surveys to get feedback on service delivery;
- making use of focus groups with previous and current clients;
- involving clients, parents and carers in the Pilot advisory group;
- making use of Viewpoint (a software package developed specifically to work with clients with LDDs);
- working with young people to produce training packs for Personal Advisers;
- holding informal discussions and conversations with individuals and groups of young people;
- involving young people in Personal Adviser recruitment.
- encouraging more effective involvement;
- building skills to increase confidence;
- ensuring the representativeness of youth forums by using the Personal Adviser as an interface between the client and other professionals.

➢ **Marketing and communication**
- Benefiting from involvement in a multi-agency group making representations to a range of forum;
- establishing satellite bases to reflect each community;
- targeting specific group's needs e.g. young Asian women;
- producing written materials and a training framework;
- developing formal and informal communications networks e.g. with parents at SEN reviews, student meetings, newsletters to schools, reviews with school staff and joint meetings with other agencies;
- developing a system and structures framework in partnership with other agencies;
- reviewing progress with project staff and joint meetings with partner agencies.

➢ **Role and training of Personal Advisers**
- developing specialist training on client specific issues;
- preparing induction and other in-house training for Personal Advisers;
- using training packs developed by clients;
- extensive networking with other professionals to share practices;
- establishing clear boundaries regarding the Personal Adviser's role, relationship and access.

8.6 Recommendations

894. This section has included much information about the issues of delivering services to particular groups of young people and the methods that Pilots have developed to address them. There is a need to communicate key learning points and good practice examples so that Pilots working or developing services with a particular sub-group of young people can use them.

9 Tackling Rural Issues

9.1 Introduction

895. For the majority of pilots, rural issues were not a focus of attention and/or were not explicitly tackled or evaluated. Very few local evaluations directly addressed rural issues as a specific topic. For some, the challenges of isolation and deprivation were already familiar and taken into account as part of the normal delivery of services. For others, the issues of delivering services across a large geographical area were not necessarily different to the delivery of services in complex urban areas. For example, the issues of management, clarity of objectives, training and support, effective communication etc. are generic and not necessarily pertinent to a rural/urban dimension. One of the few Pilots to identify issues of community isolation in urban, as well as rural areas, was South Yorkshire.

896. For these reasons no local evaluator reported specifically on rural issues. This section is based on information collected under other strands e.g. service delivery and, in particular, on a project report from Cornwall and Devon written by the project manager and worker.[33]

9.2 Identifying and addressing rural issues

897. A report by a local pilot project exploring outreach and rural questions introduced the topic as follows:

> "Issues of rurality and the related effects of social exclusion and deprivation are becoming increasingly relevant within current political and social agendas... Geographical distances and lack of resources define the social construction of rural disadvantage. Therefore, the experiences of young people must be seen in relation to the social, cultural and psychological factors influenced by this disadvantage. Policy makers are now beginning to address the need for more targeted provision to help young people in accessing work, education, recreation and information/advice services in rural areas."

898. Often rural issues had been lower down the agenda because rural areas were perceived as relatively affluent. For example, few rural boroughs are in the top quartile of areas in the DETR's indices of deprivation. However, such indicators can mask distinct areas of deprivation. For example, in northern Warwickshire there are communities that have been badly affected by declines and structural changes in the mining and motor vehicle industries. In these wards unemployment rates can be as high as in deprived urban areas. This would not be apparent if analyses were undertaken at a county level or sometimes at a borough level.

899. Pilots had focused on tackling rural issues had found that in isolated communities, young people and Personal Advisers faced some key issues:

- **Transport constraints**. Public transport is sparse, infrequent and often expensive. This makes it difficult for young people to access services, work and training, unless it was located very locally. An LMC in one Pilot looked specifically at poor school attendance among a group of Year 10 and 11 pupils living in a rural area. They found that if children missed the only school bus departure, the local bus service was prohibitively expensive as an alternative (£3.20 one way). As a result, children sometimes stayed home instead. Given the low incomes of many of the households involved, parents condoned such

33 'Rural Outreach Project Report', Cornwall and Devon Connexions.

absence because they could not afford to pay the fare.

- **Lack of 'focal points' and local service delivery for young people in isolated areas.** One Pilot identified several communities, which lacked facilities for young people. This made it very difficult for Personal Advisers and service providers to find and meet with groups of young people because there was no identifiable location. It also means that young people lack facilities for social and leisure activities per se. This Pilot has drawn the attention of Youth Services and others to the need for Youth Clubs in isolated villages. One client said that:

  > *"The area I lived in, it was a village but it was a big village. It had shops and like loads of pubs… and to sort of always be in a town and sort of come down to just having a telephone box and a bus stop was a big shock".*

- There appears to be a **myriad of projects** taking place in more isolated communities, financed on a short term basis, which need to be brought under more formal, continuous and coherent planning. People can become cynical if projects open up in a blaze of publicity but then fail after their first year because money is not reallocated. Also some projects are person dependent. If that worker leaves, at a minimum there may be a gap before another person is appointed or they may never be replaced.
- Young people often feel **powerless** regarding decisions made about their community mainly because there are few mechanisms that are appropriate or attractive to them.
- Young people in rural communities in two Pilot areas have been identified as having **very low aspirations**. This was due in part to poor employment opportunities in their area.
- **Health and safety issues**. Services often have policies that deter Personal Advisers from making home visits unless accompanied by another worker. These are difficult to arrange in compact urban areas but are even less likely in rural locations.

900. There may be an issue of rural Personal Advisers requiring a different skills set than urban Personal Advisers. Urban areas tend to be better supported across a range of services e.g. homelessness, sexual health advice, substance misuse etc. In rural areas there are likely to be fewer of these services that Personal Advisers can refer people to. Does this suggest that rural Personal Advisers require a broader range of skills? And what implications does this have for training, development and ongoing support?

901. Connexions Pilots that were having to work with these particular rural issues have adopted innovative means of addressing them. For example:

- **Use of ICT**s. In North Devon, North Cornwall and Lincolnshire, pilots were experimenting with taking laptops and various IT packages out into communities. These include careers advice and guidance packages (such as Kangaroo), learning materials, assessment and other support tools that Personal Advisers can use. In addition, materials on CD-ROM or disk can be copied and emailed or posted to people much more easily than books and other paper based materials. North Devon intend to take this idea beyond the pilot. They were also considering delivery of services via e-mail remote IT services. The North Cornwall Rural Outreach project used laptops with the Young Farmers Group to help young people access information. Several Pilots have also developed websites, though this was not necessarily limited to rural areas.

  The Isle of Wight alternative curriculum project held consultations with young people and parents. Alternative curriculum sessions were arranged for ten pupils using the Compact Club 2000 package (Key Skills qualification, accredited by ASDAN). The package encourages the group to cover curriculum through a series of challenges, and to develop a group work ethos. It has proved very successful, and two school non-attenders have a 100% attendance record at the sessions. Since commencement in October 2000, participating pupils are demonstrating increased confidence, and raised participation in youth and community activities. Pupils themselves requested that the weekly sessions be increased to twice weekly. The project delivery team was multi agency, including a member of school staff, an Education Welfare Assistant, a Youth Worker, Community Liaison Officer, and a community volunteer.

- **Mobile and outreach centres**. Outreach centres are seen as an important mechanism in the delivery of services, not just to address access issues but because it is important to meet young people on their own ground. Goole, a remote area of Humberside, plans to set up mobile rural drop-in centres. The precise form of these have yet to be developed but follow on from initiatives in the past that have seen buses used to take training advisers out to peripheral communities to provide careers advice and guidance. In North Cornwall, the rural outreach project tested out ideas for a rural skill's project on Bodmin Moor.
- Knowledge of the community, key people within it, and other local groups were important for practitioners working in isolated areas.

9.3 Case study of rural issues: the North Cornwall and Northern Devon Rural Outreach Project

902. The following is based on project report by a rural outreach project in North Cornwall and Northern Devon, initiated and funded by the Cornwall and Devon Connexions Pilot. It shows in detail the particular issues that young people living in isolated rural communities face.

9.3.1 Introduction

903. The project had two main aims: to consider ways of reducing unemployment and improving learning, employment and training opportunities for young people age 16-19 who are disadvantaged by rural isolation; to consider how rural young people can have equal opportunity of access to Connexions Personal Advisers and the Connexions Service.

904. The multi-agency project team consulted with young people, communities, employers, teachers, trainers and other professionals to explore perceived and real barriers for young people, and to make recommendations on how these might be tackled.

9.3.2 Service delivery

905. Particular issues highlighted by the employers as regards the difficulties of employing young people within North Cornwall were:

- Transport - timing, frequency and connections of public services (see below).
- Lack of job vacancies.
- Funding help for employers to take on trainees.
- Health and safety law.
- Lack of awareness of help available i.e. Careers.
- Challenging conservative attitudes towards young people as ‘problematic’ employees.
- Time pressures of the business culture that don’t always allow for good support to young people in the work place.

9.3.3 Key issues

906. Transport issues were seen as particularly important. There is a significant amount of research that highlights the effects lack of transport has on young people’s life opportunities in rural areas. Some of the main findings in the project reflect this.

- Young people rely heavily on lifts from parents and adults.
- High fares and infrequency of buses serve as barriers to young people using the limited public services in rural areas.
- Young people report that, they are seen as ‘second class bus passengers’ especially by

older passengers. They often suffer from prejudices expecting them to cause trouble.

- Services in rural areas often operate at inconvenient times during the day, making it almost impossible to get to work and return.
- Buses lack good connections, sometimes only operate on a few days a week or take too long to get somewhere.
- A considerable number of journeys undertaken by young people are by foot or bicycle often alone.

907. All these factors compound young people's experience of rural isolation by depriving them of access to social, educational and employment opportunities. One Youth Worker in North Cornwall commented:

"They are without many of the skills needed to make life decisions e.g., open a bank account, fill in a form, get from a to b safely. They have never been on a train, they can't drive. They have trapped themselves"

908. Young people's autonomy is restricted by reliance on adults for lifts and subsequently the importance of learning to drive and car ownership is greater for young people living in rural areas.[34]

9.3.4 Key learning points

- Transitional issues are particularly important in rural areas. Some young people moving away to college or university may need additional support to achieve a successful transition.
- Informal networks are much more of a factor in the rural labour market. The Connexions Service should make efforts to understand and work with this process in each locality.
- Cultural factors must be taken into account when working in rural communities. For example, there may be a history of working in a particular industry. Any developments undertaken should be carried out with sensitivity and insight and at the right pace.
- Supervision of Personal Advisers. Those Personal Advisers working in rural locations on a detached or outreach basis will encounter feelings of isolation themselves.
- Projects in rural areas rely heavily on the networks made and the enthusiasm of the individuals involved.

9.3.5 Project client case studies

Adam - background

909. Adam will be 18 in March. He has had problems in school and was educated in the Pupil Referral Unit. Adam has mild dyslexia and felt that this was not properly identified, he didn't like school because of this and became disruptive. Adam has a criminal background.

910. Adam is in receipt of Severe Hardship Allowance; he attends his fortnightly careers appointment with a Careers Adviser. At these interviews he talks about his attempts to find work, saying that when he gets his bike back he will soon get work.

911. Adam lives in a small coastal village/town that relies on the tourist trade, there are few job opportunities in the village apart from in the pubs and other seasonal work. Most of the work is scarce and there are many applicants for any jobs that become available.

Issues

912. Most work locally is in nearby Barnstaple, Braunton, Ilfracombe or on surrounding

[34] 'Young People and Transport in Rural Areas', Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000, 'New Deal Rural Transport Study', 1998.

farms. To access these job opportunities Adam would need to rely on transport and money for transport. He has been offered work but has been unable to take up the offer because public transport was difficult and he didn't manage to get there.

913. Jobs with training locally tend to be poorly paid and if young people have to pay about £3 per day for transport there is little left to live on, plus the travelling time could add up to 1 ½ hours per day, this would rule out shift work or overtime.

