

Connexions

The best start in life for every young person



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Foreword

“The youth support service will be our frontline policy for young people.”

Tony Blair, Prime Minister
Centrepont, London
16 December 1999

In this new millennium, teenagers have a lot to look forward to; they and their parents face a challenging, but hopeful future. Technological change and globalisation demand that young people of today must develop knowledge, skills and flexibility for their world of the future. Society, and the role and structure of the family, is changing. Young people face increasing challenges in their personal and family life as society on the one hand encourages an earlier transition into adulthood, but on the other, increasingly postpones departure from home and the formation of lifelong relationships.

There are many good examples of skilled and dedicated people in a range of public services and voluntary and community organisations who devote their lives to helping families and to helping young people get a good start in life. But teenagers, and those who try to work with them, are still all too often let down by a system which tends to treat the problems and challenges that young people face in isolation, and to deliver a piecemeal response down separate channels and through professionals only able to deal with issues one by one.

As a Government, we have already taken steps to improve the way public services support young people, especially those who are disadvantaged. We are determined to make schools work better to equip their pupils for personal life, citizenship and the world of work. We have overhauled the youth justice system to help prevent young people sliding into a life of crime. Our Quality Protects programme is making social services more responsive to the needs of vulnerable children, young adults, and their families and putting in place new arrangements for those in, and leaving, care.

But we know that we need to do more - not in isolated Government Departments, but jointly between our Departments and in partnership with external groups such as police, social services, health services, schools, local communities, employers and young people themselves.

That is why last summer, in our *Learning to Succeed* White Paper, we committed ourselves to setting up a single, coherent strategy aimed at all young people - the **Connexions strategy** - with the **Connexions Service**, a support service for all young people, as its centrepiece. The strategy will also:

- give all young people access to the highest standard of education and training and give them the best possible support in the transition from adolescence to adulthood;

- offer financial support to encourage young people to stay in learning and a new youth smart card to reward learning by offering discounts on travel, local leisure amenities and on things young people want to buy;
- develop opportunities for learning outside school; and
- make proposals for consultation on a new and inclusive recognition of young people's achievement in school, college and the community.

We have a responsibility as a Government to help develop rounded individuals who can call on support when they need it, and who can develop their horizons both socially, and in terms of educational and economic expectation and opportunity. The first port of call for support is of course the family, but sometimes parents themselves don't know who to turn to for advice and support for their children. Our task is to reinforce and underpin the informal network of support systems which exist in families, neighbourhoods and the wider community including support in schools and colleges, and through teenagers' own peer groups.

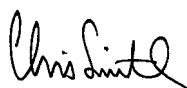
The **Connexions Service** will be a modern, public service which works in a completely new way. Our commitment to tackle this ambitious enterprise jointly, both across Government and across existing agencies, is key. Statutory agencies, the voluntary sector and specialist private sector businesses will work together to provide every young person with access to a Personal Adviser. The adviser will provide a wide range of support to meet the young person's needs and help them reach their full potential. This might include advice on possible learning and employment choices, helping with problems with family or friends, or working with a young person and specialist services to overcome severe problems such as drug abuse.

The Service will be for all young people and their families - family members will be able to call on the Service as well as young people themselves. It will be available for all young people including the most highly able, and for those who are broadly on track but who may need help to deal with particular problems. However, it will give particular priority to those who are most at risk of disadvantage.

We are determined to see a good start in life for all our young people. This document represents our joint commitment to making that happen.



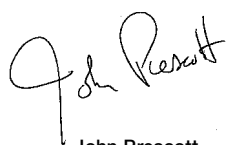
Alistair Darling
Secretary of State for Social Security



Chris Smith
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport



Jack Straw
Secretary of State for the Home Department



John Prescott
Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions



David Blunkett
Secretary of State for Education and Employment



Mo Mowlam
Minister for the Cabinet Office
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster



Alan Milburn
Secretary of State for Health

Purpose and structure of document

The purpose of this document is to set out the **Connexions strategy** aimed at supporting young people in England as they move from adolescence to adulthood.

The strategy sets out to create a step-change in participation and attainment through the teenage years. We will ensure that more and more young people access the services they need, follow appropriate and high-quality learning opportunities and make a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood and working life.

We will do this by working together, across Government and across the full range of local services available to young people, and by establishing the new, universal **Connexions Service**.

The Service is aimed at reinforcing the existing informal network of support available through families, neighbourhoods and communities, as well as underpinning and developing the more structured support currently provided by schools, careers services, youth workers, social services, the police, health services and others.

The **Connexions strategy**, therefore, brings together a number of existing and new initiatives aimed at young people into a coherent whole. This document sets out in detail the various initiatives within the strategy, including: the new **Connexions Service**; ideas for a new wide-ranging way of recognising teenagers' achievements; financial support; and wider education and training policies.

A key part of this strategy is the new **Connexions Service** which will help, support and guide young people through their teenage years. This document sets out our vision of how the new youth support arrangements will be developed, following our consultation over autumn 1999. It explains how we intend to work with our partners to establish the new service including:

- ▶ the timescale and process for setting up the Service with pathfinders and pilots to run from April 2000, and a phased introduction of the full service from April 2001 paragraphs - 9.5-9.6;
- ▶ the new Personal Adviser network which will be at the heart of the Service - set out in the box in Chapter 6;

- ▶ the training and development framework needed to support the creation of this new profession - paragraphs 6.23-6.27;
- ▶ proposals on the structures needed to deliver the service - paragraphs 7.4-7.20;
- ▶ the key role young people themselves will play in the design and delivery of the Service - paragraphs 8.1-8.4.

Over the course of the next 15 months we will be issuing further details of our plans for implementation. This will include a detailed Prospectus and Specification for the new Service this spring, against which strategic partnerships will be asked to put forward their plans.

The document is structured in two parts. The **first part** (Chapters 1-4) explains the context for the **Connexions strategy**, our policies for young people and our overall framework for ensuring high levels of participation and attainment in learning. The **second part** (Chapters 5-8) focuses on the new **Connexions Service**.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

“Our goal is that young people should leave [secondary school] equipped for the challenges of the 21st Century. Young people must be prepared for life in the fullest sense - learn how to contribute to their family, their community and the wider society; have the skills, interests and confidence to use their leisure time positively and above all, learn to respect themselves and those around them and so become caring and active citizens - adults to be proud of.”

**David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment.
North of England Speech on Raising Aspirations in the 21st Century,
6 January 2000**

- 1.1** Our challenge is simple, but vital. If we are to succeed as a nation, and if our young people are to succeed as individuals in the knowledge economy of the 21st Century, we must provide all teenagers with the opportunity and support they need as they make the transition to adulthood. The **Connexions strategy** for the first time brings together, across Government, existing and future policies for our youth into a single, coherent strategy.
- 1.2** The strategy has been formulated across Government and with external partners. The Department for Education and Employment has worked with the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Home Office and the Youth Justice Board, the Department of Health, the Social Exclusion Unit in the Cabinet Office, the Treasury, the Department of Social Security and the Department for Media, Culture and Sport. And most importantly of all, we have consulted young people themselves on what their needs are, and how we can best meet them. We are building on the best of existing policies and practice, including drawing on the best examples of what works from the careers service, public and voluntary youth services, voluntary and community groups outreach, health and education, social work and those engaged in sporting, cultural and other leisure activities, to create modern and coherent youth support arrangements.

- 1.3** The starting point for support for young people is high quality education. Excellence in learning for all is the single best investment we can make. The White Paper *Learning to Succeed* and the Social Exclusion Unit's Report, *Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 Year Olds Not in Education, Training or Employment*, set out, for the first time, our clear goal that all young people should stay in learning until 18 and beyond. We must make a step-change in learning achievement for all teenagers, stretching the most gifted, raising aspirations and providing opportunities for all young people to achieve their potential, and providing effective, targeted help and support for those who need it. To be effective, this investment must be integrated with measures that address other aspects of young people's lives.
- 1.4** This Government has established a wide range of programmes designed to improve the health and welfare of young people and to support them in making the transition to adult life. We now need to adopt a radical new approach to build on these developments, provide support for young people wherever and whenever it is needed, and overcome the fragmentation of much of current services in a way that will create a step change in the difference they make to young people's lives.
- 1.5** The **Connexions strategy**, first set out in *Learning to Succeed* and *Bridging the Gap*, is about providing that stable foundation and about making the right connections. It will do this in a number of ways. By connecting policies and services from across Government, national and local, so that they make sense to, and deliver results for, all young people. By connecting with young people's lives in the broadest sense, so that young people, in turn, feel connected with society and the community. And connecting young people with their own future, through the right learning opportunities for them to flourish in learning.

Young people do not organise their lives to fit neatly into the boundaries of public service departments. There is a need, in particular, for services to focus on the key transition process in young people's lives - school to further (or higher) education; education to working life; living in the family home to living independently of it.
(National Youth Agency June 1999)

Chapter 2 - Improving educational standards and wider government policy for young people

This chapter sets out how the drive to improve standards of education in schools underpins and links to wider Government action to address the needs of young people.

Learning to Succeed: Raising standards for all young people

- 2.1** A good education for all is the best investment that any society can make for its future well-being and prosperity. In schools, our approach is threefold.
- 2.2** First is an emphasis on **laying firm foundations**. We have already set in place a number of policies aimed at meeting this challenge by introducing:
- ▶ the Sure Start programme for children up to four years of age which will ensure they are well prepared for formal education;
 - ▶ 21 designated early excellence centres;
 - ▶ nursery education for all four year olds, with a commitment to doubling the number of places for three year olds in this Parliament;
 - ▶ smaller class sizes for Years 1 and 2, which will be implemented in full by September 2001; and
 - ▶ literacy and numeracy strategies which have brought change to every primary school.

2.3 The second aspect is **promoting school improvement**. Here we are:

- ▶ devolving more funding to schools to run their own affairs along with the advice and support they need to develop;
- ▶ encouraging greater diversity in the system - more specialist schools and greater opportunity to pursue work-based learning for teenagers;
- ▶ reforming the teaching profession to reward success and offer new opportunities for career progression;
- ▶ constantly challenging schools to improve performance through benchmarking, inspection reports and setting clear targets; and
- ▶ fulfilling our promise of intervention in inverse proportion to success so that if a school is failing its pupils and parents, the local authority and ultimately the Government can take tough action to intervene.

2.4 The third aspect is our **drive for inclusion**. We know that poor educational attainment and poverty often go hand-in-hand. We are supporting this agenda with focused action to tackle poverty and underachievement:

- ▶ the £350m Excellence in Cities programme, bringing together schools, local authorities and other agencies in innovative partnerships to raise standards, extend learning opportunities and tackle barriers to learning;
- ▶ over 70 Education Action Zones aimed at tackling long standing problems of underachievement and low aspirations in deprived areas;
- ▶ targets and £500m funding aimed at reducing the number of truancies and exclusions;
- ▶ action for children with special educational needs following publication of our Green Paper on this subject;
- ▶ tackling poor achievement rates for ethnic minority pupils through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant;
- ▶ a revised National Curriculum reflecting the importance of not only knowledge and skills but also citizenship;
- ▶ improvements in initial teacher training will better prepare trainee teachers to raise the standard of achievement of pupils from ethnic minority groups and from backgrounds of social and economic disadvantage;
- ▶ funding a number of Millennium Volunteer projects where young people are helping to raise literacy and numeracy standards and are involved in peer mediation to help reduce bullying and promote inclusion.

2.5 The summer after compulsory education is a key transition point, when many young people are vulnerable and at risk of dropping out of learning, and so excluding themselves from future opportunities. We are developing proposals for post-examination **summer activities** for all 16 year olds, before they take up post-16 education, traineeships or work with training. All young people can benefit from the experience of positive activity, which could be a 'summer camp', aimed at developing team work, interpersonal skills and leadership, as well as building the confidence and self-esteem of the individual. We expect Millennium Volunteers to be included in the summer activities, developing their personal skills as well as benefiting other young people in the community.

Making the connections: Wider Government policies affecting young people

2.6 Support for young people is not just about education and its place in helping young people contribute to the economy. It is also about providing stability, support and positive encouragement for young people now and in the future. Government policies contribute to greater stability in the lives of young people. We have improved the quality of family support (following the Supporting Families consultation document published in November 1998). We are also supporting parents and children through, for example, the national childcare strategy (led by the DfEE) and through improved healthcare.

2.7 We have introduced a number of initiatives across Government and the voluntary sectors to meet the particular needs of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. In particular, we have expanded the National Mentoring Network to include a Task Force which has the specific remit to promote mentoring for minority ethnic pupils and encouraging Black and Asian communities, including businesses, to become more involved in mentoring activity. We have also expanded the number of volunteering opportunities for young people from ethnic minorities through the Millennium Volunteers initiative and we are strengthening the capacity of local communities through the Neighbourhood Support Fund.

2.8 Long-term **unemployment** and non-participation in learning have well-documented links with low income, poverty and poor health. Tackling poverty and unemployment, and breaking the cycle of deprivation and dependency, is a key goal. We have put in place a range of policies to address this, including *Opportunity for All* (our strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion), Welfare Reforms, the Working Families Tax Credit and the New Deals. These policies will improve the family backgrounds of successive generations of young people by providing opportunities for people to enter learning and work and support for those who cannot.

