

Back on track: successful learning provision for disaffected young people

Summary report and recommendations

Sue Taylor



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Feedback should be sent to
Information Services,
Learning and Skills Development Agency,
3 Citadel Place, Tinworth Street, London SE11 5EF
Tel 020 7962 1066 Fax 020 7840 5401
www.LSagency.org.uk

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Note

This report summarises a study commissioned
and funded by the DfEE. The recommendations are
those of the Learning and Skills Development Agency
(formerly FEDA). The DfEE is expected to respond
to the recommendations in due course.

There are two additional publications related to
this study under the title *Back on track: successful
learning provision for disaffected young people*.

- Good practice guidelines
(available March 2001, £10)
- Full research report
(available now, free).

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Introduction

The Learning and Skills Development Agency (formerly FEDA) was commissioned by the DfEE in December 1999 to develop key principles for effective working with disadvantaged young people. The study was completed in July 2000. Disadvantage was defined to include those aged 16–18 who are not in education, training or employment, and those under 16 who are at serious risk of underachievement. A full research report is available.

The springboard for this work was the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) report, *Bridging the gap: new opportunities for 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training*. Action 4 in this report defined the task as to:

develop a set of key principles for effective working with disadvantaged 16–18s, in consultation with professionals working with young people and testing them through qualitative research with young people themselves
(*Bridging the gap*, p72, para. 8.16).

The SEU report made clear the intention to embed such principles into funding methodologies and inspection. This would be done through the new Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), as part of the Government's approach to post-16 education and training for disadvantaged young people. Taken together, the principles, inspection requirements and funding methods are expected to create:

mechanisms for raising the standards of education and training provision, especially for young people at most risk of underachievement
(*Bridging the gap*, p94).

The focus of this study is young people aged 16–18 who are not in education, training or work. *Bridging the gap* provides a statistical overview of this group. Recent figures indicate a fall in numbers from 185,000 in 1998 to 157,000 in 1999 (DfEE News 292/00, 29 June 2000). At the same time there was a rise in the participation rate of 16 year olds in education and training, from 85.7% in 1998 to 86.4% in 1999.

The study involved three main stages:

- devising a set of draft principles
- testing and refining the principles through case study visits to schemes (listed in Appendix 1) and through a survey of young people
- examining the implications of implementing the principles and formulating recommendations, through consultation with expert organisations and DfEE policy officers.

Six principles of good practice

We identified six key principles for effective working with disadvantaged young people. These principles, summarised below, describe the range of interventions and characteristics of provision that we believe should be in place as an entitlement for young people in any locality.

1. Strategies to reach and engage disadvantaged young people: targeting and recruiting, initial assessment and guidance.
2. Programmes and interventions that are motivating and encourage progression towards re-engagement with education, training, work or constructive alternatives.
3. Good procedures to monitor young people's progress, record and celebrate their achievements and support them as they progress to the next stage.
4. Effective links and partnerships between organisations working to help disadvantaged young people, and multi-agency strategies to establish clear pathways from one service to another.
5. Staffing and funding to support good practice.
6. Good procedures for management and accountability.

Our meetings with scheme managers and young people generally endorsed the principles and gave us a clearer understanding of how they applied in practice. A detailed list of the principles is presented in Appendix 2.

Professional values

A strong message emerged from the fieldwork about the organisational and professional values that underpin good practice, and without which any set of principles could become empty rhetoric. These values can be summarised as a learner-centred approach.

We responded by incorporating a statement of core values that should be embedded in all aspects of practice.

