

Connexions Tyne and Wear

Response to DfES/HM Treasury

Joint Policy Review on Children and Young People

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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	



Connexions Tyne and Wear

Prevention Strand

What should be the role of universal services in providing access to protective and preventative support, risk assessment and referral?

- Universal services can assess young people through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to target and access the most appropriate services.
- Universal services can provide non stigmatized access to specialised services.
- Universal services for ages 0 - 19 are more likely to pick up on events around about the time they happen than are more specialised services.
- Universal services have more opportunities for contact with young people.

How can targeted and specialist services intervene earlier to address problems before they become acute?

- Early intervention aimed at raising aspirations in areas where there are known issues. For example, Connexions Tyne and Wear in Sunderland work with Sunderland University and local employers to deliver a Primary Event aimed at Year 6 pupils encouraging them to see the value of Higher Education. A fuller account of the aims and objectives can be found in the Evaluation Report of the 2006 event attached.
- Connexions Tyne and Wear in Gateshead similarly organised a Primary Event. Four schools were selected due to Behaviour Improvement Plan (BIP) feeder status, location within a priority neighbourhood area and a high percentage of SEN/Free School Meals/below average SATs. Connexions delivered staff training to Tutors, purchased curriculum resources and delivered on-site careers events to raise aspirations. Activities were cross-referenced to Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes (eg, NHS careers were linked to importance of diet, hygiene, etc). 136 pupils were involved and 76 workshops delivered.
- It is important, however, that early intervention is not focused solely on early years. Traumatic events that impact on family prosperity, parental behaviour, etc, can arise at any time from ages 0 - 19, during teenage years as well as early years, for example. The key here is integrated working using the CAF and effective Information Sharing.

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?

- The problem can sometimes be 'How can target services be sustained?', as often they are time bound projects with limited funding.
- Efficient tracking to regularly establish the current situation of young people and their families, in which Connexions has considerable experience and expertise, must be an important element. A robust IT system similar to CCIS is needed to support this with staff suitably trained in its operation. ISA does not fit the bill.
- Effective Information Sharing is also crucial.

How can rights and responsibilities for individuals, families and communities be integrated into services to improve the lives of children and young people?

- Young people, their families and members of their communities need to be actively engaged in the design, planning, delivery, evaluation and management of services.
- Connexions Tyne and Wear has a well developed strategy for such engagement with a number of strands that enables young people to engage at a level appropriate to the individual.
- As well as helping shape the Connexions Service, this engagement strategy also provides the opportunity for young people to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to voice their views and challenge other service provision that falls short of their needs and expectations.
- This kind of engagement has also provided the Connexions Service with a closer understanding of wider needs for services and enabled us to play an influential role in planning provision.
- It is important to recognise that such engagement is much more than consultation. It is about sharing responsibilities with them and enabling them to develop the skills and knowledge for them to be effective.
- We should encourage a climate of working with and including parents, carers and young people in assessments and planning, ie, CAF and Personal Centred Planning (PCP).

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?

- The Connexions Service has achieved considerable success in improving the economic well-being of young people and therefore their families, by reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Part of this success is due to the identification of factors that are likely to result in NEET post-compulsory education and focusing on young people displaying or experiencing these factors for early preventative work.

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?

- Individuals and families need to trust service providers. Such trust is built by being honest, treating people with respect and maintaining confidentiality.
- The consistent quality of service is important.
- Consistency of staff, which we ensure by offering training, supervision and support, is also important .
- The Connexions Service has had considerable success in these respects with both young people and their families, to such an extent that the Connexions 'Brand' is recognised by them as indicating where they can receive a quality service they can trust.

- Ease of access is also important. The Connexions Service has:
 - pioneered joint working with neighbourhood-based organisations to bring services closer to individuals and families;
 - in conjunction with the above, established outreach work and home visiting as additional strategies to deliver services;
 - provided access to information and advice through a variety of media and in formats suitable to individual needs.

What evidence is there of major barriers to developing a preventative system? Are there examples where you have overcome these barriers?

- Lack of knowledge between professionals of each others' roles and responsibilities is a barrier to collaborative working in a preventative system.
- As indicated earlier, CAF and Information Sharing are developing strategies that address major barriers of poor communications between professionals.
- Lack of funding for preventative work is not always seen as a priority. Effective allocation of external funding for projects such as Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) has helped overcome this.

How can we build the capacity of parents, families and communities to shape the design and delivery of services for children and young people?