2.9 On **health** issues, relevant policies include Health Improvement programmes, *Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain*, the emerging Alcohol Misuse Strategy and the development strategy for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. The Quality Protects programme to transform **children's social services** is making additional funds available to improve the life chances of children in need, including young people in and leaving care. In addition, the support package for teenage parents flowing from the Social Exclusion Unit's Teenage Pregnancy Report, and more general support for families with young children through Sure Start and the National Childcare Strategy are all helping to address the needs of particular groups of young people and their families.

2.10 More effort is being put into crime prevention by a range of services which work with children and young people. The Police are already making significant progress in some areas, working with local community organisations and young people for crime prevention, not merely law enforcement. The Government has also refocused the youth justice system. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are the new vehicle through which youth justice services will be delivered, and will be fully in place by 1 April 2000. YOTs are made up of the police, probation, social services, education, health and other relevant bodies. YOTs have two primary functions:

- To tackle offending by children and young people.
- To target services at young people at risk of offending to prevent them doing so.

2.11 The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, which oversees the work of YOTs, is funding an extensive range of programmes aimed at addressing the risk factors associated with youth crime, focusing on drug and substance misuse, parenting skills, mentoring and participation in education and training.

2.12 Following the Social Exclusion Unit's Report on **homelessness**, The Rough Sleepers Unit was established with the target of reducing the number of people sleeping rough by two thirds by the year 2002. The Unit has now launched its strategy, which includes initiatives to prevent rough sleeping among vulnerable young people. In addition, the Youth Homelessness Action Partnership has brought together a range of interested bodies to address the wider problem of youth homelessness.

Chapter 3 - The case for change

This chapter sets out the social and economic case for creating a step-change in educational achievement of young people in compulsory education and post-16, so that all can strive to reach the level of the best.

Where are we now and why do we need a step-change?

- 3.1** There is a clear economic argument for investing in young people's future, but our aim is much wider than that. We have a responsibility as a Government to help develop rounded individuals who can call on support when they need it, and who can develop their horizons both socially and in terms of educational and economic expectation, opportunity and achievement.
- 3.2** The first port of call for support is the family. We understand the importance of the role of the family and many of our policies are designed to support families who will want to be the channel for advice and guidance themselves, but who may not know immediately all the answers. Our task therefore, is to reinforce and underpin the informal network of support systems which exist in the family, neighbourhoods and communities, through schools and peer groups. It is also to develop and build on what is good about existing provision within a brand new structure.

There is a clear social case for action. By breaking the cycle of non-participation and underachievement, we are providing a ladder out of social exclusion.

- 3.3** There are clear links between participation and success at school and participation post-16: two-thirds of those who continuously participated say they never truanted from school in Year 11, compared with one-third only of those who have spent six months or more outside learning or work. People who have been excluded from school are at least twice as likely to be non-participants post-16 as their peers. And there is a strong link between disadvantaged family circumstances and difficult school backgrounds (a history of bullying, truancy and exclusion, and poor attainment pre-16) on the one hand and lower participation and performance post-16 and other problems such as crime, drug misuse and ill-health on the other. The problems can be all the greater for young people suffering the effects of multiple disadvantage.
- 3.4** As *Bridging the Gap* sets out in more detail, the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, training or work is around nine per cent, a proportion which has remained virtually unchanged since 1994. A further 20 to 25 per cent of young people will experience significant obstacles and setbacks.

- 3.5** Those who are not in education, employment or training between 16-18 are more likely than their peers at age 21 to be:
- unemployed;
 - unqualified;
 - on a low income;
 - a parent; and
 - at risk of depression and poor physical health.
- 3.6** The findings show that men are also more likely to acknowledge a criminal record as a barrier to employment, whereas women are more likely to be coping with the additional burdens of home-care responsibility, presenting a barrier to employment.

Developing citizenship and building stronger, vibrant communities.

- 3.7** There is a wider impact on the individual and on our communities. Significant periods outside learning and work between the ages of 16-18 are associated with other problems later in life: for example, very high rates of unemployment and long-term unemployment; low incomes and unskilled jobs; and an increased likelihood of a criminal record, which forms a further barrier to employment. And there is a clear association with teenage parenthood, poor health, depression and civic disengagement.
- 3.8** Perhaps most worrying of all, the childhood disadvantages experienced by many young people who are not engaged in learning for a significant period between the ages of 16-18 are replicated in the next generation. This cycle of disadvantage needs to be broken, but we can only do so if we put in place a coherent strategy that supports the young person as a whole, rather than focusing on one aspect of their need at any one time. The **Connexions strategy** is designed so that help for each individual will be a coherent package, delivered at the right time for that person.
- 3.9** To build vibrant communities, which benefit fully from the wealth of talent and creativity that exists, our strategy must include building the capacity in communities to engage young people in a wide range of ways, including sport, the arts, and through the opportunities such as those available through Millennium Volunteers. And we must continue the work begun in schools on education for citizenship and teaching of democracy to enable young people to play a full and active role in their local communities.

Finally, by raising participation and attainment we raise individual earnings and boost economic performance.

- 3.10** Young people who participate in learning are more likely to be better qualified, and therefore have a better opportunity to participate fully in the world of work. We need a step-change in the numbers of young people who gain qualifications not only for the prospects of the individual, but also to ensure that the UK sustains and improves its competitiveness in the global market.

- 3.11** The UK lags behind Germany and France in the level of qualifications of its new entrants to the labour market. Fewer young people gain vocational skills in the UK than in our competitors' economies. As the economy shifts towards higher-skilled jobs, we must move quickly to deal with these skill shortfalls.
- 3.12** If young people are to become qualified, we must first make sure that they do not fall away from compulsory education. Since the mid-1980s there has been growth in participation in education and training following compulsory schooling. But we fall behind major competitors such as France, Germany and Japan in terms of participation in education and training by 16-18 year olds. In the UK in 1996, 82 per cent of young people aged 16 at the start of the academic year participated in full or part time education. This fell to 74 per cent at age 17, whereas France, Germany, Japan and Australia all had participation rates in excess of 90 per cent.
- 3.13** The National Learning Targets underpin our commitment to widen and increase participation in learning and raise the attainment levels of young people.

National Learning Target for 2002	Current
50% of 16 year olds achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C	48%
95% of 16 year olds achieving 1 or more GCSE at grades A*-G	94%
85% of 19 year olds with at least 5 good GCSEs or vocational equivalent	75%
60% of 21 year olds with at least 2 A levels or vocational equivalent	53%

Chapter 4 - The Connexions strategy

This chapter sets out the **Connexions strategy**, its goal and four key themes. We also set out how future developments build on the good work that is already going on.

The Goal

- 4.1** Our aim is to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to learn the skills they need to make a success of their adult lives. Young people should be stretched so that they can achieve higher standards, and so that half of them are later able to go on to university. Equally, young people should be supported so that those from disadvantaged backgrounds or at risk of disaffection become motivated to participate in society through learning.
- 4.2** Building on the Government's policies of ensuring a sound educational foundation for all from the earliest years, and identifying those who need extra help to reach their potential, the **Connexions strategy** establishes a learning framework for the whole of the teenage years. It provides:
- excellence for all: a coherent, appropriate, high-quality pathway to adult and working life for every young person, offering the widest possible individual choice;
 - the means to equip young people with the higher skill levels they will need to operate effectively in the rapidly changing jobs market of the future;
 - targeted systems of support, for those who need it, when they need it, linking all aspects of young people's lives.

The Connexions strategy brings together four key themes.**1 Flexible curriculum that engages different young people and leads to the relevant, sought-after qualifications including:**

- ▶ flexibility for young people within school to opt out of elements of Key Stage 4 to spend more time on work-related learning;
- ▶ proposals for a '**Graduation Certificate**' for all by the age of 19 which not only recognises the value of qualifications, but also of development of key interpersonal skills and voluntary work;
- ▶ review of the National Curriculum, including new elements of education for citizenship;
- ▶ 'Qualifying for Success', broadening the range of options;
- ▶ key skills qualification.

2 Ensuring high-quality provision in school sixth forms, Further Education colleges and work-based learning:

- ▶ improving the funding and coordination of learning provision by establishing, subject to legislation, the Learning Skills Council and through Learning Partnerships;
- ▶ improving the work-based route through development of Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships, and by developing the apprenticeship system;
- ▶ recognising Beacon Colleges of Excellence in Further Education;
- ▶ inspecting of all 16-19 provision to ensure high-quality education and training.

3 Targeting financial support for those in learning:

- ▶ developing a Youth Card to provide discounts including leisure and transport rewarding participation in learning and reducing barriers to learning;
- ▶ extending Further Education Access Funds to 16-19 year olds who stay in school;
- ▶ introducing an Access Fund for 16-19 year olds who stay in school;
- ▶ raising the Minimum Training Allowance for work-based learning;
- ▶ implementing Right to Time for Study regulations enabling young people in work to take time off for training;
- ▶ piloting Education Maintenance Allowances, currently in 15 areas and funding up to £40 per week for young people who stay in education with additional retention and achievement bonuses payable on top.

- ▶ Improving the coherence of existing financial support measures for 16-19 year olds, and identifying the scope for further rationalisation in the longer term.

4 Outreach, information, advice, support and guidance:

- ▶ anti-exclusion and anti-truancy measures;
- ▶ Millennium Volunteers;
- ▶ Neighbourhood Support Fund;
- ▶ the **Connexions Service**.

More detail about the Connexions strategy

4.3 Within each of the four strands of action set out in the box above, a range of activities are already in place and there are plans for further developments. The first three strands are outlined in this chapter, and the fourth, which is about how we are building towards a new support service for young people, is the subject of the next chapter.

1 Developing an appropriate, flexible curriculum that engages all young people and leads to relevant, sought-after qualifications

4.4 An appropriate, flexible curriculum that engages different young people and leads to relevant, sought-after qualifications is vital to stimulating demand from young people and to meeting the needs of young people and employers. Our approach to creating a modern, relevant and attractive curriculum covers the full range of ability and all ages.

Current policies

4.5 In schools:

- ▶ since 1998 14-16 year olds have been able to opt out of elements of Key Stage 4 to spend more time on work-related learning, where they are likely to benefit;
- ▶ there are now 190 work-related learning projects involving pupils from over 600 schools, which offer creative and innovative work related learning experiences to 14-16 year olds;
- ▶ the GNVQ Part 1 is now nationally available for 14-16 year olds, and from September 2000 more vocational qualifications will be available at Key Stage 4;
- ▶ following the National Curriculum Review the opportunities for opt out at Key Stage 4 are being extended to enable pupils to emphasise particular areas of study, or concentrate on a narrower range of subjects. From September 2000 the revised National Curriculum will come into force, including a framework for citizenship education.

For the future

- 4.6 The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is taking forward development work on the '**Graduation Certificate**' proposal set out in *Bridging the Gap*: a more visible, universal and attractive goal for young people, who would receive the certificate if they reach the necessary standard by the age of 19 - five good GCSEs or the vocational equivalent and achievement in other key skills and voluntary activity. Ministers are currently considering QCA proposals for consultation this spring, with final decisions on the precise objectives and design of the award to be made by the end of the year. Young people, particularly those not in education, employment or training, will be involved in the consultative process.
- 4.7 The reforms arising from **Qualifying for Success** will lead to a significant broadening of the post-16 curriculum in schools and colleges from this autumn. Most young people will be able to take advantage of the increased flexibility of the new AS/A level/GNVQ/Key Skills framework to take on a wider range of qualifications than previously, adding to the breadth of their skills and improving their potential employability.
- 4.8 A new **Key Skills Qualification** for 16-19 year olds consisting of Communication, Application of Numbers and Information Technology is to be introduced across England, Northern Ireland and Wales from this September 2000. It is being offered initially at NVQ levels 1-4 and is designed to be available across all post-16 qualifications pathways and therefore to be taken alongside A level and GNVQ courses, Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships.

2 Ensuring high-quality provision in school sixth forms, in FE colleges and in the work-based route

Current policies

- 4.9 Our drive to raise **standards of achievement** in schools is well documented in *Excellence in Schools*, and *Excellence in Cities*. Once in post-compulsory education and training, young people must equally benefit from a range of high-quality provision whether they are following an academic or a vocational route.
- 4.10 **Improving the work-based route:** Work-based learning has remained a popular choice for young people leaving full-time education to start their working lives. Employers have also taken a stronger leadership role in the design and delivery of training in partnership with Government. There has been a step improvement in the quality of work-based training for young people and the esteem in which it is held by young people and employers. The prime reason for these changes has been the introduction of industry designed training to national standards at levels 2 and 3 through Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships. Over 300,000 young people have started a Modern Apprenticeship or National Traineeship since their introduction, and we are set to meet our ambitious targets for attracting even more young people to this route.

For the future

4.11 But there is much still to be done to make sure we have an apprenticeship system which measures up to the best in the world. While there is much excellence to celebrate, there are still too many areas where poor practice associated with earlier training schemes remains. In too many cases young people are inappropriately placed on training programmes which do not meet their needs and capabilities and are not getting the support they need to see their training through - as a result, too many fail to achieve their target qualification.

4.12 The Government is working closely with its partners to address these issues by:

- ▶ improving the quality of what is on offer, in partnership with employers and providers of training;
- ▶ developing new more coherent and transparent planning, funding and delivery systems through the Learning and Skills Council which will come into operation from 2001;
- ▶ bringing National Traineeships into the Apprenticeship framework, to encourage progression and to clarify the choices available to young people. National Traineeships will be known as 'Modern Apprenticeships (Intermediate)'.