Core values

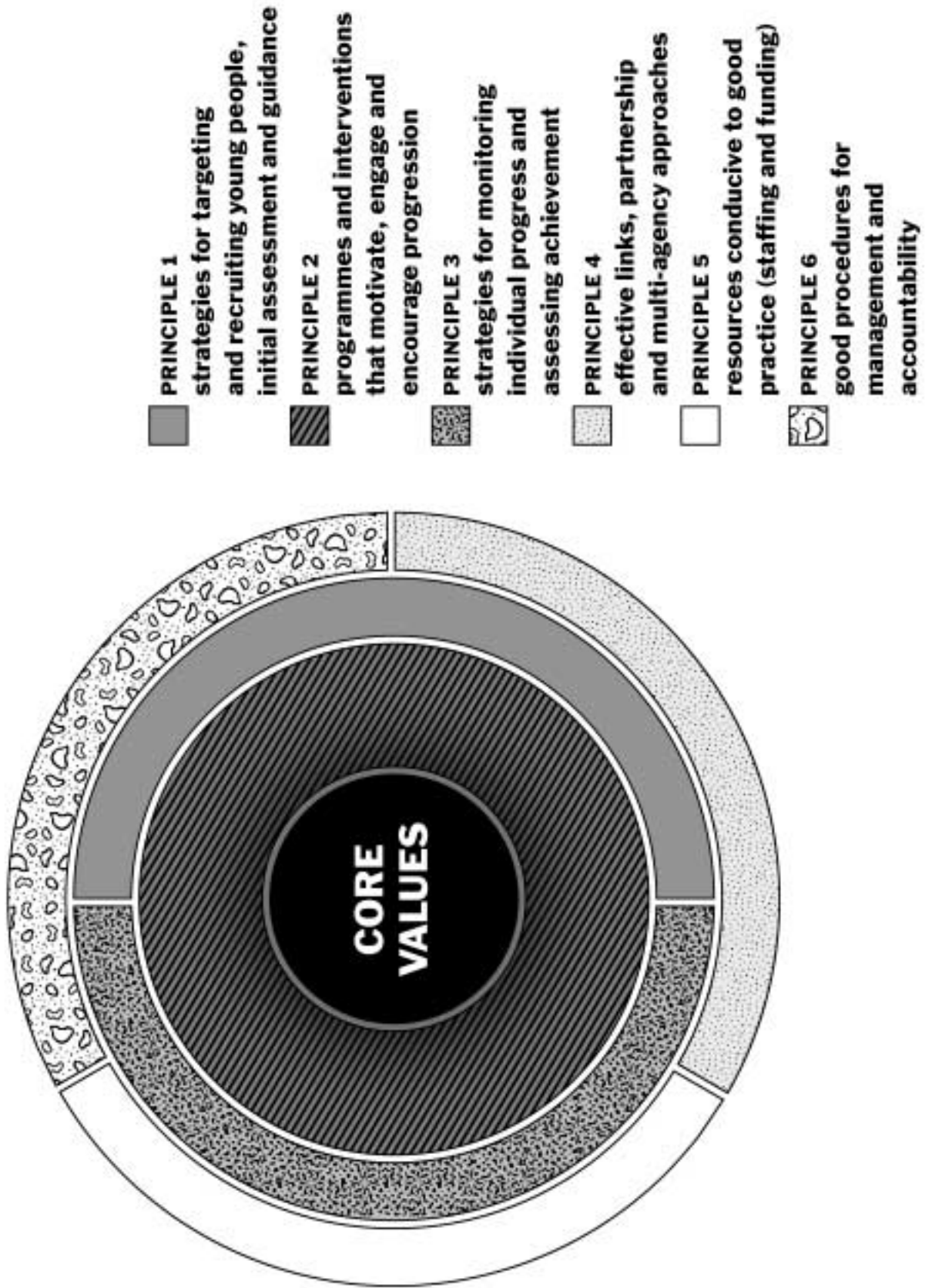
- The learner or client is treated as an individual and is central to every aspect of the programme or intervention.
- Staff have a positive regard for their clients and treat them with respect.
- Clients are actively engaged as partners in the project, conveying a sense of mutuality about the work.
- Staff have high expectations concerning their clients' achievement, coupled with realism and honesty.
- All staff show a continuing commitment to high quality.
- The treatment of both clients and staff exemplifies good equal opportunities practice.

How practitioners view the principles of good practice

The six principles are interdependent: nothing in our fieldwork suggested that any one could be omitted. However, principle 2 – *Programmes and interventions that motivate, engage and encourage progression* – was regarded by the case study schemes as absolutely central to success.

Figure 1 presents the principles as a series of concentric circles radiating from a core containing organisational and professional values. In line with the emphasis on principle 2, we place this closest to the centre, followed by two principles which also impinge directly on young people: principle 1 (concerned with targeting, recruiting, assessment and guidance) and 3 (concerned with learners' progress and achievement). In the outer circle are principles 4, 5 and 6, concerned with organisational matters such as inter-agency links, resources and management.

Figure 1 | Practitioners' perspective on the six principles



Implementing the principles

The principles and core values offer a single framework or template for good practice, applicable across different sectors and settings (e.g. careers, youth work, schools, work-based learning) and including both statutory and voluntary services. Tailored guidelines for specific sectors will be helpful.

