

Annex A – Covering Template for Responses

Please complete the attached cover sheet when sending evidence, indicating the set of questions to which a response is being provided and contact details of the person for any follow-up queries.

Contact details for respondent	
Name	
Job title	Chief Executive
Do you represent an organisation? (if so, name of organisation and type: e.g. voluntary, public body, private company).	Yes Connexions Cornwall and Devon Ltd
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	Which area of the review are you responding to? (please mark X)
Prevention strand	x
Review of disabled children	x
Strategy for youth services	x
Review of high cost, high harm families	x

Connexions Cornwall and Devon Ltd

Comprehensive spending review 2007

Call for evidence: DfES/HM Treasury joint policy review on children and young people.

Introduction

Connexions Cornwall and Devon Ltd welcomes the opportunity to comment on the joint policy review and to provide evidence where it can. We have looked closely at the analyses available and the conclusions that are being drawn but are aware that often in the field of policy, unintended side effects can come out of the best of intended ideas. Before therefore moving into the detail of the questions raised in the call for evidence and our response we would like to suggest three or four very simple ideas that could make a real difference to young people's lives, and would avoid unintended side effects such as the damage sustained by Connexions partnerships as a result of the Connexions card. These ideas are:

- free public transport for young people under the age of 19 (and indeed for adults over 65)
- free entry for young people under 19 to sports and leisure centres, cultural and creative experiences
- free coaching in sport, leisure, culture and creative activities to ensure young people get the very best out of the experience
- an integrated reward system for young people 16-19 in employment and training which means benefits are paid on top of wages until the wage reaches a certain level when benefits are reduced progressively to zero. Young people want the freedom to buy, and act as consumers in full employment
- strong links should be made between older people and 13-19 year olds; they all share the same desire to be safe, be healthy, to enjoy and achieve, to contribute to their community and to achieve economic wellbeing

Young people and older people should be encouraged to achieve these five outcomes together.

In creating our response we have drawn opinion together from managers, the staff at Connexions and young people. Whilst formulating our thoughts we felt it important to make some preliminary, albeit general statements that could otherwise get missed because of the structure of the questions:

- the Connexions service in Cornwall and Devon has focused for the last five years on achieving positive outcomes for young people; not least entering the labour market via learning and/or training or directly. We feel strongly that the vast majority of young people want to maximise their potential, to earn a decent wage and to contribute to their community. We also believe (Beveridge) that being jobless is a great source of unhappiness as it can contribute to the feeling that people can have that their skills and talents are not being utilised
- we have placed the reduction of those not in education, employment or training (NEETs) at the centre of our work. At annex 1 is a thorough analysis of NEETs in our sub-region (i.e. Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay). The report examines factors that cause young people to be NEET, the

nature of the group, the barriers they face and actions we have taken to reduce their numbers. The report will have resonance in its relation to other regions of England

- the information, advice and guidance (IAG) that supports entry into learning, training and work must remain independent of institutions and must not for example be wholly turned over to schools where its integrity will inevitably be lost. There is an economic dividend attached to information, advice and guidance which accrues from informed choices that reduce discontinuation rates and wastage in provision. It has also been proven to motivate individuals to achieve (Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby – The economic benefits of careers guidance). IAG has an important role to play in competitiveness and in developing infrastructures. OECD (2004) research has indicated that independent IAG can contribute to:
 - the lives of individuals by helping them to maximise potential and increase social mobility, particularly in terms of movement out of poverty
 - the education and training systems by acting as a stimulus to those markets via higher levels of awareness and therefore take up
 - national competitiveness through increases in skill levels via the motivation that derives from a greater awareness of oneself and the opportunities available
 - societies where awareness of opportunities will include engagement in local communities, social enterprises and regeneration

The effects on achievement have also been pointed to in national LSC research which showed 81% of Employer Training Pilot participants who received independent IAG completing their course successfully, against 53% completing who had not (LSC 2006). Arguments have been proffered that our most able young people do not really need independent IAG, but it is beyond question when considering for example HE discontinuation rates, that they do need exposure to what is available to them and what would suit their future lifestyle choices, learning styles and aspirations. HE options in for example engineering and dentistry must remain feasible to UK students to aid competitiveness and social mobility, which in rural areas is increasingly important

- the government should not allow city centric and urban-based thinking to push aside the needs of children, young people and families who live in rural communities. It should instead seek to create a sense of place and of belonging both in urban and rural environments aimed at ameliorating disadvantage

Responses

The key questions of the review:

- 'What should be the role of universal services in providing access to protective and preventative support, risk assessment and referral?' – in considering universal services there is a need to see the question in context.. The debate between universal and targeted services has largely become an economic one, and the two are often described in financial terms. The perception is that universal services are per capita cheaper than targeted, or indeed specialist services. This can be to miss a point, as universal services can become a part of a problem, if diagnosis is poor and referral random. This will drive excessive numbers towards expensive services and in this way progressive universalism will not be achieved. Universal services must be joined up at the population level and must take account of the fact that given the variable nature of individual

needs it can become impossible to determine who needs such services. Universal services therefore should form the gateway to all other services and should begin with excellent diagnosis of need undertaken by workforces prepared to act as champions of the individual. The diagnosis must be correctly timed and followed up with determination. The universal service will in this way act as the hub – a referral hub – which in turn will coordinate provision on behalf of the individual.

In general terms however there is a need for a commonly understood definition of the meaning of the universal service. Such a definition should recognise that any targeted service will by nature form a subset of the universal. Furthermore it should be defined in a way that recognises the help that can be given to planning provision through holding an overview of universal services. Universal services should relate to, for example:

- education (and this may include youth services)
- primary care health
- services such as Connexions which through statute (i.e. 1973 Employment and Training Act) provide a universal service (in this case a universal IAG service)

Universal services must work at both the individual and whole cohort/population levels.

- 'How can targeted and specialist services intervene earlier to address problems before they become acute?' – this can only be achieved through better diagnosis. This must be coupled with early warning systems based on clearly understood 'triggers' or 'thresholds' so that those delivering universal services know both how and when to act. Currently, because of resource constraints (as evidenced in social services, health, immigration) the thresholds are too high. High thresholds prevent prevention! There is a need to invest in terms that are longer than the next election! Early investment will prevent higher spending levels further down the line, but if thresholds are left impossibly high, acute cases rise in numbers placing increasing demands on more expensive services. Currently all acute services are fully stretched, so there is no possibility of separating cash out to put into universal from acute provision. An immediate investment in universal services is therefore needed in order to reap the rewards of less acute and therefore less expensive cases needing to be handled. A clear example of this is in drug / alcohol misuse amongst children and young people. The thresholds for publicly funded support in this area are so high that hundreds of cases are left to become acute resulting in huge damage being done to individuals and communities and costs of treatment becoming prohibitive and a burden to the public purse.