4.13 Improving Quality in Further Education: the twin themes of encouraging excellence and tackling poor performance run through our strategy for improving the quality of further education. The first ten Beacon Colleges of Excellence were announced on 12 May 1999: Park Lane College (Leeds), Lewisham College (London), Carmel Sixth Form College (St Helens), Greenhead Sixth Form College (Huddersfield), Havering College, St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College (London), Bishop Burton Agricultural College (East Yorkshire), John Leggott Sixth Form College (Scunthorpe), Blackpool and the Fylde College and Knowsley College (Merseyside).

4.14 Beacon colleges are selected from:

- ▶ colleges which have gained accreditation from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) by demonstrating effective quality assurance and monitoring; rigorous and valid self-assessment; consistent achievement of targets for performance; improved student achievement over a three-year period; and effective action to address any weaknesses; and/or
- ▶ colleges which have achieved at least five top grades in a recent (post-September 1997) FEFC inspection.

We particularly recognise excellent colleges which serve communities with high levels of social and economic deprivation.

Current policies

- 4.15** Colleges with serious weaknesses are now receiving highly targeted funding from the much-increased **FE Standards Fund** to ensure radical and rapid improvement. The recent FEFC Chief Inspector's Annual Report shows slight increases in achievement rates and a general narrowing in performance between the best and worst performing colleges.
- 4.16** **Inspection of all provision** has become a key lever for improvement, whether by OFSTED in schools, the FEFC in colleges or the Training Standards Council in work-based training. Building on the strengths of all three, new arrangements have just been put in place to ensure greater coherence and rigour for quality assurance across all post-16 provision. For the first time, area-wide inspections by all three inspectorates are tackling the fragmentation and serious problems that exist in 16-19 provision in some parts of the country. We expect 15 joint-area inspections to have taken place by December 2000. These inspections will ensure that young people at 16 and beyond have access to high-quality education and training, and that business can rely on a coherent mix and high standards of provision to meet its needs.

Area-Wide Inspections

Once an area has been selected, most school sixth forms, colleges and major training providers will be visited. But the emphasis will be on provision in the area as a whole, rather than on individual organisations. Inspectors will draw on evidence from other inspections to complement, rather than duplicate existing inspection activity.

Inspections will be in two stages. The first will focus on visits to institutions and providers to gather and interpret evidence on performance, curriculum and programmes, and cost/resource issues, and to meet staff and students or trainees. In the second stage, several weeks later, inspectors will visit a sample of lessons/sessions to assess the quality of what is provided and students' and trainees' responses to it.

In addition, certain themes, such as guidance, will be addressed across the different sectors. Inspectors will also consider the contribution of the LEAs, the local TECs (and, from April 2001, the LSC) and the careers service to 16-19 provision in the area, and will take account of available information on the local labour market and skills needs.

Each inspection will result in a published report which will include judgements on:

- ▶ the standards achieved and quality of provision in the area;
- ▶ the range and coherence of provision available;
- ▶ the value for money provided.

By commenting on the match of provision to local demand, the inspection programme will provide a basis for future planning of 16-19 education and training.

For the future

4.17 The LSC, when it comes into operation in April 2001, will lead the drive for more consistent standards across all learning options, post-16. Of course, principal responsibility for quality will remain with those who provide learning opportunities - including colleges, employers and the voluntary and private sectors. But the LSC will encourage a culture of continuous improvement. Subject to legislation, local LSCs will have broad funding powers which will enable a more flexible approach to meeting individual needs, including collaborative provision for 14-16 year olds. More details are set out in the *Learning and Skills Council Prospectus*.

4.18 To support the LSC at local and national level, there will be a rigorous and independent external inspection system. The inspectorates will develop the common framework for inspection which will apply jointly to OFSTED (for provision for 16-19 year olds in schools and colleges) and the new Adult Learning Inspectorate, which will be operational from April 2001 (with responsibility for post-19 provision in colleges and for work-based learning).

3 Targeting financial support for those in learning

4.19 The Prime Minister has announced a Youth Card for all young people in further learning. This will carry an entitlement to a range of discounts, including transport and leisure. It also has wider potential. Developments in smart card technology make it possible that the card could eventually be used to:

- ▶ reward participation in learning;
- ▶ ease entry into and support further learning by acting as an electronic key to information; electronic enrollment and attendance; and support the payment of Education Maintenance Allowances (see para 4.26); and
- ▶ contribute to the removal of the cost of transport as a barrier to learning.

We are already testing a variety of different approaches to the use of the new Youth Card.

Demonstration Project Update

There are currently eight demonstration projects testing combinations of the five functions identified in a recent feasibility study as being the most beneficial functions for an IT-based card to carry. The projects are currently using either magnetic stripe or 'smart' card technology and will inform the introduction of the Youth Card. Private sector organisations wishing to offer discounts on presentation of the Youth Card are being encouraged to take part in the demonstration projects. One such organisation is currently sponsoring a newsletter in our Knowsley, Merseyside project.

Whilst most of the projects are situated in urban areas, the Northumberland project in particular is investigating the benefits of using an IT-based card in a rural context. Projects are currently being set up and run in the following areas: Nottingham, Knowsley, Gateshead, Northumberland/Durham, Leeds, Bradford, Grimsby and Thurrock.

Nottingham

The Nottingham project is specifically using the attendance monitoring system to test its benefits in relation to tracking, validating Education Maintenance Allowance eligibility and rewards and loyalty functions. The careers service are working in collaboration with Bull Information Services and Touch in order to put together a project which in addition to testing the benefits of the IT-based card is also testing the feasibility of setting up 'piggy bank' arrangements through its collaborative work with the Nottingham City card. Through the use of cards carrying both contact and contactless chips, young people taking part in this project will be able to access reduced-cost public transport and receive discounted access to local leisure facilities. They will be able to earn reward points for positive activities related to learning (for example regular attendance) which can be redeemed in a wide number of retail outlets which are operating city-wide as part of the wider Nottingham City card project.

The card will be launched in Bluecoat School shortly after half term with around 3,500 cards being in circulation shortly afterwards.

Current policies

- 4.20** We have extended Further Education Access Funds to 16-18 year olds for the first time. We have provided a new Access Fund for those 16-19 year olds who stay at school. And we have made special provision for childcare costs and for those young people who need to study away from home.
- 4.21** We have increased the level of the **Minimum Training Allowance** for those young people following the work-based route. We increased the allowance (by £10 per week for 16 year olds and by £5 for 17 year olds) to £40 in September - a long overdue review of this important allowance.

4.22 The **Right to Time for Study or Training Regulations** came into force in September 1999. This new employment right, entitles young employees aged 16 or 17, who have not already achieved five good GCSEs or equivalent, to reasonable paid time off to study or train for a relevant qualification which will help them towards achieving that standard and improving their career and life chances. **Time for Study or Training** is a key element of the **Connexions strategy** and a vital new lever in encouraging young people who did not succeed at school to return to learning. We will capture early feedback from young employees and initial employer reactions. In addition, Local Learning Partnerships will be invited to pilot arrangements for setting and monitoring targets for take-up under the right for time for study or training.

For the future

4.23 Too many of our young people from lower-income families leave school at 16, many more than those from better-off backgrounds. Many would like to stay on at school or college, but can't afford to do so.

4.24 The current system of financial support for young people is not good enough. It is fragmented, piecemeal and often discretionary. It doesn't address real need. It was criticised by the Social Exclusion Unit as providing 'insufficient incentives for disadvantaged young people to participate in learning, as opposed to taking work'.

4.25 That is why we are piloting Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs), which started in September 1999. In the 15 pilot areas, up to £40 per week is paid to young people from less-well-off families who stay in education, with additional retention and achievement bonuses payable on top. Four different models are being tested, so that we can evaluate which is most effective.

Model 1	£30 per week maximum EMA, plus £50 termly and achievement bonuses	'Core' model
Model 2	£30 per week, plus £80 termly retention bonus and £140 achievement bonus	Model being tested in two pilot areas
Model 3	£40 per week maximum EMA, plus £50 termly and achievement bonuses	Model being tested in two pilot areas
Model 4	"Core" model, but payment is made to a young person's mother or responsible adult	Model being tested in two pilot areas

- 4.26** EMAs have the potential to improve young people's life chances, but it is vital to find out what difference they actually make. The Prime Minister recently said, 'If these [EMA pilots] make sufficient impact, we are ready to introduce such allowances nationwide, as part of our commitment to student support to encourage participation and attainment'.
- 4.27** Early feedback about participation is generally positive, although it will be some time before we will know for sure the difference EMAs are making. There is already strong anecdotal evidence that EMAs are having a positive impact on young people's attendance and effort.

'My EMA has made me stay in College because it has allowed me to get an education and get paid instead of just getting a dead end job' - a student in Middlesbrough's City Technology College

'My father had a heart attack two years ago and is on disability living allowance. I would have left school this year if it wasn't for my EMA, as I would not have been able to afford my transport fares to and from college and my equipment' - a student in Oldham

'Attendance has significantly improved as a result of EMAs, and homework and assignments are being handed in very promptly. We've never had it so good in that respect' - Head of Sixth Form, Mexborough School

'I would have stayed in education, but I wouldn't have had full attendance or no lateness' - a student at Middlesbrough's City Technology College.

- 4.28** The EMA offers a framework for the future, but we need to ensure that it is flexible enough to meet the particular needs of our most disadvantaged young people. That is why we will be introducing refinements to the pilot scheme from September 2000 in certain areas. These will test the additional support required by young people who are homeless, disabled or parents. We will also be introducing further EMA-style pilots for young people living in areas with poor transport provision. These refinements will be invaluable in deciding how any extension of EMAs could best meet the needs of young people. In *Bridging the Gap* we indicated that we will explore whether EMAs could be brought together with other sources of financial support for young people into a single coherent framework.

The fourth strand - Outreach, information, advice, support and guidance, is discussed in full in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 - Building a new youth support service

This chapter sets out the outreach, information, advice, support and guidance which will be offered by the **Connexions Service**.

- 5.1** The provision of information, advice, support and guidance, sometimes delivered by imaginative and flexible outreach activities, is an important part of connecting and re-connecting young people with learning throughout their teenage years.

Current policies to reconnect young people with learning

- 5.2 Anti-exclusion and anti-truancy** measures will continue to be vital. The *Tackling Truancy Together* strategy was launched on 1 November 1999. This outlined three proposals on which the Government has asked for comments. First, it is proposed to support the spread of good practice including celebrating the achievement of those schools which have done best in tackling truancy. Secondly, the Government has asked for views on whether or not the resources at secondary school level which LEAs currently spend on their Education Welfare Services should be placed under the management of schools. LEAs would retain responsibility for strategic action and multi-agency working to tackle truancy, and continue to provide an Education Welfare Service to schools. Third, it is planned to increase the penalties for school attendance offences.
- 5.3** *Bridging the Gap* identified that there are areas which are already experimenting with partnership working as a means of providing support for young people. Learning Mentors in schools have been welcomed as a means of enhancing the schools capacity to deal with barriers to learning. Three linked initiatives will all provide critical building blocks for the new **Connexions Service**, proposed in *Bridging the Gap* and *Learning to Succeed* - the new focus for the work of the careers services, the work of **New Start Partnerships** and the recent introduction of the **Learning Gateway**.
- 5.4** Careers services have been asked to focus their attention on those who need and can benefit most from their expertise. Careers services have therefore been concentrating their activities on increasing the numbers of young people in learning by encouraging 16-17s not in learning to take up opportunities and ensuring as many as possible Year 11 pupils progress into learning.

- 5.5** Additional resources (an extra £22m over two years) have been made available to the Careers Service to support this work. It will be targeted at those areas in which the challenge to raise educational achievement is greatest. On average, services are deploying about half of their resources in re-engaging 16-17 year olds in learning. Careers services also have a key role to play in the **Learning Gateway** (see paragraph 5.7) - they are responsible for the Personal Advisers who will identify and guide participants through the **Learning Gateway** and beyond.
- 5.6** In the two years since **New Start** was launched it has established itself locally and nationally as a major influence in the drive to engage young people in learning. We are now supporting **New Start** partnerships throughout England. Local partnerships established under **New Start**, which have been founded on the principle of multi-agency involvement, have focused local efforts to understand and tackle youth disaffection. They have developed new approaches which are being absorbed into mainstream learning. Most recently projects have trialed key elements of the **Learning Gateway** - such as the Personal Adviser which will also be a central feature of the **Connexions Service**. We envisage that **New Start** partnerships will be an invaluable source of expertise and experience for the **Connexions Service** to draw on.
- 5.7** In September 1999 we introduced a new **Learning Gateway** for those 16 and 17 year olds who need extra support to enter, and get the most from, learning. By tackling the personal and social obstacles which stand in their way, the **Learning Gateway** ensures that disengaged and vulnerable young people get back into, and remain in, learning. Personal Advisers are at the heart of the **Learning Gateway**. They provide the individual attention and seamless support which some particularly disadvantaged young people need to avoid 'falling between the cracks'. They agree tailor-made 'Lifeskills' programmes to match the needs identified through careful assessment and guidance - for example, literacy, team working and social skills.
- 5.8** **Millennium Volunteers** encourages young people who have been socially excluded to play a more active role in their communities and also to develop the kind of skills that are increasingly valued by employers and educational institutions. Building confidence and self-esteem, developing team working, helping an individual to mature and to understand the world around them are all part of the success of the **Millennium Volunteers**. It builds on the recent successful history of volunteering for young people through Prince's Trust Volunteers, Community Service Volunteers, and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. This kind of involvement is a key part of the framework of the citizenship education that the government is now putting in place.
- 5.9** The new **Neighbourhood Support Fund**, which has begun to fund projects this year in the most deprived areas, is designed to test different approaches to re-engaging young people aged 13-19 back into learning and work through local community and voluntary organisations. By attracting young people into innovative activities such as producing videos for teenage parents, improving learning through educational support for young people to pass driving theory exams or becoming involved in local community environmental projects, the Fund will use new ways of working outside the existing services to explore the best ways of reconnecting young people with the worlds of work and learning.

