



Establishing the Connexions Service in schools

Overview

The Connexions Service begins in 16 areas in 2001 (listed on p4). This note describes the Service as it relates to school pupils and gives guidance on the partnership between schools and the Service which is envisaged. It outlines:

- universal provision for pupils from age 13, including impartial careers information and guidance;
- targeted guidance, support and development activity for those facing barriers to progression and success;
- roles and management of Connexions personal advisers working in school;
- partnership processes, including resourcing and the issues to be addressed in partnership agreements between the Service and each school.

In areas where Connexions starts in 2001, school and Connexions Service managers will soon be discussing plans to deliver services to young people. School managers elsewhere should use existing Headteacher fora to be involved in plans for their area.

Further information

Key documents about Connexions are available from: www.connexions.gov.uk

Further copies

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and Schools

Headteachers & senior managers in secondary schools

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Action: Where Connexions
starts in 2001, plan links with
the Service

The Connexions Service

1. The Connexions Service will help all those involved with young people to make a step change in learning achievement for teenagers. It will also help young people to develop as individuals over and above their educational and vocational choices. The new service will bring together many partners currently working in careers and youth services, community groups, social services, Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), schools and colleges. Many aspects of Connexions will operate in school, although young people may also access services outside a school environment. The Service and schools will work together to raise aspirations and provide opportunities for all young people to achieve their potential. No young person will be outside the scope of Connexions; it should be a service that all want to use because it gives them access to wide ranging information, guidance and opportunities.

2. The first Connexions Partnerships will pioneer new ways of working, learning from current Connexions pilots and the good work of many schools and agencies. The Service will evolve as effective practice and management is identified but Government expects to see early improvement in the experiences of young people. The Service rests upon 8 key principles, summarised as: –

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'

School and Connexions Service provision and partnership

3. Connexions can help to develop an integrated approach to supporting progression. This will combine the services which Connexions will deliver directly with a number of core functions of schools, e.g. careers education, work with truants,

review and target-setting. It will build on but not substitute or duplicate the effective pastoral and other support that schools already offer.

4. The advent of Connexions gives greater scope for schools to manage the different professionals who support their pupils, including EWOs and school nurses. The Service will include a range of staff, such as school-based personal advisers, Service-based specialist advisers and support staff. Advisers will have a core set of common skills, with specialisms available through multi-disciplinary teams drawn from a range of backgrounds. Headteachers will have day-to-day responsibility for the work of Connexions in their schools, within partnership agreements between the school and the Service. Headteachers will be able to link Connexions staff closely with school staff working in pastoral, personal development and careers/PSHE roles, and with activities to meet the Healthy School Standard. Connexions will improve school links to other agencies, thereby freeing up more time for teaching.

Services to pupils

5. Connexions offers both a **universal** advice and guidance service to all pupils and **personal support** to those in need. Connexions will deliver the Government's duty to ensure provision of careers information and guidance. The universal service will, within the overall work of the school, support:

- learning opportunities that introduce pupils to the world of work ;
- access to information, advice and guidance on a wide range of issues of concern to young people, through individual or group contact with advisers or ICT-based services such as websites or helplines. Help to progress in learning includes impartial guidance on post-16 options;
- a co-ordinated approach to the school's programme of careers education/PSHE/ citizenship, and the school's pastoral support system.

6. The Service will work with schools to bring greater coherence to these areas, linking them to help for parents to support their children's progress, the involvement of the wider community (including volunteer mentors), broader youth work/personal development activities, summer activities and study support, work experience, and

peer support. The Service has important roles in influencing the quality of provision and supporting the transition to post-16 learning for all pupils.

7. Pupils who need personal support should have access to a Connexions Service personal adviser. Contact with advisers may be on school premises or elsewhere. Personal adviser interventions will be based on a sound understanding of the young person's needs, using a new integrated framework for assessment, which is currently being developed. Support can include:

- one-to-one mentoring, group or peer support and personal development activities;
- referral to specialists in and outside school (e.g. health, study support, careers guidance, behaviour management);
- work with parents and carers;
- arranging provision outside school (e.g. in FE or the community for 14-16 year olds) and supporting pupils on that provision.