In the matter of targeted services and the interface with universal ones, there is a need to determine what works. There have been examples of catastrophic failure and unexpected side effects (the anti-drugs posters of the 1990s). Ask young people and parents.

A particular stress point in the relationship between universal and targeted services is the assessment / ineffective intervention continuum. If poor diagnosis is made through poor assessment, interventions will be less effective and the cycle continues.

- 'How can the impact of intervention to prevent children, young people and families with complex needs repeatedly moving in and out of contact with targeted services be sustained?' – this question is not solely about the removal of

damaging behaviour, but ensuring that a child or young person is stabilised into a positive and sustainable outcome. An example could be a young offender. It is not sufficient to stay close to them, to support them in the hope that they will stop offending. There is a need to secure an outcome, preferably a job, where they will be gainfully occupied. Entry and re-entry into learning, training or work will ultimately be a powerful mechanism for breaking antisocial and unproductive behaviour patterns, and in reducing risk factors and building resilience. If a young person has a responsible job and has to be at work, say at 8 a.m. there is a strong possibility that they may well not be outside making a nuisance of themselves at midnight.

Although this question is looking at reducing the to-ing and fro-ing between targeted services, consideration must be given to referral from targeted back to universal. Without this any outcome achieved will be likely to be less sustainable. Rather than there being precipices or canyons between targeted and universal, there should be bridges. For example, in Connexions we get virtually no referrals from GPs, who by nature will be aware of the status of their young patients. We need better communications between organisations; ideally we should know which organisations are working with which individuals, to what purpose and to what effect. In the current climate, particularly where there are fears surrounding exchanges of information, this is virtually impossible. Current proposals for the national child index do not offer very much encouragement.

- as the Information Commissioner has said “we are building haystacks in which we will lose our needles”. Overall a goal that government should set is to make the ‘system’ work for children, young people and parents. A well understood, fully functioning system now will save considerably in the long run where cases ‘drag on’, and minor issues become major crises
- ‘How can rights and responsibilities for individuals, families and communities be integrated into services to improve the lives of children and young people?’ – in Connexions Cornwall and Devon we have always felt that any individual’s rights are always counterbalanced by responsibilities. Rights and responsibilities can be integrated into services. We feel, for example, that each young person has the right to a client centred confidential IAG service, but to use this they must be honest and be prepared to exercise informed and productive choices. However, individuals need to understand their rights, and they do not always do so. Individuals also need to know what the diagnosis (as referred to earlier) is, and what the options are. In many cases this will need the simplest form of explanation – drawing pictures where needed. When rights and responsibilities have been brought into balance, individuals should be encouraged to recognise that they need to earn those rights. Any sanctions applied should be both relevant and meaningful – some sanctions can increase the risk of harm (e.g. withdrawal of benefits). Effectively what is required is a customer driven service
- ‘What would be the impact of more preventative services and early intervention on the life chances of children and young people and on the value for money of public spending on children, young people and families?’ – there is no doubt that early intervention is likely to lead to better economic performance in later life. Upon this very premise have top-up fees in HE been predicated! The question is how to balance resource in terms of early intervention and longer term services. Consideration should be given to moving resource down the age range, to increase preventative services. This is however not the whole story. Preventative services must not only be better resourced, they must be accessible, well timed, well placed and relevant. Furthermore thought should be given to the effects of

constant 'reinvention' through government policies which continually introduce initiatives that are similar to previous ones, but sufficiently different to create instability, duplication and a waste of resources (e.g. mentors, Personal Advisers, key workers, lead professionals). This duplication and attendant confusion is often borne out of different departmental approaches, funding streams and initiatives from within the government itself. As mentioned, this causes a waste of financial resource, but is also unsatisfactory for service users and damages staff morale

Supplementary questions

- 'What works in reaching out to the most vulnerable families to ensure they are able to take full advantage of service provision, especially in the early years?' – unquestionably it is the universality of the service on offer, with interventions that are appropriate to need. In effect this is about the proportionality of response. It is important that services are non-stigmatised
- 'What evidence is there of major barriers to developing a preventative system? Are there examples where you have overcome these barriers?' - on a regular basis we record case studies of young people who have used Connexions in Cornwall and Devon. As part of the case study we record the barriers that they face; they are manifold. However some occur frequently and appear to be of great significance and these chime with the issues they raise in terms of things to do and places to go; they are:
 - transport
 - finance
 - access
 - relevance

Each of these four represent both major elements of the problem, but also offer solutions.

Other barriers quoted by young people include:

- disabilities, health problems, mental health, issues with lack of provision
 - poor family relationships with little support available
 - limited qualifications/skills with difficulty in securing progression opportunities
 - insecure accommodation/homelessness with little help offered by district councils
 - isolation, particularly in rural locations
 - caring responsibilities with little recognition of agencies with regard to the extent of such responsibilities
 - misunderstanding of the system because it is not joined up
- 'What evidence is available on how funding can be freed up at the acute end of provision to spend on preventative services?' – it may take several years for any funding to be freed up (see above comments on investment now leading to longer term savings). Here again it is important to recognise that excellent diagnosis and referral will lead to a reduction in the wastage of resource
 - 'How can we build the capacity of parents, families and communities to shape the design and delivery of services for children and young people?' – it will be necessary to make their involvement:
 - interesting
 - relevant

- result in feedback on what has taken place as a consequence of their intervention
- contribute to governance of services
- empowering; to have a major impact on how their services are run; and to have the confidence to deal with their own difficult children
- easy to access and engage in
- appropriately supported, particularly where the subject matter may be complex (e.g. children's trust arrangements)

Terms of reference for the review of disabled: key questions

- 'The changing profile of disabled children, for example, due to increases in complex disability and rise in Autistic Spectrum Disorders, profound and multiple learning disabilities and low birth-weight babies and the challenges this poses to services.' – possible causes for the changing profile of disabled children (particularly with regard to young people with ASD and PMLD) could be:
 - advances in medical science has led to greater survival rates for babies with PMLD
 - better diagnosis (with ASD, although there is debate on whether this is contributing to the increased numbers)
 - environmental issues e.g. diet, chemicals
 - children and young people with ASD and PMLD are now included more in mainstream education and within society generally, whereas previously they were more hidden

This has resulted in the following challenges for services:

