

Making a difference
Emerging Practice

Connexions and
the RNIB



connexions
The best start in life for
every young person

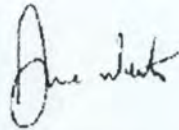
Foreword

Connexions aims to provide integrated advice, guidance and access to personal development opportunities for young people aged 13 to 19 to help them make a smooth transition to adulthood and working life. If Connexions is to realise its vision of meeting the diverse needs of young people, then Connexions Partnerships will need to work to engage the voluntary and community sector. They have a wealth of expertise to offer, developing innovative ways to engage young people failed by traditional methods. Connexions wants to build upon existing practice, to offer the best possible start in life to all young people.

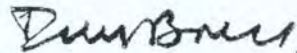
This booklet builds on the publication 'Working Together - Connexions with Voluntary and Community Organisations'. It provides examples of how the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) and Connexions have worked together for the benefit of blind and partially-sighted young people.

There is already a great deal of good partnership working taking place between Connexions and the voluntary and community sector. Excellent support is being provided to young people who face specific and often considerable barriers to learning and accessing employment opportunities.

Connexions Service National Unit and the RNIB hope that this booklet will inspire and encourage the further development of productive partnership working between Connexions and the voluntary and community sector and are particularly pleased to publish this booklet during, and as part of our support for, the European Year of Disabled People 2003.



Anne Weinstock
Chief Executive
Connexions



Professor Ian Bruce
Director General
RNIB

Introduction

This booklet is designed to show how the voluntary and community sector and Connexions Partnerships, working effectively together, can help to attain some of the challenging and important principles on which Connexions is built:

- **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**

Voluntary and community organisations are key partners in the successful delivery of Connexions and offer a reservoir of specialist support, resource and advice targeted at individuals with specific needs. These principles will only be obtained through effective partnership working.

Initial experiences of the relationship between Connexions and the voluntary and community sector suggest that progress still needs to be made in order to bring them closer together. A recent Ofsted report on the provision made by Connexions Partnerships from July 2001 to March 2002 commented that although

"the voluntary sector is well represented in business plans...many voluntary sector partners do not have the infrastructure and capacity to engage fully with the Connexions Service. In the early weeks of one Partnership, only 35 of 780 voluntary and community groups responded to a consultation exercise".¹

In addition, a recent focus on Connexions in *The Guardian*² backed up these concerns by pointing out that "some voluntary groups, whose expertise is required for Connexions to work, say that a smooth working relationship has yet to emerge. But the links between Connexions and the voluntary sector are still in their infancy, and all agree that much needs to be done to bring services with the same aims closer together."

The case studies provided in this booklet show how the RNIB has attempted to respond to some of these issues. It shows the reciprocal benefits to be gained by Connexions Partnerships working with voluntary and community sector organisations that can offer a range of specialist services to enhance the provision already available. It is hoped that it will provide other voluntary and community sector organisations and Connexions Partnerships with practical ideas of how they might work together.

About RNIB

RNIB is a large national charity. Its mission is to challenge blindness by empowering people who are blind or partially-sighted, removing the barriers they face and helping to prevent blindness. Like many large charities it works with a wide range of people and addresses a broad spectrum of needs. For this reason RNIB has a divisional structure and each division has a specific focus. Most of the activities described in the following pages were initiated by RNIB's Education and Employment (E&E) Division.

As its name suggests, the RNIB E&E Division provides a range of services to support the learning and employment needs of blind and partially-sighted people throughout England. It has a regional structure with E&E centres in London and the South East, South West, West Midlands, East Midlands, North West and North East.

In common with most, if not all, voluntary and community sector organisations, RNIB has limited resources with which to reach the many people who could benefit from its services, especially when it is endeavouring to provide services across a whole region. It is vital, therefore, that it maximises its impact by working in partnership with key networks. In practice, this means that RNIB staff work alongside professionals in other organisations, providing inputs such as training and consultancy, helping staff in mainstream organisations develop skills and knowledge that enable them to meet the particular needs of blind and partially-sighted people.