914. The village does not have any social outlets for the older teenagers. There is a sports centre but Adam is not sports minded. There is no evening transport out of the village and back again so the young people are often hanging around with nothing to do.

915. Adam needs the structure and respect he would gain from having 'a proper job'. He would benefit from the support of a Personal Adviser to help him negotiate the work and growing up issues. They feel that when he had the help of a YOT worker, he responded to the ongoing support and this really helped him. Adam does not know how to get the best out of the system and this leads to anger and frustration. When he gets support he responds to it.

916. A's family do have a car but they use it to get to work, they work shifts and so can't help him with transport. Their shift work patterns also make it difficult for them to support Adam in getting up for work. At one point Adam had an appointment with the Training for Skills programme, but he didn't go. His parents think he may have gone if he had had someone to go with him i.e. a Personal Adviser.

917. He could also do with help on form filling and job applications. He would accept help more readily from a Personal Adviser than from his parents.

918. His parents feel that Adam would have benefited from leaving school early and getting work that would have given him respect and independence, but that hanging around doing nothing led to him getting bored and in trouble.

919. They think Adam is good with his hands but doesn't like written work, he responds well to praise and encouragement, perhaps a mentor in the workplace or a 1-1 situation in a workplace would help him.

Emily - Background

920. Emily and her family moved to the present town from the South East of London about two years ago. Emily has an older brother who has ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder) and her parents thought that it would be giving Emily a better chance if they moved away, since every time something went wrong her brother's problems were thrown up at her. Emily enrolled at College but quickly encountered problems. She continued her education at the Lantern Unit, and she tells me she was very happy there and did well.

921. Emily left school in July 2000 and is considering her options for employment and training. She has an appointment with Devon Training for Skills (DTfS) and she has been sent information from the careers office about vacancies. Emily lives at home with her parents, both parents work.

Issues

922. Transport was identified as a major problem. Emily will have to rely on public transport to get to work. We looked at the timetables and the earliest bus leaves at 7.55am and gets to Barnstaple at 8.35am at the bus station. If Emily misses this bus the next one is at 9.30am and reaches Barnstaple at 10.25am (because it goes around the villages). The

bus fares cost either £2.50 per day return or £13.60 per week. There are also no bus shelters where they have to wait for the bus and during the winter, parents were worried that Emily could get very wet before getting to work.

923. Both Emily and her parents appeared to be confused about the advice and information provided by the Careers Service, Job Centre and DTfS and they were uncertain about which information had been provided by which agency. They felt that some of the information sent out by the Job Centre or the Careers Service had not been appropriate to her interests.

Jane - background
924. Jane left College with (GCSE's, mostly C's and D's). She then went on an Equine Course but left after one week. She then went on the Breakthrough to Excellence training, she spent 4 weeks each with a vet, glass factory, horses, retail, café and then 6 months at a Hotel. She has some NVQ's in catering and quickserve. The family home is in a village that is about ten miles from the nearest town.

925. Presently unemployed, Jane has been in touch with Careers but there is very little employment in the area.

Issues
926. Jane would like to do a veterinary course but this would mean living away from home, which she doesn't want to do. She would have stayed on in the 6th form but her local community college did not have a 6th form. At present, she could not undertake a full time educational course because of finance, she may have continued if EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) had been available.

927. Her most important focus is having a car and being able to keep it, she says looking for work is about what is available rather than what you want to do. There are few employment opportunities in the area.

928. We discussed Personal Adviser rural outreach provision and how she would like to access advice and support. She thought that an office in a shopping area would be fine. She was doubtful if she would walk into her local Youth Club, she thought this would be difficult for anyone who did not go there regularly.

929. The family do not have their own ICT facilities but Jane thought that this would be the best way for her to keep in touch with careers information, training or employment opportunities. She thought that she would consider distance learning if she had her own PC.

930. Jane thought that it would be helpful to meet up with people her own age to know what they were doing and exchange information.

9.4 Conclusions

- Some rural issues have resonance in urban areas but there are additional issues to be faced.
- The main issue was transport. Young people living in isolated communities were dependent on public transport, which was often infrequent and expensive in the daytime. In the evening it was often non existent.
- Education and training opportunities, especially post-16, can involve much travel or young people having to move away from home, which some are reluctant to do. Support services are also difficult to access for the same reasons.

- Employment opportunities in rural areas can be scarce or seasonal. Many are low paid and do not include training.
- Lack of access and opportunity can also lead to low aspirations, which can be a vicious circle affecting confidence and motivation to access any opportunities that are available.
- Issues of access and opportunity were further compounded if the young person faces additional barriers, such as, poor basic skills, low motivation or a disability.
- There were many support projects initiated in rural areas that address particular rural issues e.g. isolation, but they need to be sustained.
- Lack of potential sites in isolated areas. There may not be appropriate sites to deliver services from, even if they were available, for example, adults may also use them and this may deter young people from going there. Local support service providers have sought to address these issues. The use of ICTs to facilitate distance learning and distance advice, guidance and support. But this assumes that clients have PCs.

9.5 Recommendations

- Little dedicated work has been undertaken on the implications for the Connexions Service of delivering in a rural area.
- More work needs to be undertaken on whether ICTs can provide an appropriate (and cost-effective solution) to the issue of rural isolation and access.
- More work needs to be undertaken on exploring new methods of delivery. Many of the initiatives mentioned are based on existing or past programmes but are they still relevant and effective?
- There were a need for outreach and mobile support centres. These include buses that take careers advisers and other support workers to isolated communities or bases for peripatetic Personal Advisers. These and other support projects developed to address rural need to be sustainable.
- The issue of resources needs to be addressed. Most rural areas, when compared with urban areas, are more affluent and less deprived. However, this often masks large pockets of deprivation. What are the financial implications of addressing this need in a rural context and how does this relate to any funding formulas?

10 Quantifying Need

10.1 Introduction

931. Needs assessment was identified as a key task for Connexions Partnerships when developing their business plans. The testing of "a planning system that integrates as many other relevant plans as possible, quantifying need and mapping provision" was one of the key aspects that Pilots were asked to carry out through their lifetime.[35]

932. To help the Connexions Partnerships in this process, the CSNU developed a Mapping Tool, which aimed to support the Partnerships in quantifying demand for services and mapping existing provision.

933. The Mapping Tool was structured into different parts. It included:

- contextual information on the Connexions Partnership and the local area it serves;
- data and information on the cohort the Connexions Service is aimed at (mainly young people aged 13 to 19, and the needs of different cohort sub-groups, e.g. teenage parents, homeless, SEN);
- information on service providers, including key local partners, specialist services and schools as providers of secondary education (in contrast to community education); and
- a baseline on existing structures for consultation with and involvement of young people.

934. Parts of the Mapping Tool had to be submitted to the DfEE to support the business planning process; other parts (mainly information on current service provision) were intended for local use.

935. This requirement meant that the completion of the Mapping Tool was of greater importance to Pilots which submitted a Phase 1 proposal.

936. The Mapping Tool was first tested over summer 2000 in three pilot areas. After consultation with other Pilots, government departments and external agencies (including the voluntary sector), the final version was distributed in November 2000.

937. We asked Pilot coordinators and key partners about:

- the process – if and how they used the Mapping Tool, if it was an original exercise or based on existing exercises, who undertook it, if it covered demand for services and how young people were involved, and what the main issues were in undertaking the exercise;
- the findings – what the main conclusions were about demand and service provision in their areas;
- development plans – how they plan to build on these findings, how the mapping exercise is going to be developed in the future, and how it will feed into ongoing service evaluation and monitoring; and
- the added value in undertaking a mapping exercise in terms of planning for the Connexions Service and implementation of it.

938. We have also drawn on responses from interviews with individuals in each Pilot who managed the mapping exercise (including demand and service provision), mapping reports produced by some Pilots, monthly reports, and discussions at the Interim Report Conference in May 2001.

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[35] Connexions Prospectus

10.2 The Mapping Tool

939. The Mapping Tool attempted a consistent approach to data collection and collation. It was designed to:[36]

- use data that was already collected for other purposes;
- apply the same definition adopted for other purposes;
- only collect data that was directly relevant to the planning of the Connexions Service;
- collect data that describes the really important aspects, rather than easily measured aspects; and
- produce material that will be useful for local management (and evaluation) purposes.

940. Most respondents recognised the value in undertaking the mapping exercise. However, the use of the Mapping Tool was affected by:

- the number of drafts issued and the various changes made, sometimes after Pilots had started their mapping exercise;
- the late arrival of the final version of the Mapping Tool;
- difficulties in using the Mapping Tool (e.g. design, user-friendliness and skills of the user), particularly the electronic version;
- the need for some Pilots to change some of the terminology used and provide additional guidance notes;
- a feeling that some questions were felt to be inappropriate for some potential service providers, particularly from very small organisations in the VCS; and
- its assumptions about data availability, e.g. information by age of school groups.

941. One respondent said:

> *"Initially the Pilot mapped data held by key agencies and providers working with young people and mapped service provision. The national Mapping Tool was then distributed to Pilots, so the original map had to be reintegrated with the national Mapping Tool. The Pilot only became aware of the final Mapping Tool in December, so realistically the map wasn't ready until January. This was frustrating because more staff had to be employed."*

942. Generally, the process of undertaking the mapping exercise was seen as time-consuming and very labour-intensive, particularly the mapping of service provision. It required not only staff time, but also time and willingness to cooperate by those organisations which contributed to the exercise by providing data or filling in questionnaires:

> *"… the size of the exercise, dealing with the definitions and having to get the cooperation of other organisations. It was a significant exercise for us to undertake and for other service providers, e.g. the VCS and local authority departments. For some VCS organisations, especially one or two-person organisations, it was a significant exercise to undertake. The involvement of the VCS was problematic. We sent out 550 forms and only got 70 back. We even used a VCS to facilitate this process, but the response was only about 10%. For some local authority departments that provided youth support services it was a substantial exercise as well. The return from one Youth Service was about ¼ of an inch thick. Key providers (e.g. Youth Service) did complete it, but as I said it was a substantial exercise."*

943. For those Pilots which went on to become a Phase 1 Partnership, mapping took

[36] Mapping Tool: guidance notes

place at the same time as the business planning process. Some felt that it enhanced their business planning. However, most would have liked more time to conduct the mapping exercise, analyse the results and then write the business plan. Instead, they had to do the two together.

944. Those Pilots which employed dedicated people or consultants to do the work said that this process also needed to be managed and monitored.

945. Pilots also reported the concerns of the people and organisations being mapped. The main issues were:

- the fact that they were involved in repeated mapping exercises without any visible benefit to their organisation, the service or their clients;
- duplication of effort – e.g. the same information is provided to different central government departments, so why cannot they provide it on a Connexions Partnership/LMC basis;
- how the information was going to be used – people were especially concerned about the questions on funding; and
- it was seen as a one-way exercise – *"just another paper-pushing exercise"*.

10.3 The mapping process

946. All Pilots used the Mapping Tool except for Huntercombe YOI. Huntercombe was carrying out its own mapping exercise covering services and need in the YJS.

947. In multi-LMC Partnerships, such as South Yorkshire, most have broken the mapping exercise down into LMC area to aid service planning, development and delivery at the local level:

- Four Pilots said that they had completed the whole mapping exercise (using the Mapping Tool) across the partnership area at the time of our interviews; none were Phase 1 Partnerships.
- Five Pilots focused the mapping exercise initially on the sections of the Mapping Tool that needed to be submitted to the DfEE for purposes of business planning (statistics and information on the cohort and cohort sub-groups as well as baselines on young people's involvement and consultation across the Partnership's areas). These were mainly Pilots which submitted a proposal to become a Phase 1 Partnership.
- Sections of the Mapping Tool on service provision were intended for local use only, and two Pilots had used the questionnaires provided as a starting point to develop something that suited their own needs.
- One Pilot decided not to use the Mapping Tool in a sub-area, because recent mapping exercises (e.g. Community Plan, Learning Gateway and Careers Service needs analysis) had been undertaken across the Partnership's areas. Another Pilot undertook mapping in one sub-area first, and is now planning to complete the exercise across the Partnership during 2001.