- staff (particularly support staff) having the training within universal services to work with young people with complex disabilities, especially those with communication difficulties and/or challenging behaviour – see also answer to question 8. Need for a workforce strategy
 - having the skills to ensure that young people with complex disabilities are equally consulted about, and involved in, their services as their peers
 - balancing the time needed to work with young people with complex disabilities, with the needs of those young people who have less apparent disabilities but who may still need preventative work (with regard to the NEET group)
 - a government policy geared towards the funding of level 2 qualifications as the gateway to employability, which puts even more barriers in the way of those young people with complex disabilities who, whilst unlikely to achieve at that level, may still have something to offer employers. The unintended outcome of this is an increase in the need for welfare benefits for those who otherwise would be contributing to the economy. Resources would be better allocated to work related support and learning (including incentives to employers). The cut in funding to courses for post-19 adult learners with disabilities will be another contributing factor to increase pressure on the benefits system
- 'What progress has already been made in addressing the needs of disabled children and their families?' - approaches which enable disabled young people and their families to identify their own needs and to look laterally at ways of meeting these, for example through Person Centred Planning have to date proven effective. These have been particularly successful at harnessing the interests and energies of young people with a learning disability in imaginative ways that don't always need to impact on service providers' budgets. Also, the progress that has been made in enabling them to have more control over the

funding of the support they need, for example direct payments and pilots for individualised budgets such as the 'Dynamite' project. The concept of the budget-holding lead professional is another example of progress in this direction

- 'What are the barriers currently restricting access to services and therefore effective intervention?' – there is a number of barriers which restrict access to adult services for young people in transition. These include:
 - lack of co-ordination of information to parents of young people going through transition, by all the services concerned. This means that early planning for transition is hampered as parents and young people cannot make informed decisions.
 - decisions about eligibility for adult services can be taken so late that, by then, young people and their parents are in a crisis situation that could have been avoided. Transition protocols across children's and adult services seek to address this and will usually identify the need to involve adult services from an earlier age, but in practice this does not always happen due to information about budgets not being known from year to year.
 - young people who do not meet eligibility criteria for individual adult services (e.g. access to some learning disability services have an IQ criterion which young people with Asperger's syndrome might not meet), but who have a number of problems which, put together, mean that they require a high level of support. The time wasted trying to broker that support can lead to a worsening situation for that young person, sometimes leading them to need more critical interventions (for example, for mental health issues)
 - a lack of incentive on the part of employers to recruit young people and adults with LDD. Financial incentives should be offered to employers

There are also major issues for young Deaf people who use British Sign Language as their first language, or for Deaf parents of either BSL users or of hearing young people. Services are realising that good practice means that front-line staff who, as part of their job, work face-to-face with BSL users will, depending on the depth of that involvement, need to be trained to level 1, 2 or 3. However, any increase in the number of people who can sign (at any level) or interpret (there is a severe shortage in this area) is dependent on an increase in the number and range of BSL courses in the area, as the current provision is not going to meet the demand. Up until now, many services have "got by" in their dealings with BSL users and this has meant that the needs of Deaf young people and/or their parents have not always been adequately met. This is something that has been raised with the LSC nationally but they appear to be reluctant to address. (NB Statistics from the British Deaf Association show that there are over 70,000 people in Britain for whom BSL is their first or preferred language. In some rural areas of the country, the numbers of BSL speakers would out-weigh the numbers of speakers of other languages than English)

- 'Are services sufficiently co-ordinated at local level to allow families to access sufficient support to meet their needs?' – this question has largely been answered elsewhere in this response. However there is insufficient coordination which is evidenced in:
 - the difficulty in making a smooth transition from secondary education
 - the lack of communication between adult and children's services
 - differing levels of support between services
 - the sudden withdrawal of support at certain 'cliff edges' (e.g. at 19 years)

- 'How does the system of support for disabled children and their families compare across the country and abroad? Are there lessons we can learn to improve outcomes?' – we are not in a position to contribute meaningfully to that question
- 'What family support services i.e. key workers, short breaks, sibling support, behavioural management are currently available and how do these relate to other services?' - other support services that are available include Parent Partnerships, out-of-school activity schemes, discrete information services for parents of disabled children (including web-based services). Of the above, short breaks and informal respite care are particularly welcomed. Improving the relation of all these to other services should be through promotion, and ensuring that systems of referrals and access are clear and transparent
- 'What are the most cost effective interventions in delivering better outcomes?' – the most cost effective interventions we are aware of are:
 - ensuring that eligibility for services are not rigidly based on too-narrow criteria.
 - interventions that allow for the measure of “softer” outcomes for young people, which take into account their individual needs rather than just thinking of their progress in terms of government targets. This means measuring ‘distance travelled’
 - role of IAG practitioners in helping young people with learning disabilities (and their parents) to navigate the system – acting as advisers and advocates
- 'Are there interventions which, if made earlier, could reduce more costly interventions later? How can we identify the need to intervene earlier?' - one of the issues for children and young people with a learning disability is the poor identification of the onset of mental health problems, which too often is misdiagnosed as part of their learning disability. This is particularly the case with children and young people with little or no communication through words (see also answer to question 1). Young people going through transition may be facing fears around change, losing friendships, and lack of opportunities for education, work and leisure, which can trigger mental health problems. Learning Disability and Mental Health services need to work closer together to facilitate earlier interventions, underpinned by multi-agency training on identification. The introduction of the Common Assessment Framework, and the use in some areas of Child Concern Pathways, should enable earlier interventions. However this will only happen if individual services are clear and confident about their roles, and when it is appropriate to involve other services, and are willing to seek a solution where there is a difference in professional opinion e.g. a school seeing an issue as one for discipline rather than support.
- 'What lessons can we learn from the legal frameworks in other countries that might inform the review?' – we are unable to respond to this question.

In concluding this section it should be noted that our emphasis has been on secondary school aged young people and in those making the transition into adulthood. For this reason, our responses may have touched on services for young adults.

