

# Implementing Connexions in Schools

## Overview

Connexions is the new advice and guidance service for young people aged 13-19 in England.

This information will help headteachers and senior managers to

- plan the implementation of Connexions in their school
- add Connexions resource to help meet existing needs
- strengthen the work already going on to raise achievement and inclusion

This document builds on the guidance given in 'Establishing the Connexions Service in Schools' (DfEE 0302/2000)

## Action required

This document should enable senior managers to make effective plans to introduce Connexions successfully in school. Copies should be circulated as widely as possible amongst teaching staff, especially those with responsibility for pastoral support and careers. Governors may also find the information helpful. Extra copies are available, free of charge, from the number below. A checklist is included in the document for senior managers to plan implementation. Further guidance will be issued during the course of 2001 to help schools continue to implement Connexions successfully.

## Further information

More information on Connexions can be obtained by writing to, or calling the Connexions Service National Unit:

The Connexions Service National Unit  
Moorfoot  
Sheffield S1 4PQ

Tel: 0114 259 1104 Fax: 0114 259 4094

Further copies of this document are available from the DfEE order line on 0845 60 222 60 by quoting reference DfEE 0033/2001

The Connexions website can be viewed at [www.connexions.gov.uk](http://www.connexions.gov.uk). Copies of all Connexions publications are available to download from this site.

## Headteachers and Teachers

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Related Documents:

Establishing the Connexions  
Service in Schools

(DfEE 0302/2000)

Excellence  
in schools

## Connexions

### Working with schools to help all young people to increase participation and attainment in formal and informal learning

In partnership with each school, Connexions looks to:

- **provide all 13 - 19 year olds with the help and support they need** to prepare their progress to further stages in education, work and adult life;
- **offer advice and guidance** on learning and career options, as well as access to broader personal development opportunities;
- **raise aspirations and motivation** to greater achievement;
- **identify and address potential problems** before they become major barriers to learning;
- help young people **overcome existing barriers** to participation.

**Connexions** is about increasing **participation and attainment** for all young people between 13 and 19. It was one of the innovations arising from the 'Bridging the Gap' report in 1999 and is designed to help young people **achieve the best start in life**. This inclusive approach is **exactly what young people want**. The involvement of young people in pilots shows that they are looking for a service which offers quality help to all, and which is valued by young people, whatever their situation - but which also responds to the nature and level of need.

**Connexions has already begun in 12 areas**. If your school is in one of those areas you should already have had contact from the Connexions Partnership or one of its partner organisations helping to take forward development. Four other areas are hoping to begin in the Autumn. Later this year, pupils in the North East should be served by a pilot of **Connexions Direct**, a telephone and web-enabled information and advice service available to all young people between 13 and 19, as well as their parents. And **Connexions should operate across England from next year** - if local plans are satisfactory there will then be a total of 47 areas, corresponding to the Learning and Skills Council areas.

**Connexions is universal** - because every teenager will have access to it; and crucially it will also be **differentiated** - since it will offer more intensive support for those who need it.

#### The main elements of Connexions

Connexions will **free up more staff time for teaching, or curriculum-related or pastoral work**. Connexions personal advisers will take on some school liaison work with outside agencies (which currently absorbs the effort of Heads of Year or House or pastoral deputies).

Connexions will provide **impartial guidance on learning and career options**. This continues, and in many cases will improve upon, what has been provided by careers services. As an absolute minimum this will be a day a week of pupil contact time for a typical secondary school. Detailed arrangements will be determined by individual Connexions Partnerships and their Local Management Committees (which include a headteacher representative) and it is expected that all schools will receive more than this minimum guarantee, and more than provided recently by careers services.

Connexions can support the broader work of a school to **improve attendance and motivation** by helping to resolve out-of-school and personal issues for pupils. This brings greater potential for raising achievement, and also for developing the personal skills which can **equip young people to make a success of life**.

Personal Advisers

**The personal adviser (PA) will be at the heart of the service in schools.**

Headteachers will have a large say in the selection of PAs being recruited by Connexions for schools' work. They will negotiate the role and deployment of the PA(s) working in their own school. PAs will come from a wide range of professional, and in future, non-professional backgrounds, with additional training to prepare them for this unique role. Although many will be based in schools, others will work on outreach activity in the area, or at one-stop shops and drop-in centres.

PAs may take on a range of roles, subject to the needs and existing provision in an individual school. Some may have a **broad remit**, offering advice and guidance and referring on to other agencies; others may **work intensively** with a small caseload. Connexions PAs will complement the work of other support staff, including Learning Mentors and the broader range of business and community mentors which many schools involve to raise aspirations and motivation. The roles, and any PA work with priority groups, will be negotiated as part of the Partnership Agreement with each school, and could include:

- **stretching** able pupils;
- **working** with any at risk of going off track;
- **giving intensive support** to those facing complex problems.

Personal advisers in action - experience from pilot studies

**There is no single blueprint.** Connexions will operate in many ways in schools, to reflect how young people can best benefit and how individual schools are organised and resourced.

To establish a strong base in schools, Connexions **must build on successful pastoral systems and curriculum provision, including careers education and guidance.**

Schools will still be encouraged to develop their careers libraries and increase the advice

for pupils available through ICT. Connexions will not duplicate or take over school responsibilities. This is clear from examples from the Connexions pilot work during 2000/01:

**In one South Yorkshire school** the PA had a comprehensive induction period to take on a role co-ordinating with Year Heads and those managing pastoral care and citizenship. The PA gave presentations to all tutors, and slowly built up relationships with other staff. He now also has regular discussions with SMT about the progress of the work. Although pupils view this PA as having a different role to teachers, he is also seen to be collaborating positively with the school - the fulfilment of a Connexions/school partnership.