5.10 Career-related learning in schools often begins in the primary sector and involves schools working to raise their pupils' aspirations and understanding of society and the world of work. Schools will be helped in this task by the new framework for Personal, Social and Health Education, and the requirement to study Citizenship, both of which overlap significantly with career-related learning. Teachers will be supported by the strengthened school business link organisations and by **Connexions Service** staff, who will provide specialist advice on labour market developments. Many schools are already benefiting from a new curriculum resource *The Real Game* being made available by the DfEE which introduces financial literacy, careers work and community issues to pupils in Year 8 or 9 in a highly motivating approach.

For the future

5.11 *Bridging the Gap* and *Learning to Succeed* identified the problems affecting the current mechanisms for supporting young people, and especially those who may be from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who are disaffected or who are suffering the effects of multiple problems.

- First, institutional fragmentation: Although schools and colleges are the most obvious points of contact for young people, a bewildering array of other agencies are, or could be, involved in helping young people steer their way through the teenage years.
- Second, insufficient preparation for post-16 choices: *Bridging the Gap* recognised some excellent practice by both careers services and schools, but a significant number of young people were not being well advised or supported.
- Third, there was a lack of a comprehensive support service for 16-18 year olds who are outside full-time education.

5.12 A good example of a local regeneration project, setting up a network of Personal Advisers, is contained in the box below. Many voluntary and community organisations are heavily involved in this type of activity, and we will continue to help and encourage this excellent work.

New Options West in Newcastle upon Tyne is attempting to tackle education, training and employment problems for the young people in the city's disadvantaged West End.

It was conceived as 'pre-gateway preparation for employment' and one of its key elements was a network of personal advisers to work with young people recognised at risk from disaffection.

The network is made up of 25 staff, each seconded for one day a week from agencies including the youth service, youth offending teams, community support teams, school nurses, careers, education welfare, educational psychology and school teachers. Each is allocated up to 10 young people at Year Nine from three schools in the area. Their key roles are to befriend and support while identifying what they can do to meet the young peoples particular needs and increase their employability.

So what do youth workers think of being advisers? Most seem to feel that this is the right direction for youth work to take. One of the most rewarding things for youth workers is the feeling that it gives legitimacy to the nuts and bolts of youth work - relationship building.

It is relatively early days in the project but early results are impressive. Of the 243 pupils identified, 67 per cent committed themselves to continue with the programme to the personal planning stage, 21 per cent are still being interviewed, and only two per cent have chosen not to continue - and for some of those it was because they did not want to miss lessons.

What can we learn from other countries?

5.13 A number of other countries have taken steps towards integrating information, guidance and support for young people.

- ▶ **Norway** has established a 'Follow Up Service' for any young person who does not move on to post-secondary education or who drops out of school. It brings together schools, employment services, health and social security offices, and the education psychology service.
- ▶ The **USA** has established various initiatives including 'Gear Up' to create locally designed partnerships to reach middle school students at risk of dropping out of education, featuring personal advice and guidance, mentoring, community work and leadership training.
- ▶ **France** has 'Missions Locales' which are able to meet the individual needs of young people aged 16-25, in relation to learning, employment, access to health insurance, housing, culture and leisure pursuits. They provide a comprehensive service involving all the relevant partners that has the capacity to intervene to meet the individual needs of each young person as appropriate.

5.14 In Denmark, every effort is made to reach those young people aged under 20 who have fallen through the cracks and to give them another chance to obtain a qualification, either for work, or for tertiary study. They are actively encouraged to return to education through a combination of carrots and sticks. Each municipality is legally obliged to follow up all young people under the age of 20 who drop out of education without obtaining a qualification. Schools are legally obliged to notify the municipal follow up or youth guidance service of such drop outs. It includes identifying those not in work or in jobs that do not require a recognised vocational qualification, temporary or part time jobs.

Those identified are called for a personal interview and, in association with an adviser or mentor, develop a personal action plan which can involve work, education and training and must be intended to re-insert them into mainstream education as soon as possible so that they can gain a qualification. They must have at least two interviews a year to check progress.

This focus on prevention as well as remedial activity integrated education, labour market and welfare policies and locally managed delivery mechanisms that track early leavers and coordinate services across several portfolios has contributed to positive outcomes in the labour market. Denmark has the lowest proportion of unemployed 15-24 year olds in the EU who are seeking their first job.

Denmark also has the lowest incidence of long-term unemployment in this age group, and, together with Sweden, the proportion of unemployed 15-19 year olds not in education is well below the average level in the 15 EU countries (Eurostat 1997, using 1995 figures). Finally, the incidence of long-term youth unemployment is among the lowest in the OECD in Denmark and, along with Norway, the incidence of long-term unemployment among teenagers fell during the 1990s.

A radical new response

- 5.15** The rest of this document, describes the response to these problems, building on the lessons and experience of those who are already making a difference to the lives of young people. It provides more detail about the **Connexions Service** which will, for the first time, provide coherent support to young people over time and across current service boundaries, so that they are able to make informed choices about the opportunities that are right for them, and so that they receive any help, whether related to learning or to wider needs, that they require.
- 5.16** The Government's intention to introduce legislation in the current session of Parliament was announced in the Queen's Speech in November 1999. Some aspects of the plans for the **Connexions Service**, as well as establishment of the Learning and Skills Council and the proposed new arrangements for post-16 learning, are subject to the passage of the Learning and Skills Bill. This Bill was introduced in the Lords on 16 December 1999 and received its second reading on 17 January 2000.

Chapter 6 - The Connexions Service

- 6.1** At the heart of the **Connexions strategy** will be the new **Connexions Service**. This Service will provide a radical new approach to guiding and supporting all young people through their teenage years and in their transition to adulthood and working life. The new Service will be delivered primarily through a network of Personal Advisers linking in with specialist support services. They will be drawn together from a range of existing public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations, and build on best practice. These organisations will come together to form new Connexions Partnerships to develop and coordinate the delivery of support services for young people.
- 6.2** The key aim of the Service will be to enable all young people to participate effectively in appropriate learning - whether in school, FE college, training provider or other community setting - by raising their aspirations so that they reach their full potential. The new service will play a central role in helping to deal with problems experienced by young people, removing any wider barriers to effective engagement in learning that young people are suffering. It will do this by providing high quality support and guidance, and by brokering access for young people to a range of more specialist services. The **Connexions Service** will ensure that all young people have access to the support and guidance they need, when and wherever they need it, irrespective of their circumstances. The Service will be universal and comprehensive, and will ensure that no young person falls through the net of support.
- 6.3** It is envisaged that the **Connexions Service** will be delivered through a structure which, with the minimum of bureaucracy, ensures proper accountability, high standards of service to young people and proper coordination of the work of Personal Advisers. It will allow planning and funding at a strategic level, whilst ensuring the flexibility for local delivery arrangements to reflect local circumstances. The proposed structure will have:
- ▶ a cross-Departmental Connexions Service National Unit.
 - ▶ Connexions Partnerships at local Learning and Skills Council area level, responsible for strategic planning and funding;
 - ▶ local management committees at the level of local authorities, or groupings of local authorities, to suit local circumstances, bringing together local partners and responsible for organising local delivery;

- 6.4** The Service will be phased in over a two to three year period from April 2001 subject to the passage of the Learning and Skills Bill introduced on 16 December, with some pathfinders and pilots from April 2000. Resources for the service will come from partners pooling the resources currently devoted to the range of youth support and guidance, plus any additional funding which is made available in the Government's Year 2000 spending review. That review will also consider the additional impact that the Service might place on specialist support services.
- 6.5** The rate at which the Service will be implemented, and the areas chosen for phasing will depend in part on the time it takes to identify, recruit and train sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff - without having an adverse impact on related programmes such as Quality Protects. The Government intends to undertake an audit of the human resource implications of a range of new and existing advice and support services across Departments and agencies at central and local level. On the basis of this, an Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group will consider a strategy for meeting these demands working with external partners.

Connexions Principles

The Service will be based on **eight key principles**:

- ▶ raising aspirations - setting high expectations of every individual;
- ▶ meeting individual need - and overcoming barriers to learning;
- ▶ taking account of the views of young people - individually and collectively, as the new service is developed and as it is operated locally;
- ▶ inclusion - keeping young people in mainstream education and training and preventing them moving to the margins of their community;
- ▶ partnership - agencies collaborating to achieve more for young people, parents and communities than agencies working in isolation;
- ▶ community involvement and neighbourhood renewal - through involvement of community mentors and through personal advisers brokering access to local welfare, health, arts, sport and guidance networks;
- ▶ extending opportunity and equality of opportunity - raising participation and achievement levels for **all** young people, influencing the availability, suitability and quality of provision and raising awareness of opportunities;
- ▶ evidence based practice - ensuring that new interventions are based on rigorous research and evaluation into 'what works'.

Targets

6.6 The Service will be set a range of targets, both nationally and locally, which reflect its key principles. It will be an outcome-driven service, allowing local discretion over delivery, but with clear targets to cover the multi-agency nature of its work. The principal targets will relate to participation and attainment in education, training or work, since it is clear from the *Bridging the Gap* report and other research that participation has a major impact on a young person's more general 'well-being'.

6.7 The Service will build on the following ambitious existing targets across the range of services supporting young people, which will serve as a base for continuous improvement year on year-

on participation in education and training, by 2002:

- ▶ 33% reduction in the time lost through school truancies;
- ▶ 33% reduction in the numbers of permanent exclusions;

on achievement, the following National Learning Targets for 2002:

- ▶ 50% of 16 year-olds achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C and 95% achieving 1 or more GCSE at grades A*-G;
- ▶ 85% of 19-year-olds with at least 5 good GCSEs or equivalent;
- ▶ 60% of 21-year-olds with at least 2 A levels or equivalent;

on care leavers, the National Priorities Guidance target:

- ▶ to increase the level of employment, training or education amongst young people aged 19 in 2002 who were looked after by local authorities in their 17th year, to at least 60% of the level of all young people of the same age in their area;

on drug abuse, the Government's Drug Strategy target:

- ▶ to reduce the proportion of 13-19 year olds using illegal drugs particularly heroin and cocaine, by 50% (2008) and 25% (2005);

on youth offending:

- ▶ to reduce the propensity of young people to commit crime by 5% by 2002/3; reducing recorded crime by 1%;

on teenage pregnancy:

- ▶ to reduce by 50 per cent the rate of conceptions amongst under 18 year olds by 2010, and establish a firm downward trend in the conception rates for the under 16s.