Terms of reference for the strategy for youth services:

Before examining the key questions we felt that some general points needs to be made:

- learning, training and ultimately work leading to independent living are what most young people want that contact us in Connexions. This is not a skewed view as the Connexions service in Cornwall and Devon has contact with over 99% of 13-19 year olds
- in Connexions we have a track record of successful interventions across a wide spectrum of needs. It could be argued that our work extends from the apex to the base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs where Connexions Personal Advisers assist young people to attend to their basic requirements of a roof over their heads, a safe place to stay, through to actualisation through the utilisation of skills in the learning, training and labour markets
- as this section is concerned with local authority youth services, it must be said that without significant reform 'Youth Matters' and 'Youth Matters – Next Steps' will not succeed. The current youth service should be reassembled and reconstituted within high performing Connexions arrangements in order to help local authorities to become commissioners rather than direct deliverers of services in line with the government's vision for local authorities by 2015, in which case the penetration rate currently as low as 13% - 15% will increase considerably. In this way the combined forces of current youth services and Connexions will be better able to fill gaps. Such a reassembly will also ensure that the youth service becomes more outcome orientated
- there is a considerable need, building on the points made above, to recreate the youth service as a targeted service that seeks out vulnerable and disaffected young people with the view to returning them to mainstream. Its current functions are out of step with the needs of young people and outmoded. It must get much closer to local communities
- in suggesting a reassembly of the youth service and combining forces with Connexions, this could be achieved by contract. Connexions Cornwall and Devon for example contracts with other organisations in an extremely effective way because of its customer focus, close monitoring, understanding of the needs of young people, ensuring that what is contracted for happens, the creation of tailored, diverse provision through expert specification and through rapid decision-making and speed of execution. We operate a 'social model' of contracting, which aims to make our contractees feel they are achieving and adding value to the community. An aspect of the new, combined service could be a 'children's and youths' disability play and leisure service' with the intention of social and relevant physical activity for the most isolated children and young people
- on the matter of active citizenship there needs to be a serious attempt at a redefinition. As all people living in Great Britain are subject to the laws of the Crown, we are subjects. We are inexorably also part of a defined class system, and these facts make it difficult for young people to get a real handle on the term citizenship. The key message is that of participation; that not only includes participation in the learning, training and labour markets, but also participation in community activities such as volunteering. Many young people for example who have undertaken 'positive activities for young people' in Cornwall and Devon, which is run by Connexions and offers challenge plus the chance to succeed, show a predisposition to return as peer mentors. This is a clear indication that they feel they have learned a great deal from the experience and wish to share that with their peers. This rich vein of support should be rigorously exploited in any future arrangements to provide services to young people
- in considering youth activities generally there are a number of prejudices that should be overcome. Not least of these is for example the reluctance to accept some activities as being 'right' for young people, and this could include, say boxing clubs. What is 'right' for young people should be a matter largely for young people (excluding of course any endorsements by publicly funded services for

totally irresponsible activities). The case for, for example, boxing clubs can be made in terms of the cost - benefit analysis. Yes, harm can come from the activity, but the numbers of young people who have been diverted from antisocial behaviour through having their energies channelled in this way can be seen to outweigh the disadvantages. This is a matter of equal worth being accorded to activities.

Key questions:

- 'What is the current distribution of youth services and youth engagement activities available across the country? How is that likely to evolve following the Youth Green Paper?' – the current distribution is patchy (here we need to distinguish between the local authority run youth service, and voluntary/community sector youth services). The funding league table for LA run youth services speaks for itself with huge discrepancies between what some local authorities spend over others. This patchiness is reflected in the variable quality as observed in reports by Ofsted. The youth services will not evolve until they are adequately managed, and this will require both a sense of direction and leadership. There is no national model for youth services, no blueprint, in effect no strategy. The youth service "curriculum" is something of a myth
- 'Building on the Youth Green Paper, is there more that could be done to improve and sustain the effectiveness in the delivery of existing services and activities?' – the youth service is not currently working with those most in need. Greater clarity is therefore required from government. During the lifetime of Connexions we have witnessed confusion on for example teenage pregnancy counselling, and information, advice and guidance on careers. These moves indicate a series of lurches over the last five years in government policy; also a succession of short term funding initiatives with continual reinvention all of which militate against brand loyalty and stability
- 'What are the particular barriers faced by different groups of young people, including disabled young people, in accessing services, and what are the policy issues that arise?' – this question has largely been addressed in previous parts of this response. However, in considering transport in rural areas and our proposal to offer under 19s free transport, this may encourage the use of public transport later in life. Also the offer of free sports facilities such as swimming and tennis would help to break through a substantial barrier – i.e. lack of money. In considering finance, young people and the staff of Connexions tell us the EMA system is unfair as two young people may be on the same course from similar backgrounds, one with and one without EMA
- 'How can we best combine demand led provision for young people with provision that is planned and structured to have the best impact on outcomes for children and young people?' and 'What more can we do to support and enable young people to exert a strong demand side influence on provision? What would we expect in return from young people – their rights and responsibilities?' – there is a need here to be clear on what is meant by demand led. Normally the demand side is taken to mean employers. However, as this question would seem to relate to personalised learning, and therefore to provision being led by the demands of young people, there is a conflict in the message. Perhaps a way through is to see the understanding of labour market information at local, regional, national and international levels, as the key. There is growing scepticism around demand led provision if it is centred on personalised learning for individuals. First the workforce engaged in providing learning neither understands nor is committed to

it. Second, without appropriate career opportunities, a young person demand led approach can short-change them. There is a need for more entry points into opportunities, with greater flexibility so that large numbers of young people are not put off by entry requirements being set too high (e.g. e2e). At the same time, through the provision of appropriate LMI, young people must be enabled to understand for themselves where oversupply is taking place

- 'What principles and priorities should guide the allocation of current and future resources? And who do we need to target?' – these have largely been covered in previous parts of this commentary. In particular there is an urgent need to target youth service resources and provision on those who are most vulnerable. This may require a different approach on the part of youth workers with regard to the voluntary nature of their work with young people
- 'What measures and milestones need to be in place to ensure that performance can be assessed and delivery monitored at a local level.' – the key milestone must be the watershed date of 1st April 2008. At this point local authorities inherit Connexions grant funding, and with that the attendant statutory duties (e.g. the provision of a careers service under the 1973 Employment and Training Act; the requirement to ensure young people participate in learning and work under the 2000 Learning and Skills Act; and the need to arrange assessments at points of transitions for students with LDD under the same Act). They will of course also inherit amongst other things the 'NEETs – PSA' target. At this point local authorities should consider moving their youth services into the most successful Connexions services, which the government has already pledged to maintain, so that both can be commissioned under contract. In this way youth services will benefit from a culture of performance management aimed at achieving positive outcomes for young people 13-19; most notably engagement in learning, training and work

Supplementary questions:

- 'What are the barriers and enablers of effective Third Sector provision, including statutory commissioning capability?' – Whilst considering the third sector it is important to understand what is meant. On the one hand it refers specifically to the voluntary and community sector, but where social enterprises are concerned can include the private and public sectors (Cabinet Office definitions). Third sector organisations must be fit for purpose and not for example set up provision because they happen to have the personnel or equipment, rather than establishing provision against proven need. Certainly close monitoring of how government funding is used within the third sector needs to take place as after all, if elements of the sector are funded by the taxpayer, how do they distinguish themselves from any other government agency?