- When Connexions Tyne and Wear asked young people how they would like to be involved in improving services we found:
 - 54% wanted to be involved by completing questionnaires;
 - 48% wanted to give an opinion by website, text or e-mail;
 - 34% wanted to get involved via school, college or youth group;
 - 22% didn't want to be involved;
 - 19% wanted to attend meetings.
- When we asked their parents we found:
 - 52% didn't want to be involved;
 - 26% wanted to be involved through school or youth group;
 - 23% wanted to be involved via questionnaires;
 - 21% wanted to give an opinion by web, text or e-mail;
 - 15% wanted to be involved by attending meetings.
- The comments made earlier with respect to engagement are relevant here. Such engagement can only be effective if the individuals are supported and helped to develop appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding.

Connexions Tyne and Wear

Review of disabled children

Connexions is a confidential advice and support service for all 13 - 19 year olds (and up to age 25 for young people with special educational needs). It offers information and guidance on a wide range of issues including education, training, careers, employment, health and personal development. Connexions Personal Advisers (PAs) help young people and their parents/carers make informed choices about the future.

A key aspect of the organisation's role is to bring together the range of services and support young people need in order to access opportunities and achieve their full potential.

What progress has already been made in addressing the needs of disabled children and their families?

- In order to best meet the individual needs of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), Connexions Tyne and Wear has developed specialist PAs in each Local Authority area. In addition to working with young people with complex needs, these PAs support colleagues providing our universal service, delivering training, producing guidance and offering mentoring support as required. New PAs are also given training on LDD work as part of their induction.
- To best support young people with LDD, Connexions Tyne and Wear works in partnership with a range of key stakeholders, including schools, colleges, social workers, the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Health Professionals, Disability Employment Advisers, supported employment providers, Children's Trusts and parents/carers.
- To maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of disability issues, regular training is arranged from agencies with specialist knowledge. This information is then cascaded across the organisation by utilising the specialist PAs.
- Specialist PAs are also engaged, on a local basis, with key groups working to combat social exclusion, such as Learning Disability Partnership Boards, Disabled Children's Forums and disability/condition specific support and advocacy groups.
- In Tyne and Wear, Connexions also oversees the management of work experience for schools in the sub-region. The widening of opportunities for young people with LDD is a key priority within this role.
- At the core of our support for young people with LDD is the role of PAs in transition. All transition reviews for statemented young people are attended by a PA who will work with the young person throughout the transition process to ensure they receive all the support they need to achieve their goals. PAs will work with young people and their parents/carers to help them make choices about the future, provide information, advice and guidance and work with other agencies to make support available. Where statemented young people leave school to study elsewhere, a Section 140 assessment is completed and shared to ensure they continue to receive appropriate support.

- To ensure that the individual needs of each young person are fully assessed and met, PAs undertake APIR (Assessment Planning Implementation and Review) as part of their work. This process ensures that any issues facing a young person can be addressed as part of the PA's work with them, or that the appropriate partner agencies are involved. This assessment also links into the Section 140 assessment process.

In order to improve the effectiveness of the transition process and help young people and their families get the most out of it, Connexions Tyne and Wear has produced 'Moving Forward! Your guide to transition planning' funded by the local Learning and Skills Council. A guide to working with young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has also been produced for Personal Advisers.

- Where young people would be most effectively supported through attendance of a specialist college, the Connexions PA will be involved in co-ordinating evidence to support funding applications to the LSC or any other relevant agency.
- Transition events which provide information and advice to young people and their parents/carers are regularly co-ordinated by Connexions, allowing all agencies to introduce and explain the services they provide.
- Specialist PAs have also recently been involved in piloting 'Person Centred Transition Planning' in several schools. This process allows the individual to take a far more active role in the planning of their transition and has been well received.
- To ensure Connexions facilities are fully accessible, access audits have been undertaken by the Local Authority with their recommendations incorporated into the refurbishment of delivery centres.
- Connexions has also played an active role in advocating for the needs of young people with LDD, lobbying LSC and Local Authorities, managing the recent Strategic Area Review of provision for learners with LDD and providing the LSC with an annual 'Learner Voice' report on learning provision by gathering the views of young people and partner organisations.

In the recent 'Youth Matters' consultation organised by Connexions Tyne and Wear, 30% of young people responding said they had not had enough information, advice and support about disability at school. 15% of adults said they had not had enough information

What are the barriers currently restricting access to services and therefore effective intervention?