948. Additional mapping of service provision also took place at the project or service level, and through Personal Advisers, covering their immediate environment.

949. The 'needs analysis' part of the mapping exercise was reinforced by research projects that focused on particular sub-groups of clients (e.g. gifted and talented), and by dedicated research undertaken recently outside Connexions (e.g. into the needs of care leavers).

950. Pilots did not consult with young people specifically for the mapping exercise, but in most cases Pilots said that the involvement of young people around mapping issues had taken place through separate activities. It was also important to include partner agencies, especially the VCS, because other organisations had a wealth of information that the mapping exercise needed to tap into (e.g. YOTs have statistics for young offenders/re-offenders/victims of crime, and health authorities have data on health issues of young people):

- One Pilot appointed a worker to engage the VCS, including running conferences and workshops. Mapping of VCS organisations (of which there were hundreds) was an outcome of this work.
- One Pilot adopted a number of strategies to make contact with agencies working with young people, including mapping surgeries and conferences, presentations to sub-groups of agencies and working with specific groups of young people.
- Another Pilot commissioned a VCS to carry out mapping/coordination exercises across the sector as a whole, or sub-groups (e.g. black communities).

951. Pilots used a range of means to complete their Mapping Tool/mapping exercise:

- Five Pilots appointed an individual dedicated to mapping.
- Five Pilots commissioned an outside organisation for the whole exercise or parts of it.
- In two Pilots, members of the Pilot Connexions team carried out the exercise wholly or in part.
- In five cases, all or parts of the mapping were managed by a partner organisation, e.g. the local authority, the Careers Service or a voluntary sector organisation.
- Three Pilots established a mapping theme group to provide support, monitoring and steering.
- In one Pilot, mapping was undertaken by LMC members.

952. All mapping exercises were based on existing information – secondary data and other information held by various partners – but four Pilots were able to base their mapping on previous exercises. Earlier initiatives, such as Learning Gateway, SRB programmes and social inclusion strategies, had also benefited from the mapping of service provision and need in their particular areas. So some areas were able to 'map the maps' and include more up-to-date data where appropriate. Eight pilots said that their mapping exercise was original in whole or in part.

10.4 Main mapping issues

953. Using the Mapping Tool and carrying out the mapping exercise raised a number of issues.[37]

10.4.1 Geography

954. A number of issues related to the availability, validity and reliability of data at the local level – i.e. LMC level and below.

955. Some nationally available information is not detailed enough at the local level or is not available, for example ethnic minority data.

956. LMCs can cover quite large and varied areas, and a true picture of needs and service provision may need to go below LMC level. For example, LMC areas like Warwickshire and Devon have large urban areas whose issues of deprivation and exclusion are different to

[37] These issues are very similar to the findings of the Social Exclusion Unit's PAT18 report 'Better Information'.

those in the more isolated rural parts of these areas.

957. The boundaries of organisations central to the mapping exercise vary (e.g. the police and health authorities). So information about offences and health issues may not be available at borough level. Furthermore, schools data is based on catchment areas and not local authority boundaries. There were cases of schools and colleges based in one borough having the majority or a significant proportion of their students resident in another borough.

10.4.2 Fragmentation/inconsistency/different purposes

958. Pilots reported that existing information is held in different formats and according to different definitions. For example, some organisations may collect data on 11-16 year olds, and others on 13-16 year olds. So there was often overlap and duplication of effort.

959. Furthermore, some departments hold information for the 13-19 age group, whereas others hold data on a broader age range, e.g. the 5-18 age group. It was therefore difficult to pull the information together by the required areas and age groups. One Pilot had problems getting numbers, for example of 17 year olds on courses, because colleges do not break numbers down by age.

960. Statistical information is produced with a single focus (for example the number of teenage conceptions, or the number of offences of different types) which is different to that required in the Mapping Tool. This does not give a clear understanding of how young people fall into different groups, especially if they had multiple needs.

961. There were also issues about the different definitions that people used. For example, when counting staff, how FTEs are calculated, and what constitutes different types of workers. Also, there were variations in defining drug users, homeless young people and lone parents. Some terms are too open to interpretation, and when some questions referred to funding there may be a temptation to use a wider interpretation. In one Pilot, one LEA only measured the take-up of free school meals, not those eligible. There were also variations in how temporary exclusions were counted.

962. Area policies can also distort the figures. For example, a zero tolerance policy in one area could inflate the number of young offenders in the short and medium term.

963. There was a general plea for much more work nationally to sort out the definitions, especially to ensure the comparability and compatibility of data.

964. There was also a need for a national return on the investments that Pilots were having to make in collecting data for the Mapping Tool and other data requirements (e.g. management information). There was a feeling that resources were not available nationally to analyse and compile this data into a form that would be helpful to the Pilots (e.g. benchmarking data, developing relative weights). At the moment, Pilots were unable to compare their activities with other similar pilot areas.

10.4.3 Access to and availability of data and information

965. Even if issues around definitions were overcome, there were still other issues to be confronted, especially in mapping service provision. Mapping of service providers proved to be more difficult than originally anticipated because of the complexity of service arrangements within many organisations, particularly those within the public sector.

966. Some organisations were reluctant to provide data. In one pilot area, only one out of seven FE colleges returned data. Other sectors were very large (e.g. the VCS), so mapping them was an extensive exercise. Some data was out of date; for example, the number of one-parent families was based on the 1991 census.

967. When agencies were contacted it took time to get hold of the relevant information. As mappers were outside these agencies, it was not always straightforward to identify the most appropriate contact within an agency. Also, people were very busy and could not always devote themselves to external tasks.

968. One Pilot said that its work within the Neighbourhood Support Fund had meant that it had built up positive relations with the VCS. This had improved the speed and quality of the information it received.

10.4.4 Methods of collecting information

969. Issues around the method of data collection had implications for the mapping exercise and the use of the information it generated. The main issues were as follows:

- Problems with Information stored on paper rather than digitally. This especially applied to directories of service providers, which still tended to be paper based.
- The different methods used to collect data meant that it was not always possible to add up the data from the separate LMCs to provide a picture for the Partnership's area.
- Follow-up phone calls had to be made to remind agencies to return their questionnaires, but also to clarify the returns. One Pilot remarked that questionnaire returns *"raised more questions than they answered!"*
- One Pilot said that in terms of collecting local statistics, local area knowledge was needed to do that intelligently. One Pilot used young people to verify information given by service providers.
- Analysis at the local level, as well as data collection, was felt to be important. Levels of homelessness, drug abuse, participation and achievement may be affected by particular local circumstances (e.g. the presence or not of a well-funded support activity) which need to be incorporated into any analysis.
- In one Pilot, some organisations did not have the tools to measure the impact of their activities. One service focused on raising aspirations, but did not have any methods for measuring when aspirations were raised. So the Pilot group had to develop their own tool.

970. An important issue was the need to analyse the data once the information had been collected. Some Pilots assumed that this would be part of the Mapping Tool, and were surprised that it did not link demand and provision together. Most Pilots were undertaking additional work to develop a meaningful analysis from the mapping exercise.

971. The aim of the Mapping Tool and exercise was to provide a needs assessment on which the business planning process could be based. Pilots had used the mapping exercise to:

- identify strengths and weaknesses of current service provision, e.g. 'hot spots' – deprived areas where there is real lack of provision in relation to need;
- identify need across sub-groups and geographical areas through the indicators provided in the Mapping Tool;
- assess the lack of provision of certain services or facilities generally;
- put local proportions/numbers into triangle of needs;
- assess and allocate the number and location of Personal Advisers needed;
- identify a network of Personal Advisers working in existing agencies;
- identify specialist service providers; and
- assess quality and measure effectiveness among service providers.

972. Four Pilots said that they were in the process of undertaking an analysis of their mapping exercise.

973. Pilots demonstrated a number of ways in which they were taking forward the conclusions drawn from the mapping exercises. For some, the mapping exercise had highlighted gaps in service delivery, which they were now seeking to address. One Pilot was instituting pre- and post-intervention questionnaires on projects it chose to support, as a means of evaluating effects. Another Pilot was investigating how referrals could be formalised and transmitted via the Internet.

974. Another Pilot used the mapping exercise to identify resources locally to add to the support within the Connexions framework. Several Pilots were using the information to develop databases and directories of service providers.

975. An important message from the Pilots was that the mapping exercise – shortcomings included – provided a baseline that needed updating and developing in the future:

- eight Pilots were planning to continue the exercise and repeat it in the future so that it became more dynamic in monitoring activities over time, but also because information became out of date very soon. One Pilot said that it was already planning to monitor some statistics on a quarterly basis;
- two Pilots were undertaking additional or more detailed analyses (e.g. into particular groups or exploring further down, to neighbourhood levels), using these to map even smaller organisations;
- three Pilots were developing the findings as a resource for service planners – e.g. service directories as a resource for Personal Advisers, providing them with information about service providers and other Connexions Personal Advisers; and
- one Pilot was using it to improve (and measure) standards in provision across its area.

976. At least two Pilots were continuing their mapping posts, which will involve research and coordination. There was also a consistent desire to link the mapping exercises with Connexions Customer Information Systems and monitoring and evaluation systems, to produce combined analyses to feed into business planning.

977. It was at the business planning stage that the value added by the mapping exercise would be most apparent. For some Pilots, mapping has confirmed existing knowledge and provided justification for previous decisions. It has also been used as a basis for allocating resources, e.g. numbers of Personal Advisers within different settings and with different sub-groups. Mapping has also highlighted issues that need to be addressed in the future, for example the level of disaffection and the services available to address it. But the mapping exercise is not worth undertaking if it is not used intelligently, and this requires time, the correct timing and sufficient resources. As one key partner said:

> *"I think it has been a dead loss, a costly exercise. It had to be done, but without any meaningful analysis of the data it is useless and we have not had the time to do that. It is no good unless it is turned into intelligence."*

978. Table 50 shows the key issues and learning points concerning the mapping of needs and services.

Table 50 Key issues/learning points concerning the involvement of young people

- The mapping exercise should be seen as the beginning of an ongoing process of bringing together agencies that work with the Connexions cohort. Thought should be given to how this function is to be maintained and updated as part of the Connexions Partnership remit.
- A list of national data sources would be useful.
- Mapping forms should be simplified as much as possible. They should contain only the information that the Pilot actually needs. Connexions Partnerships would benefit from asking themselves "Why do we need this question on here" before using the form.
- Connexions Partnerships should attempt to bring a cross-section of agencies on board and aim for a minimum service to start with. Many agencies are more willing to commit when they can actually see something in operation, rather than signing up to a contract.
- Mapping agencies is hugely time-consuming.

979. Table 51 shows the good-practice pointers concerning the mapping of needs and services.

Table 51 Good practice concerning the involvement of young people

- Bring together planners and managers from a range of organisations – there are gains in increasing understanding among partners.
- Use data that is readily available, rather than seeking information in formats that involve partners in additional work; the drawback is lack of comparability.
- Link together exercises to map service providers, and work collaboratively with others involved in similar exercises.
- Undertake mapping using a variety of methods, in order to achieve maximum penetration and cope with the large numbers of agencies involved.
- Develop the potential benefits of such an exercise to those providing the information. While the information will be used for Connexions planning purposes, it should also be useful for other purposes, such as helping to inform agencies, young people and professionals about other services available to them.

10.5 Conclusions

- The process of undertaking the mapping exercise was seen as time-consuming and labour-intensive, especially the mapping of service provision.
- This meant that few Pilots who were becoming Phase 1 Partnerships were able to use it in their business planning.
- There were a number of issues in collecting data, relating to its availability at certain area levels; the fragmentation and inconsistency of data collection; access and availability of information; and methods of collecting information.
- The main value added in undertaking the mapping exercise was being able to put the profile of need together with a profile of service delivery in order to identify gaps and overlaps. Few Pilots have systematically undertaken this exercise.