Development of RNIB Links with Connexions across England

Background

When Connexions was launched in 2000, RNIB E&E Division quickly recognised that this was likely to become one of the most significant initiatives with which it should be working. It was apparent that by developing effective links with Connexions Partnerships, RNIB would quickly increase its capacity to ensure that the needs of blind and partially-sighted people were being met. In short, it was clear that the development of links with Connexions was likely to bring great benefits, not only to RNIB and its clients, but to Connexions as well.

In response to the launch of Connexions, RNIB E&E Division identified a Connexions Link Officer in each of its regional centres. The role of the Link Officer was to act as a co-ordinator of Connexions development within each region. However, it was expected that the majority of E&E staff would also have contact with Connexions Partnerships as part of their role.

Since January 2001, each E&E centre has been working with at least one Connexions Partnership in its region. This is enabling both RNIB and Connexions to develop joint activities that can be built on and implemented more widely in the future. Some of these activities are described in the following pages.

The development process

Development of links has taken place in three stages:

1. Awareness raising of the scope of RNIB's services

In the early days of Connexions, it was clear that new and developing Connexions Partnerships and other key organisations were not aware of the nature and scope of services that RNIB could provide.

Soon after Connexions was launched, in addition to attending meetings and seminars and delivering presentations locally, RNIB held a national conference called "Making Connexions Work". One hundred and fifty delegates attended from a range of careers, youth services, voluntary and community groups, and other agencies involved with supporting young people aged 13 to 19. One of the most powerful elements of the event was a video that showed visually impaired clients' experiences of learning and progression.

Positive outcomes include:

- many delegates stated that they went away with a much clearer understanding of and empathy with the barriers that face blind and partially-sighted young people during transition;
- a number said that experiences described by young people in the video had had a particularly strong impact on their thinking;
- numerous delegates said that the conference would make them think more carefully about the way in which their services responded to the needs of blind and partially-sighted young people in the future;

- many stated that the conference had made them appreciate the huge potential value of developing partnerships between Connexions Partnerships and specialist voluntary and community sector organisations like RNIB;
- a large number of partnership links were established as a result of the conference, some of these resulting in the developments described in this booklet.

2. Strategic involvement

By making contact with Connexions Partnerships at an early stage, RNIB have been able to input specialist advice on the development and delivery of their services by for example:

- becoming an elected representative for the voluntary and community sector on the Regional Connexions Forum, convened by the Regional Government Office and including representatives from NHS Executive, Home Office Crime Reduction Team, Jobcentre Plus, Regional Development Agency, British Youth Council, Youth Justice Board. This provided RNIB with strategic links with Connexions Partnerships across a whole region, as well as providing a voice for the voluntary and community sector;
- being involved in the establishment of a Voluntary Sector Regional Forum;
- at the invitation of Government Offices, commenting on Connexions Partnerships' business plans to try to ensure the needs of visually impaired young people are being met and advising on how Connexions can develop further effective links with the voluntary sector.

Positive outcomes include:

- ensuring that the voluntary and community sector as a whole has had a practical influence on Connexions at an early stage;
- demonstrating how a diverse and potentially disparate range of voluntary and community sector organisations can have a collective voice within an important initiative;
- ensuring that Connexions business plans are informed by the specialist knowledge and in-depth experience of a wide range of voluntary sector organisations;
- helping Connexions Partnerships to identify and "map" the voluntary sector organisations that can help them meet the needs of their clients.

3. Practical involvement

The provision of information, advice and guidance to blind and partially-sighted people is an integral part of RNIB's services. Connexions Personal Advisers will often need to refer young people with disabilities to specialist advisers and RNIB staff may be called in to advise on particular issues. But there are many other forms of support that RNIB can offer.

The case studies following show a number of ways in which RNIB has provided practical support to Connexions Partnerships.

In a number of areas, RNIB is working with Connexions to develop a clearer understanding of how they can work together, and partnership agreements are being developed.