Putting the principles and core values into action calls for:

- **a range of accessible, coordinated services** for young people in each locality – not only a learning programme, but also outreach services and supported transition between stages and programmes, with good tracking and monitoring both on and off programmes
- joint work by staff with **a variety of professional backgrounds and skills**, ideally operating in multi-disciplinary teams
- clarity and rigour about the **objectives and outcomes** for learners, whatever the nature of the service, and whether outcomes are quantitative or qualitative. Services should focus on enabling disaffected young people to break out of the cycle of attending one scheme after another without showing clear progress towards a job or high quality training
- **a learner-centred, intensive but flexible style** of working with young people, based on relationships of mutual respect between practitioners and clients. This may require changes in organisational cultures to bring about a different approach to working with disaffected young people
- **a motivating programme or intervention** that is responsive to client feedback. There should be opportunities to negotiate an individualised learning plan and to repeat or extend stages if needed
- **continuity of support** for the transition stage between leaving one programme and adapting to the next stage
- a good **strategic overview**, at local level, of services and programmes for disaffected and disengaged young people
- **close partnership** and strong links at local level between programmes and services catering for disaffected and disengaged young people
- capacity for **innovation**

A continuum of services

The six principles of good practice (particularly principles 1–3) represent a continuum of services for young people. Any one scheme may not cover every aspect. Some do attempt an ‘all-through’ service by integrating closely with other partners. For example, one of the case studies was a partnership of voluntary and statutory agencies offering a comprehensive menu of services, from outreach and assessment to job search and aftercare.

Other schemes may deal with only a part of the continuum: some, for example, are essentially access and support services, rather than providers of educational programmes. Nevertheless, our study confirms that all elements should be present in any locality, from targeting and recruitment, through to learning programmes and finally to strategies for continuing support and follow-up.

Whether one organisation offers a comprehensive service, or several partners deliver this jointly, a key message to emerge from our study is that the separate elements of provision must be well integrated. Young people and those supporting them need to be able to identify clear pathways from one type of programme or intervention to another. At times, different types of support, provided by different services, will need to work closely together. When pathways are clear and services well coordinated, the chances of re-engaging disaffected and disengaged young people with education, training or work are greatly increased. Where there are gaps in services or weak links in the chain, young people are at risk of falling into limbo and repeating the cycle of disengagement.

- sufficient and stable funding for work carried out in **voluntary and community organisations**
- **coordination of education and non-education budgets** at a local level
- **effective personal financial support** for young people, including those not in full-time education or training and therefore not eligible for Education Maintenance Allowances.

In considering implementation, the DfEE directed the Learning Skills and Development Agency to look particularly at inspection/quality improvement, funding, and professional training and development. Two added dimensions which arise from our fieldwork are the national curriculum in schools and graduation.

Inspection and quality improvement

It is important to ensure that the principles and core values are reflected in relevant inspection tools and in guidance on quality improvement. There are three significant tools.

1. *The common inspection framework for inspecting post-16 education and training.* From April 2001, this will replace both the existing Ofsted framework for the inspection of schools and the FEFC framework for inspections in the FE sector.

The framework document (Ofsted, September 2000) states that all inspections will focus primarily on the experiences and expectations of individual learners. The values statement underpinning our proposed six principles is consistent with this focus.

Inspections will evaluate the extent to which provision is educationally and socially inclusive, and promotes equality of access to education and training. We believe that the principles we have devised will make a key contribution to these objectives.

2. *The Connexions Inspection Framework* (under consideration by DfEE at the time of this report). This will be used by Ofsted to inspect the work of the Connexions service in supporting all young people in the transition from school to further education, training or work.
3. The LSC's quality improvement processes. Local LSCs will be responsible for assessing performance across the range of post-16 provision, making use of inspection and other evidence. Local LSCs will publish annual reports on the actions taken locally to improve the quality of learning and help providers improve their performance.