- Funding is often a barrier to gaining the most appropriate support for young people with LDD. This is due both to individual agency budget constraints and to disputes between agencies over funding responsibility.
- Transport can also be a major barrier to access as its costs, availability and suitability can all disproportionately impact upon access for young people with LDD.
- Forward planning, transition and provision can also be hampered by inconsistencies between key agencies in their use of terminology, criteria and thresholds. This can also mean there are difficulties in assessing need as data-sets do not match across agencies.

- Despite recent improvement, more still needs to be done to routinely gather, interpret and respond to feedback from young people and their families, across key agencies. Improvements must also be made to key processes in order to fully engage all young people and their parents/carers, ensuring that they understand the process and feel empowered to take an active role.
- The lack of employment opportunities, due to poor employer engagement and lack of knowledge, is leading to benefit reliance, low self-esteem and ultimately social exclusion.
- Transition between Children's Services and Adult Services continues to cause major difficulties. The removal of support due to changes in eligibility criteria often cause massive impact and disruption to families.
- Recent refocussing of funding priorities and the inflexibility of targets also disproportionately impact on learners with LDD, who are now finding their opportunities limited as a result. Failure to recognise independence and quality of life as positive outcomes inhibit the viability of provision for individuals unable to achieve the global LSC targets.
- Although sector colleges are working to ensure that they are able to provide opportunities for all young people as directed by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), this provision is not always as appropriate or effective for an individual as that available through specialist colleges. This creates tension in some cases as the costs are generally much higher at specialist colleges, for example due to their 24-hour curriculum and greater staffing ratios. Balancing cost against benefit can lead to some young people not receiving truly 'specialist' support which would best meet their needs, due to budgetary constraints.

Are services sufficiently co-ordinated at local level to allow families to access sufficient support to meet their needs?

- As Children's Trusts evolve this should ensure greater co-ordination and remove some of the issues around funding responsibility. However, should all agencies working with young people combine there will be a lack of support and independent advocacy where disputes arise.
- Children's Trusts have begun to set in place policies and procedures for children in the very early years, with a focus on safeguarding. As they evolve it will be imperative that the needs of older young people are not overlooked.
- The majority of support services are delivered through the Local Authorities with support from some voluntary organisations, as such this should maintain a level of co-ordination to services.

What are the most cost-effective interventions in delivering better outcomes?

- Connexions Tyne and Wear work closely and effectively with partners to avoid duplication and deliver holistic services.
- In order to support young people at key points in their development, PAs are able to be flexible and work with those under 13 or over 19/25 if it would prove beneficial. An example of this is the annual Primary Event at Sunderland University aimed at Year 6 students, which includes a special school. The event is organised by Connexions Tyne and Wear in collaboration with the University, local employers and the schools.
- By developing good working relationships with parents, PAs often fulfil a role similar to that of 'Lead Professional'. However, due to the independence of Connexions and their reliance on other agencies for funding there remains a power imbalance which is often to the detriment of the young person.

Connexions Tyne and Wear

Strategy for youth services

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 creation of Connexions Tyne and Wear with a ring fenced budget but with a direct provision model has allowed us to provide a professional service to young people. This has included good quality information, advice and guidance (IAG), excellent young people friendly premises in town centres and an excellent internet service.
- The Youth Service is under Local Government control. Each Local Authority has different arrangements for the organisation of youth services and the level of youth service funding.
- The levels of funding have created a postcode lottery. The National Youth Agency reports:
 - The financial year 2004 - 2005 shows total spending of £306.3m on youth services by Local Authorities from their Education Formula Spending (EFS) as nationally allocated by central government.
 - The average Local Authority spent £75 per head of its 13 - 19 youth population. (See Appendix 1)
 - Spending in addition to the Local Authority EFS amounted to £108.1m, accounting for 26% of total spending. In the average authority it amounted to 22.5% of its total spending.
 - Some £26.9m was given in grant aid and contract arrangements to the voluntary sector amounting to 6% of Local Authority spending in the average authority.
 - The average authority contacted 26% of its 13 - 19 youth population - an average of 16% were considered participants according to the definitions in 'Credit Where It's Due'.
 - Nationally the Local Authority youth service employed 3,950 mainly full-time professionally qualified staff accounting for 3,400 FTE; 14,150 mainly part-time youth support posts accounting for 3,300 FTE; around 860 in management posts (800 FTE) and an FTE of 1,550 in administration.
 - Locally there are differences in the expenditure allocated for youth work:

	13 - 19 spending per head 2004 - 2005
South Tyneside	£121.26
Gateshead	£111.67
Sunderland	£82.23
Newcastle	£77.03
North Tyneside	£71.76

- There is a wide variation in how services are delivered. In some areas most of the face to face work is done predominantly by the voluntary sector who are commissioned by Local Authorities. In other areas it is predominantly delivered directly by managers and workers employed directly by the Local Authority (some of whom may be seconded to voluntary sector organisations, ie, community centres or youth clubs/projects with independent management committees).