The Connexions Partnerships with which RNIB has worked have all expressed their willingness to share partnership agreement documentation upon request. RNIB is happy to co-ordinate any requests of this kind - please refer to contact details at the end of this booklet.

Case Study 1: Provision of a disability audit service to a Connexions Partnership

Background

Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP) is particularly committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity is at the heart of all its work. It identified at an early stage a need to review its compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and contracted with RNIB to undertake a pan-disability audit within the Partnership.

Action

To ensure that RNIB officers carrying out the audit had an understanding of the culture of the organisation and an awareness of its policies and procedures, key GMCP documentation, including the business plan, was made available to them.

To ensure mutual understanding and facilitate ownership by GMCP, a team of relevant GMCP area managers met with RNIB regional officers for Post-16 Education, Employment and Technology and agreed a strategy for undertaking this audit. This included:

- a half-day session including a presentation to GMCP senior managers to provide them with background information on the DDA and an outline of GMCP's responsibilities under the legislation. The rationale for undertaking an audit was considered, as well as its nature and scope;

- consultation with disabled clients;
- visits to all Connexions Centres across the Partnership area;
- a presentation of the findings to GMCP managers.

The audit was conducted between July and October 2002 and the final audit report was produced in December 2002. It produced recommendations covering:

- access to services;
- the guidance and information available to disabled clients;
- the provision of suitable information and communication technology;
- physical access to buildings and facilities resulting from detailed, technical audits of all premises;
- similar access issues relating to disabled members of staff.



Tactile lift control

RNIB delivered presentations to all team managers, corporate managers, chief executives and area connexions managers. The presentations focused on:

1. Disability awareness and rationale/strategy for audit
2. Audit report findings/recommendations and summative action plan

Outcomes

Positive outcomes include:

- responsibility for the audit undertaken by a member of the Partnership Chief Executive's Team;
- commitment to the audit process (including response to its findings) throughout the Partnership;
- specific involvement of the Partnership finance director, enabling speedy decisions relating to financing physical changes to premises;
- an action plan which is monitored by the Access Strategy Team on a quarterly basis and GMCP await their first review meeting shortly;
- increased disability awareness of all Connexions staff, both in terms of service provision and informing the premises strategy.

GMCP views

GMCP says: 'It takes some courage to open the doors to another organisation and let them see it, warts and all!! This is what we did when we invited RNIB to conduct the audit. We believe that RNIB involvement has enabled us to produce an action plan that will ensure we can comply with the DDA. We will build on this work by the further development of effective partnership working with RNIB and other voluntary and community sector bodies. RNIB will be appointed to do a further evaluation of progress made in 12 to 18 months' time. The lead professionals in each organisation continue to maintain regular communication between the partners. This work has also prompted us to consider how we can further our commitment to gender, race equality and social inclusion.'

Further information

For further information on this work, contact:

Jan Langley
SEN/LDD Manager
Tel: 0151 230 4454
Email: jan.langley@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk

or

David Barlow
Finance and Corporate Services Director
Tel: 0151 703 7400
Email: david.barlow@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk

Case Study 2: RNIB involvement in Personal Adviser training

Background

Since July 2001, three Post-16 Education Officers from RNIB have successfully completed the Connexions Diploma for Personal Advisers in three separate regions. One of these officers subsequently became an associate lecturer delivering both the Personal Adviser Diploma and Understanding Connexions courses with the College of St Mark and St John (Marjon). A number of important benefits (to the RNIB and other voluntary and community sector organisations, Connexions Partnerships and mutual clients) have emerged from this direct involvement as both participant and deliverer.

Benefits

RNIB's experience has shown that a key benefit of voluntary and community sector involvement in both receiving and delivering Personal Adviser training is facilitation of long-term partnerships and inter-agency working between the voluntary and community sectors, Connexions and other organisations. This can enable voluntary and community sector organisations to maximise their impact because they start to operate within more robust professional networks. This improves referral processes and enhances the skills of mainstream advisers so that they can work even more effectively with clients who require specialist support.