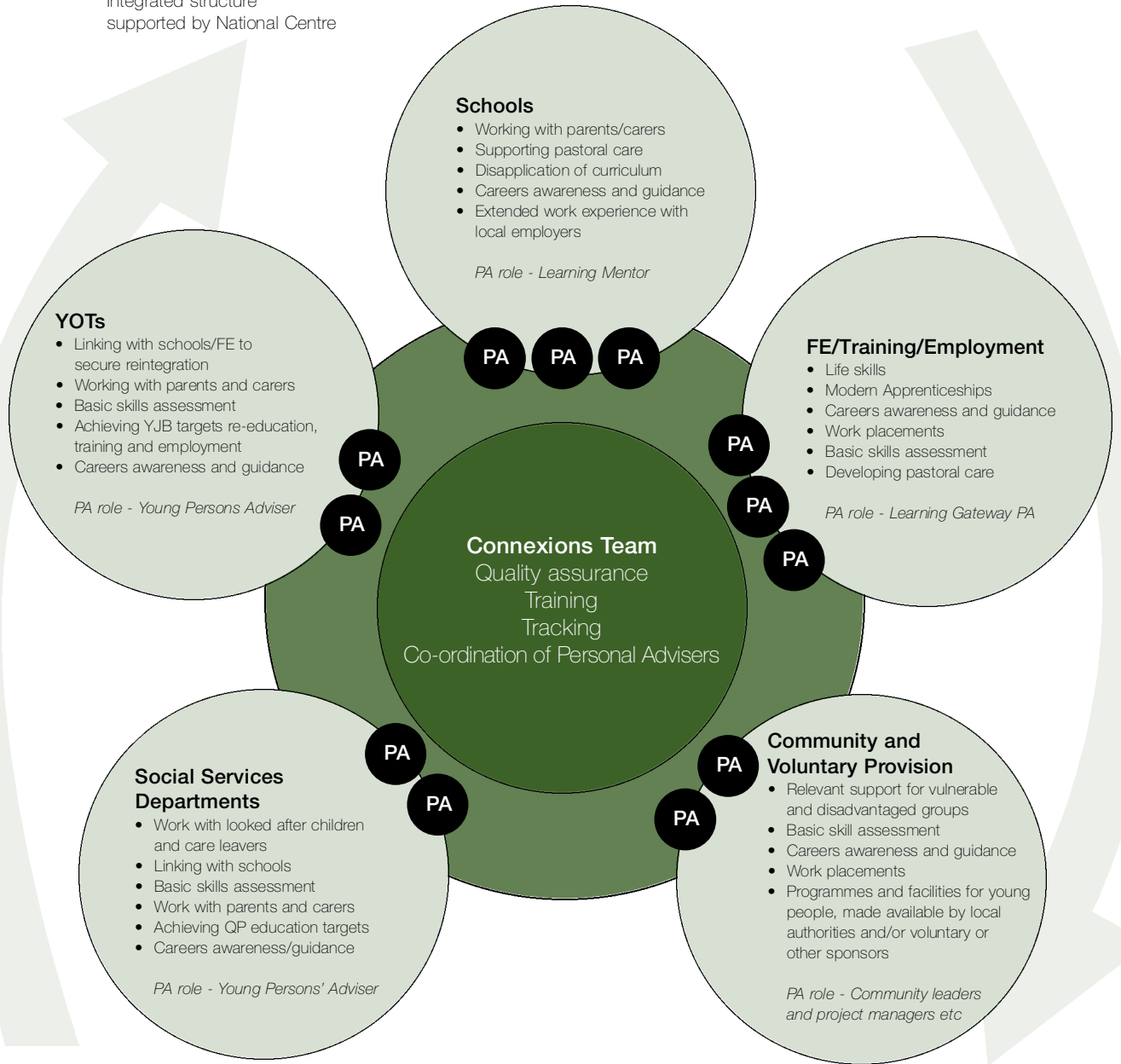
- 6.8** The Service will also have the target of ensuring that, over time, participation and achievement for minority ethnic groups and young people at risk, such as those looked after, with disabilities, teenage mothers and those from neighbourhoods with significantly lower participation than typical, converge with those for the population as a whole.
- 6.9** The Service will additionally be set a range of challenging, cross-departmental targets, as part of the Government's Year 2000 spending review. These will include a target for post-16 participation in education and training. Further details of the proposed Quality Framework for the service are set out in paragraphs 8.5-8.8.

Personal Advisers

- 6.10** The **Connexions Service** is designed to end the current fragmentation of services through the creation of a network of Personal Advisers drawn from a range of backgrounds. They will take responsibility for ensuring all the needs of a young person are met in an integrated and coherent manner. Personal Advisers' work will range from: ensuring school attendance pre-16; to the provision of information regarding future learning and work opportunities; to more in-depth support in gaining access to education and training and the brokering of access to, plus coordination of, specialist services. Personal Advisers will be deployed in a variety of locations, including schools, FE colleges and community settings so that young people can have access to them in the most appropriate way. The **Connexions Service** will have a 'shop front' presence, and make innovative use of technology to encourage access by **all** young people. Figure 1 sets out how the proposed network of Personal Advisers will be constructed.

Figure 1: Proposed Network for Personal Advisers

Integrated structure supported by National Centre



Participation, attainment and inclusion of all young people

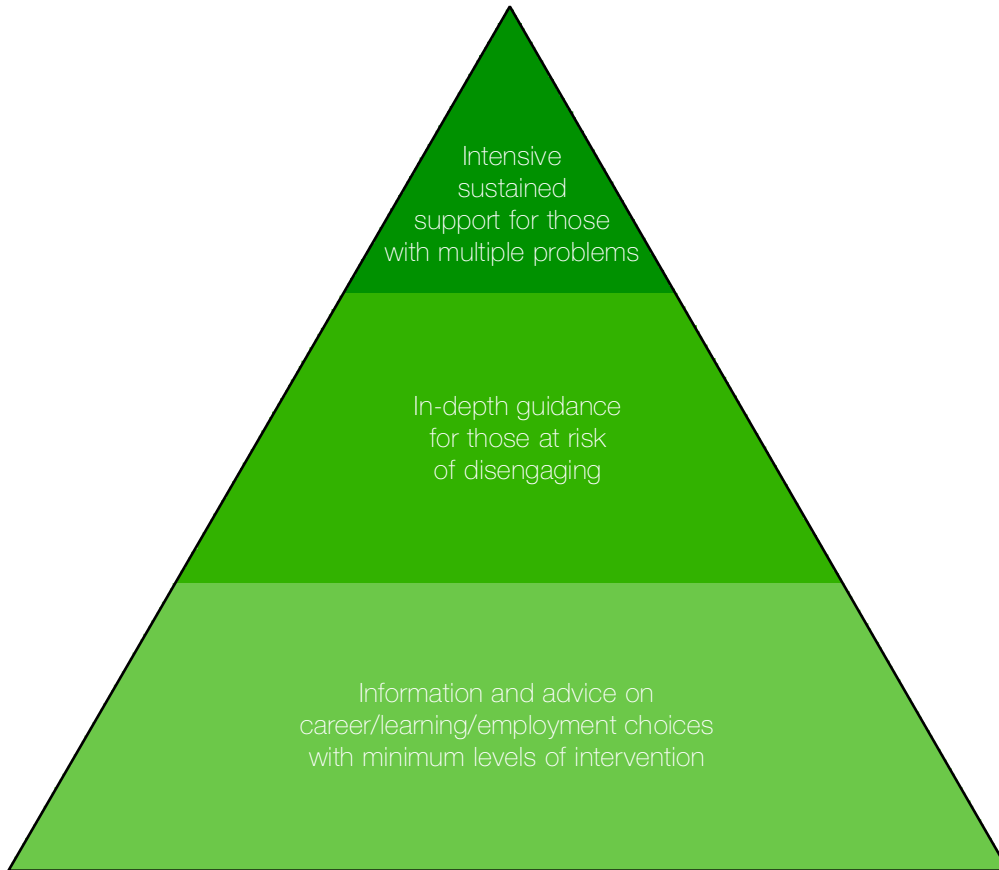
Meeting the needs of young people

6.11 All young people need an element of guidance if they are to fulfil their potential during their teenage years and make a successful transition to further education, employment and adult life. Failure to provide appropriate advice may result in inappropriate decisions being made, which will prompt more serious problems, such as dropping out of training, further or higher education. The type of support they require will vary according to their needs. Broadly, it is possible to distinguish between:

- ▶ **General advice and support** - at those key episodes in each young person's life when information, advice and support on educational and vocational issues will be necessary to help them make decisions that affect their future;
- ▶ **In-depth support** - for those at risk of not participating effectively in education and training. This group include those: whose aspirations do not reflect their abilities; who do not attend school regularly, who have learning difficulties or disabilities, who are unlikely to achieve as they should and those who are not undertaking any education or training post-16. Young people in these situations need in-depth guidance and support to help them to address barriers to learning and to enable them to fulfil their potential;
- ▶ **Integrated and specialist support** - for those facing substantial, multiple problems preventing them from engaging with learning, who are likely to be involved with a number of different professionals engaged in education, social welfare, criminal justice, health and housing. Equally, we will integrate support for the especially gifted. They will need Personal Advisers to take effective action on their behalf to help them gain access to a range of more specialist services, to ensure that barriers are overcome in a coordinated way, and keep in touch with their progress.

6.12 Young people have strong views about the type of help and wider provision that they require. The **Connexions Service** will have an important role collecting the views of young people. More details are given in paragraphs 8.1-8.4

Figure 2: Priority Groups For Personal Adviser Intervention



What does that range of support mean for individual young people?

Paul

Paul is exceptionally bright. He did very well in his GCSEs and has the potential to achieve extremely well in Higher Education. Unfortunately, Paul's school is in a very rural area and does not offer a very wide range of A levels. He was encouraged by his school to stay on and do A levels which were not really suitable for him. He started to disengage with the subjects he was studying and, due to the school's lack of interest, dropped out half way through his first year. His parents are very concerned about the time they feel he has wasted and want to make sure the next steps taken are the right ones. The local careers service is only open half-a-day-a-week and Paul is not sure if they will be able to help him. He is starting to become involved with group of disengaged young people in the village. Paul is 17.

Now: Paul could easily become demotivated, particularly as a result of the time lag between him leaving school and the start of the new academic year. He may be tempted to approach the nearest college directly, but could be swayed into other activities.

In the future: Paul and his parents would be aware of the **Connexions Service** and would be able to approach them for advice. If early enough in the academic year, his Personal Adviser would be able to identify if he could transfer to a college. They would also be able to help with travel and accommodation issues which may arise. If he were unable to transfer, the Personal Adviser would develop an appropriate and worthwhile package for Paul to pursue in the interim period. This could be a combination of vocational training in a relevant occupational area, volunteering through the Millennium Volunteers programme and an opportunity to become a mentor. In due course, he will be able to take advantage of the new summer activities programme.

Lisa

Lisa comes from a very difficult background. Her parents split up when she was very young and her step-father was abusive to both her and her mother. She suffers from low levels of literacy and numeracy and has been bullied as a result. The bullying resulted in Lisa displaying challenging behaviour which saw her twice temporarily excluded from school. Her mother tried to talk to the school but with no success and Lisa started to truant. The bullying continued and Lisa took an overdose, which resulted in her mother taking her to a Child Psychiatrist. The school eventually permanently excluded Lisa for her continued poor attendance. Lisa has started to become involved in drugs and crime as she waits for the LEA to decide what to do with her. Lisa is 13.

Now: Lisa could be sent to an alternative school, receive home tuition or be sent to a Pupil Referral Unit. A complex range of organisations could be drawn in to support her needs but, without a cohesive overview of her issues and barriers she could end up going round and round the system, leaving at 16 having achieved very little. Ultimately, she could end up in a low-skilled, low-paid job with few prospects. The immediate danger is that she becomes more heavily involved in drugs and crime. Her mother is very keen to help Lisa, but does not know how to do so.

In the future: The **Connexions Service** would provide Lisa with a Personal Adviser who would advocate on her behalf and coordinate support for her. This could include a tailored curriculum with specific support for her literacy and numeracy needs, access to specialist service such as counselling, mentoring and links to out-of-school interests. Lisa's mother's evident interest and concern could be utilised and become an intrinsic part of the support Lisa receives.

Ahmed

Ahmed had been doing fairly well at school, living with his parent and keen to progress to a Modern Apprenticeship. However, his parents split up during his final year at school and his father moved out. Consequently, Ahmed left school in the summer with lower GCSE grades than predicted and lost all enthusiasm for his Modern Apprenticeship. He is currently not involved in any form of education or training. He spends his time at home with his mother, who seems to like having him around, or hanging around the streets with other young people. Ahmed is 16.

Now: Ahmed is in danger of becoming involved in petty crime. His mother is starting to doubt her ability to cope with him and wants him to go and live with his father. The family have no contact with existing support agencies and are at a loss to know where to look for help.

In the future: The **Connexions Service** would identify that Ahmed had not taken up his Modern Apprenticeship placement and would make contact with him. He would be encouraged to work with a Personal Adviser who would support his needs. The Personal Adviser would be able to develop a package of support for Ahmed to enable him to take up a Modern Apprenticeship placement; this could include confidence building, exploring his feelings in relation to his family, retaking a couple of GCSEs and providing a mentor. They would also be able to organise accommodation for Ahmed should the situation with his mother not improve.

The Personal Adviser's role

6.13 In order to provide the high quality information, advice and support young people need, the Personal Adviser's role will include:

► **Working with, or as part of, the school or college or training provider**

Most young people under the age of 16 are likely to work with Personal Advisers based in schools - building on the current model being introduced in *Excellence in Cities* areas. But there will also be outreach and access to Personal Advisers through community and voluntary organisations and FE Colleges, which will be of particular relevance to those young people who are excluded from school. Although much careers advice will continue to be given by careers teachers, Learning Mentors will also provide careers advice, or refer to specialist careers advisers, in addition to their other support, guidance and help to young people.

A key function will be to enable mainstream educational institutions to become more effective in meeting the needs of all children and young people and developing their ability to lead independent lives. Further Education Colleges, training providers and employers will all have access to Personal Advisers.

► **One-to-one support and providing information, advice and guidance**

The effectiveness of the one-to-one relationship with a young person over a sustained period will be a crucial determinant of future life and educational success. The Personal Adviser will have the skills to assist the young person in navigating key life episodes - for example, finishing compulsory education or leaving care - and will be equipped with the skills to meet the needs of young people who may be particularly vulnerable due to background, disability, health or other factors. We will be looking at ways of making the Service flexible so that Personal Adviser support can be based on the needs of the young person, rather than being defined by agency boundaries.

► **Assessment, planning and review**

Personal Advisers will be trained in diagnostic skills within an integrated assessment, planning and review approach to ensure that they can identify the important issues which may affect a young person's ability to participate. They will also be equipped to undertake non-specialist assessments in basic skills, drug abuse and mental health in order to make specialist referrals where appropriate. Assessment, Planning and Review are considered in more detail below.

► **Working with parents and carers**

The Personal Adviser will work with parents and carers as active partners in the education of their children and to ensure that higher expectations are reinforced in the home setting and support given to the development of young people's skills and aspirations.