Under the arrangements set out in the consultation document, *Raising standards in post-16 learning*, annual self-assessment and development plans will be a requirement for all providers and will be used to brief inspectorates. Providers will be expected to use effective internal quality assurance arrangements and will be subject to regular performance reviews. Several goals set for providers are of immediate relevance to the subject of our report, namely to:

- *minimise drop-out rates and deliver high completion and achievement rates and appropriate progression*
- *ensure competent and appropriately qualified staff deliver and assess learning*
- *offer equality of access to learning opportunities and close equality gaps in learning and job outcomes.*

Services catering for young people who are disengaged from education, employment and training are often small voluntary and community sector organisations. They may lack an effective infrastructure for monitoring quality and implementing quality improvement measures. A variety of approaches to quality are being developed across the voluntary and community sector, including Investors in People and the PQASSO and Excellence models. Much remains to be done, however. The current situation has been described as 'a patchwork of crops rather than a uniform field ploughed in the same direction' (*Quality Standards Task Group newsletter*, April 2000). Meeting higher standards of provision for disadvantaged young people will therefore require action to support voluntary and community organisations in developing their capacity for quality improvement.

Funding

Action 4 in *Bridging the gap* stated that the new post-16 funding methodology for the LSC should give credit for provision that satisfies the principles.

Several aspects of the proposed methodology (under consultation at the time of our research) should ease the implementation of the principles:

- the creation of a level playing field, enabling a variety of different providers of education and training (public, independent, voluntary and community-based) to access funding. Provided they satisfy quality requirements, voluntary and community organisations working with disadvantaged young people will have access to national formula funding for their learning programmes
- funding which follows the learner
- the setting of targets and priorities for contracts (termed delivery agreements) between local LSCs and service providers.

Voluntary and community organisations will need sufficient and stable funding in order to contribute fully to combating problems of disaffection and disengagement. Funding is needed not only for programmes but also to build capacity to engage in staff development and quality improvement. Access to formula funding will be beneficial, but such organisations should also be helped to take advantage of additional funding streams, where time-consuming bidding procedures may be a barrier.

Professional training and development

To improve services for young disadvantaged people, our fieldwork and consultations suggest that there is a substantial need for professional training and development. This need applies across the board, i.e. it is not limited to a particular sector or profession.

We are aware that social exclusion issues are under examination in the current review by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) of the standards for initial teacher training (ITT) in DfEE Circular 4/98. Our recommendations suggest using this opportunity to enhance trainees' experience of work with disadvantaged young people.

Implementing the six principles and core values would make demands on the following areas in particular:

- the skills of teachers, lecturers, youth workers and others working with disengaged and disaffected young people. Skills need to be developed, for example, in:
 - creating a learner-centred ethos and positive approaches towards combating disaffection
 - building positive relationships between practitioner and client ('respect')
 - undertaking groupwork with young people who have very substantial needs for support and whose behaviour may be very challenging
 - designing alternative curricula that re-engage and challenge young people, while not replicating the school curriculum
 - challenging stereotypes (e.g. about traditional male and female roles) which may act as barriers to young people's progress and limit their life chances and choices
 - effective collaboration between professionals in different sectors (e.g. schools, careers, youth work, work-based training, social services, probation). This implies not only skills but also knowledge and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of other agencies and professionals.
- resources for staff support, development and training in organisations working with disadvantaged young people, particularly voluntary and community organisations
- recruitment and motivation of practitioners – their remuneration and status.

National curriculum

The content of the school curriculum is an important factor in pupils' engagement with education. Schools have a degree of flexibility in how they apply and develop the key stage 4 national curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils. This flexibility includes some vocational subjects in the options menu; GNVQ Part One courses were introduced for this purpose.

In addition, since the academic year 1998/99, schools have been able to disapply up to two out of three national curriculum subjects (design and technology, modern foreign languages and science) to enable pupils to engage in extended work-related learning. This may be off-site and include courses provided by FE colleges, training providers and community organisations.

Experience in the first year suggests that this flexibility has been beneficial: for example, some schools have worked with multi-agency partnerships to link with colleges and training providers and to identify work placement opportunities for pupils.

There is, however, some evidence that anomalies in the points scores allocated to qualifications could act as a disincentive to schools considering the introduction of work-related learning. Vocational qualifications may earn fewer or no points, compared with traditional academic qualifications. Points scores are used in performance tables; schools that believe in offering work-related alternatives for all abilities may be faced with a lower score and thus disadvantaged.

From August 2000, schools have greater freedom at key stage 4, allowing them:

- to pursue different qualifications in design and technology, modern foreign languages and science
- to disapply two national curriculum subjects (design and technology and modern foreign languages), not only for extended work-related learning, but also to enable pupils to emphasise a curriculum area where they have a particular strength, or to consolidate their learning across the curriculum when they are not progressing as well as they might.