Specific benefits include:

- facilitating the development of more reflective working practices - learning from the experiences of staff from other backgrounds;
- providing a broader awareness of how Connexions works, especially in terms of broader links with the voluntary and community sector, other agencies and the issues facing personal advisers in their work;
- helping to provide a broader context for the use of the APIR (Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review) Framework;
- raising awareness of 'person-centred' approaches to working with clients;
- raising awareness of the barriers to learning and accessing employment opportunities that some young people face (eg. homelessness, substance abuse);
- facilitating broader networking opportunities;
- developing a clearer understanding of the challenges involved in developing effective partnerships and different methods of working;
- the RNIB associate lecturer's knowledge of the post-compulsory education sector in terms of funding, provision, and legislation, in relation to disability issues, helped to bring a useful dimension to the training sessions.

Outcomes

Positive outcomes include:

- visual awareness training has become an integral part of the Learning Difficulties and Disabilities training strategy of a Connexions Partnership;
- staff development events have been negotiated between a number of Connexions Partnerships and RNIB. These have included customised training and short courses for Personal Advisers run by RNIB;
- Connexions staff attend courses run as part of the RNIB's regular training programme, which includes training on visual awareness, the Disability Discrimination Act and access technology;
- RNIB has received funding from West of England Connexions to set up Young People's Information Points. As a result RNIB staff will shortly be working alongside Connexions Personal Advisers, offering information, advice and guidance to blind and partially-sighted young people in the West of England, both from the RNIB centre in Bristol and also in schools, colleges and community venues.

Summary

For a 'specialist' disability organisation like RNIB, it has proved highly beneficial to work so directly with personal advisers. It has helped RNIB staff to ensure that clients with specialist support needs are provided with an 'inclusive' service where they receive the benefits of mainstream resources, but can also access more specialised support whenever this is required.

It has been a catalyst for establishing robust, professional networks and partnerships that will ensure long-term benefits for both staff and clients.

This has been an extremely positive experience for RNIB and other voluntary and community sector organisations are strongly encouraged to contact their local Connexions Partnerships to discuss how they can participate in or become involved in delivering PA training.

Case Study 3: Provision of a specialist Personal Adviser service to clients in Partnership with local Connexions staff

Background

This section provides two case studies in which RNIB has worked closely with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP). In both cases, the clients have worked intensively with both Connexions staff and RNIB's Post-16 education officer.

The personal adviser involved with both of these clients has for some years been based at the large, mainstream comprehensive school that they both attend. This has a Visual Impairment (VI) Unit. The VI Unit provides a resource base for specialist teachers of the blind and other staff.

Case Study 3a

Andrew (not his real name) is registered partially-sighted. His personal adviser identified a number of potential barriers to Andrew making a successful transition to adult life that were likely to require long-term support from Connexions. These included Andrew's:

- lack of career ideas;
- visual impairment;
- unreliability in turning up for appointments;
- difficulty in communicating with people in authority.

Action

The personal adviser made contact with the RNIB's Post-16 education officer and they agreed to work together to support Andrew to overcome these barriers.

Lack of career ideas:

Both Connexions and RNIB staff felt that Andrew would benefit from a work placement. The Individual Development Plan drawn up by the personal adviser included vocational training with a local training provider. The training course included key skills (communication, numeracy and information technology), confidence building and a series of work placements. This included assisting in the production of materials in Braille, and how to use computer-based technology for transcription purposes. This was an effective experience for Andrew because it enabled him to sample jobs and a variety of tasks which helped him to firm up his learning and career plans, identifying a particular interest in desk-top publishing and printing.

Visual Impairment:

The RNIB officer met with Andrew to explore issues related to his sight loss and to discuss these in the context of his career ideas. To address his sight issues, Andrew needed training in the proper use of magnification aids (hand-held magnifier and monocular) and in mobility.