On the matter of barriers unquestionably short term funding is the greatest one; therefore longer term funding would be the greatest enabler. This would lead to good quality staff with less turnover, greater stability and a more appropriate allocation of contracts to providers best placed to arrange activities that benefit young people. At present, because of short termism, if a local community organisation happens to have a piece or two of equipment, they are likely to be given a contract which places demands upon them which are way above their resource and equipment levels. This is unacceptable as young people receive an inadequate experience in this way

- 'What can be done to improve the ability of universal provision to identify and provide a service to those with greater needs?' – this question has been considered at the beginning of this commentary
- 'Which projects and programmes in the last five years have had a proven and sustained impact and brought innovation to delivery of services for young people?' – this question is virtually identical to one asked in the government's consultation on Youth Matters that closed on 8th November 2005. Our view is as stated then, one of the most successful programmes in Cornwall and Devon has been Connexions, which has already met its NEETs target for 2010 and has the lowest number of 'not knowns' in England. This success has been backed by the creation of the 'single role' Personal Adviser, who acts as the central point of contact for each young person, brigading services and resources on their behalf. In effect we have been operating the 'lead professional' role since 2000. This work has further been enhanced by the significant engagement of young people in the design and delivery of the service; a feature that was found to be "excellent" in our 2003 Ofsted report
- 'What encourages young people to try new and different kinds of activities from those they already do?' – the provision must be challenging yet offer the opportunity to succeed (see earlier comments on 'positive activities for young people'). Provision must take account of differing learning styles, and must above all offer interest and motivation. It is simply not acceptable to see, as we have in Connexions, evaluations by young people of their post-16 training provision in which the answer to the question "What have you learned on this programme?" is "nothing". From evidence from the staff of Connexions, it is also clear that what will encourage young people to try new and different types of activity, is adequate financial reward. Many young people define themselves and measure self worth via their spending power
- 'What evidence is there of the benefits that arise from young people's involvement in design and provision of their activities? What evidence is there of how outcomes have improved as a result?' – there are many examples, as observed in the Ofsted report on Connexions Cornwall and Devon Ltd referred to earlier. Examples include:
 - better designed, more appropriately set out and furnished Connexions centres
 - young person friendly websites that attract young people to start with and are 'sticky'
 - written information (e.g. leaflets, posters, pocket books, etc.) that is attractive, intelligible and useful to a wide range of young people
 - the creation of the working practices of the 'single role' Personal Adviser
 - the creation of comments and complaints systems that help us to improve services
 - the evaluation of services provided; similarly intended to help us to improve (our 'Help Us Get It Right' questionnaires)
 - the recruitment of appropriate staff; not only Personal Advisers, but right to the top of the organisation including the chairperson of the Board of Directors
 - the active promotion of our services in schools and colleges of further education
 - determining the opening hours of services
 - presence at consultation events and conferences where the voice of young people needs to be heard

- in assisting with comments on government policies, naturally those most likely to affect young people and services to them
- in the preparation of aspects of the annual business plan; not least the creation of a specific 'young people's business plan' for Connexions
- 'What attracts people to the youth work workforce? What is less attractive about membership of this workforce?' – there are many factors, the key ones seem to be:
 - lifestyle
 - autonomy
 - belief that young people are our future
 - contribution to society
 - not difficult to gain promotion

Less attractive would seem to be:

- unsocial hours
- unrewarding clients
- low pay
- low regard or non-recognition by other professionals

Terms of reference for the review of high cost, high harm families

The questions posed in this section of the call for evidence are probably best answered by children and family services, rather than by Connexions. However, there are several points that we feel able to make that may contribute to the review:

- we have particular concerns around children in and leaving care. In consecutive initiatives the government has sought to attach a 'worker' to individual young people from this group; a sort of state sponsored 'Ersatz parent'. This can create unintended side effects, not least because of turnover in the workforce where children and young people get let down because of constant changes to their worker. This can mean that through a lack of continuity and consistency they experience services at the wrong times in their lives and of the wrong kind. The worker will also almost inevitably not be able to operate without calling on the assistance of others in acting as a champion for the individual. Joined up services should not be confused with single role models in this way.
- young people from high risk, high harm families are overrepresented in the NEETs group, particularly in workless households
- parents need to understand how the 'system' works, what services are available, and what is going on around them at a very basic level
- there may well be a lack of understanding at a higher level that many parents are a good deal less able than their children. This places considerable responsibilities onto children and young people
- questions need to be resolved about the state's overall right or otherwise to intervene in family life; and this may include questions of family income and what it should be spent on. Furthermore, on family income, the question arises on how the state should supplement that income, particularly where it questions current spending practice in a family. The government may have a view on how families should operate, a view that may well not be shared by the families in question

- parents and parenting courses are seen to be useful, but parents in effect have to admit failure before they start. This is analogous to an alcoholic admitting they have a problem and may be very hard for families. Parenting courses could and should perhaps follow on naturally from prenatal ones. There is a growth in interest in parenting issues, not least fuelled by TV programmes such as 'Supernanny'. Government should capitalise on this and engage in public information/education courses that are non-stigmatised and that could be backed by access to websites and the production of self help CD ROMs that could be distributed to households
- it has long been recognised that parents are the biggest influence on young people's career and lifestyle choices. In 'support for parents: the best start for children', the advice given by parents to their children in relation to careers is described as "realistic", but this begs the question "can it be comprehensive and impartial?", let alone 'expert'. This we feel is very unlikely. It is also unlikely to be 'equal' in that one parent may have a strong social/professional network that can be a source of opportunity for their children, whereas an equally caring parent from a less privileged background will simply not be able to tap into the same 'contacts book'. Those parents in this latter category are less likely to be able to make a judgement about the information available to them on opportunities that their children may enter
- there is a need as part of the public information/education approach to provide 'careers courses' for parents, particularly during years 8 and 9 prior to 14-19 choices. They should be made available outside of a school environment and could take the form of an adult education programme. As mentioned earlier, the DfES could supply materials, for example CD ROMs to support such courses. Such materials could be distributed via tabloid newspapers, possibly backed by a media campaign. They could further be backed via mentions in soap operas, through 'fly on the wall' documentaries and through public advertising. To begin with, considerable information should be published to parents on 14-19 generally; and on the first five diploma lines specifically

NEETs report

Introduction

The timing of this report is important as the NEETs PSA became a system-wide target in April 2006 and in many places in England is a stretch target under the LAA attracting additional resource. Here it seems more low key.

Also there are signs of both a tightening labour market nationally, real pressure in Cornwall with Imerys and others losing employment opportunities and a possible impact as a result of the influx of a motivated migrant workforce.

This PSA target is likely to remain key as it is the indicator of current and future labour market engagement and relates to skill capacity and international competitiveness.