On the evidence of *Bridging the gap* and our own study, it is clear that for many pupils the existing flexibility in the national curriculum has not resulted in learning which meets their needs and motivates them to achieve. Disapplication to allow extended work-related learning is a relatively recent initiative. Schools will vary in the extent to which they exploit the flexibility available within the regulations and in their success in finding innovative solutions to problems. The remaining national curriculum subjects may still fail to attract some pupils.

There is also a perception that the criteria for access to alternative curriculum programmes are bad behaviour, poor attendance or poor work, rather than identifying a positive match between the programme and the young person's learning needs. Wider work-related learning remains an exceptional alternative: this may give the wrong signals to teachers (and pupils) about which pupils can gain from it, despite official guidance that it can be used to extend high-attaining pupils as well as motivate those at risk of disaffection.

Positive connections could be made between schools and a variety of alternative learning programmes including community-based options. More joint working between schools and schemes outside the mainstream would help (see, for example, the schemes listed in Appendix 1). Case studies of partnerships between schools and colleges, employers and training providers are cited in the review of wider opportunities for work-related learning (available on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website: www.qca.org.uk).

It will be important to monitor the impact of the planned increase in flexibility. Key questions are:

- whether it will allow sufficient scope to develop a motivating curriculum for all learners, given that the freedom to disapply remains limited to two national curriculum subjects from a restricted choice. The rest of the statutory curriculum timetable remains very full; even where work-related opportunities are available, the choices are limited
- whether schools will exploit these options to the full, through partnerships with a range of organisations which can widen pupils' choices
- whether alternative curricula will be used in a preventative fashion, as a positive response to individual learning needs, rather than as a form of remedial education for pupils who are already becoming disengaged
- whether motivation would be improved by introducing flexible options before key stage 4.

Graduation

The current debate on graduation should take account of the need for the graduation process to be accessible to young people who have dropped out of education and training and who may have effectively lost the benefit of several years of their schooling. Many of the schemes catering for young people outside mainstream education develop personal and social skills which can be linked with graduation, provided the graduation process allows for learning experiences and outcomes in a range of contexts.

Recommendations for practice and policy

The recommendations which follow are addressed to:

- The Connexions Service
- DfEE
- LSCs (national and local)
- Ofsted and the ALI
- Professional standards and training organisations.

Inspection and quality improvement

1. The principles should be viewed as good practice which schemes should work towards, not as a minimum threshold which all should be expected to reach. Practitioners should be encouraged to interpret the principles in the light of their particular setting and to use them in implementing improvement strategies. Not every principle and characteristic of good practice will be relevant to every type of scheme.

Connexions Service

2. The Connexions Inspection Framework should take account of the principles and core values. In particular, it should give weight to principle 1 (strategies for targeting and recruiting young people, initial assessment and guidance), principle 3 (strategies for monitoring individual progress and achievement) and principle 4 (effective links, partnership and multi-agency approaches).
3. The Connexions Service should promote and facilitate improved collaboration between organisations at a local level, to ensure that all young people make a successful transition from one service or programme to another.
4. The Connexions Inspection Framework should examine how well the partners in multi-agency relationships work together and whether there are any weaknesses in partnership or gaps in services which affect young people's success in engaging or re-engaging with education, training or work. This issue might also be addressed in area-wide inspections by Ofsted and ALI.

Local LSCs

5. Local LSCs should encourage practitioners to make use of the principles and core values in self-assessment and quality improvement, and as a preparation for inspection. Tailored guidelines for different sectors should be prepared, to assist practitioners in interpreting the principles. Local LSCs should facilitate and support self-assessment by practitioners, using the principles.
6. In their annual reports, LSCs should provide qualitative and quantitative information on their progress in meeting the needs of disaffected and disengaged young people and in closing the equality gaps in learning and job outcomes.
7. Local LSCs should take steps to support quality improvement in voluntary organisations and community groups working with disaffected and disengaged young people. Action could include:
 - promoting and supporting existing initiatives such as PQASSO and others arising from work by the Quality Standards Task Group supported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
 - promoting supportive partnerships between large and small organisations to assist quality improvement, recognising that very small organisations and those staffed primarily by volunteers may find quality assurance systems burdensome to implement and maintain.
8. In consultation with institutions and schemes, local LSCs should specify a wide variety of indicators of success to ensure their relevance to the objectives of different contexts and settings.