- Youth services are not seen as a high priority by all Local Authorities. Youth services are frequently 'squeezed' when there are bad financial settlements to local government. Many Local Authorities tend to focus on their statutory duties. The provision of a youth service is very much a discretionary issue.
- As OFSTED in 'Effective Youth Services' has noted:

"The framework stresses the responsibility of the Local Authority for setting a strong strategic direction for the service and providing the necessary financial, human and material resources. The report provides examples of services where the Local Authority provided exemplary support. In these cases, the morale of staff and young people was almost always good. In inadequate services, Local Authorities frequently failed to provide the necessary level of direction and support.

Young people achieved high standards when workers had a good blend of qualifications and experience; the work was planned well and balanced effectively between recreational and educational aims, when young people were involved in the planning and evaluation of it. Inspectors judged work with a specific focus to be generally the most successful - project work and youth information and counselling, in particular.

All services draw up curriculum policies and the report identifies those, which put these policies into practice effectively. In these services, the curriculum was designed in consultation with staff, partners and young people and was broad and varied, understood well by managers and workers and implemented consistently. It actively promoted the principles of equality, inclusion and diversity. Inadequate services frequently lacked the management capacity and expertise to ensure that what they intended through their curriculum policies was put into practice.

There was usually a link between the level of human and material resource allocated to a service and the quality of its work. Good services had sufficient managers and workers, a good balance between full and part-time workers and a good quality accommodation and resources. There were substantial variations between the quality and levels of staffing and resources in different services. Some services performed well, however, despite shortcomings in resources.

The report identifies features of good strategic and operational management that underpinned successful youth work, especially the quality of partnerships and multi-agency working and links established with the statutory and voluntary sectors. The best managed services defined and integrated their aims clearly within overall local and national priorities. Supervision and performance management arrangements were good, staff training plans were closely linked to service development plans and managers deployed staff flexibly to meet changing circumstances."

- Many youth services are tied to 'historic funding' of 'neighbourhood based projects'. This is due to political pressure from community groups and elected members. Youth service managers have successfully sought external funding to develop project based provision, which is more targeted. In our experience this type of provision has been of much better quality.
- The 'Transforming Youth Work' initiative has led to positive change.
- Youth Matters proposes that youth support be more integrated and that funding for Connexions should be channelled through Local Authorities, to enable commissioning of IAG for young people by the local Children's Trust by April 2008. This is leading some Local Authorities to implement major structural changes in the delivery of Connexions, resulting in a degree of disruption, particularly in areas where the Local Authority has made a decision to move the service 'in-house' with attendant changes in management structure and employment status for both frontline delivery staff and core infrastructure support staff. Commissioning of the Connexions Service post-2008 is likely to necessitate complex structural changes, which will unavoidably divert resources and attention away from frontline services.
- In some Local Authority areas the Children's Trust is looking to merge the Local Authority youth service with Connexions, so that there is one organisation leading the delivery of a comprehensive range of support to young people. These changes may lead to a 'postcode lottery' in the provision of IAG as well as youth support services.

Without further pressure from Government we believe the youth service will continue to be a 'Cinderella' service.

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?

- A requirement for all schools and statutory agencies (including the Probation Service and Jobcentre Plus) to co-operate especially in the area of information and data sharing - this is critical if accurate tracking and intervention is to be achieved.
- A clear statement explaining the required standard of service required for youth support services, youth services and providers of information, advice and guidance would be welcome.
- The Youth Green Paper is vague does not of itself ensure young people have an entitlement to good quality youth services or impartial information, advice and guidance.
- It would be helpful if the Government gave details of indicative funding and monitored the investment in youth support service to be provided. Clear Quality Standards of provision would also need to be given.
- The establishment of Children's Trusts and associated youth support services is being carried out at a time when Local Authorities have had a poor financial settlement. Very little additional funding has been made to support the management of change. Some Local Authorities may see the Connexions Service as a 'cash cow' to fund other services leading to a reduction in the quality of provision delivered to young people. This will have a detrimental effect to their transitions post-16 and 18.
- Central Government frequently offers funding opportunities of a very short term nature (often at short notice). This does not help in delivering targeted projects. It would be helpful if projects were on at least a five year pilot basis. Government should also understand that there is little flexibility in mainstream funding. If funding is withdrawn there is little opportunity to 'bend mainstream' funding unless additional funding is provided to Local Authorities.