The DfES is particularly keen that the CCIS becomes the major ICT system to carry activities 13-19 and the Board should note that Andy Tellam has been invited from this company to take part in the next phase of national development.

Purpose and background

This paper gives an overview of issues affecting NEET young people: what might have contributed to their status, what may hinder their return to activity and what actions are taking place or might still be required to address the issues raised.

Being NEET between the ages of 16 – 18 is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, poor mental and physical health and associated other problems in later life, especially for those young people who remain NEET for extended periods or who repeatedly re-enter the NEET group.

The potential long term economic cost of NEETs is high. A study undertaken in 2002 on behalf of the DfES* estimated the present value of additional public finance costs to be an average of £52,000 (2000/01 prices) for each 16 – 18 year old NEET young person over their lifetime. This is the average direct additional cost to government of providing services and benefits to every person who was NEET between 16 – 18 and can thus be seen as an estimate of the value to the government of addressing the NEET issue. Some of those who are NEET between 16 and 18 may incur additional costs less than this average, but harder to help NEETs with multiple problems could be expected to incur costs very much higher.

The same report estimated the additional 'resource cost' to the economy as a whole to be £45,000 per capita for each NEET young person. This figure estimates the cost to the wider economy through, for example, reduced productivity, underemployment, crime, poor health etc. If just 100 young people were removed from the NEET group, therefore, the potential savings over their lifetimes would be £5.2 million in public finance costs and £4.5 million in resource costs at 2000/01 prices. The report emphasised that the predicted savings were an extremely conservative estimate.

There had been concern that the 16 – 18 NEET rate had remained fairly static (at around 9 – 10% nationally) from the mid 1990s to 2002. In **2004 the PSA target to reduce NEETs by 2 percentage points by 2010** (from its 2004 level) was adopted

by government, indicating how important a continuing reduction in NEETs is seen to be in improving longer term outcomes and reducing the level of welfare dependency.

16 – 18 NEET rates in Cornwall and Devon have been kept significantly lower than the national average despite sometimes challenging economic conditions and the difficulties of access to a full range of opportunities in more rural areas.

* ‘Estimating the Cost of Being Not in Education, Employment or Training at age 16 – 18’ – DfES Research report number 346

The nature of the NEET group

- 16 – 18 year old NEET percentages are subject to cyclical variation with the rate generally peaking in September (when some young people do not take up their expected post 16 learning options), then falling rapidly due to intensive follow up and placing work, usually reaching its lowest level in November and December. 16 year olds still in ‘pre 16’ education are excluded from the calculations.
- Comparing one month with its equivalent one year earlier shows some evidence that NEET rates are increasing after a period of steady decline. A tightening labour market may be largely responsible but the extension of EMA to some work based learning routes may also now be having an effect (see section below on barriers). NEET figures for the whole of Cornwall and Devon for the months of January and July for the last three years are shown in the following table:

	January		July	
	% rate	Number	% rate	Number
2004	6.2%	2,915	6.0%	2,331
2005	6.0%	2,974	6.3%	2,543
2006	6.4%	3,249	6.6%	2,706

Source: Connexions CCIS system

- Snapshot figures, however, do not tell the full story. Churn rates within the NEET group are considerable so that many more young people move through the NEET group than the above figures might indicate.
- Data extracted from the ‘Client Caseload Information System’ (CCIS) operated by Connexions shows that of the two cohorts of young people who completed statutory education in 2004 and 2005, 7,660 separate individuals were recorded as NEET at some point during the year July 2005 to June 2006. This is equivalent to approximately 19% of the two year cohorts.
- Some young people enter the NEET group once only and subsequently move on to a settled and secure destination. Such young people may have come to the end of a course, dropped out early from post 16 education or lost/left a job or work based training place.
- Other young people, however, are harder to help and remain NEET for longer periods, or repeatedly re-enter the NEET group. These young people are at particular risk of social and economic exclusion in the future and the associated risks of poor health, offending behaviour, drug misuse, homelessness and longer term worklessness.

- Work carried out in preparation for the Activity Allowance Pilots in Cornwall and Devon (see section below on action being taken) showed that 1,662 young people aged 16 and 17 became NEET for at least 20 continuous weeks during the 12 months to November 2005 and that approximately a quarter of these fell into the not available/economically inactive category.
- 547 young people aged 16 – 16 were recorded in the not available sub category of NEET at the end of June 2006, amounting to 21.4% of total NEETs. Not available young people include those with long term limiting illnesses and disabilities, some teenage parents and other young carers. **Despite being not available, however, these young people are still counted as NEET for the purposes of the PSA target.**
- Local and national research has demonstrated that those most likely to become NEET, especially longer term or repeatedly include:
 - Care leavers/looked after children
 - Those achieving low levels of qualifications at school
 - Young people with poor school attendance records
 - Young offenders
 - Young carers and teenage parents
 - Young people who were excluded from school
 - Young people brought up in workless households
 - Young people with troubled home backgrounds
- Data from the activity survey of 2005 year 11 leavers showed that young people who had 'school action plus' support were at particularly high risk of becoming NEET with an unemployment rate of 13.2% compared with 4.4.% for the whole cohort and 8.6% for all those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Barriers to engagement

- Some of the main personal barriers to engagement have been outlined above. There is a clear link between school achievement and the likelihood of becoming NEET and very often young people will fall into several high risk categories. So, for example, looked after children are likely to achieve less well at school than their peers, and are more likely to become teenage mothers, NEET, homeless and so on.
- A lack of adequate basic skills have been highlighted as a particular concern by Youth Offending Teams with significant numbers of the 'harder end' young offenders lacking the skills needed to engage in mainstream provision.
- Young carers and teenage mothers may not be able to commit to regular attendance in mainstream work and learning options and those with chaotic and/or problematical lifestyles often need significant help before being able to realistically engage and remain in work mainstream options.
- In addition to the personal barriers of young people, however, there are a number of other factors that may be preventing a more rapid reduction of NEETs. The sort of very flexible provision that may be needed by those currently classed as 'not available', for example, is not always readily available, particularly for those living outside larger settlements.