Ofsted and the ALI

9. The new Common Inspection Framework for use by Ofsted and the ALI should embody the six principles and core values within its evaluation requirements and criteria.
10. Ofsted and ALI should ensure that inspectors who currently operate in a number of separate regimes are trained to understand the diverse contexts in which the principles are applied. Assessment criteria must be sufficiently sensitive to the varied needs of young people to recognise and reward innovative practice that achieves positive results.
11. Ofsted and ALI should brief inspectors to take account of the actions of other partners in a multi-agency relationship, which may influence the success of a particular scheme (e.g. if it depends on employers providing suitable work placements).
12. Ofsted and ALI should conduct and publish periodic surveys of provision for disadvantaged young people. This recommendation is in line with the *Informal Consultation Document on the Common Inspection Framework* (April 2000), which stated that:

In addition to carrying out inspections of individual providers, both the ALI and Ofsted will ... undertake surveys of key areas of policy.
13. The inspection framework for schools should embody the principles and core values, with particular reference to recognising and addressing the learning needs of pupils who are disaffected with schooling. Performance indicators for schools should include success in achieving positive outcomes for disaffected pupils.
14. Steps should be taken to promote the principles and core values in guidance for special initiatives designed to raise motivation and achievement in schools, such as Education Action Zones and Excellence in Cities.

Funding

Connexions Service

15. To enable the Connexions Service to fulfil its remit as a support service for all young people aged 13–19, its funding must reflect the resource-intensive nature of successful practice with those that are disaffected and disengaged. The level of funding must ensure effective provision for reaching and engaging young people, giving advice and guidance and supporting transition.

DfEE

16. Government should consider arrangements for personal financial support for learners not in full-time education and thus not eligible for the Education Maintenance Allowance. The Connexions Card may play a role here.

Local LSCs

17. In contracting with providers of services and programmes, local LSCs should ensure that the range and scale of services are sufficient to meet the needs of young people who are disengaged from education, training and work.
18. Local LSCs' contracts with providers should specify targets for recruiting young people who are disaffected or disengaged and for helping them progress towards re-engagement.
19. Local LSCs should liaise closely with local funding managers of non-education services (e.g. housing, social services, health) to coordinate income streams for successful programmes and services, and ensure that they are funded on a stable basis.
20. Local LSCs should report on how non-formula funding has been used effectively to develop services for young people not in education, employment or training (e.g. services to reach, recruit, engage and support transition, and innovatory programmes).
21. Funding via local LSCs should encourage practitioners to work actively to achieve successful outcomes for individuals – i.e. clear progress towards re-engagement with education, training or work. However, we advise against linking too large a percentage of funding with predetermined outcomes, as this could deter providers from recruiting the most hard to help.

22. Local LSCs should use outcome funding judiciously, in association with quality assurance measures to encourage best practice.
23. Local LSCs should promote the use of additional income streams, such as the recently announced European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 funds, which provide a new opportunity to tackle social exclusion among the 14+ age group. The Neighbourhood Support Fund is a further example. Steps should include:
- ensuring that information about funding opportunities reaches all sections of the community, by making use of appropriate communication channels, including ethnic minority networks and media
 - support mechanisms and, where appropriate, up-front payments, to enable small organisations to access income streams operated on a retrospective basis and with heavy bureaucratic requirements (as in the case of ESF).
24. Local LSCs should encourage collaboration between larger institutions and smaller voluntary organisations to ensure that the latter have access to additional income streams (such as those mentioned above), perhaps through 'brokerage' arrangements.

National LSC

25. The LSC should evaluate the disadvantage element in national formula funding to determine whether it is effective in promoting the re-engagement of young people not in education, employment or training. If shortcomings are identified, the LSC should devise new strategies to remedy this.
26. The LSC should keep under review the policy on the balance between formula and non-formula funding, to ensure that the volume of non-formula funds sustains the required level of provision not categorised as a learning programme or course (e.g. innovative practices; outreach work to target, recruit and engage young people; measures to support their transition from one scheme to the next).

Professional training and development

Professional standards

27. Organisations responsible for professional training standards should review current standards and where possible, strengthen the emphasis on skills, knowledge and understanding for effective working with disaffected and disengaged young people. Relevant organisations include:
- the Teacher Training Agency
 - the Further Education NTO
 - CAMPAG (the approved standard-setting body for counselling, advocacy, mediation, psychotherapy, advice and guidance)
 - PAULO (the National Training Organisation for community-based learning and development).
28. Reviews of professional standards should give particular attention to principle 2 (programmes that motivate and engage young people and encourage progression) and to the core values underpinning the principles.
29. The principles and core values should be embedded in professional standards for Connexions staff, particularly in the competences of personal advisers and others with direct contact with young people, such as call-centre operators.