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?

- Connexions Tyne and Wear has made progress in working with vulnerable groups. As a service we have developed partnerships with those frontline services in the voluntary and statutory sector delivering services to vulnerable young people. Our PAs have targeted those young people who have systematically been identified as 'being at risk' or vulnerable. Targeting is done with the support of partner agencies. Many young people in vulnerable groups lack self-esteem and a belief they can succeed and resilience to overcome problems. Connexions PAs and others can provide a mentor to assist young people to overcome these problems. Young people perceive there is a lack of provision.
- Many young people lack the resources to purchase provision.
- Tyne and Wear had a very good 'Teen Travel' system, which has recently been reduced. This limits the choice of education, employment, training and leisure opportunities available to young people.
- Connexions Tyne and Wear, as part of the Youth Matters' Consultation, carried out an Internet based survey using Viewpoint. The young people participating in the survey consider the three most important issues facing teenagers today are education or school, smoking, drugs or alcohol and plans for the future.
- Most adults participating in the survey thought that, from a young person's perspective, the most important issues were friends and peer pressure, plans for the future and money. From their own point of view, most adults thought the most important issues related to drugs or alcohol, plans for the future and health/mental health.
- See also Section 2.1 page 8 of the enclosed Viewpoint report, which is repeated here:

Young people were asked to describe what they considered to be the three most important issues facing teenagers today. The responses named by more than 15 young people are listed below:

1. 193 suggested education or school, including succeeding at school, exams and GCSEs, getting good grades, feeling pressure to do well at school, coursework and workload.
2. 184 suggested smoking, drugs or alcohol, of which 149 said drugs, 93 said alcohol and 45 said smoking.
3. 182 suggested plans for the future, including future career, getting a job, what to do after school, college or university, choices and options and earning money.
4. 149 suggested sex and relationship, with 86 mentioning sex, 35 mentioning relationships, 28 mentioning pregnancy or teenage pregnancy and two mentioning sexuality.
5. 108 suggested bullying or racism, with 90 mentioning bullying and 19 mentioning racism.
6. 105 suggested friend and peer pressure.
7. 75 suggested money.
8. 52 suggested health or mental health, including fitness, feeling pressure and stress, being happy and obesity.
9. 47 suggested personal safety, including crime, violence, gangs and the behaviour of others.
10. 38 suggested family, including feeling under pressure from parents.

11. 34 suggested boredom or not having enough things/activities to do, including the importance of leisure.
12. 26 suggested image or appearance, including fashion and weight.
13. 22 suggested socialising, including balancing social life with school work.
14. 16 suggested young people being blamed or stereotyped by adults.

- See also Section 2.2 page 10 of the enclosed Viewpoint report, which is repeated here:

Adults were asked to describe what they considered to be the three most important issues facing teenagers today. The responses are listed below:

1. 25 suggested drugs or alcohol.
2. 22 suggested plans for the future, including future career and prospects, job opportunities and further education.
3. 19 suggested health or mental health, including attitude, motivation, personal development and fitness.
4. 17 suggested education or school, including succeeding at school, exams and feeling pressure to do well at school.
5. 14 suggested personal safety, including crime, violence, gangs and the behaviour of others.
6. 9 suggested friends and peer pressure.
7. 9 suggested staying out of trouble and behaviour.
8. 8 suggested sex and relationships.
9. 5 suggested relationships and communication between parents and children.
10. 3 suggested bullying.
11. 4 suggested money.
12. 3 suggested boredom or not having enough things/activities to do.
13. 3 suggested housing.