The next step was for the RNIB education officer, in conjunction with a technology officer, to carry out a work-based learning assessment. This looked at the full impact of Andrew's visual impairment on his learning experience. The assessment considered how Andrew would access written material (using a combination of magnification aids, large print, access technology and reader support), take notes and cope with practical work-based issues.



Large print diary

Unreliability in turning up for appointments:

Since November 2002, Andrew's Connexions support has transferred from a personal adviser based in his school to one based near his home. Up-to-date client records and detailed "hand-over" discussions between the RNIB officer and the two personal advisers helped to ensure that Andrew received continuity of support. As a result of this, the new personal adviser has been able to build on the support and assessment services provided by RNIB. Since November, the personal adviser has met with Andrew on four occasions, each time undertaking a home visit. Home visits have been arranged, partly as a result of Andrew's frequent failure to turn up for meetings elsewhere and partly to make him more comfortable by meeting in a familiar environment.

Difficulty in communicating with people in authority:

The personal adviser now feels that Andrew is communicating more effectively with him. During their first two meetings the personal adviser spent time gaining Andrew's confidence by talking to him informally about his general interests. By the third visit, Andrew was starting to put forward some ideas of his own. Andrew and his personal adviser are now hoping to take forward his interest in the arts and computers by looking into college courses (particularly as the college is opening up a new site near his home) and work-based training options linked to computer-aided design.

Outcomes

The ways in which RNIB and Connexions have worked together in this case have demonstrated the value of bringing together two complementary sets of skills for the benefit of a client. Connexions has helped Andrew to identify his career and learning options and RNIB has helped Andrew to look at these in the context of his sight difficulties. Specifically RNIB and Connexions support has:-

- shown Andrew the possibilities of ICT within the learning and employment context;
- advised Andrew about careers being open to blind and partially-sighted people, thereby broadening his career aspirations;
- offered Andrew support from an organisation that has an understanding of visual impairment, (which has also been very important for his mother);
- offered Andrew an advocacy service that will work with him to help him articulate his needs;
- given Andrew the confidence to look beyond his "disability" when looking at work and learning.

Andrew will continue to receive the support that he needs over a longer term to make further progress on overcoming barriers to progression.

Case Study 3b

Whereas Andrew was classed by Connexions as a "maximum support" case, Ben (not his real name) received "light-touch" support from Connexions. This reflected an assessment of his needs and of the level of resources provided by the school to support him. His SEN statement provided him with the option of further Connexions support (until his 25th birthday if required) but Ben did not feel that this was necessary. He felt, and the Connexions Personal Adviser agreed, that the advice he had received in his Year 9 and Year 11 reviews together with the support of the VI Unit were enough to enable him to reach his full potential by progression to a suitable university. It was agreed that it would be appropriate for Ben to stay at his current school to complete his A' levels because he would have the support of a VI Unit and of staff who were familiar with his needs.

Action

In the spring term of his final year at school, Ben was referred to RNIB and had an interview with a Post-16 education officer. Discussions included:-

- the need to consider both the academic reputation of the course and the support offered to students with a visual; impairment, when choosing a university.
- making early contact with the university's disability adviser and requesting a copy of their Disability Statement;
- the Disabled students' Allowance (DSA) and how it could help to pay for extra study-related costs associated with his disability.

When Ben received a conditional offer, RNIB carried out a learning needs assessment so that he could access his DSA from the local education authority (LEA). The assessment covered how Ben's sight loss impacted on a range of issues including:

- access to written information;
- mobility and transport;
- note-taking;
- research strategies (including accessing the Internet);
- practical issues in the laboratory;
- the use of personal support workers;
- computer access using adaptive technology.



Adaptive software at Connexions

Outcomes

Ben is now coming to the end of his first year at university and is doing well. He no longer requires any significant input from RNIB or Connexions. However, he knows and appreciates that both organisations are there to help should any issues arise in the future.

To build on this successful joint working, a service-level agreement between RNIB and the Connexions Partnership is currently being developed. Anyone requiring more information about this development is welcome to contact RNIB (see contacts at the end of this booklet).