Partnership and resources

8. Connexions Partnerships are developing structures for their operations, and in areas starting in 2001 are preparing business, delivery and transition plans. The secondary schools in an area should have one or more representatives on local management committees, alongside other partners including young people themselves. In consultation with its local management committees, a Partnership will assess the needs of young people in its area and arrange for appropriate services to be delivered. Plans will include the role of Education Welfare Officers working with secondary age pupils.

9. As part of its Business Plan, Partnerships, in consultation with their local management committees, will develop transparent criteria for allocating staff resource to work with pupils on school rolls. Suggested criteria are set out in business planning guidance to partnerships.

10. The first Connexions Partnerships will have significantly more resource than existing careers services. As a starting point, all schools will receive at least the same level of help as they do from their careers service, unless a school's situation has changed significantly. Many schools will receive more as Connexions seeks to reduce disparities in support for similar schools in different areas. Partnerships will also ensure that all maintained secondary schools have an absolute minimum

allocation of pupil contact time from personal advisers: as a rule of thumb, one day a week. This is more than some schools currently receive from the careers service and is a base from which Connexions can build over a number of years.

11. At school level, a partnership agreement is the mechanism to consider pupil needs, the range of Connexions resources to be deployed, the roles of personal advisers (see para 12) and the support from Connexions specialists. This process is modelled on current agreements with the careers service. Agreements should cover the issues below.

Issues to be addressed in partnership agreements

objectives and targets – how Connexions can enhance schools' own targets, including those for truancy and achievement to which the Service will be working and ensuring delivery of statutory obligations of the school and Service for which targets are not set (e.g. careers education, information and guidance).

prioritising guidance and support – monitoring and identifying need (e.g. Year 9 'progress checks', review systems), determining the make-up and size of caseload and co-ordinating the work of Connexions and school staff;

management – how personal advisers will be managed day-to-day by Headteachers and receive appropriate training, supervision, appraisal and development;

impartiality – how impartiality of information and guidance on Key Stage 4 and post-16 options will be guaranteed in the school, to meet the statutory duty previously met through careers services;

communication and access – how pupils and parents will learn about the services available through Connexions and can access personal advisers;

out of school support – arrangements for supporting non-attenders, and for supporting attenders out of school hours (e.g. at weekends and in holidays);

child protection – the set of issues affecting the rights of pupils and the responsibilities of Connexions and school staff;

data collection and sharing – both in aggregate and on individual pupils.

Operational responsibilities

12. Headteachers will select who will work in their schools, either from a pool of people offered by the Connexions Partnership, or through involvement in co-ordinated recruitment and selection activities where pool applicants are found not to be suitable. Various approaches to roles and lines of accountability of school-based personal advisers are possible, including:-

- working primarily with a small group of priority pupils, leading the input of external professionals and volunteers to those pupils and linked to the school pastoral team;
- working under school management to identify the needs and help oversee the progress of the whole cohort, including in relation to career and post-16 learning choices, but working closely with some individuals as needs arise;
- in certain circumstances, an existing member of school staff could be financed, tasked and trained in the same way as a Connexions personal adviser.

13. In the initial phase at least, it is likely that most personal advisers will either be employed by the Connexions Partnership or operate under a sub-contract or secondment basis.

14. A key requirement is for effective arrangements to enable all young people to access impartial careers information, advice and guidance. The Connexions Service is responsible for ensuring this is achieved.

Next steps

15. In areas beginning in 2001 (see box), school managers should anticipate close working with the Connexions Service. Regular school processes of

development planning and review will help managers to identify how they can contribute to Connexions, and make effective use of Connexions' resources. This will prepare the ground for discussions with local Connexions' representatives about partnership working, local targets, personal adviser roles and accountability to the Service for relevant school provision.

16. More detailed information about topics in this note are available on the Connexions website (www.connexions.gov.uk), especially in the Business Planning Guidance for Partnerships.

Partnerships in these Learning & Skills Council areas are preparing business plans for 2001

Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes
London North (Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Waltham Forest)
London South (Richmond, Kingston, Merton, Sutton, Croydon, Bromley)
Suffolk
West of England (former Avon)
Devon & Cornwall
The Black Country
Coventry & Warwickshire
Shropshire/ Telford/Wrekin
Lincolnshire & Rutland
South Yorkshire
Humber Sub Region
Merseyside & Halton
Cheshire & Warrington
Cumbria
Tyne & Wear

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