- Adults were also asked to describe what they thought the young people viewed as the three most important issues were for teenagers today. The responses are listed below:

1. 22 suggested friends, peer pressure and being popular/accepted.
2. 22 suggested plans for the future, including future career and opportunities, the job market and job security, further education, choices and options and being successful.
3. 19 suggested money.
4. 19 suggested education or school, including succeeding at school, exams and GCSE's, feeling pressure to do well at school and coursework and workload.
5. 11 suggested socialising and having fun.
6. 10 suggested health or mental health, including personal development, confidence and growing up.
7. 10 suggested sex and relationships.
8. 8 suggested drugs or alcohol.
9. 4 suggested family and being supported.
10. 4 suggested image or appearance, including fashion and weight.
11. 4 suggested personal safety, including crime.
12. 4 suggested leisure and having enough things/activities to do.
13. 3 suggested bullying.

What is the national and international evidence on the effectiveness of different types of services and activities in terms of better life outcomes?

- The DfES has described the effectiveness of the Connexions Service in the following way:

- A3. Nationally, Connexions achieved its key target to reduce the proportion of 16 - 18 year olds NEET by 10 per cent between November 2002 and November 2004.
- A4. The service has high levels of customer and stakeholder satisfaction and a strong OFSTED inspection record. The National Audit Office (NAO) report published on 31 March 2004 concluded that Connexions had made good progress in improving the way that young people receive advice and guidance. It also reported that the Service was providing good quality advice to young people who were seen by PAs and was working well to build strong partnerships with other agencies.
- A5. The NAO review of Connexions also recognised that it had significantly improved the quality of information about the education, employment and training activity of 13 - 19 year olds and that CCIS provided the most complete national picture to date. This system has and will continue to have, a key role to play in the effective delivery of services, monitoring of the NEET group and provision of information that all children's services can utilise in the planning of provision for young people.
- A6. The multi-agency approach to both the composition of partnerships and in their operational delivery has been a key strength of the Connexions Service. Partnerships have forged strong links with local partners such as Local Authorities, schools and colleges, employers, local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs), the Youth Service, Youth Offending Teams, the Education Welfare service, the Police, Health and Social Services, Jobcentre Plus and a wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations. In this sense, the service pioneered the drive towards greater integration of young people's services which is one of the underpinning principles of the reforms set out in Youth Matters. The development of multi-agency one-stop shop facilities for young people has been an important plank in the success of this approach.
- A7. Another important feature of Connexions has been the commitment to involving young people in meaningful ways in the design, planning, delivery, evaluation and governance of the service. This has been recognised as a strength - with young people and stakeholder surveys reporting that young people were involved in a wide range of activities across the service, most commonly relating to influencing the scope, mechanics and evaluation of the service.
- A8. Connexions services and activities underpin key elements of DfES strategies. They are at the heart of the reform agenda set out in Youth Matters and through their work with schools, colleges, the LSC and employers - they also contribute to the aims outlined in the recently published white papers, 'Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work and 14 - 19 Education and Skills'.

This is now at risk as Children's Trusts will commission youth support service.

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?

- The 'demand' for services from young people may not be the same as the perceived or real 'needs' of young people.
- A comprehensive needs analysis needs to take place. This needs to include a description of outcomes required. Based upon the needs assessment, a specification of services needs to be developed.
- Providers who have the capacity to meet not only the statutory and contractual obligations but have good relationships with young people.
- Access to support services for small groups to complete the necessary MI, Child Protection, Health and Safety and contractual requirements.
- Open and transparent methods of putting work out to contract.
- Young people ideally would be involved in the decision making process.
- Our Viewpoint survey has shown that:
"Young people were asked to select from a list the factors that would encourage them to be involved in their local community. Of 512 responding, the most commonly selected response was 'Doing something I really enjoy' (83%). Other commonly selected responses included certificates and awards (45%), if it was necessary to get into university or college (38%) and earning points to spend on leisure (38%)".
- We believe we have good processes in this area and would be delighted to share them with others.

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?

- The Connexions Service has involved young people in a variety of ways:
 - Young people have been consulted about the type of provision they would like to see provided.
 - Adverts have been placed and, once tenders and/or grant applications have been received, young people have been consulted about the applications. Young people have also been involved in the decision making.
 - Young people have carried out 'mystery shopping' exercises and feedback has been given to management committees and managers. Young people have been involved in making final decisions about the outcome of such reports.
 - Connexions has used the Hear by Right standards and young people have accessed the quality of youth engagement using this standard. Feedback has been given to managers and management committees.
 - Young people have been involved in Shadow Local Management Boards in each Local Authority area. A countywide Young People's Advisory Group has also been active.
 - Research into the needs of target groups has taken place with vulnerable groups such as teenage parents and young people with LDD. We have also supported the development of support groups for Asian young people and lesbian, gay and bisexual young people.
 - Young people have been trained and engaged in the recruitment and selection of staff at every level.
 - We have been involved with Local Authorities developing young people's engagement strategies.