- A labour market with rising levels of adult unemployment locally and nationally may make it less likely that employers will want to recruit young people with little or no work experience, particularly the less well qualified.
- There is some evidence from Connexions Centres that new vacancies notified are falling. In June 2006 a total of 204 new vacancies were notified compared with 250 in June 2005. More targeted canvassing of employers on behalf of individual young people is helping to counteract this downward trend.
- The effect of the recent significant increase in migrant workers is not yet fully clear. A report published by the South West Observatory in May 2006 recognised that further research was required but suggested that the recent increase in migrant workers is helping to relieve labour shortages and dampen wage inflation pressures.
- Certain sectors suffer particular problems. Construction, for example, continues to forecast skills shortages and yet the long sub-contracting chains within the industry do not always encourage smaller employers to recruit and train apprentices. Health and safety limitations can limit opportunities for 16 and 17 year olds in the personal care industry.
- There is some evidence that the extension of Education Maintenance Allowance to those entering non employed work based learning programmes such as E2E (a pre-entry work based learning programme for those not ready to enter apprenticeships etc) may be having a detrimental effect on recruitment. Means tested EMA has replaced the previous flat rate training allowance (parents may also continue to receive child benefit/child tax credit) and a recent report in the TES quoted Graham Hoyle, Chief Executive of the Association of Learning Providers as saying 'I'm picking up reports of 46, 50 and 70 per cent reductions in applications (to non employed work based learning) in a large number of providers across the country'. (See appendix 1)
- Transport and access can be issues in more rural areas resulting in a restricted range of post 16 choices being available. (see appendix 1)
- Whilst great advances have been made in terms of information exchange it is not always the case that timely referrals and exchange of information (with informed consent) takes place.
- Too much emphasis within funding regimes on the achievement of formally validated and nationally recognised qualifications may not be helpful in providing the very gradually sloping ramp required by the hardest to help young people.
- Whilst some young people clearly need to work towards improving their work based skills and qualifications there needs to be wider recognition that very small steps that may not be directly related to formal vocational learning are often the route to **eventual** engagement in more mainstream options. But the process can take a considerable time, often involves setbacks and is likely to result in very high unit costs.

Actions taken to address NEETs issues

Partnership working

- Connexions Cornwall and Devon has worked individually and with partners to develop and implement a wide range of activities and processes to keep NEETs to a minimum.
- The 'September guarantee' – a joint Connexions/LSC initiative – guarantees to offer a learning opportunity to all year 11 completers by the end of September.
- Close partnerships with the LSC, local authorities, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, youth services, specialist support providers, YOTs, Education Welfare Services, JobCentre Plus, the Police, NHS trusts and many voluntary and community sector organisations have led to effective partnership working and referral, although there is still some room for improvements.
- Connexions works closely with school and college providers to provide support, information and advice for all pupils and students, differentiated according to identified need.
- Connexions works closely with the LSC to develop new provision (Positive Pathways being an example – see below), where gaps are identified. E2E locally was developed with the close involvement of Connexions and partnership working between providers, Connexions and the LSC seeks to resolve any difficulties of access or suitability for young people.
- Where information exchange works well it has been shown to result in very effective practice. In Devon, for example, robust data exchange procedures were developed with regard to looked after children and care leavers resulting in smaller proportions of 19 year old NEETs (a shared target) than are seen in some other parts of the sub-region. Similar data exchange agreements are now being implemented in other areas which it is hoped will also help to increase participation amongst care leavers.

Recording and monitoring

- The Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) has been significantly developed through a partnership approach with the software provider so that it is increasingly capable of sophisticated recording and analysis. The database contains a record of virtually all 13 – 19 year olds in Cornwall and Devon (some young people 'lost to the system' or recently moved to the area may not be included).
- The CCIS system has helped to increase the monitoring of NEETs with reports produced weekly detailing numbers of joiners and leavers to and from various destinations.
- Personal Advisers record all interventions with young people and there are established processes for remaining in very regular contact with NEET young people. Those recorded as being engaged in EET are also followed up on a regular cycle to ensure that their recorded destination is still current.

- Whilst most 16 and 17 year olds do not qualify or claim benefits the processes in place still ensure that data held on CCIS is robust. CCIS crosses local authority boundaries and allows 'tracking' of young people both longitudinally and across the sub-region. Connexions Cornwall and Devon is seen as an exemplar in terms of effective use and development of CCIS systems.

Delivery and specialist programmes

- Connexions offers employers a vacancy and placing service with opportunities notified to NEET young people via text, phone, post, personal contact and the Connexions website.
- A vacancy and placing strategy group has recently been tasked with reviewing current vacancy and placing activities with a view to offering employers and young people a better service.
- Connexions Cornwall and Devon manages the Positive Pathways programme in Devon which offers tailor made support and learning packages to those with barriers that might prevent them from entering mainstream provision. A wide range of providers are used so that young people can access provision from a number of different organisations as part of their overall package. A pilot run in South Devon and Torbay during 2005 was highly successful although negotiating suitable provision across Devon has proved challenging. This is largely due to the majority of providers being structured to work with young people in small groups whereas those with multiple barriers often require one-to-one input.
- 'Get On' is a programme delivered by Connexions PAs and provides work focussed activities such as CV writing, presentation and interview skills, job search etc for NEET young people.
- The Activity Agreement Pilot has provided funding to test out the effect of financial incentives in helping long term NEET young people to engage. Whilst it is still early days there are some signs that engagement levels amongst the hardest to help are increasing.
- The Learning Agreement Pilot is aimed at increasing the skills and qualifications of those in jobs without training, thus helping to increase their long term employability and reducing the likelihood of them entering the NEET group.
- The PAYP (Positive Activities for Young People) programme has also enabled Connexions to provide a programme of motivational and learning activities for those young people at risk of offending, one of the groups most likely to be NEET over extended and repeated periods.

Remaining issues

- Whilst much has moved forward in terms of reducing NEETs some issues still remain.
- The NEETs PSA itself is somewhat of a blunt instrument since it does not differentiate between those short term NEETs who are simply 'between options' but with no major motivational, educational or other barriers, and those who are more likely to move into long term welfare dependency in adulthood.