Comments

"RNIB helped to ensure that the transition from school to university was pretty smooth. Without their help, I wouldn't have known who to contact at the university". (Ben).

"I felt that the Personal Adviser had made all the right suggestions in devising Andrew's careers programme. I was there to fill in the gaps around issues to do with visual impairment". (RNIB Post-16 education officer)

"It is good knowing that support is available and is tailored to individual and family needs, particularly for those visually impaired young people with additional complications...this feeds into their action plans which then feed into future programmes with training providers". (Connexions Personal Adviser).

Case Study 4: Providing Connexions Staff with practical support in making information accessible to blind and partially sighted clients

Background

Blind and partially-sighted people access information in different ways including standard print, large print, tape, braille, computer disk, e-mail or over the Internet. As well as it being fair to offer information in a way that is accessible to everyone, organisations also have a legal obligation to do so. Following implementation of section 21 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in 1999, organisations have to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure blind and partially-sighted people can access their service. RNIB's See it Right campaign makes information providers aware of the information needs of blind and partially-sighted people and offers practical advice on how to meet these needs.



PC for Braille users

RNIB has a national network of transcription centres which transform anything from print into a format which is accessible for visually impaired people. It has also produced Clear Print Guidelines. While blind and partially-sighted people access print information in different ways, for many people well designed print which follows RNIB's Clear Print guidelines will be enough. In addition, well-designed Clear Print documents will benefit everybody by making information easier to access. Clear Print documents use a minimum type size of 12 point (although RNIB recommends 14 point to reach more customers with sight problems). In producing Clear Print, RNIB provides guidelines concerning basic design elements including font, type size, type weight, contrast, page navigation, and use of images and illustrations.



Document magnifier

Action

Connexions Cornwall and Devon were increasingly being asked by clients for information in formats other than standard print and approached RNIB for help.

As a result RNIB have transcribed a number of documents for Connexions Cornwall and Devon, including:-

- a recruitment pack on audio tape;
- a set of six careers information factsheets on audio tape;
- Go4 Careers Advice for Adults on audio tape;
- a set of nine employment factsheets in braille;
- the Cornwall and Devon Business Plan Summary Guide 2001/2004 in braille, large print and on audio tape.

As well as having material transcribed by RNIB, Connexions Cornwall and Devon have also taken into account RNIB's Clear Print guidelines when producing their accessible information policy. In addition, they are currently producing guidelines for their staff in how to deal with requests for information on alternative formats. For further information, please contact:

Elaine Thomas,
Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator
Connexions Cornwall and Devon
Tel: 01566 777672

Gill Cowstill
RNIB Transcription Service
Tel: 01752 690092

Outcomes

Staff at both RNIB and Connexions feel that the joint work has benefited clients. It has enabled Connexions to reach a wider audience, who would not previously have been able to access recruitment information independently. It is early days, but as a result of this work, Connexions are expecting to receive increasing numbers of applications from blind and partially sighted people. This will be monitored through their equal opportunities monitoring procedures.

"From our point of view, the crucial thing about linking with other organisations is to enable our blind and partially-sighted clients to be able to access information independently". (Centre manager, RNIB Ivybridge).

"It has allowed greater access to our services and the turnaround time has been excellent. The feedback from clients has been very positive". (Area information co-ordinator, Connexions Cornwall and Devon).

Way forward

As with other policy areas, RNIB is keen to work with Connexions in future regarding making information accessible for visually impaired people. As well as directly transcribing material, RNIB transcription centres also work with organisations to enable them to be capable of producing their own material in alternative formats, particularly material in large print and on computer disk.

For further information about RNIB's transcription services and those provided by other organisations (also to find out if material is already available in accessible formats) or to find out more about Clear Print Guidelines please contact RNIB Customer Services on 0845 7023153 or email cservices@rnib.org.uk

Conclusion

For Connexions to provide the quality of service it aspires to it is vital that it develops links with a broad cross-section of voluntary and community sector organisations to provide better support for Connexions clients.