10.6 Recommendations

- There is a need to give Pilot Partnerships a sense of ownership of the Mapping Tool. They feel that it has been imposed on them, and see it as a burden rather than as a useful tool. Any changes in the future must be negotiated with people who are tasked with carrying them out, and changes to definitions and concepts need to be kept to a minimum.

- Very few Pilots have been able to use the Mapping Tool in their business planning processes. This was partly because of time delays, but also because of uncertainty in how to use the information. There is a need for a good practice guide on how to use the Mapping Tool. Issues raised include:
  - How does the Mapping Tool relate to other data collected, e.g. MI and evaluation and monitoring data?
  - How it can be used to bring supply and demand together and identify gaps and overlaps?
  - What are the implications for agencies if the analysis shows that they are delivering in an area of overlap?
  - What are the resource and capacity implications in meeting gaps in services?
- There is a need for more detailed analysis on how the mapping exercise has been used, which sections are more or less relevant, and problems with definitions.

11 Connexions Customer Information System

11.1 Introduction

980. The evaluation of the Connexions Customer Information System (CCIS) strand of the Connexions Pilot was the responsibility of local evaluators. This section is based on local evaluator reports from Coventry and Warwickshire, Lincolnshire and Greater Merseyside.[38] As well as the monthly monitoring reports and, face-to-face interviews with the Pilot Coordinator and other key partner's by the national evaluator.

981. Overall, eleven pilots have reported that they were developing CCISs as part of their Pilot activity. Several were basing these on existing systems such as ASPIRE; CORE or HITS that were primarily developed as resources for careers advisers. Other Pilots were using systems used by organisations involved in delivery of Connexions services such as the Careers or Youth Services.

982. Pilots were focusing on CCISs to varying degrees. One Pilot, Greater Merseyside, was focusing on little else whilst others were piloting CCISs within the Youth Justice System (YJS).

983. Tracking is seen as an essential component for the Connexions Service and there is a desire to have a national CCIS in place. The Connexions Customer Information System, as the national CCIS is referred to, is planned to be fully implemented in autumn 2002. The CSNU's tracking team has employed a team of consultants to describe the business model for the CCIS and all Phase One and Pilot Partnerships are being encouraged to comment on and inform its development.

984. The CCIS will be entirely computer based to enhance storage, analysis and transmission of information.

985. The local evaluation team in one Pilot highlighted the fact that many LMCs were waiting for a lead from CSNU over the issue and that while organisations involved in the delivery of Connexions services had individual CCISs in place, there was no system that was used by all the different agencies involved.

11.2 Identifying and addressing customer information system issues

986. The primary purposes of a CCIS were threefold:

- To store appropriate information about a client e.g. their age, gender, ethnic origin, employment status, education and training history and aspirations, and particular special needs e.g. particular health needs, nature of their family, offending behaviour etc. The Personal Adviser, on a computer, can then store this information.
- To monitor any changes over time by the same support worker or immediate colleagues. For example, how is the client's behaviour changing, are there any changes in their circumstances (e.g. have they moved house, achieved a qualification etc.), have they been referred to other support workers or agencies and did they turn up?
- To communicate client information between different people and agencies. For example, if someone is charged and convicted of an offence information about the young person

[38] The local evaluator for both Coventry and Warwickshire and Lincolnshire is Deirdre Hughes, Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS), University of Derby, and for Greater Merseyside it is Sue Bloxhan of St Martin's College Lancaster.

can be communicated from Personal Advisers to YOTs and the YOI and vice versa using the same format.

987. CCISs may also be used by Partnerships to measure performance e.g. have particular interventions worked, what is the type and number of Personal Adviser caseloads.

988. Pilot CCIS projects have concentrated on ensuring that relevant data was obtained and shared between organisations involved in service delivery.

989. A variety of issues were identified that helped and hindered the development of CCISs.

- **Culture of contributing organisations** - organisations involved in delivery of Connexions Services typically had different attitudes to aspects of tracking young people. This was in terms of both methods of data recording and in terms of data protection. In one Pilot it was found that one agency's outreach workers did not want to collect data on individuals and that another did not have Internet access. The vast majority of information recorded by support workers (including Personal Advisers) was paper-based and was not (or could not be) communicated. Some organisations had rules and procedures about the transfer of information. For example, the Personal Advisers in a YOI are not, under the rules of the YJS, able to take their case notes outside the YOI when attending e.g. community review meetings. Particular organisations or systems, like the YJS, have very particular information requirements and established procedures, protocols and forms for recording client information.
- **The starting point** - the baseline from which the CCIS was built was lower than expected in terms of the systems and practices that partner agencies had. Even when the systems and protocols were in place there were issues over how comprehensive the information was and its validity and reliability. Also some agencies may well be advanced in terms of their own CCISs but partner agencies may be using entirely paper-based systems.
- **Data protection and information sharing protocols** - there appeared to be significant differences in the way that issues relating to data protection and information sharing protocols were being treated across the different Pilot areas. Different areas were starting from different points in terms of past practice. There were also different professional views about the issues surrounding the transfer of data, for example, will others use it appropriately (do they have the right training?), will confidentiality between client and Personal Adviser be breached, and for how long do you hold information. Most Personal Advisers do tell their clients the circumstances under which they would pass on information with and without their consent. One Pilot raised concerns that the more formal nature of data sharing has led to organisations involved in the delivery of Connexions services being more cautious with regard to the sharing of data generally:

  > *"Interestingly we are beginning to find that the more formal we make arrangements e.g. protocols for information exchange, the more reluctant some partners are to share data. In the past a lot of informal data sharing took place but now we have raised awareness re DP Act/Human Rights Act etc. services are now reluctant to pass on useful "soft" information."*

  (This issue is addressed in more detail in the case study of the Greater Merseyside Pilot below).
- **Tracking young people who move to other areas** – information about some young people will have to be transferred to other Connexions Pilot areas e.g. if the client moves house. Should all areas have the same protocols and procedures? How will data be 'exported', who then owns the data and is responsible for its initial (e.g. receipt and storage) and subsequent management (e.g. who is sent the information)? One Pilot reported that individuals moving into other areas would have their details forwarded to

the receiving Connexions organisation or Careers Service. It would then be the responsibility of the receiving service to follow up on it. The ‘exporting’ service does not retain responsibility once an individual has left a geographical area.

- **Technical difficulties** – not only did partner organisations have varying degrees of access to ICTs, including PCs and email/Internet access, they may not have been on compatible systems. Also some data files may be large and not easily transported. There were also security implications involving the storage of client information by Personal Advisers, by the central service, and by agencies who are subsequently sent the data. A key question was whether there is only one client file, and who holds the most up-to-date version?
- **Resource constraints** – not only were there considerable resource implications for ‘kitting out’ organisations to run and use the CCIS, but also recording information can take a considerable amount of time by Personal Advisers. One Pilot running a client database said that it could take up to one-third of a Personal Advisers time to record and up-date information about a client. Also some Personal Advisers are slower in getting round to writing up their case notes and there are variations in the way that different information is recorded by different Personal Advisers and this affects the reliability of the information. Personal Advisers will need training in these aspects so that any CCIS holds valid and reliable data.
- **Involving the correct staff from participating organisations** - this issue was strongly connected with the culture of organisations contributing to the CCIS. Pilots identified several factors that affected the success of a CCIS in terms of who to involve in and manage the process. Ideally it should include staff who:
  - possess technical knowledge
  - have a strong interest in the project
  - have the capacity to be fully engaged with the project
  - possess decision making capability within their organisation

  Some organisations e.g. the Police, YOTs, and health authorities have experience in the transfer of information between agencies and have been included on tracking strand teams within some Pilot areas.
- **Involving young people in the development of the systems** – only one-third of Pilots were involving young people in the development of their CCISs. This may have implications for the way that clients perceive how information was recorded, stored and transmitted about them.
- **A local or a national database** – should there be one national database holding information from the CCIS or a series of many local ones. Some Pilots doubt the efficacy of one database because it cannot reflect local needs and it will also be too large. But if there are many local databases then issues of compatibility arise. A compromise might be many local databases that are based on nationally agreed protocols.

  If there is no national database, then how does this impact on the information used by Connexions Direct and the Connexions Card?

990. Very few Pilots had been able to make much progress on the development of CCISs. For some this was due to difficulties in recruiting IT staff with the appropriate skills. Others were waiting on national guidance and did not want to undertake a lot of work if nationally defined protocols were different to what they have been working on. There were also problems in developing systems that people are currently using e.g. Careers Service databases because of computer system down time and the fact that it is confusing to make changes within ‘live’ systems.

991. Those Pilots that have developed work on CCISs have highlighted the following good practice pointers.

Table 52 Good practice pointers concerning the development of CCIS

➢ Personal Advisers have been included on the strand group. Also included are the Police, Health Authority, Social Services, the Probation Service, LEA, Careers Service, YOT, VCS and young people. The involvement of parents and carers is being considered. ➢ The work of this group has also assisted other processes e.g. the annual import of SIMS pupil data from the LEA. ➢ The development of a Connexions smart card is being examined. ➢ Partners are providing examples of their policies, practices and experiences of confidentiality and information sharing. ➢ The local authority's Data Protection Officer has run training sessions. ➢ There is a good spread of skills in the strand team including ICT and databases. ➢ Expertise has been brought in where necessary e.g. the Borough's legal department to advise on barriers to data sharing. ➢ A client booklet on these issues has been produced.

Source: Monthly Monitoring Reports, GHK.

992. Those Pilots that have developed work on CCISs have highlighted the main issues that have arisen so far.

Table 53 Main issues concerning the development of CCIS

➢ There is a lack of clarity about the role and status of the national database. ➢ Clearer guidance is needed from the DfEE about all aspects of CCISs. National solution is expected. ➢ Some organisations are reluctant to provide information due to self-protection. This has slowed down progress to getting signed written agreements. ➢ This is not a new area and pulling together different approaches may be as difficult as getting agreement. ➢ The need to develop appropriate mechanisms for consulting parents. ➢ Protocols have been received from partners as examples of current practice. But are these working at the operational level? ➢ Developments within other organisations are relevant e.g. YOTs are developing their own database. ➢ Delays have been caused by having to meet the Careers Service headline targets and the development of our ASPIRE database. ➢ Does the Connexions Service require legal authority to hold data on clients? Does it require further legal authority to hold data on clients who have left the education and training system? ➢ What is the position if parents want to view data about clients?

Source: Monthly Monitoring Reports, GHK.

993. One Pilot that had made progress on CCISs was the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership who have assembled a multi-disciplinary tracking team, comprising representatives from a wide range of agencies, with a spread of experience. Their objectives were to:

- involve young people in the design and development of CCISs;
- develop websites to facilitate feedback from all involved parties and to keep people up-to-date on developments;
- enhance the communications and marketing of the Connexions service.

11.3 Good Practice Case Study: Teenage Parents Project – CCIS case study: Greater Merseyside Pilot

994. The Greater Merseyside Pilot was focusing exclusively on developing a CCIS that can be used by the Connexions Service in all of its manifestations. It is due to go live in September 2001. It was based on internal project reports and interviews with the Pilot Coordinator and other key staff.

11.3.1 Introduction

995. Eleven people staff the Pilot: one Pilot director, two project managers, six tracking coordinators, one systems support technician and one administrator.

996. The CCIS that has been developed is based on consolidating the existing CORE system for, four local Career Services.

997. Each young person recorded by the system has a unique identifier. This is currently a system-based identifier but it does not share the information with other systems at the moment. The Pilot is planning to meet with representatives from the LEAs in the Connexions Partnership area to investigate the shared use of a unique identifier pending a decision nationally.

998. The system records information relating to all aspects of provision of services that the young person has *consented* to be shared between agencies. This information takes the form of notes by those involved in service delivery and information about referrals to different agencies, activities undertaken and all 'destinations' of young people at each stage of the support process.