► **Community support**

The Personal Adviser will access local welfare, health, arts, sport, study support, and guidance networks to assist young people to participate in and gain maximum benefit from education and training provided in a variety of settings. This will contribute to neighbourhood renewal and ensure that the whole community plays a role in the education and development of its young people. Voluntary organisations and community groups will provide part of the Personal Adviser service. The **Connexions Service** will encourage and provide appropriate training to members of the community to act as mentors. The service will also encourage young people to become involved in their communities, for instance through Millennium Volunteers and the Neighbourhood Support Fund. Community involvement is considered in more detail below.

► **Working with other agencies**

The Personal Adviser will take effective action to broker access to specialist agencies, for example social services, child and adolescent mental health services, housing and young people's drug prevention services, to ensure that barriers to learning are overcome and that the young person has an integrated support network to enable them to remain within education or training.

► **Keeping in contact and monitoring**

Personal Advisers will help the **Connexions Service** maintain contact with all the young people in its area through an up to date and comprehensive register. This will allow them to keep in contact with all young people they work with and ensure that there is detailed monitoring regarding progress and outcomes for those young people receiving in-depth and specialist support.

The **Connexions Service** is designed to offer appropriate support to all 13-19 year olds. To ensure that this can be offered at the earliest possible stage, Connexions will build on the progress review procedures currently in place in Years 7, 8 and 9, through the **Excellence in Cities** initiative and the broader Social Inclusion: Pupil Support programme. This will identify the particular needs of young people, ranging from the gifted and talented to those facing particular risk factors.

There may be a significant number of young people who, at age 13, do not require any additional support from a Personal Adviser. However, to ensure that the service remains open to them, there are a number of other ways in which they can receive extra help at a later date. These include:

- ▶ a young person approaching their Personal Adviser independently and requesting a guidance meeting;
- ▶ professionals both in and outside school asking the service to provide additional guidance to young people experiencing difficulties, for example when a young person is moved into the care of the local authority or is put on a Pastoral Support Programme;
- ▶ parents / carers seeking additional support for their child.

To ensure a smooth transition at 16, Personal Advisers will also be located in Further Education colleges and training providers. They will be closely linked with school-based Personal Advisers under the umbrella of the local **Connexions Service**.

Most 19 year olds will progress into further or higher education, training or work successfully, and will link in with adult information advice and guidance services as and when required. From April 2001, responsibility for planning and funding these services will lie with the local Learning Skills Councils. When planning services, arrangements should be put in place which will ensure a seamless transition from one service to another.

If, by age 19, a young person has not progressed into education, training or employment, close links with the New Deal programme will ensure that support for a young person does not stop, and builds on what has been achieved within the **Connexions Service**.

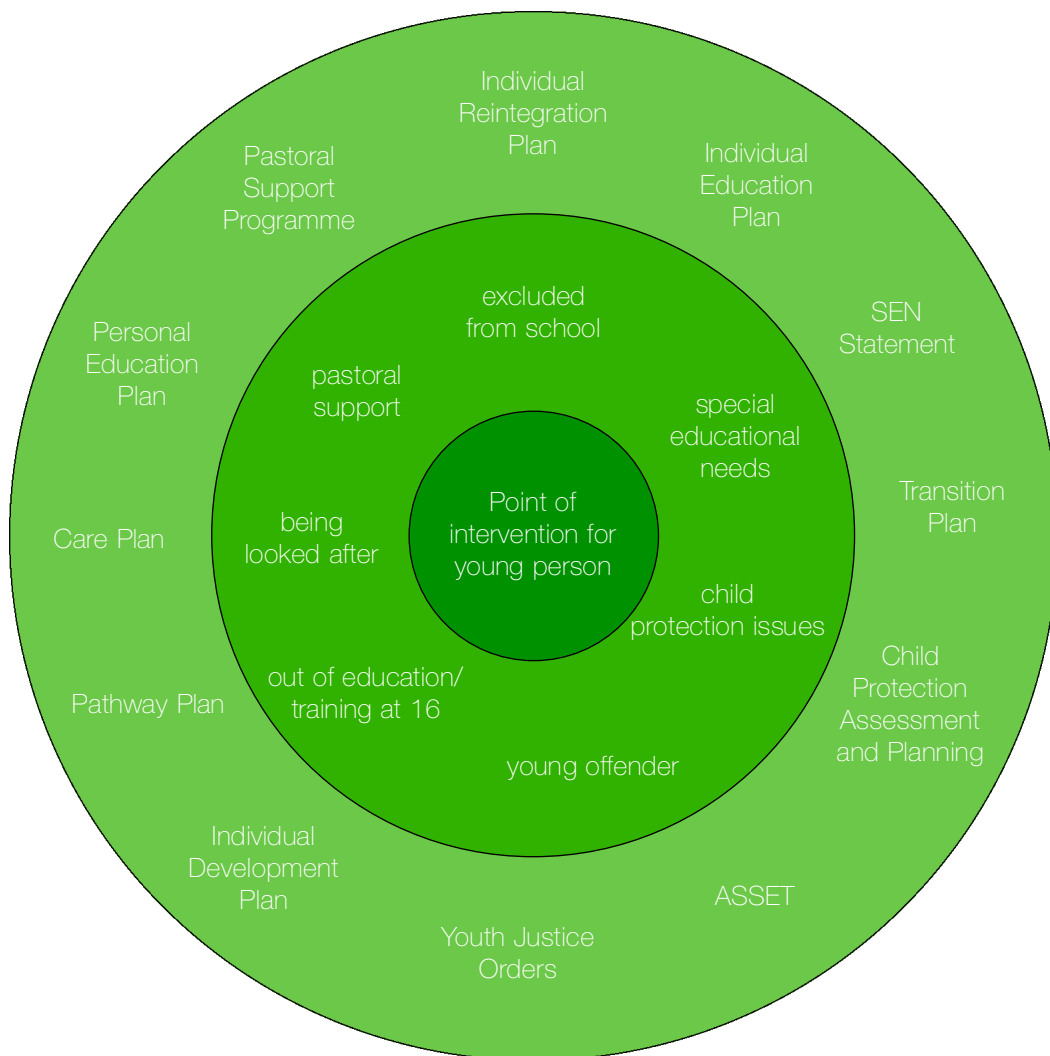
6.14 As the Service becomes established, referrals to specialist services should lessen because young people will be better connected to mainstream provision. Where referral to specialist agencies is necessary, these will be more timely, ensuring that problems do not escalate and high cost, low outcome intervention at a later stage is avoided.

6.15 In order to achieve their task, Personal Advisers will have an appropriate caseload. Existing practice in this area suggests that, each year, a Personal Adviser could work with a small number of young people with multiple problems; but with rather more who require in-depth guidance or only information and advice. In practice, each Personal Adviser is likely to work with a combination of these.

Bringing together assessment and planning procedures

6.16 Assessment, planning and review systems are at the heart of effective practice and each agency has developed its own system (see figure 3). A number of these have been developed since 1997 to reflect the policy focus on meeting the needs of young people at risk of social exclusion, while some existing systems are in the process of refinement and change.

Figure 3: Individual Planning Systems for Young People



6.17 The **Connexions Service** will seek to develop a common assessment tool, with a common core and sections related to specific problems a young person might face, that can be used by all Personal Advisers to assess a young person's needs. Its use will allow different agencies to agree on how needs can be met either directly or through referral, and encourage a co-ordinated response.

Young People with Special Educational Needs

6.18 The **Connexions Service** will have a key role in advising and supporting young people with learning difficulties. In particular, the Service will support the transition of young people with statements of special educational needs (SEN) from school to other forms of post 16 learning. The Service will participate in the transitional reviews of all young people with statements of SEN (during year nine) undertaken by LEAs, when detailed consideration of what post-16 provision would best meet their needs begins. Where it becomes clear from the review process that a young person is likely to leave school for other post-16 provision, the **Connexions Service** will have a particular responsibility to ensure that an assessment of their learning needs and the provision required to meet them, is undertaken during a young

person's last year of compulsory schooling. The Service will also be able to arrange for assessments to be undertaken for other young people who are under 19 years of age, whose learning difficulties develop after they have left compulsory schooling or who choose to leave school after year 11.

- 6.19** These new arrangements will ensure that transition planning into post-16 provision for those with statements of special educational needs starts at 14 and involves all local partners, including the young people themselves, their parents or carers, the local LSC and potential or identified providers of suitable learning opportunities. The young people concerned will have the support of a Personal Adviser throughout the transition and assessment process (see figure 3).
- 6.20** The arrangements will involve the new post-16 provider at the earliest opportunity to allow the maximum time possible for them work with the local Learning and Skills Council to plan the particular learning programme and support required and ensure that funding support is available.

Community and Peer Mentors

- 6.21** Mentors drawn from local communities will have an important role within the **Connexions Service**. For instance, for those at risk of underachieving, motivation and confidence can be increased by providing role models and encouragement. For those who have dropped out of learning and work, and do not want contact with statutory bodies, they can provide a first point of contact. The **Connexions Service** will be responsible for drawing together a pool of mentors, perhaps by subcontract, managing the caseloads, and working with them to develop their expertise in supporting young people. It will be important that mentors in the Excellence in Cities programme are an integral part of the Service. The Service will also recruit peer mentors, particularly young people who have themselves experienced difficulties, to act as role models to help young people deal with similar challenges. In both cases, acting as a mentor may for some be the first step towards becoming a Personal Adviser.

Working with employers

- 6.22** Employers will play an important role in the **Connexions Service** and will become increasingly involved in education locally, through the further development of the Education Business Partnerships network. Local Learning and Skills Councils will be working closely with the **Connexions Service** and local employers to ensure coherence. The Service will develop close links with employers, both directly and through the Learning and Skills Council, to ensure their involvement in:

- ▶ planning the service;
- ▶ providing community mentors;
- ▶ providing appropriate work experience opportunities;
- ▶ contributing to labour market and skills planning information for use by Personal Advisers.

A new profession of Personal Adviser

6.23 The development of the network of Personal Advisers presents three major challenges:

- ▶ a significant cultural change within and between some agencies;
- ▶ a recruitment drive to widen the pool of Personal Advisers available over the next few years;
- ▶ a focus on raising the skills levels of professionals to those of the best.

6.24 Personal Advisers will be drawn from a range of backgrounds including the Careers Service, Youth Service, Social Services, teachers and Youth Offending Teams, as well as from the voluntary and community sectors. They will need to adapt and develop their skills for the new Service. The key to success will be that they have the attitude and ability to engage with young people.

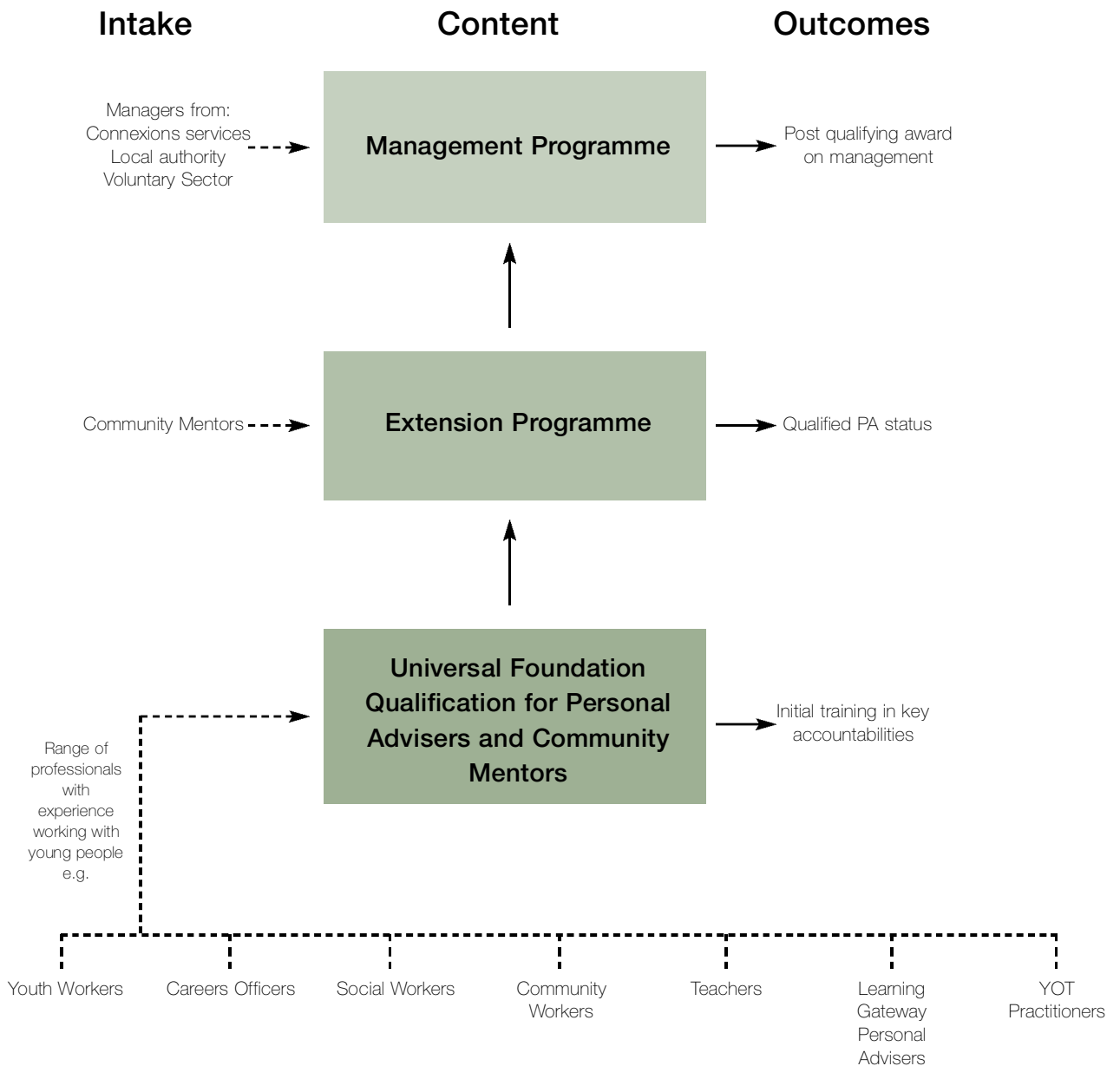
6.25 We will be developing a major training programme for Personal Advisers. To support this and ensure its coherence it will be vital that the new profession is underpinned by a robust training framework (see figure 4). We will be consulting widely on developing a new professional framework for Personal Advisers. The consultation will cover:

- ▶ whether the training programme should include:
 - ▶ a Foundation Qualification to enable relevant professionals to undertake some initial accredited training to prepare them to meet the key accountabilities of their new role. This might also provide accreditation for those from the community with the attitude and ability to engage with young people but without a professional background;
 - ▶ an Extension Programme for those Personal Advisers who wish to extend their core skills. Over the medium term, this would be the level that professionals have to reach to achieve qualified Personal Adviser status;
 - ▶ a Management Programme at post-qualifying level for managers and those wishing to become managers;
- ▶ whether there should be national occupational standards, and possibly a national training organisation (NTO), for Personal Advisers which sets occupational standards;
- ▶ whether there should be a National Centre or Professional College for Personal Advisers and others working closely with Personal Advisers, such as community mentors, to promote the key principles which underlie the Personal Adviser role. These would include, for example, multi-disciplinary practice and management, community involvement and links with neighbourhood renewal, and the promotion of evidence-based practice;

- ▶ how most efficient use can be made of ICT, via the Connexions website for professional development and support;
- ▶ what implications there would be for professionals working in closely related fields, such as the provision of information, advice and guidance for adults.

6.26 These issues of a new professional qualification are likely to have implications for other professional groups working with young people, including social workers. Arrangements for the development of a new profession, including training, will need therefore to be consistent with any developments in the reform of social work training. It will also be necessary to consider what if any form of registration will be required for this new profession and who should take responsibility for it.

Figure 4: The Personal Adviser Training Programme



Chapter 7 - Structures needed to achieve our aims for the Connexions Service

Results of the consultation on how to provide a youth support service

- 7.1** The Social Exclusion Unit's report *Bridging the Gap* set out clearly the need for the type of Personal Adviser described in the previous chapter, and proposed three possible organisational approaches to providing that service. These approaches were: (i) to channel all funding through a single lead partner in each area; (ii) to draw together key elements of the work at local level, with statutory duties on partners to collaborate in the new service; or (iii) to enhance partnership working. The three approaches were the subject of extensive consultation, both through meetings and written responses.
- 7.2** The consultation revealed strong support for the concept of the **Connexions Service**. There was a clear preference that the new service should build on the good practice that has developed through initiatives such as New Start and the Learning Gateway (described in Chapter 5), with a preference for the second rather than third option in the consultation - i.e. putting in place organisational structures which enhanced partnership working, whilst ensuring proper accountability. Respondents also felt strongly that young people should be involved in the development, delivery and ongoing monitoring of the service.
- 7.3** A more detailed analysis of the consultation outcomes can be found on the Connexions website www.connexions.gov.uk.

Proposed structure

- 7.4** The consultation generated many helpful ideas about organising the delivery of the Service. Our aim is to create a structure which, with the minimum bureaucracy, ensures proper accountability, high standards of service to young people building on best existing practice, and proper coordination of the work of Personal Advisers. We believe that the structure set out below would meet these requirements, but during the next few months we will be discussing with local partners how this model can be developed to meet the needs of young people. In brief, the Service would be delivered through a National Unit; Connexions Partnerships at the local LSC area level responsible for strategic planning and funding, and committees responsible for the day to day operational delivery of the service, usually based on local authority boundaries.

- 7.5** A wide range of organisations will need to come together to work in partnership to deliver a comprehensive and coherent support service for young people. It will take time for this to happen everywhere. The service will therefore be phased in over a period of two to three years. The exact timetable and approach will depend on the outcome of the current Spending Review and will develop in the light of the experience of pathfinders and pilots over the next year. This will allow time to test which structures work best in particular local circumstances, and to take account of further detailed consultation. Further changes may then be introduced in the light of that experience.

National Unit

- 7.6** A new National Connexions Unit will be established from spring 2000. It will have responsibility for contracting with Connexions Partnerships for the development and delivery of the service in their areas, for monitoring performance, and for quality improvement. Like the Sure Start Unit, it will be part of DfEE. But its staff will be from a range of Government Departments, youth and voluntary work, and the private sector, to reflect the multi-agency nature of the **Connexions Service**. The Unit will be based both in Sheffield and London.
- 7.7** A Chief Executive, appointed through external competition (on Nolan principles) will be responsible for establishing and developing the new Connexions Service. The National Unit will be supported by an Advisory Council drawn from other Government Departments, the private and voluntary sectors and other agencies. It will also consult widely through a range of advisory groups and mechanisms (such as a website). The National Unit will report to the inter-departmental Ministerial Group, chaired by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

Connexions Partnerships

- 7.8** Connexions Partnerships, working with local management committees, will be responsible for working out at a strategic level how the Service is to be delivered in their areas - working out how local management committees are to deliver an integrated and co-ordinated network of Personal Advisers, with access to specialist support services in each local area.
- 7.9** Connexions Partnerships will be set up in each of the areas to be covered by one of the new local Learning and Skills Council boundaries. These boundaries have been agreed by Ministers following advice from RDAs based on consultation with local partners. They reflect the local economies and job markets, travel to work and study areas which largely determine young people's job prospects. By working on the same boundaries local LSCs, Connexions Partnerships will be in a strong position to influence the pattern of education and training provision in their areas, in particular by giving feedback to local LSCs about young peoples' learning and skills needs and the suitability and quality of provision.

- 7.10** The Connexions Partnerships will be small, strategic bodies. Their membership is likely to include the Chairs of the local management committees (see paragraphs 7.15-7.20) (representing the interests of all the partners on their committees); the Chair or Chief Executive of the local LSC; and, representation from the private sector (including careers and guidance companies) and voluntary and community organisations. Each Partnership will be responsible for producing a three year Business Plan.
- 7.11** The plan will set out: the needs of young people in its area, reflecting their wide diversity of cultures, ethnicity, social-economic backgrounds and personal needs; the outcomes to be achieved; and the means by which services will be delivered to ensure that these outcomes are achieved. It will show how the delivery of the service will be shared between statutory services and services delivered by private sector companies and by voluntary and community organisations under contract to the partnership. Different approaches to delivery will be tested during the phasing in of the Service.
- 7.12** There will be a contract between the National Unit and each Partnership based on the payment of central Government funding against the Partnership's delivery plan. Contracts will only be awarded if the National Unit is satisfied that the Partnerships have included in their plans the optimum mix of delivery through private, voluntary and public partners. Private and voluntary organisations will have the opportunity to demonstrate their potential contribution both to the partnerships and to the services that are sub-contracted for local delivery, as is the case now in the delivery of the careers service.
- 7.13** As in every other area of service provision, our objectives will be to secure the highest standards and best value for money. The National Unit will be empowered to withhold funding for plans which do not demonstrate that first class provision will be delivered and the best value secured. If it does not consider that all potential partners have been given an adequate opportunity to play a part in the service, it will be required to take appropriate action, including contracting directly with private or voluntary sector organisations for the provision of particular services, and re-tendering for delivery of the service as a whole. In addition, as the service develops, rigorous inspection arrangements will ensure that services are held to account for standards, so that failure or poor performance can be addressed - and the service re-tendered if necessary.
- 7.14** The Connexions Partnership will be responsible for ensuring that the Business Plan is delivered satisfactorily, targets are met, performance monitored, and benchmarking of services undertaken. The Partnership will ensure that a database of young people in its area is created and maintained (many young people travel across local authority boundaries for education, training or work purposes). Paragraphs 8.9 and 8.10 provide more information about the database. It will also have responsibility for overseeing professional development issues and the identification and spreading of good practice.

Local delivery of the Service

- 7.15** The day to day operational management of the **Connexions Service** will be the responsibility of local committees working on county or unitary authority boundaries or, in some cases, where local partners decide it will allow a more effective service to be delivered, groupings of local authority areas. The Chairs of these committees will be local authority Chief Executives or other top level local figures and they will also be members of the new Connexions Partnerships. There will be a broad membership which will include: voluntary and community organisations, careers and guidance companies; employers; representatives of statutory services including members of Youth Offending Teams; and young people themselves.
- 7.16** The committees will be responsible for ensuring the Personal Adviser service works to uniform standards and reaches all young people without duplication of effort. It will also be responsible for managing the relationship between the Personal Advisers will need to call to help young people enter or stay in learning and play a positive role in their local communities. When thinking about the areas to be covered by the local management committees, local partners will take into account the configuration of existing partnership areas, such as those for Learning Partnerships, so that there are effective links with services such as the adult information, advice and guidance service.
- 7.17** A local manager will be responsible to the committee for the day to day management of the local service. This will include managing the relationship between Personal Advisers employed by different partners (see paragraph 6.13) and determining where Advisers work to deliver an accessible service to their clients - in schools, colleges, youth centres and 'shop front' offices - and organising the outreach work which will be needed in the community to reach young people where they meet.
- 7.18** The local management committees and Connexions Partnerships, in discussions with Head Teachers, together will agree an integrated and coherent management structure for Personal Advisers, including staff seconded to the service, and staff working under formal or informal partnership agreements. This will enable local management committees to ensure that caseloads are allocated, all young people have a Personal Adviser and that that each Personal Adviser is accountable to the Service for the level and quality of the support he or she gives to young people. It will also ensure that the local service has clear accountability for monitoring the quality of the support provided.
- 7.19** The **Connexions Service** will build on the success of existing services and initiatives, including the best careers service companies, local authority led services (eg youth and social services); Youth Offending Teams; Drug Action Teams; voluntary and community providers; employers; and school and college based support services. Local management committees and Connexions Partnerships will also draw on successful partnership working developed through Single Regeneration Budget and European funded initiatives as well as New Start, Excellence in Cities and the Learning Gateway.

7.20 As a first step towards establishing the service, mapping of current provision will be undertaken with local partners. This mapping will identify the strengths and weaknesses of current arrangements in meeting the need of young people. It will be essential that it includes both an analysis of the contribution that the private, voluntary and community sectors will be able to make to the delivery of the service, and how the particular needs of young people from minority ethnic groups can be met. It is envisaged that local delivery plans from areas with high quality existing private sector run careers services would include a substantial role for those services, as well as those from the voluntary and community sector. This work will be taken forward into delivery plans, with partners testing the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector delivery against delivery in other ways.

Key services that will contribute to the new youth support arrangements

Careers Services

Many careers service companies have been responding positively to the development of a number of important initiatives introduced since the election. They include working in partnership with schools and colleges in providing information, advice and guidance to young people and in delivering the Personal Adviser support in the new Learning Gateway for 16 and 17 year olds. Many careers service companies have also been active partners in helping develop New Deal, New Start and the Information, Advice and Guidance Networks for Adults. We therefore expect that the new Connexions Partnerships and local management committees will build on the skills and experience that exists within careers service companies. The **Connexions Service** will offer challenging new posts to be filled by people with appropriate competence and skills - from the careers service, Youth Service and other statutory, community and voluntary organisations. Careers information, advice and guidance will continue to be an important element of the overall service for young people.

Private and not-for-profit careers service companies will have the opportunity to demonstrate their potential contribution both to the partnerships and to the services that are sub-contracted for local delivery. The National Unit will need to ensure that the role played by all relevant agencies in: the formal membership of the partnership at the LSC level; the production of the business plan; and service delivery; have all been properly assessed, before awarding a contract to the Connexions Partnership.

The phased introduction of the Connexions Service will allow various approaches to the involvement of existing Careers service companies in the new service to be examined. These will depend, in part, on the type and number of existing Careers service companies in each Connexions Partnership area. For example:

In those areas with partnership careers companies - Partnership companies are already looking at their structures in the light of the introduction of the LSCs. This gives them the opportunity to consider how their existing functions can be incorporated within the wider Connexions Partnerships and local management committees.

In those areas with private sector careers companies - These companies will be offered the opportunity to contribute to the partnerships and to deliver parts of the personal adviser service or undertake specialist sub-contracted work. Such work might include in-depth careers advice and guidance.

Other possible models may be developed by local partners during the phasing in of the Service. The key issue will be to develop arrangements that assist the integration of support service for young people and, in particular, the development of the new professional Personal Adviser service. It will also be important to ensure that there is sufficient careers guidance expertise to support not only young people but also the adult information, advice and guidance networks which will be funded by the LSC.

With support from the Careers Services National Association (CSNA), the DfEE has established a group to produce guidance during the next few months on transitional issues facing careers service companies as the Service develops.