RNIB and Connexions have worked in partnership since the early days of Connexions and this booklet has provided some examples of this work.

These are only a few ways that the voluntary and community sector and Connexions can work together. The Annex gives a number of further ideas.

Contacts

RNIB would welcome contact from Connexions Partnerships who are not already working with them. If anyone would like to discuss this further or for information on partnership agreements mentioned earlier in the booklet please contact Rob Dyke by email - rob.dyke@rnib.org.uk or phone 0117 934 1713.

For voluntary and community sector organisations wanting to make contact with Connexions Partnerships, contact details can be found on the Connexions website www.connexions.gov.uk

Annex

1) Services that voluntary and community sector organisations could potentially offer Connexions

- Facilitating access to vulnerable young people
- Providing access to specialist services
- Delivering training for Personal Advisers - e.g. providing specialist input as part of PA continuing professional development and developing training materials and schedules
- Training for other staff within Connexions Partnerships
- Training and consultancy for employers, training providers and school/college staff
- Training and consultancy on relevant legislation
- Secondment opportunities for Connexions staff
- Technology consultancy (providing advice and support that enables organisations to provide accessible technology to meet client and/or employee needs)
- Consultancy on development of accessible information resources, including translation services
- Curriculum development support and consultancy
- One-to-one advice, guidance and assessment work with clients who have complex/specialist needs
- Advice and guidance to small groups of clients
- Assessments for students/trainees entering learning and/or work
- Input at 14+ Transitional Reviews
- Training, selecting and supporting young people involved in delivering Connexions
- Advice on and provision of volunteers, mentors etc
- Acting as partners in joint funding bids
- Acting as members of local liaison groups, Connexions boards and local management committees, grant allocation forums, staff recruitment panels etc
- Mapping of local services for young people
- Running specific targeted projects through grant funding from Connexions
- Delivery of Connexions services under contract
- Contributing to the development of Partnership Business and Delivery Plans
- Advice on the development of local Compacts
- Help with running events and producing or distributing marketing material
- Hosting of Personal Advisers
- Advertising job and secondment opportunities and including information on Connexions in newsletters
- Hosting of Connexions stalls or noticeboards

2) Services that Connexions could potentially offer voluntary and community sector organisations

- Access to Connexions training and backfill support to attend
- Grant funding to run projects with and for young people, and advice on other funding sources
- Secondment and volunteering opportunities
- Use of premises, IT and other resources
- Help with establishing local VCS networks
- Help with capacity and infrastructure development
- Access to contacts and networking opportunities
- Consultancy on information, advice and guidance issues
- Marketing and publicising voluntary group services to a wider network
- Providing access to accurate Labour Market Information (LMI)
- Employer, education and training provider links
- Referral of clients who need specialist support

References

1. "Connexions partnerships: the first year 2001-2002", Ofsted Report, October 2002.
2. Guardian Society, 29th January 2003.

Resources

Working Together - Connexions with Voluntary and Community Organisations (Ref: CX VCO)

Strategy for Engaging the Voluntary & Community Sector in Connexions (Ref: CX SEVCS)

Making Connexions - Issue 8 - January 2003 (Ref: CXNEWS8) - good practice examples

All the above publications are available from DfES publications:
Tel: 0845 602 2260
Email: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Toolkit for Connexions Partnerships on working with the community & voluntary sector (ISBN 1 901974 39 1) available from the Community Development Foundation
Tel: 0202 7226 5375
Email: admin@cdf.org

Connexions Voluntary & Community Sector e-Newsletter
- e-mail only. To subscribe email Stephen.Standret@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Involving Community Groups in Connexions - Bright Ideas
available from Stephen Standret in Connexions Service National Unit
Tel: 0114 259 4862
Email: Stephen.Standret@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Copies of the wording of this report are available in large print and Braille and can also be made available in audio tape. Please see contact details below.

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E-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Please quote ref: CXDIFFRNIB

ISBN: 1 84185 996 6

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D2/PP62/PUB030068/153

connexions

The best start in life for
every young person