999. Agencies will be able to access the system under a strictly need to know basis. It is possible to block discrete parts of the system to individual users as each user has a username and password for personal identification.

1000. In this way it is possible for information to pass from one user to another as it is updated in real time. The majority of agencies using the CCIS will have remote access via an Intranet. It is intended that the system will be web-based in the future.

1001. Young people are categorised according to the support group codes S1, S2 and S3 according to the level of support required in each individual case. This allows the system to trigger reminder notes to the relevant Personal Advisers or other staff if, for example, a young person requiring a high level of support has no entries on the system for a significant period of time.

11.3.2 *Mapping exercise*[39]

1002. The provision of a map of comprehensive data held by all agencies involved in the delivery of youth services in the partnership area was the first objective that was identified by the Pilot. Questionnaires were sent to all agencies involved in the provision of youth support services.

1003. There were several problems that arose during the mapping exercise:

- The involvement and contribution of LMCs was not significant.
- Responses were not necessarily compatible with each other as questions in the survey were interpreted in a variety of ways by participating organisations.

[39] Section 10 of the report focuses on issues relating to mapping service provision and need in local areas.

- At the moment, very little practical data sharing goes on between agencies in the partnership area.
- Some agencies – even those prominent in existing service delivery in the area – were found to have poor recording systems that impacted on data integrity.
- Delays in recruiting staff to the Pilot to carry out the mapping exercise meant that there were problems processing the data.
- Pulling together data from a variety of agencies is a complex process. There is a clear issue around how to combine data from a variety of agencies that have a range of different standards of recording information. This proved to be the case both in terms of efficiency in a standalone context from the individual organisation's point of view and in terms of combining data submitted in different forms.
- The system needs to be developed in such a way that outcomes can be effectively analysed.

1004. The learning points arising from the mapping exercise were:

- There needs to be a clear strategy regarding how to pull together disparate data from different organisations *before* the process starts.
- Assumptions that statutory agencies have robust recording systems should not be made.
- That there is no simple solution to how to collate data regarding young people, especially in an environment where there are no unified systems to build on.
- Success in recording data depends on the relationship between young people and delivery staff.
- There needs to be absolute clarity of how a system is to be used before the information is requested. Without this there is an increased risk of data that is returned being incompatible.
- An example of this can be identified in the case of local education authorities: it is wrong to assume that there is commonality either in terms of data sharing or in terms of data recording.
- Validity and reliability are paramount concerns and require much initial planning and consultation.
- It is vital to invest in people upfront rather than wait for problems to arise. A greater initial investment in training of staff would have been beneficial. It is acknowledged that there is only so much that can be anticipated, especially in a climate of competing demands on resources, but that in the case of the Greater Merseyside Pilot savings would have been made had investment in the process been made at an earlier stage.
- Consideration needs to be given at an early stage as to the issue of how the data collected in the mapping exercise is to be used by Connexions, especially in the context of analysing soft outcomes.

11.3.3 Development of a website

1005. The purpose of developing a website was to enable effective communication of developments and information between partners and clients. A web design company was chosen and market research was carried out to ascertain young people's views and needs for a website. Issues proved mainly to focus on content, and in general terms how to attract young people to the site.

1006. Content has mainly revolved around what is happening locally of interest to young people. The Pilot and the web design company involved in producing the site have been working on the premise that the one thing, which will attract young people to the site, would be if updates were frequent. Young people using the site will almost certainly have followed a link to get there rather than identifying the URL themselves. The website was also considered to be a useful method of forging links with the Connexions card project.

1007. Learning points from this element are:

- Links from other sites popular with young people in the partnership area need to be established as widely as possible. Greater Merseyside found useful sites for this purpose included Liverpool FC, Widnes RLFC, schools and direct links from emails to attract young people to the site.
- It would be appropriate for agencies to update as much as possible the content on the site that is relevant to them. Links, therefore, need to be made by the company or part of the Pilot responsible for the website and agencies involved in the provision of youth services in the Pilot area.

11.3.4 Consulting young people

1008. The Pilot's objective in this area was to implement a process that allowed consultation with young people, especially from ethnic minorities, in the development and implementation of the Pilot. This process is intended to inform the wider implementation of the Connexions Service within the Partnership area. The process has been developed through established contacts, including staff already involved in the development of the Pilot, such as the tracking coordinators. A wide range of delivery organisations was involved. Four specific groups were identified: an ethnic minority group in Liverpool, a teenage pregnancy group in Knowsley, a homeless organisation in St Helens, and a group of care leavers from Liverpool.

1009. Learning points from this element are:

- The principal item of good practice identified by the Pilot was that it was appropriate to pick groups from which there would be a positive response who were known to want to work with the Pilot. This was thought more important than consideration of issues around representation as a good cross-section could be achieved within these limits. Service delivery would also be enhanced by the links forged.
- As part of the spending from the development fund available, a full time member of staff from the local learning partnership has been employed to work exclusively on youth consultation, continuing work carried out in the past.

11.3.5 Data protection legislation

1010. The Pilot has been keen since its inception to investigate data protection issues and to liase with other agencies involved in provision to produce solutions to any areas of concern. The Pilot has teamed up with the Connexions Card project locally to liase with the Data Protection agency. Two issues arose:

- Answers to questions in relation to this area often raise more questions in themselves.
- There are particular difficulties around gaining and maintaining a record of a young person's consent.

1011. The learning points from this element are:

- Links should be made with other agencies and organisations locally who will need to address data protection issues in a Connexions context because resource constraints dictate that the Data Protection Agency will liase with one organisation in each area.
- It is often easy to diagnose problems – such as working practices that do not comply with existing legislation. It is harder to create solutions. People wish to share data, but as the issue becomes more contentious, organisations show a more cautious approach.
- The most important point has been to rigorously address the issue of permission from young people for data to be shared. This is very much a training issue for agencies involved in provision. Young people need to be properly prepared for being asked these

questions.

- Young people should write the permission sheet. Extreme care must be taken to ensure that they are written in a form that can be easily understood. An example is the use of the phrase ‘in the strictest confidence’: although the use of this phrase was well intended, it was found firstly to be misleading in the wider context of data sharing, as well as mystifying to young people.

11.4 Conclusion

- Whilst eleven Pilots were developing tracking, most were developing existing client databases, usually those used by the Careers Service. Greater Merseyside was focusing almost exclusively on this strand.
- There was a wide range of important issues involved in developing CCISs. Many were familiar to other strands e.g. the involvement of young people, the culture of partner agencies, and multi-agency networking. In addition, there were a range of further technical and resource issues that have compounded the development of these systems.
- There have also been difficulties in recruiting IT staff and some Pilots said they were waiting for national guidance on, for example, the role and status of the national database.
- Greater Merseyside has made most progress in terms of tracking; mapping the information that agencies hold about young people; involving young people in the design and implementation of the CCIS; developing a website; and exploring data protection issues.

11.5 Recommendations

- The need for national guidance and decisions on a range of issues concerning the development of CCISs e.g. the status of the national database, data protection legislation and data sharing protocols.
- More identification and dissemination of best practice and key learning points.

12 Use of Evidence-based Practice

12.1 Introduction[40]

1012. The use of evidence-based practice was one of the key aims of the Connexions Service. However, few people could define what evidence-based practice meant in operational terms. A formal definition is that it is a *"systematic approach to problem-based lifelong learning and an aid to decision-making"*. Evidence-based practice is *"a process of lifelong self-directed learning which identifies, clarifies and addresses gaps in our knowledge… It does this by developing certain core skills: question forming, searching for and critically appraising evidence, incorporating applicable evidence into practice, and evaluating our performance"*.

1013. For the Connexions Pilots, the use of evidence-based practice was meant to:

- identify what works;
- highlight successful research practices for working with young people;
- analyse the effect of Connexions, e.g. through longitudinal studies;
- evaluate methodology;
- facilitate benefits analysis;
- reinforce the adoption and strengthening of successful activities; and
- identify need.

12.2 Use of evidence-based practice in the Pilots

1014. In their local evaluations, not all Pilots focused on evidence-based practice. This was partly because of a large overlap with the involving young people strand, and also because it was inherent to the work in many Pilots. In one Pilot, for example, most service activity was entirely research based, to inform the development of the full-blown service.

1015. Local evaluators in the Coventry and Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, and South Yorkshire Pilots evaluated the use of evidence-based practice in those pilot areas:

- In Coventry and Warwickshire, the evaluation focused on describing how evidence-based practice was used across the Pilot.
- In Lincolnshire, it focused on the involvement of young people in the design and development of the Connexions Service.
- In South Yorkshire, it looked at setting out the use of evidence-based practice within each of the Pilot's strands/projects.

1016. In Coventry and Warwickshire, evidence-based practice involved the following:

- sharing what works at regular meetings of Personal Advisers;
- reflective diaries collated by the development manager;
- consultation with young people;
- social activities designed to develop trust and working relationships;
- the evaluator sharing policies and practice across agencies and institutions;
- collation of mapping evidence to inform the location and levels of service delivery;
- conferences to share practice; and

[40] The use of evidence-based practice was a strand to be addressed by the local evaluators. This section is based on local evaluators' reports for Coventry and Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, and South Yorkshire. Deirdre Hughes wrote the Coventry and Warwickshire, and Lincolnshire reports; Simon Bysshe wrote the South Yorkshire report. They are both based at the Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS) at the University of Derby.

- youth forums.

1017. Key learning points across the Pilots were also identified in partnership agreements with schools and colleges, the ASPIRE database (which holds client information), newsletters and games.

1018. The process involved a combination of external evaluators and systems inherent to and managed by the Pilot. It covered the work of Personal Advisers in schools and colleges as well as Personal Advisers working in community settings (e.g. youth clubs and care-leaver teams).

1019. The use of evidence-based practice has impacted on services. Examples include: adopting different approaches for particular client groups, using the Real Game/Pacific Institute in group sessions, developing the management of Personal Advisers in schools, and providing staff with additional resources (e.g. mobile phones, laptops, time off for study leave).

1020. It was also useful in developing closer relationships with educational institutions, for example by instituting joint meetings, and in making a local decision to limit other training alongside the National Personal Adviser Diploma.

1021. The involvement of young people through mechanisms such as school councils, neighbourhood forums, the Youth Council and external consultation exercises were also used to gather evidence. The results of a market research exercise were being fed back to young people for further discussion. The Youth Service have also been closely involved in this involving young people, as has the use of peer role models. The Youth Service had also developed specific research projects to look at the needs of disaffected, and gifted and talented young people.

1022. The following example is taken from the report by Lincolnshire's local evaluator.

12.2.1 Use of evidence-based practice in Lincolnshire

In Lincolnshire, the Involving Young People projects intended to develop a more responsive and 'fit for purpose' service by exploring and implementing ways of engaging young people in designing, developing and reviewing services. However, the project has concentrated on the stage before this by exploring the methods of consultation and involvement that work or are preferred by young people rather than 'the use' of such practice.

Within these parameters, the following approach has been followed. An action team comprising representatives from the Youth Service and Careers Service, the YOT, a young carers worker and the Council for Voluntary Youth Service was formed and has driven the project forward.

Individuals within the team brought experiences of working with rural deprivation, young carers, information centres and disaffected young people. The main thread within the project has been the use of focus groups of young people working with the Viewpoint organisation and the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside. The aim has been to test out tools and methodologies which are best suited to engage with young people in eliciting views and needs, and also in reviewing services and strategies.

The range of consultation methods used included paper questionnaires, peer-led focus groups, workshops, one-to-one discussions, representative forums/councils and the Viewpoint software package.

The project has been developed over two phases. The first phase investigated methods suggested by research undertaken by the Queen's University of Belfast on consulting with young people. Once approaches likely to be successful were established, a simple questionnaire was prepared and trialled with three small groups of young people (see below). The aim of this trial was to confirm the acceptability of different methods to the young people.

The trials were conducted by different members of the action group, all of whom had experience of working with young people.