- Our Viewpoint survey of young people in Tyne and Wear showed:
 - Young people were asked to select from a list the factors that would encourage them to be involved in their local community. Of 512 responding, the most commonly selected response was 'Doing something I really enjoy' (83%). Other commonly selected responses included certificates and awards (45%), if it was necessary to get into university or college (38%) and earning points to spend on leisure (38%).
 - Adults were asked to select from a list the factors that would encourage their child to be involved in their local community. Of 62 responding, the most commonly selected response was 'Doing something they really enjoy' (87%). Other commonly selected responses included more information about the opportunities available (47%) and earning points to spend on leisure activities (37%).
 - Both young people and adults most commonly selected the options 'Doing something I really enjoy' and 'earning points to spend on leisure activities' as encouragement for community involvement. However, the responses differed in the other most commonly selected responses. Young people most commonly thought that certificates or awards or needing to do the activity to get into college or university would be an encouragement, compared to adults thinking that more information about available opportunities would be an encouragement.
- We have not attached any strings to engagement. We expect young people to behave reasonably. However as citizens we do not put strings to involvement in a fundamentally democratic process.

What principles and priorities should underpin the allocation of current and future resources? Who do we need to target?

- Funding should be allocated on the basis of the size of population of an area's youth population.
- Weighting factors should be included to take account of additional needs of target groups, for example:
 - educational underachievement;
 - NEET young people;
 - young people with LDD;
 - young people in Care/Care Leavers;
 - families in poverty.
- Clear priorities should outline how resources are allocated.
- Targeted services should be provided within the framework of a universal service to ensure:
 - no stigma in the take up of services;
 - that all young people and their parents know where they can receive help;
 - flexible responses to the needs of young people, including personalised support within a context of community development and regeneration;
 - Efficiency through economies of scale and targeted services.

Underpinning principles

- The best interests of young people.
- Inclusion through youth engagement.
- Flexibility to work the way they ask.
- Advocating on behalf and alongside young people.
- Partnership co-operation with other agencies.
- Inclusive and enabling young people.
- Standards as high as possible.
- Integrity - practice what you preach.

What measures and milestones need to be in place to ensure that performance can be assessed and delivery monitored at a local level?

- Tracking, although time-consuming, needs to be in place so we know who needs help.
- What gets measured gets done. Although it is desirable to measure outputs the measure of outputs on their own is not a reliable measure of effectiveness of services. The NEET figures for example, are in part dependent upon wider economic trends.
- Targets need to be negotiated and realistic.
- The problem with outcome targets is that resources tend to be targeted at young people at the cusp of the relevant target - the consequence of this is that those most in need can be further excluded. Targets need to cover this group.
- Qualitative information is needed as well as quantitative information to establish 'what works'.
- The Connexions Service has an upper age limit of 19 years (25 years for young person with LDD). Some of the more vulnerable young people may not make successful transition until they are older and need the support of Youth Support Service. We would suggest some flexibility in upper age limits depending on the needs of the young person concerned.

What are the barriers and enablers of effective Third Sector provision, including statutory commissioning capability?

- The Youth Service has provided grant aid to a large number of voluntary and community organisations over decades.
- Lack of additional resources makes it difficult to fund new innovative projects.
- There is heavy dependence of many neighbourhood organisations on grant aid for survival - this creates a lot of political pressure to continue funding. Many organisations are 'process' driven and hostile to target driven work. Many of these organisations are constantly looking for grant aid.
- The temporary nature of funding means that smaller organisations lack the infrastructure to compete effectively for contracts.
- Many have problems retaining the necessary staff because of the casual nature of the employment offered. Poor conditions of employment. Lack of capacity to keep up to date and comply with legislation including CRB and Health and Safety. Poor systems and/or lack information to gather MI. Larger community organisations with the necessary infrastructure are better positioned to compete and deliver services.
- Connexions Tyne and Wear has offered contracts to voluntary organisations. Key issues include:
 - being clear about the service commissioned;
 - having clear outcomes/MI;
 - robust systems for financial systems, CRB checks/safeguarding, Health and Safety and Risk Assessment, delivering well designed programmes, retention of key staff, monitoring and providing Management Information.
- Many voluntary and statutory youth service organisations are constantly seeking alternative funding. This leads to insecurity for staff.
- Connexions Tyne and Wear has developed clear and transparent processes. The involvement of young people and other stakeholders in the decision making process.
- Funding goes to those who write the better proposals. These are not necessarily those who are best placed to deliver services.