**In a Devon school** the PA deals with small numbers on an intensive basis. A new Social Inclusion Manager works closely with the PA and Heads of House. Shared office space facilitates communication. One successful feature of this collaboration is the fortnightly review meeting to identify which individuals should be taken onto the PA's caseload.

**Three Cornwall schools** each have a PA who spends some time in the school but also works in the local FE college to improve transition post-16.

The vast majority of young people in pilot areas are very positive about the service. On a wide range of indicators, PA work is rated a real success. Young people who spent a significant amount of time with their PA to discuss education and training issues, and other specific or personal problems, said:

- *"I am more focussed in class - it has given me something to aim for and I feel more motivated to work."*
- *"I can get things off my chest and she says things and it calms me down."*
- *"I'm staying in loads more lessons and caught up with my work. It's easier to cope."*

Beyond the work with individual pupils lies **a bigger vision** of Connexions in schools. Pupils will be helped to **link up the different guidance processes and activities** they experience - target-setting, tutoring, careers guidance and mentoring. They will also **make links between their personal development and their learning**, wherever that learning occurs, e.g. through PSHE, work-related activities, careers education, summer activities or citizenship.

## **Preparing for Connexions in your school**

To be fully effective, PAs need to be part of a school-based team, involving many of the following staff:

- SENCO
- Year or House Heads
- Careers co-ordinator and/or PSHE co-ordinator
- Record of achievement/Progress File co-ordinator
- Work Experience co-ordinator
- Learning Mentors (in EIC areas)
- Education Welfare Officer
- School counsellor
- School nurse

Connexions is designed to slot easily into existing approaches, building on what already happens under the direction of the headteacher. Connexions can also be a catalyst for better integration. For instance, through negotiation with schools, Connexions can help link target-setting, Progress File and pastoral processes to careers guidance, external support or personal development. Learning Mentors and personal advisers will work together as part of an overall co-ordinated approach to providing pupil support and Connexions will be an additional resource for the work of the school. Connexions will also offer schools help to integrate guidance and support. This can include **training for staff** on career-related issues and in assessment of need; and **support on curriculum issues**, initially on careers and related areas, but also more broadly on drugs, health, mentoring or education-business link issues.

***Further guidance will be available over the next few months, detailing the ways in which other key staff can help implement Connexions successfully in schools.***

The overall structure of Connexions

Connexions managers at LEA or other local level have a responsibility to ensure that in every school:

- guidance on learning options is **impartial**;
- there is sufficient time for **any pupil to refer themselves** to an adviser;
- Connexions staff can **support the transition planning for pupils with special educational needs**, especially when they consider post-16 provision;
- **PAs help Connexions keep track of pupils joining and leaving school**, and provide other information necessary for Connexions.

**The Local Management Committee (LMC)** will oversee delivery by co-ordinating the different services needed by young people. It will allocate resources to schools via a partnership agreement negotiated with the headteacher. It will be responsible for deploying personal adviser coverage across its area and improving the co-ordination of agency support to schools. To give local schools a voice, headteachers should be represented on every LMC - and some may also be represented on Partnership Boards.

**The Connexions Partnership** is the strategic body, composed of statutory and voluntary services, such as **local authorities, health authorities, the police, the probation service, employers, the voluntary sector and young people**. It will plan and direct the work of Connexions across the whole area, overseeing the provision of vocational routes to learning in conjunction with the local LSC. Partnerships are involved in planning how the service might operate in schools and colleges as part of a well co-ordinated strategy of support for young people.

Headteachers will negotiate an agreement with their Connexions Partnership on:

- what **adviser skills and roles** are needed in the school;
- the **mix of the PA team**, if more than one PA is involved (full- or part-time);
- **other support for the school** to be provided by Connexions;
- **management** and reporting arrangements.

**Connexions is an integrated service** - the local Partnership will bring together all the organisations that support young people and provide coherence in a way that has not happened before. It will **support progress and achievement in the broadest sense** - not just formal learning leading to qualifications, but the personal development gained through access to sporting, artistic or leisure opportunities and involvement in community activities.

## What schools should do now

To gain the most from Connexions, school managers should address the following issues:

- Which of **the mix of PA functions** defined by Connexions is appropriate for your school?
- How is the PA being **inducted into and integrated with** your school's existing provision and support?
- What channels will PAs use to **share routine information with school staff**?
- In what ways can Connexions be used in **a multi-disciplinary team** of teaching and support staff within your school? How can that team be **best co-ordinated, monitored and directed**?
- How will the **continuing professional development of advisers**, including off-school training, be managed?
- How will Connexions enhance pupils' existing **review and action planning** cycles?
- In what ways will your school **help pupils to express their views** about Connexions?
- How will Connexions establish **two-way contact with parents**?
- How will your school assess and report on the **delivery and effectiveness** of Connexions in its work with pupils, and show that **impartial guidance** on learning and careers options is available to all?
- How can Connexions be a **natural extension of the school's strategic or development planning**?
- How can Connexions **best add value** to the work of the school?

*Connexions – the best start in life  
for every young person*



**Department for  
Education and Employment**