One group was held in a local MacDonald's, one was in an informal setting in a secondary school with a group of 'at risk' pupils, one was in a workshop setting in a rural youth group, and one was with a group of young carers. There was also an attempt to engage in one-to-one discussions with three young offenders (unfortunately this was not successful as the interviews were tape-recorded and the clients 'switched off'). The success or otherwise of this consultation depended on the initial briefing given, the use of language and the interpersonal skills of the 'administrator'. Early lessons learnt were to keep the language simple and that it was essential to get the concept of Connexions across first. A total of 32 young people were involved in the initial testing phase.

Following the trial consultations and any revisions to the materials, a major exercise was mounted. Four methods/tools were tried with all groups. The methods were as follows: a scenario exercise based on an androgynously named character, Sam, who asked for suggestions as to what help was needed for him; focus group discussions; questionnaire completion; and use of the Viewpoint software. The exercise was spread out over two days in a local training college, with three sessions each day (morning, afternoon and evening). The first day focused on the 'at risk' groups and the second on mainstream young people. The same format was followed on both days.

Initially, an attempt was made to have peer-led focus groups. The young people chosen to facilitate these groups were selected from existing members of Youth Parliaments. In the event, although an experienced individual from the action team supported them, this approach did not work as the young leaders were unable to cope with the situation. Should this be attempted more generally, a much lengthier and detailed briefing/training process would be necessary, plus the selection of less 'challenging' groups of young people to lead.

All the above interactions were observed and will be reported on by the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside.

1023. In South Yorkshire, evidence-based practice has been used across eight of the Pilot's strands – Black and minority ethnic young people, tackling disaffection, SEN, young carers, special needs, engaging young people, additional needs and universality – as follows:

- The Black and minority ethnic young people strand has collated previously gathered evidence/mapping, to determine location and levels of delivery. It has also indicated the most appropriate models of delivery and methodology (e.g. one-to-one work, small-group work, a drop-in facility, a fixed appointment system).
- The tackling disaffection strand has included one-to-one work on developing relationships, contracting, target setting and the reviewing cycle. It has also used behaviour management techniques as part of the school plan, training and systematic

assessment, and problem-solving, social skills and solution-focused models.

- The tackling disaffection strand has also developed a young women's programme around trust, self-esteem and so forth.
- There has been consultation with young people with SEN – both in school and previous years school leavers.
- Work with young carers has included recording in/out-of-school activity in a number of ways, including photography. The results will be displayed in an exhibition. A variety of activities have been used (e.g. art, drama, sport). There have also been social activities designed to develop trusting, working relationships (e.g. a visit to a Pizza Hut with a group of young carers).
- The engaging young people strand has run a photography exercise to obtain young people's opinions. Various groups of young people have designed Connexions posters/postcards, and an information display at a conference.

1024. The above process was being carried out by staff within the Connexions Service.

1025. Key learning points have been identified through individual records, tracking young people, monthly monitoring reports, the assessment process, the involvement of other professionals (e.g. SENCOs), group-work sessions with young people, and the results of exercises (e.g. photographs).

1026. Personal Advisers were usually responsible for collecting information. Any key learning points were referred back to the strand management groups (which involve a wide range of people from appropriate partner organisations) and discussed at their meetings. Personal Adviser team meetings and other meetings also provided a focus for discussion.

1027. The process of evidence-based practice has largely derived from practices already existing within partner organisations, especially the Careers, Youth and Social Services, and VCS agencies. The work in the special needs and engaging young people strands has been developed through consultation with partners.

1028. However, most responses from the strands indicated that it was too early to incorporate the findings into service delivery.

1029. This work was in addition to the wide range of mechanisms for involving young people across South Yorkshire, ranging from surveys and service feedback forms to focus groups and formal forums such as youth councils.

1030. These mechanisms allowed Connexions to feed back the results of evidence-based practice exercises and discuss them with young people. However, in some strands it was still too early to go through this process.

1031. By using a variety of methods, the Pilot hoped to ensure an adequate breadth of consultation. However, involving young people in evidence-based practice processes requires support. For example, within the special needs strand it was necessary to respect and build on young people's ability and capacity to become effectively involved. It was also problematical, so early in a project, for young people to have much to feed back on.

1032. The use of evidence-based practice has highlighted key learning points about the way in which services were developed, designed and delivered, including the following:

- publicity aimed at young people needs to be changed to make it more appropriate;
- greater clarity on policy was needed when working with young people;
- it is useful to have Personal Advisers with prior knowledge, experience and relationships in the Black and minority ethnic communities;

- involving young people in the planning and delivery of project work ensures a positive result for both the clients and the service providers;
- not having clear information and objectives to give to young people hinders their involvement and affects the results obtained;
- intensive support was needed for young people;
- school was not an appropriate location to engage disaffected young people, especially those who may be excluded and therefore legally forbidden to enter school premises;
- placement of the Personal Adviser in a particular client group project enables staff and young people to have a better understanding of the role of the Careers Service;
- asking young people what they actually want in a programme of delivery was essential if that service is to meet their needs;
- engaging young people in the Connexions Service has to be delivered in a way that is fun, interactive, considerate to all young people and easy to understand; and
- planning and preparation were important.

12.3 Conclusions

- Not all local evaluators featured evidence-based practice in their reports. This was because many Pilots had not focused on evidence-based practice as a distinct and separate issue – mainly because it was not seen as being very distinct from involving young people in design and delivery, monitoring, research, evaluation and mapping.
- As a distinct concept, evidence-based practice was only evident in four Pilot areas, and in two of these it was not formally referred to as such.
- The only tool that was distinctly used in evidence-based practice was the reflective diary where, for example, Personal Advisers wrote down their experiences. The other techniques used were aimed at involving young people in service design and delivery; monitoring; research and evaluation; and mapping e.g. peer-led workshops, surveys, youth forums and ICTs.
- Where evidence-based practice has been used, it has provided useful insights into service delivery, for example by focusing on hypothetical clients and discussing how services should be delivered to them.

12.4 Recommendations

- The concept and usage of evidence-based practice are not very well understood. If evidence-based practice is to be a core principle of Connexions Services, it needs to be communicated more effectively.
- Best practice and key learning points in the implementation of evidence-based practice need to be disseminated.
- There needs to be development of resource banks of materials and techniques used in evidence-based practice.

13 Conclusions and Recommendations

13.1 Conclusions

13.1.1 Introduction

1033. This section brings together the conclusions and recommendations.

13.1.2 Strategic Partnerships

Strengths

- There was a developing Connexions **infrastructure in place**, by this we mean that there were distinctive structures and working arrangements that could be called a Connexions Service (165).[41]
- There was a high level of **commitment and enthusiasm** to the principle of the Connexions Service and to making it work in practice (62).
- Partners were committing considerable **resources** to developing Connexions in their area; in some cases this was over £750,000 (128).
- There were a large range and number of **organisations** involved in Connexions Boards - almost 180. This does not include organisations and people represented on LMCs and strand/task management groups (82).

Areas for development

- There was some confusion over what the **objectives** of the Connexions Service were. This made it difficult to communicate and understand the notion of what Connexions is and allowed for a variety of interpretations (27).
- There has been a considerable emphasis on developing effective and appropriate **communications** structures. A variety of methods have been employed. However, it was still felt that more could be done especially by other Government Departments, and by partners within their own organisations (74).
- The issue of a **legal entity** was not generally an issue, but where it was it took up a lot of people's time and resources (124).
- There is now much more concern over **funding** issues, especially as Connexions will soon become the manager of funds and contracts (130).
- There was seen to be a need for more **development funding** (e.g. to employ Chief Executives ahead of projects going live), greater clarification over who retains control of funds, and how different funding streams may be simplified (130).
- For some Pilots the focus on developing the Connexions Service for the **Phase One rollouts** has, naturally, diverted attention away from the Pilots (157).
- As the Connexions Service broadens, there was a need to give more **ownership** to partner organisations and ensure that their identity is not lost. Also, the need was identified for partner agencies to identify outputs that they have produced (54).

13.1.3 Services

Strengths

- Many fundamental issues were being actively explored. For example, what is multi-agency working and what is the role of the Personal Adviser? Different Pilots had different views of these two concepts. There was more agreement about what constituted the core of these two elements but what it meant 'at the edges' was much more open to interpretation (186).

[41] The figures in brackets refer to the relevant paragraph in the report. In some cases, however, they refer to specific pages or sections and this is indicated.

- There was a large amount of activity, 64 services targeted at young people were being piloted. The vast majority of these involved multi-agency and multi-site working. Most agencies were being targeted at specific groups of young people, mainly young people with learning difficulties or disabilities, SENs, care leavers and young offenders. 105 organisations were involved, directly or indirectly, in the delivery of Connexions Services whilst 80 different venues were being used to deliver the services from (169).
- The Connexions Service being delivered by the Pilots was effectively a Personal Adviser based service delivered on a one-to-one/face-to-face basis between the Personal Adviser and client. Some Pilots were developing other types of provision e.g. peer mentoring, use of ICTs, but how Connexions Services differed from existing ones remains to be seen (182).
- Underpinning the development of the Connexions Service in some areas was the triangle of need - a three-tiered model based on the needs of young people and developed from primary research (188).
- There was a need to build on what was in place before Connexions (172).

Areas for development

- As the Connexions Service was not clearly defined the Connexions Service Pilots were not clear about how to operationalise the Connexions vision (27).
- However, very few Pilots can measure the relative impact of, and outcomes from, clients using their services. This was because many impacts were 'soft' outcomes and were more difficult to measure (222).
- Reviewing services on an ongoing basis was important to achieving best practice (247).
- Data issues became more prominent throughout the year as services developed, especially sharing client information (216).

13.1.4 Personal Advisers

Strengths

- A variety of different models of the Personal Adviser were being Piloted working with different types of clients and in different locations e.g. Personal Advisers in schools, One Stop Shops, working within partner agencies to deliver services to hard-to-help young people, networking etc (344).
- The Connexions Service was effectively a Personal Adviser based service delivered on a one-to-one/face-to-face basis between the Personal Adviser and client. This very much reflected the roles of other professionals the Personal Adviser was based on, particularly careers advisers (438).
- Personal Advisers working for the Connexions Service in the main met with young people, assessed their need, developed action plans/targets and worked with the young person to achieve them. Pilots did develop other support mechanisms including ICTs, mentoring, group work, training and more extensive referral (456).
- There was true multi-agency working in terms of the backgrounds of Personal Advisers, the locations they worked in and the organisations Personal Advisers worked with on a daily basis. Any issues that arose from bringing a variety of professionals together (different backgrounds, cultures, perceptions) were gradually being worked through (399).
- The Pilots had developed extensive training and support programmes for Personal Advisers. This was essential to achieve the necessary skill sets required of Personal Advisers, and to support them in what can be a very challenging job. Views of the National Training Programme were generally positive (415).
- Induction training was seen as very important both in introducing people to the Connexions Service and to the role of the Personal Adviser (392, 484).

Areas for development

- There was general agreement about the core role and competencies of Personal Advisers (see the person specification Section 4). But there were differing views as to the wider role, and these views will change over time (Table 15).
- One of the criticisms levelled against the National Training course was that it covered a lot of ground that skilled and experienced Personal Advisers knew already and there was a need for more APL. Also there needed to be more communication between local and national trainers, an assessment of skills and competencies, less distance assessment, and preparatory study support for those new to or who haven't studied for a long time (482).
- Whilst many Personal Advisers felt that they were working for the Connexions Service, few felt they were being managed by it (445).
- Very few Personal Advisers were piloting the universal service as we understand it. Even when the service was called this, Personal Advisers worked mostly with disaffected young people. This may be because Personal Advisers worked alongside career advisers in schools and had not replaced them (Section 4.6).
- Recruitment could be a lengthy and involved process, especially if it was an open exercise. There were a wide variety of issues to address from attracting applicants from different backgrounds to checking the probity of recruits (361).
- One of the main areas that Personal Advisers felt could be improved was the marketing of the Connexions Service (468).