- A certain level of 'churn' is generally accepted as inevitable in all labour (and learning) markets but those willing, able and likely to re-engage quickly still count if they happen to be NEET on the target counting dates. Further work is being developed, using the Connexions CCIS system and surveys of NEETs, to further refine the evidence relating to the proportion of young people who regularly re-enter the NEET group compared with those who are NEET for a single short period. A further report detailing this analysis should be available during the autumn.
- Quick wins might be more easily achievable by working with those young people with fewer barriers and ensuring that they are re-engaged very quickly. Whilst this approach has appeals in terms of target achievement it may not have the long term effects on long term adult welfare dependency sought by government, since it is more likely to divert resource away from those most likely to present problems in the long term.
- There may still be too much emphasis on the achievement of formal qualifications in the short term for the hardest to help young people. For those with the most serious barriers it may be more appropriate to develop effective 'small steps' progression measures in recognition that some young people need very gradually sloping ramps to engagement. Existing pre E2E and E2E options go some way but too many young people still do not achieve **sustained** engagement and progression. The hardest to help young people are very likely to suffer setbacks and small positive steps – such as attending appointments, need greater acknowledgment. Existing funding mechanisms may need to be revised to address this issue, with less emphasis on formally measured outcomes over relatively short periods.
- Access to provision is still not uniform across the sub-region and Personal Advisers report sometimes different entry criteria applied by providers for equivalent provision. Again, funding regimes may on occasions result in providers being cautious when considering applicants that may not achieve required outcomes.
- It may be that apprenticeship vacancies are not always advertised as widely as they might be by work based providers, so that some young people are excluded from applying if they are not already in touch with that particular provider.
- Whilst information exchange at both personal and strategic level has moved forward there is room for further improvement. Much progress has been made on looked after children and care leavers, for example, but Connexions only has details of only just over half of the DoH estimate of teenage mothers. GCSE/key stage 4 results are not made available at individual level to Connexions despite the fact that they would be extremely helpful to further analysis of the NEET group and to the one to one work carried out with young people by Personal Advisers. Data on school exclusions (a key predictor of subsequent NEET status) is often only available at Local Authority level.
- If it is accepted that prevention is better than cure then it may be that there needs to be better exchange of intelligence about those at risk of becoming NEET earlier in their school careers. More flexible 14 – 19 pathways, together with better targeting and earlier support from Connexions PAs, Youth Workers and others should help to prevent as many young people becoming long term or

frequently churning NEETs in the future, but early identification and referral will be crucial.

Recommendations

1. That, in line with guidance issued in December 2005 to Government Offices, Local Authorities and Connexions Partnerships, the NEETs PSA target is adopted and 'seen as an umbrella measure for children's services', with Local Authorities assuming accountability to government but with the Connexions Service as a key delivery agent.
2. That under future funding arrangements the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) is retained as a single Cornwall and Isles of Scilly/Devon/Plymouth/Torbay wide database with operational and development responsibility remaining with Connexions.
3. That work continues to ensure equality of access to a comprehensive range of flexible learning and support provision that is coherently planned, is complementary and avoids duplication, particularly for NEET young people and those leaving 'year 12' courses. Provision for young people currently classed as 'not available' such as teenage parents, may need particular consideration.
4. That delays in learning opportunity start dates and the payment of Education Maintenance Allowances are minimised, to ensure that those offered places either via the September guarantee or subsequently can engage and receive any financial support to which they are entitled quickly. For harder to help young people delays can quickly lead to disillusionment, increasing the risk of longer term disengagement.
5. That funding and contracting bodies are encouraged to give greater recognition to the importance of 'distance travelled' as a vital step towards eventual (but longer term) engagement in learning and work for the hardest to help young people. Improvements in self-esteem, confidence, time-keeping, attendance and social skills, for example can be significant 'small steps' towards eventual mainstream engagement. The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People may help to measure progress in these areas.
6. That where they are not already in place pre and post 16 early warning systems are introduced to ensure early identification and referral of potential NEET young people allowing intensive early preventative work to take place via Connexions PAs and other partners.
7. That unnecessary barriers to information sharing are removed (through, for example, agencies more pro-actively seeking the informed consent of young people). Consent for notification of individual GCSE results to Connexions, for example, might be sought before a young person completes year 11.
8. That the Connexions Board approves this paper for consideration and endorsement by Children's Trusts/Children and Young People's Partnerships.

Appendix 1 – Case Studies

The first 3 case studies, all from a single PA, are examples of funding and transport barriers. The remainder are taken from case studies completed by PAs working with young people eligible for the Activity Agreement pilot.

1. Interviewed young person on 19th July and discussed E2E (Entry to Employment). Young person also met with provider. Young person declined E2E – the reasons she gave were that her parents' income is too high for her to get the EMA and she felt the programme would be too similar to full time education. She has also cancelled her place at FE college as her family would have had to pay £250 bus fare and buy hairdressing equipment on top. This isn't a high income family – just a regular, hardworking one!
2. Year 11 leaver is also wavering about college due to high cost of transport and lack of EMA – 'N'(Youth worker) is doing her best to persuade her of the merits of attending...but we'll have to wait and see. Again – not a high income family – mum is a part-time teaching assistant and volunteer youth worker.
3. Another year 11 leaver is in the same boat – parents are farmers and she doesn't qualify for EMA – she lives a long way from both Budehaven 6th form and North Devon College – Bude is £80 per term for transport, and nearer £300 for NDC. She is also very uncertain about full-time FE for the same reason.
4. Karen is now 18, joined Activity Agreement at 17. Was SEN at school. Never had a job. Needed a work placement (preferably a paid job) within animal care so that she could commence her college placement (Bicton) in September 2006 to progress on to NVQ in small animal care. A notoriously difficult area to find a work placement let alone a paid job. However via an accompanied employer visit to Crealy Park with AA PA, Karen was offered a 3 day trial in the animal section which we hope will turn into an offer of a work placement albeit on a voluntary basis (at least to start with) which will enable her to progress onto her NVQ course. Without a placement Karen cannot take up her place on the NVQ course. We are hopeful that the work trial will be her opportunity to shine.
5. 17 year old female care leaver, unemployed since leaving school, and in receipt of Care leaver's allowance. She is living independently, and has involvement with YOT, NCH and Social Services. Attendance and engagement have been major issues throughout her activity agreement to date, as without the incentive of the allowance, she does not take the agreement seriously. Her agreement has included activities such as basic skills assessments, PA-delivered workshops and outdoor activities, but attendance has been extremely poor, as has attendance for weekly reviews.
6. Mike has been on the AA programme for 9 weeks. During this time he has participated in a range of activities and developmental exercises. He has made good progress in that his confidence has improved and he has proved himself reliable. His career aim is to work in the motor industry and his plan is to achieve a training placement in the first instance. Mike has so far completed a day with PSC in the motor vehicle workshop to test out the

provision. He has been offered a place with but is not able to commence until mid August because of start dates.

7. I am working with a young mum on the activity agreement. She is not entitled to the monetary element of the agreement but this has not been a bar to her involvement in the project. She has had a taster day at a land based training provider and enjoyed this and may continue to do either a short course with certificate with them or enrol on more full time base in the Autumn. She has completed Curriculum Vitae for prospective employers and is quite enthusiastic to add to this with training and/or experience during the activity agreement. Currently we are looking for housing for J and have completed housing benefit forms. Part of her agreement is to find suitable housing so that she can make plans for the her future. J and I have completed care to learn forms so that she has these ready, should she choose to go back into further education. She has also agreed to join the local Impact group in Bodmin and is coming in to speak to a Personal Adviser about this today.