- The delivery of programmes such as Positive Activities for Young People are in our experience best delivered by specialists who can provide exciting programmes and organisations who have an on-going positive relationships with the young people you are targeting. It is difficult to write this in a contract specification.
- It requires years of building credibility in a locality gathering support from the community. Some large organisations can write excellent funding proposals, 'parachute' into areas and lack the capacity to deliver programmes with more difficult young people.

What can be done to improve the ability of universal provision to identify and provide a service to those with greatest needs?

- The provision of adequate funding would be a good start.
- The National Audit Office (2004) identified that Connexions was not sufficiently resourced to provide both high quality universal IAG around Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) and intensive input to young people who need it. The commissioning of IAG by Children's Trust will increase this problem.
- The issue of poor CEG is due to it not being a mandatory part of the curriculum, poor communication or poor delivery by schools in their obligation to deliver careers education.
- Some Connexions Partnerships, which deliver using a 'commissioning model', were fragmental in both the delivery of IAG and intensive support. We believe that the single delivery model planned and delivered on a sub-regional basis has been successful.
- The problem with 'Youth Matters - the next steps' is that it is full of rhetoric and expectations, yet offers little in the way of guidance or resources.
- There is a case for the regions and/or regional IAG organisations serving 'travel to work'/city regions which do not reflect Local Authority areas.
- The Connexions Service, although only partially funded, has provided examples of excellent work. It has achieved its targets and provided value for money.
- We have built successful partnerships with young people, parents, sectors and other providers.
- We have recruited well qualified and well motivated staff who know what is required of them.
- Positive Activities for Young People has been successful.
- We also appreciate the joint work we have done with Millennium Volunteers.
- In Tyne and Wear we have many examples of good work with Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Groups and Youth Offending Teams.
- Many young people in vulnerable groups have limited expectations and horizons. Good Youth Workers/PAs can develop trust and relationships with young people. Using this relationship they can encourage young people participate in activities they would previously not dream of. If young people have positive experiences and positive relationships they find it easier to progress.
- Young people as far as possible should be involved in the design and provision of activities. Involvement in such a process increases ownership, develops the young people's skills and learning and improves the relevance and take up of provision.
- Our experience of 'mystery shopping' has indicated that young people are happy with the service we provide.

- Our Viewpoint survey revealed:
 - Of 480 the young people responding who said they had accessed the Connexions Service, 92% said they agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend Connexions to their friends.
 - Most young people (over 50%) said they had received information about Connexions Tyne and Wear, had used the Connexions Tyne and Wear website and had been in contact with a Connexions PA.
 - Young people were asked if their PA understands the help they need. Of the young people responding who said they had met a PA, 81% said they agreed or strongly agreed that their PA understands the help they need.
 - Of the young people responding who said they had spoken to someone from Connexions, 80% said they agreed or strongly agreed that people from Connexions do what they say they will do.
 - Of the young people responding who said they had spoken to someone from Connexions, 86% said they agreed or strongly agreed that someone from Connexions is available when they want to speak to them.
 - Of the young people responding who said they had received information from Connexions, 95% said they agreed or strongly agreed that they could trust the information they get from Connexions.
 - Of the young people responding who said they had received information from Connexions, 76% said they agreed or strongly agreed that Connexions had helped them make decisions about the future.

What attracts people to the youth work workforce? What is less attractive about membership of this workforce?

- Many people are attracted into youth work because they want to 'put something back into the community'. Some have been involved as volunteers and have progressed as part-time sessional workers on to university courses.
- The retention of part-time sessional workers/volunteers is problematic. This type of worker provides the core of the workforce on evenings.
- Recent changes over the last few years has been the move to NVQ style qualification rather than locally derived qualifications. These qualifications were based on NYA guidelines and were moderated regionally on a peer basis. The old qualification generated much greater volumes of sessional youth workers.
- The Connexions Service has a clear, well-developed progression route for staff trained 'in-house' using NVQs alongside graduate entry routes. The destruction of sub-regional Connexions Services will put this infrastructure at risk.