13.1.5 Views of clients

Strengths

- The clients interviewed used a range of services from school based to more specific services targeted at hard-to-help young people. Most were in full-time education (557).
- Most clients were happy to be using the service and found the information they were first given about the service to be sufficient (563).
- For most clients the Connexions Service involved general advice, information and support provided by a Personal Adviser on a one-to-one basis. The most common topics discussed with the Personal Adviser were education, training and employment, followed by personal problems e.g. anger management, offending behaviour, pregnancy (562).
- The large majority of clients felt that the Personal Adviser was someone who listens to their problems and understands them. The location of the service was not a problem (Section 5.7).
- On a range of measures, clients were very happy with the Connexions Service, see Section 13.3 (1036).

Areas for development

- Some clients initially felt they were being sent to the Personal Adviser because they had been badly behaved (579).

13.1.6 Involving young people

Strengths

- There were a lot of existing consultation mechanisms existing prior to Connexions. Most Pilots were developing this work but found that it must be undertaken sensitively and add value to what already existed (616).
- As with many other themes discussed in this report, such as the role of the Personal Adviser, the involvement of young people was something that was still being worked out. There were a wide range of methods and levels of representation that the Pilots

were developing. Most methods existed to comment on and develop specific services. It will be interesting to see how the involvement develops strategically, so that the involvement of young people is fundamental and inherent to the development of the Connexions Service (622).

- There were advantages and disadvantages to the range of methods of involvement that Pilots were employing. In recognition of this many Pilots were using several methods especially regarding the involvement of hard-to-help young people (630).

Areas for development

- Training and support of young people included in the decision making progress is essential (627).
- There were important debates about the level of involvement. There was some opposition by a significant minority of partners, to the formal involvement of young people on decision-making boards or committees (608).
- The method of involvement needed to be appropriate in terms of the location, the methods and language used (627).

13.1.7 Connexions in schools, colleges and training providers

Strengths

- Most Pilots were working with schools and colleges but few were working with training providers (447).
- Schools, colleges and training providers were involved in Connexions at all levels – Board level, operational groups, staffing and location (666).
- The fact that the vast majority of the schools/colleges and training providers that took part in the Pilots volunteered to do so helped to alleviate difficulties in engaging these institutions with the concept of Connexions. Some of the Personal Advisers had previously worked in non-teaching roles in the institutions in which they were based which helped them to develop or build upon relations with young people (758).
- Overall, the relationship between the Connexions Service, and schools and colleges seemed to be working. Pilot Co-ordinator's rankings in their monthly reports and interviews with Personal Advisers suggested that they were more than satisfied with this relationship. However, most schools and colleges were volunteers and this may affect perceptions (713).
- The nature of the Personal Adviser role varied both within and between Pilot areas. These differences primarily reflected the local context within which the institution was operating (for example the extent of deprivation in the surrounding community) and the skills, qualities and background of individual Personal Advisers (688).
- Very broadly, young people were positive about their relationship with their Personal Adviser. Young people mentioned the following aspects of the service when asked what they liked best about Connexions and their Personal Adviser: the Personal Adviser's independence from teaching staff; the accessibility of the Personal Adviser (in particular, the fact that they were located within the school or college); the continuity of support and the fact that the Personal Adviser has both the time and the inclination to help them. The most common forms of support that young people requested from their Personal Adviser was help with specific problems and help with planning for the future (particularly in relation to careers) (Section 7.7).
- Teaching staff and members of the SMT also expressed positive views about the work of the Personal Adviser in their institution. Although much of the evidence was anecdotal at this stage, there were plenty of good news stories. In many cases, schools reported that the Personal Adviser role had helped them to achieve institutional objectives that they may not otherwise have managed (Section 7.7).

- Some of the initial concerns that arose early on in the Pilot (in relation to the management and role of Personal Advisers, training and support, and the relationship between Personal Advisers/Connexions and other professionals/services) have (1) either not come to fruition or (2) been avoided or tackled through proactive, innovative and inclusive ways of working which recognised and built upon existing provision (673).
- The joint management of Personal Advisers by a designated individual within the school/college/training provider on the one hand and Connexions on the other generally worked well. This was particularly likely to be the case where careful planning and effective communication occurs in relation to: the role of the Personal Adviser; working relationships; referrals; and information sharing. Partnership Agreements served to embed these processes (679).

Areas for development

- There was still a need to communicate effectively the role and responsibilities of Personal Advisers based in schools and colleges. In some pilot areas there was much confusion as to the nature of the Personal Adviser role among partners, other professionals, school and college staff, and young people (Section 7.8).
- One area of concern was the access of clients to the service. It appears that, initially, Personal Advisers had to rely on PRU's, SENU's and members of the pastoral team for many of their clients. The school, therefore, managed the main referral mechanisms. As the Pilot progressed, there was some evidence to suggest that Personal Advisers were seeking to identify prospective clients themselves. This required the Personal Adviser to have at their disposal a significant amount of school data (for example SATs, absentee rates, and tutors' reports). It also necessitated closer inter-agency working on behalf of the Personal Adviser (Section 7.7).
- Another key concern that lasted for the duration of the Pilot was the issue of confidentiality between Personal Advisers and clients. Some partners and Personal Advisers felt that schools wanted too much information fed back to them about some clients. This placed Personal Advisers in a compromising position and had the potential to undermine the independent position of the Personal Adviser in the eyes of young people (Section 7.7).
- Some people feel that there were issues, especially the management of Personal Advisers within schools, that needed continuous monitoring. They may not have arisen yet because of the nature of the Pilot (e.g. schools getting more resources) and because most institutions volunteered. Some schools have initially been hostile to the idea because of 'initiative overload' and the pressures on school SMTs to manage another service (Section 7.7).
- There was a concern that the investment within schools, colleges and training providers in the Pilot cannot be sustained in the Phase Ones and beyond. People's expectations were raised by Pilot activities (e.g. the provision of a full-time Personal Adviser within their school) and may have to be revised when the full service goes 'live' (Section 7.7).
- There was significant evidence of good practice among the Pilots. It is important that this information is captured and communicated effectively at all levels (Section 7.7).

13.1.8 Working with sub-groups of young people

Strengths

- The Connexions Service had to provide generic, universal support to all 13-19 year olds. For most young people this involved advice and support with employment, education and training choices. However, as this section has shown, there were important groups of young people with particular support needs that required a different and targeted service (Section 8.5).
- Pilots have explored and developed a wide range of services targeted at specific groups of young people (Sections 8.3 and 8.4).

Areas for development

- ➢ Reports from local evaluators, national evaluators, interviews with Personal Advisers and comments from Pilot co-ordinators in the monthly monitoring reports have identified the main issues regarding the delivery of services to specific sub-groups of young people (Section 8.3):
- There were large resource issues associated with providing both a universal and a targeted service.
- Services had to be flexible to deliver tailored provision for targeted young people with specific or multiple barriers.
- There were considerable implications for the caseload level for Personal Advisers (page 202).
- Effective communications and marketing was needed amongst young people, parents and staff to avoid confusion regarding who the service is for .
- Some services had been marketed as being 'open to all' but some young people often perceived that it was for young people with 'problems'.
- There was a need for effective referral mechanisms so Personal Advisers are not sent inappropriate clients.
- Schools and colleges were keen to retain the current level and expertise of their careers advisers but they needed to recognise what the Personal Adviser role was.
- There was a need for particular additional support mechanisms e.g. the development of alternative curriculum for disaffected young people.
- There were important implications for developing universal assessment forms, CCISs, monitoring and evaluation etc.

1034. There were a series of issues in developing services to specific sub-groups of young people. The ways that Pilots have sought to address them were:

- ➢ **Delivery and access** (Section 8.3)
- developing multi-agency frameworks and agreements which defined the role of Connexions in relation to other agencies and the particular sub-group of clients;
- including in the role of Personal Advisers advocacy and brokerage on behalf of clients;
- mapping of provision and need;
- developing flexible delivery e.g. out-of-school activities;
- developing the role of the Personal Adviser in various locations appropriate to the needs of the client group;
- using different approaches to meet particular needs;
- having structured activity as well as drop in/counselling support;
- using peer mentors and group role models;
- using job and FE course 'taster' sessions;
- involving young people in design and delivery;
- organising interesting trips and activities;
- establishing a community bases with ICTs and client CCISs;
- installing mechanisms for provision of up-to-date information;
- active networking agencies and support workers;
- working with a relatively small target group.
- identifying bases that would deliver a service that was impartial from other projects;
- ensuring there was city-wide provision;
- developing multi -agency approaches and bases that were trusted by clients;
- flexible methods of access;
- use of non-school support mechanisms

- providing impartial information and guidance on opportunities;
- identifying a wide range of other support agencies available;
- involving young people in planning;
- delivering a service that was impartial and supportive, and that promoted the needs of the client group;
- focusing on the needs of clients;
- developing services that enable young people to make effective, considered choices and supported young people to achieve them.

➢ **Monitoring and evaluation, and tracking** (Section 8.3)
- involving parents and clients in advisory groups;
- developing links with other agencies;
- investigating previous tracking mechanisms;
- building on existing protocols;
- analysing how CCISs and protocols could be implemented across the age range;
- using existing systems e.g. ASPIRE;
- using the Personal Adviser as the focal point for links to other agencies to share tracking data.
- looking at the issue of continuity and support through to age 25;
- doing evaluation base lining exercises;
- ongoing monitoring through joint management arrangements;
- developing an MIS. and the use of this MIS and other data for ongoing monitoring measuring progress towards action plans.

➢ **Inclusion in service design** (Section 8.3)
- using client surveys to get feedback on service delivery;
- making use of focus groups with previous and current clients;
- involving clients, parents and carers in the Pilot advisory group;
- making use of Viewpoint (a software package developed specifically to work with clients with LDDs);
- working with young people to produce training packs for Personal Advisers;
- holding informal discussions and conversations with individuals and groups of young people;
- involving young people in Personal Adviser recruitment.
- encouraging more effective involvement;
- building skills to increase confidence;
- ensuring the representativeness of youth forums by using the Personal Adviser as an interface between the client and other professionals.

➢ **Marketing and communication** (Section 8.3)
- Benefiting from involvement in a multi-agency group making representations to a range of fora;
- establishing satellite bases to reflect each community;
- targeting specific group's needs e.g. young Asian women;
- producing written materials and a training framework;
- developing formal and informal communications networks e.g. with parents at SEN reviews, student meetings, newsletters to schools, reviews with school staff and joint meetings with other agencies;
- developing a system and structures framework in partnership with other agencies;
- reviewing progress with project staff and joint meetings with partner agencies.

- ➢ **Role and training of Personal Advisers** (Section 8.3)
- developing specialist training on client specific issues;
- preparing induction and other in-house training for Personal Advisers;
- using training packs developed by clients;
- extensive networking with other professionals to share practices;
- establishing clear boundaries regarding the Personal Adviser's role, relationship and access.

13.1.9 Rural Issues

Strengths

- ➢ Pilots had explored and developed a wide range of delivery options to address rural issues (902).

Areas for development

- ➢ Some rural issues had resonance in urban areas but there were additional issues to be faced (897).
- ➢ The main issue was transport. Young people living in isolated communities were dependent on public transport, which was often infrequent and expensive in the daytime. In the evening it was often non existent (899).
- ➢ Education and training opportunities, especially post-16, could involve much travel or young people having to move away which some were reluctant to do. Support services were also difficult to access for the same reasons (903).
- ➢ Employment opportunities in rural areas can be scarce or seasonal. Many were low paid and do not include training (Section 9.3.5).
- ➢ There were many support projects initiated in rural areas but they need to be sustained (899).
- ➢ Lack of access and opportunity can also lead to low aspirations which can be a vicious circle affecting confidence and motivation to access any opportunities that are available (912).
- ➢ Issues of access and opportunity were further compounded if the young person faces additional barriers, such as, poor basic skills, low motivation, a disability (909).
- ➢ Lack of potential sites in isolated areas. There may not be appropriate sites to deliver services from, even if they were available, for example, adults may also use them and this may deter young people from going there. Local support service providers had sought to address these issues. For example, the use of ICTs to facilitate distance learning and distance advice, guidance and support. But this assumes that clients have PCs (899).
- ➢ The need for outreach and mobile support centres. These included buses that took careers advisers and other support workers to isolated communities or bases for peripatetic Personal Advisers. However, these initiatives must be sustainable (Section 10.5).