Youth Service

The youth services, both statutory and voluntary, already perform a range of valuable support functions for young people, and often undertake excellent outreach and personal adviser work. They will make an important contribution to the wider work of the **Connexions Service**. As part of their contribution to the Service, local authorities will be expected to incorporate their outreach and detached youth workers within the multi-disciplinary teams of Personal Advisers created at local level. But, when devoting resources to the **Connexions Service**, it will also be important that local authorities preserve the wider work of youth services in their areas, and that these activities are integrated with the Connexions service. Such work includes centre based and residential activities with groups of young people, and that provided by voluntary organisations with local authority funding - for instance motivation/outward bound work. The **Connexions Service** will have an important role in ensuring that all youth service activity is effectively co-ordinated, coherent, and that gaps in provision are filled.

The DfEE, working with the Local Government Association, the Standing Conference of Principal Youth and Community Officers, the National Youth Agency, the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services and others representing statutory and voluntary youth services will also be producing guidance, on the implications of developing the **Connexions Service** for youth services. It remains the Government's intention, that LEAs continue to provide youth services, and retain the powers to do so.

Youth Offending Teams

Youth Offending Teams will be closely linked to the **Connexions Service**, providing Personal Adviser support to young offenders, and working with the Service on crime prevention. They have already instigated partnerships working by the key partners in the Connexions Partnerships, and will have a key role in the local management committees. The **Connexions Service** will allow YOT Personal Advisers to develop further the range of support they can offer young people, and ensure that young people's progress is closely monitored whilst under the supervision of YOTs and beyond.

Education Welfare Service

In relation to its work with secondary age pupils, the work of Education Welfare Services is clearly a critical part of the **Connexions Service** in delivering advice and guidance. This will secure advice and guidance, and specialist support, to enforcement of parental responsibilities towards educating children of compulsory school age, including regular attendance at school. The precise role of Education Welfare Officers and their relationship to Personal Advisers is currently under consideration by the Government following the publication of *Tackling Truancy Together*.

Learning Mentors

The Personal Adviser for most 13-16 year old children will be a Learning Mentor based in their school. He or she will be appointed and managed by the Head Teacher (including Heads of Pupil Referral Units) but operate as part of the integrated **Connexions Service** in their local delivery area.

Care Leaver Personal Advisers

The specialist personal advisers being introduced to support young people aged 16 and over in and leaving care will act as the **Connexions Service** adviser for this group of young people.

Specialist services with which the Connexions Service will work

Social Services

Social Services will continue to provide support for children in need, including looked-after children and their families and child protection.

Employment Service and Benefits Agency

The Employment Service will continue to have responsibility, as now, for job broking services for 18-19 year olds who have joined the labour market. The Employment Service will also retain responsibility for providing specialist support to 18 and 19 year olds under the New Deal for 18-24 year olds. The Employment Service and Benefits Agency will continue to administer claims to benefit with the support function currently undertaken by the careers service for young people aged 16 or 17 who are claiming benefit transferred to the **Connexions Service**.

Other services

Personal Advisers will also have a key role acting as an advocate to ensure each young person gains access to a range of other sources of specialist support for young people. These include: Health Services, including the vital contribution of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services; Drug Action Teams; the Educational Psychology Service; Learning Disability Services, Housing Departments and Social Landlords.

Working closely with the Learning and Skills Councils

7.21 There will be close links between the **Connexions Service** and the Learning and Skills Councils at both local and national levels. At national level the Head of the National Connexions Service Unit will be invited to attend meetings of the LSC and its Young People's Learning Committee. At local level the Connexions Partnership will be invited to attend meetings of the Board of the local Learning and Skills Council as observers. The local **Connexions Service** will advise the local LSC on gaps in provision and provide feedback on the quality, and on trends in, and reasons for, non-participation. The local LSC will provide labour market information including skill shortages to the local **Connexions Service**. They will work together to improve advice and information to young people about post-16 opportunities and to ensure pre/post-16 coherence. This will be aided by having compatible IT systems to aid joint access and information sharing.

7.22 The new Service will work with the local Learning Partnerships on developing strategies to match provision to the needs of young people and adults at local level. They will help develop and co-ordinate innovative approaches that work locally. The detailed knowledge assembled by Personal Advisers of their clients' experiences in learning should provide a powerful impetus to the encouragement of improvements by providers in the Learning Partnerships.

Chapter 8 - Key design features and systems

Involving young people in the design and delivery of Connexions.

- 8.1** From the outset, ways have been sought for young people to be directly involved at all levels of policy development, in developing and delivering the Service locally and in ensuring that the service continues to meet their needs.
- 8.2** This began with extensive consultation of young people - over 600, in small groups and around the country. They were asked first about the range of problems and issues that affected them; second, about what they thought of the notion of Personal Advisers and how they should work with young people; and finally, about how the new Service should operate. Some of their views are highlighted in the box below and these views are reflected in the policies and structures set out in this document.

Views of young people

We consulted a broad range of young people.

The **most frequently mentioned problems** (without prompting) were:

- ▶ Drugs;
- ▶ Decisions about education, training and employment;
- ▶ Bullying and harassment;
- ▶ Lack of money and debt;
- ▶ Contraception and pregnancy;
- ▶ Problems with the law.

A wide range of other issues for young people were mentioned.

On the **Personal Adviser**, there was general agreement that:

- ▶ there should be at least one person whom a young person can get to know and trust, and who will understand their needs;
- ▶ the Personal Adviser should be someone who is prepared to act in an advocacy role for the young person;

and on a number of key attributes that a personal adviser would need. The personal qualities of the staff were seen as key to making the young people more likely to use the service.

There was general agreement that **young people themselves should be involved in deciding:**

- ▶ Opening hours;
- ▶ Location and type of premises;
- ▶ Range of services;
- ▶ Quality of Services;
- ▶ Having a say in who their Personal Adviser should be;
- ▶ Having their privacy and confidentiality respected.

8.3 The Service as it develops nationally and locally will continue to take account of the views of young people. Young people will be included in the governance of the new service. They will be represented on the National Advisory Council, Local Learning Partnerships have a role in drawing on effective existing arrangements for obtaining the views of young people. The **Connexions Service**, will lead on establishing and maintaining appropriate mechanisms for feedback. Connexions partnerships will have a clear strategy for engaging young people in their work, through local consultative arrangements, representation on the partnership board and through regular surveys of their views.

8.4 Regional and National Youth Councils will contribute to the development of the wider policy affecting young people, the **Connexions strategy** and the future development of the service, linked with the possible development of a Youth Parliament.

Quality framework

8.5 The **Connexions Service** will build on the best practice of multi-agency working and will have a quality framework to support continuous improvement in the help and guidance it gives to young people. The quality framework will have two main elements: target setting and benchmarking; and audit and inspection.

Target Setting and Benchmarking

- 8.6** Details of the targets which the service will support are set out in paragraphs 6.7-6.9. The service will also be set detailed management, performance and delivery targets as part of the contracting process.
- 8.7** Connexions Partnerships will be required to **benchmark** their performance against other partnerships, and more widely, both in relation to the targets set for them, and through more detailed monitoring of performance and client satisfaction surveys. Connexions partnership companies will also be required to put in place **quality systems** covering five key principles: accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, people, and continuous improvement.

Inspection

- 8.8** The **Connexions Service** will be subject to full inspection. The inspection framework and inspection process will be designed to reflect the multi-agency approach that the Service will be adopting, and the range of partners involved. OFSTED will take a leading role, because it already has responsibility for inspecting many of the services being brought together under the **Connexions Service** 'umbrella'. It will, however, involve other inspectorates with an interest in the Service as appropriate. The inspection and QA framework will be developed alongside those for related areas such as post-16 provision and information, advice and guidance for adults.

National and local database of information about young people

- 8.9** In order to ensure that young people do not fall through the net, or become lost to the **Connexions Service**, a database to track their progress through their teenage years will be established. The aim of the database will be to ensure that the **Connexions Service** is aware of all young people and their education, training or employment status. It will maintain the record of the services support to individual and referrals to other agencies. It will allow monitoring of the help provided to those not in learning or at risk of becoming disconnected from their current learning or work.
- 8.10** The database is likely to have national, local and possibly regional components. Key data for national monitoring and analysis will be anonymised, although there is also a need for a small team in the National Unit to help identify young people moving between areas. At local level, the database will be accessible to many different agencies and professional. Clear protocols will be established to cover data exchange and access, which will be strictly controlled on a need to know basis, to preserve client confidentiality.

Communication

- 8.11** Connexions can only succeed if parents and carers, young people, teachers, employers and practitioners get involved. Your views are needed.
- 8.12** A web site, 'www.connexions.gov.uk', has been set up which will be the home for all of our communications. There is already a lot of information and interactive features for young people about career choices, about what to study for and where to study. Sections of the web site are being developed specifically for parents, linked to the DfEE Parents' web site, for practitioners, who will be interested in the work of Personal Advisers and the skills they need, and for employers. Feedback on the youth support service consultation can also be found on the web site. Everyone, but especially young people, is encouraged to let us know what they think of the site and of the work we are doing.
- 8.13** The feasibility of 'Connexions Direct' - a call-centre/on-line assessment, information and guidance support model for young people and their parents or carers, is also being considered.

Chapter 9 - Next steps and pathfinders

- 9.1** The development of the new **Connexions Service** is an important priority for the Government. We are keen to see progress in developing the new service. It is clear from our consultation that the majority of people support our vision and objectives, but feel that we need to learn from what is already in place and from what can be achieved by enhancing existing support for young people as well as bringing on stream new, radical approaches. We have to get the ingredients right from the point of view of the young person using the Service.
- 9.2** We want to be able to see what is working now and what could work better, as well as testing out brand new ideas. We shall be working with partners to see what will work and will introduce changes over time in the light of our experience. This applies to creation of the network of Personal Advisers at the heart of the new Service and also to the structures needed to support that network.
- 9.3** Strong partnerships will be at the heart of the structures for the new Service. We recognise that some areas may find the partnerships we shall be looking for easier to achieve than others. We shall therefore be looking for a phased approach to introducing the new service. We will aim to have a few early pathfinders and see a phased introduction of the new service from April 2001.
- 9.4** Partnerships seeking to deliver the new **Connexions Service** will have to demonstrate that they have appropriate structures in place to provide a quality service for young people. This Chapter sets out the next steps in developing the **Connexions Service**.

Pathfinders and Pilots

- 9.5** In order to test out key elements of the service and learn from the work of local partners we will be phasing in the **Connexions Service** from April 2001. We will also be working with partners in a few areas from April 2000 to develop Pathfinders Connexion Services, and with others to create an informal network to pilot key aspects of the Service. These will include:
- A.** How the Personal Adviser role will operate - including an assessment of case-loads - and ensure significantly more effective transitions for young people whatever their circumstances.
 - B.** The effectiveness of the Personal Adviser role in gaining access to appropriate specialist services for young people.
 - C.** An integrated assessment, planning and review system with supporting database that meets the needs of relevant agencies and their professionals.
 - D.** A planning system that integrates as many other relevant plans as possible, quantifying need and mapping provision.

- E.** The role of the voluntary sector and community groups.
- F.** Approaches to working with young people from minority ethnic communities
- G.** 'Connexions Direct' - developing the call centre/on-line support model for self and professional assessment of young people.

Establishing the new Service - Proposed timetable

- 9.6** A number of steps will be taken to put in place the infrastructure for the new **Connexions Service**. The proposed timetable is as follows:

February 2000

- ▶ recruiting the Head of the National Unit;
- ▶ developing the detailed specification for the new Service with the support of a working group
- ▶ with the support of Government Offices, holding discussions with local partners in each region on how they can start preparing for the new arrangements. Views will be sought on the local structures that need to be developed and transitional arrangements.

Spring 2000

- ▶ publication of a more detailed Prospectus and Specification for the new service against which strategic alliances of partners will be asked to put forward their plans. The Prospectus and Specification will outline arrangements for undertaking mapping of provision in each area and arrangements for partners signing heads of agreement to establish the new Connexions Partnerships. The Specification will set out the targets the Service will have to meet, including specific targets on mainstreaming equal opportunities. A development fund has been established to assist local partners to help with preparatory work and further information about this will be included in the Connexions Prospectus and Specification.
- ▶ consulting on arrangements for a new profession of Personal Adviser.
- ▶ establishing the National Connexions Unit with responsibility for setting up the new **Connexions Service**;
- ▶ the launch of 'pathfinders' to test out the development and delivery of the new youth support arrangements.
- ▶ Outline Partnership Plans received setting out details of how partners intend to develop the Service, the timescale and the handling of transitional issues.

Summer 2000

- ▶ Announcement of funding and contracting arrangements;
- ▶ Connexions Partnership Workshops on sharing good practice;
- ▶ Announcement of phase 1 areas to run the new Service from April 2001.

Autumn 2000

- ▶ Issue of final planning guidance to those bidding to run the new service from April 2001;
- ▶ Receipt of business plans from phase 1 areas.

December 2000

- ▶ Final approval of business plans.

April 2001

- ▶ Launch of phase 1 area services;
- ▶ Invitation for phase 2.

Summer 2001

- ▶ Announcement of phase 2 areas.

Autumn 2001

- ▶ Receipt of phase 2 area business plans.

December 2001

- ▶ Final approval of phase 2 area business plans.

April 2002

- ▶ Launch of phase 2 area services.

Notes

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