13.1.10 Quantifying Need

Strengths

- ➢ The main value added of undertaking the mapping exercise was being able to put the profile of need together with a profile of service delivery to identify gaps and overlaps (942).

Areas for development

- The process of undertaking the mapping exercise was seen as time consuming and labour intensive, especially mapping service provision. Few Pilots had carried out the mapping exercise (942).
- This meant that the few Pilots who were becoming Phase Ones were able to use it in their business planning (943).
- There were a number of issues in collecting data relating to its availability at certain area levels; the fragmentation and inconsistency of data collection; access and availability of information; and methods of collecting information (969).

13.1.11 Connexions Customer Information Systems

Strengths

- Pilots have explored a wide range of systems and issues concerning the development of CCISs (991, 992).

Areas for development

- Whilst eleven Pilots were developing CCISs, most were developing existing client databases, usually those used by the Careers Service. Greater Merseyside was focusing almost exclusively on this strand (981).
- There were a wide range of important issues involved in developing CCISs. Many were familiar to other strands e.g. the involvement of young people, the culture of partner agencies, and multi-agency networking. In addition, there were a range of further technical and resource issues that compounded the development of these systems (992).
- There were also difficulties in recruiting IT staff and some Pilots said they were waiting for national guidance on, for example, the role and status of the national database (992).
- Greater Merseyside had made most progress in terms of tracking; mapping the information that agencies held about young people; involving young people in the design and implementation of the CCIS; developing a web site; and exploring data protection issues (994).

13.1.12 Evidence based practice

Strengths

- The only tool that was distinctly used in evidence based practice was reflective diaries where, for example, Personal Advisers would write down their experiences. The other techniques used were aimed at involving young people in Service design and delivery; monitoring; research and evaluation; and mapping e.g. peer led workshops, surveys, youth forums, ICTs etc (1014).

Areas for development

- Very few local evaluators featured evidence based practice in their reports. This was due to the fact that many Pilots had not focused on evidence based practice as a distinct and separate issue. This was mainly because it was not seen as being that distinct from involving young people in design and delivery, monitoring, research, evaluation, and mapping (1014).
- As a distinct concept, evidence based practice was only evident in four Pilot areas and in two it was not formally referred to as such (1015).
- The only tool that was distinctly used in evidence based practice was reflective diaries where, for example, Personal Advisers would write down their experiences. The other techniques used were aimed at involving young people in Service design and delivery; monitoring; research and evaluation; and mapping e.g. peer led workshops, surveys, youth forums, ICTs etc (1016).

- Where evidence based practice has been used it has provided useful insights into service delivery e.g. focusing on hypothetical clients and discussing how services should be delivered to them (1019).

13.2 Recommendations

13.2.1 Introduction

1035. This section focuses on the key recommendations emerging from the research.

13.2.2 Strategic Partnerships

There is a need:

- For greater clarity over many aspects of the Connexions Service especially its objectives and key concepts.
- To develop mechanisms to enhance the communication of good practice and to increase networking; for example, the development of a dedicated web site; the identification and publication of good practice and key learning point; and the creation of a resource or evidence bank.
- To identify and respond to key issues and learning points.
- To share experience: Many Pilots were working to address the same issues but feel that they were working in isolation.
- To improve the profile of the Connexions Service e.g. launch a national campaign similar to New Deal.
- For national guidance to be clearer, consistent and more timely. The CSNU should:
  - give clearer frameworks for action;
  - set boundaries for decision-making e.g. what are Connexions partnerships NOT allowed to do;
  - make statutory duties clearer;
  - answer technical questions promptly and consistently e.g. the eligibility of asylum seekers for services;
  - provide technical advice/support e.g. on the legal entity issue;
  - communicate information about other initiatives that are related e.g. the Connexions card. Use the Connexions services as a conduit either for funding related initiatives within an area or at a minimum for cascading information;
  - ensure that the DfEE provides a policy context that is consistent with the national approach and set of policies on youth.

13.2.3 Services

- The need to identify and disseminate good practice and key learning points, for example, assessment and diagnostic tools, data sharing and recognising and measuring 'soft' outcomes.
- The need to be clear about what Connexions is and what does it mean at an operational level.
- The need for everyone to learn from the experience of Connexions whether by best value reviews or other processes. There is a lot of learning and personal development taking place that needs to be consolidated and disseminated.
- The need to recognise that organisations differ in their capacity to become involved in Connexions.

13.2.4 The role of Personal Advisers

- Pilots would like more guidelines and good practice examples on:

- the wider, non-core role of the Personal Adviser;
- recruitment, including how to encourage people who are more representative of the client group to apply for Personal Adviser posts; the need for more access training;
- vetting procedures of recruits.
- the best means of involving young people in the process of recruitment.
- assessment and diagnostic tools.

➢ Other issues are:

- The need for effective supervision for Personal Advisers, especially those working with hard-to-help clients.
- The need for continuous professional development, and also the use of reflective practice because Personal Advisers have a lot of experience to pass on.
- More APL in the National Diploma, the linking of national and local trainers and a better understanding of the status of the National Diploma.
- The need to develop resource banks of materials e.g. assessment tools and learning materials that Personal Advisers can access.

13.2.5 Involving young people

➢ The need for mechanisms to identify and disseminate good practice and key learning points.

➢ The need to develop a resource bank of materials and software that can be used to engage young people in interesting and creative ways.

➢ The effort and commitment that has been shown in involving young people needs to be sustained. If promises are made about the level and extent of commitment they need to be sustained or young people will become cynical.

➢ Linking in the involvement of young people with monitoring and evaluation, and auditing of services, e.g. undertaking annual client surveys, developing quality standards.

13.2.6 Connexions in schools, colleges and training providers

➢ A lot of effort has been put into engaging and working with schools, colleges and training providers, and this effort needs to be maintained and broadened as the Connexions Service becomes more widespread.

➢ The credibility of, and trust in, Connexions and the Personal Adviser, needs to be established and maintained especially in relation to other initiatives that have been around for longer.

➢ There is a strong feeling that Personal Advisers should not be managed by schools, colleges and training providers mostly so that they can be seen as impartial and able to exercise their role effectively e.g. advocacy on behalf of clients.

➢ The most demanding young people, occupy the vast majority of Personal Advisers time and this has resource implications for the provision of a Universal Service. Personal Adviser's workload needs to be monitored.

➢ With limited resources and a limit to the numbers of Personal Advisers, it will be important to explore other ways of Service provision to young people in schools.

➢ There is a need to understand and work with agencies and services already delivering in schools, colleges and training providers. It needs to complement these services and agencies.

➢ Partnership or Service Level Agreements are an important tool in defining and formalising the relationship between Connexions and schools, colleges and training providers and should be developed.

- The need to build on and extend quality standards.
- School staff, especially teachers, need to become more aware of Connexions and the role of the Personal Adviser.
- CSNU should identify where gaps in information exist (and where there is too much), what the most effective way is of informing all relevant people and devising a strategy for improved sharing and cross fertilisation of good/interesting practice.

13.2.7 Working with sub-groups of young people

- There is much work being undertaken to deliver services to particular groups of young people. There is a need to communicate key learning points and good practice examples so that Pilots working or developing services with a particular sub-group of young people can use them.

13.2.8 Rural Issues

- Little dedicated work has been undertaken on the implications for the Connexions Service of delivering in a rural area.
- More work needs to be undertaken on whether ICTs can provide an appropriate (and cost effective solution) to the issue of rural isolation and access.
- More work needs to be undertaken on exploring new methods of delivery. Many of the initiatives mentioned are based on existing or past programmes but are they still relevant and effective?
- The issue of resources needs to be addressed. Most rural areas, when compared with urban areas, are more affluent and less deprived. However, this often masks large pockets of deprivation. What are the financial implications of addressing this need in a rural context and how does this relate to any funding formulas.

13.2.9 Quantifying Need

- There is a need to give Pilot Partnerships a sense of ownership of the mapping tool. They feel that it has been imposed on them and see it as a burden rather than a useful tool. Any changes in future must be negotiated with people who are tasked with carrying them out and changes to definitions and concepts need to be kept to a minimum.
- Very few Pilots have been able to use the mapping tool in their business planning processes. Partly because of time delays but also due to uncertainty of how to use the information. There is a need for a good practice guide on how to use the mapping tool, issues that have been raised include:
    - How does the mapping tool relate to other data collected e.g. MI and evaluation and monitoring data;
    - How it can be used to bring supply and demand together and identify gaps and overlaps;
    - What are the implications for any agencies if the analysis shows that they are delivering in an area of overlap;
    - What are the resource and capacity implications in meeting gaps in services.
- There is a need for more detailed analysis on how the mapping exercise has been used, which sections are more or less relevant, and problems with definitions.

13.2.10 Connexions Customer Information System

- The need for national guidance and decisions on a range of issues concerning the development of CCISs e.g. the status of the national database, data protection legislation and data sharing protocols.

- More identification and dissemination of best practice and key learning points.

13.2.11 Evidence based practice

- The concept and use of evidence based practice is not very well understood. If it is to be a core principle of Connexions Services then it needs to communicated more effectively.
- The need for the dissemination of best practice and key learning points in the implementation of evidence based practice.
- The development of resource banks of materials and techniques used in evidence based practice.

13.3 Impacts of the Connexions Service

1036. On a wide range of measures the Connexions Service can be rated a success

- By its clients:
  - 96% said that they found their sessions with the Personal Adviser were useful;
  - Just under nine out of ten clients rated access to the service, ease of use, usefulness of the information and support; getting hold of the Personal Adviser when they wanted to was 'good' or 'very good';
  - 79% of clients said that they were now more interested in education and training as a result of the service;
  - 70% said they felt more confident about getting a 'good' job;
  - 75% said it had helped them cope with other problems;
  - 87% now did something different as a result including improved attendance and participation, and feeling more motivated and confident;
  - 89% of clients would like to stay in touch with their Personal Adviser, and;
  - 77% said it was better than the support they had received in the past.

- The involvement of a broad range of organisations in Service management and delivery:
  - There was a large range and number of organisations involved in Connexions Boards almost 180. This did not include organisations and people represented on LMCs and strand/task management groups;
  - There was a large amount of activity. 69 services targeted at young people were being piloted. The vast majority of these involved multi-agency and multi-site working. Most services were being targeted at specific groups of young people, mainly young people with learning difficulties or disabilities, SENs, care leavers and young offenders.
  - 105 organisations were involved, directly or indirectly, in the delivery of Connexions Services whilst 80 different venues were being used to deliver services from.
  - Furthermore, the views of the vast majority of partners were very positive about the structures that are being developed.

- The investigation and development of a broad range of mechanisms for involving young people in the design and delivery of Partnerships and services.
- Over 500 Personal Advisers had been recruited and a large majority were satisfied with the progress and impact of service delivery.

1037. The Connexions Service set Pilots a huge challenge in changing and developing fundamental aspects of existing youth support services:

- In creating a step change in multi-agency working;
- In the level of support available to all young people;
- In the involvement of young people and communities; and
- In delivering services within a partnership structure.

1038. Whilst some of these principles did exist before, they had not been brought together to the extent demanded by the Connexions Service. The Connexions Service, in its implementation so far, has risen to the challenge and put in place a sound basis for further development.

1039. The evaluation of the Pilots investigated systematically, and thoroughly, all the key areas of operation. The lessons that need to taken on board for the further development of Connexions are clearly stated in this Final Report. Perhaps the most important impact of Connexions is that people have changed, and have had to change, the ways they work and deliver services for the benefit of young people.