Initial training programmes

30. As part of the review of the standards for ITT in DfEE Circular 4/98, and the development of a regional strategy for ITT, the TTA and DfEE should enable and encourage ITT providers to give recognition to trainee teachers' engagement in out of school activities involving disaffected young people. The TTA should also consider what steps can be taken in the next two years, i.e. in the period up to 2002, before the implementation of changes resulting from the review.
- 'Out of school' should be interpreted to include a school other than the school where the trainee teacher is based, an FE college, or other organisations serving young people at risk, including the voluntary/community sector. The aim should be to increase trainees' exposure to activities designed to tackle the symptoms and causes of disaffection and disengagement, including practice in the innovative use of flexibility available within the national curriculum.
31. For initial training in other professions, consideration should be given to designing a generic module on effective working with disadvantaged young people.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

32. Consideration should be given to specialist training for a range of professions on effective working with disadvantaged young people, for use in CPD and in-service teacher training (INSET) for those who wish to specialise.
33. DfEE should consider the option of using INSET to develop in-school specialists, able to support and advise other teachers working with disaffected pupils.
34. Cross-sector staff development workshops should be organised to promote better understanding of the roles, responsibilities and cultures of different professions and to develop skills in joint working. For the teaching profession, the DfEE should consider using funds allocated for reducing school exclusions.
35. All training programmes designed to address the skills needed to work with disaffected and disengaged young people should cover:
 - knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities issues
 - skills to challenge stereotypes which may hinder young people's engagement with education, training and work.
36. Local LSCs should use their quality assurance mechanisms to encourage professional development in working with disaffected and disengaged young people and should report on the action taken.

National curriculum and graduation

37. DfEE should actively encourage schools to take full advantage of opportunities to disapply the national curriculum at key stage 4 in order to develop alternative options which match pupils' learning needs. The Department should monitor the impact of the increased flexibility available to schools from August 2000. Further modifications should be considered if it is found that the timetable is still too constrained to respond effectively to pupils whose learning needs are not best served by the standard range of subjects.
38. DfEE should ensure that schools offering work-related learning options can do so without prejudicing their position in school performance league tables. Data used in comparing school performance should include successes in this field. We note that positive results are now emerging from demonstration projects on wider work-related learning. Schools should receive recognition not only for whole qualifications achieved in this way, but also for partial achievements towards qualifications.

39. DfEE should encourage and support schools to exploit the flexibility available in the national curriculum, to enable young people who are disaffected or risk becoming so, to undertake options matched to their learning needs, either in-school or off-site. The exceptional provisions of the national curriculum should be used as an opportunity to motivate pupils and prevent disaffection, rather than chiefly as a form of remedial education for those who are already becoming disengaged.

For example, schools should increase their collaboration with FE colleges and with voluntary and community organisations that work with disaffected and disengaged young people. A multi-agency approach to designing flexible options for key stage 4 should be considered, with the aim of encouraging re-engagement with schooling. The objective should be to increase the range of positive and motivating options available and to draw on the specialist skills of a range of professionals.

40. Strategies to help pupils who are at risk of disaffection and disengagement should become a key feature of quality improvement initiatives in schools. The principles and core values could be tested in schools, with suitable guidelines, as part of this process.
41. DfEE should ensure that the graduation framework is sufficiently flexible to include – and motivate – young people who may take considerably longer than the norm to meet the full requirements. We recommend that the graduation process is closely examined in the light of the principles. The framework should be designed to permit the accumulation and recognition of small steps towards graduation.
42. Steps should be taken to ensure that young people on programmes in organisations outside school and college, including those on personal and social development courses, can accumulate achievements in these activities towards their graduation profile.



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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Case study schemes

42nd Street

Scheme: Community-based

Target group: Mental health problems and age 14–25

Targets 14–25 year olds in Manchester, Salford and Trafford experiencing stress and mental health problems. Undertakes community-based individual counselling, group support and outreach work.

Acorn Initiative

(is now under contract to TEC, which has altered remit)

Scheme: Youth/TEC/careers partnership

Target group: Unwaged and not receiving any learning support and age 16–17

A support service to assist young unemployed people aged 16–17 in North Nottinghamshire to develop, either by gaining employment, entering further education or finding voluntary work. Provides one-to-one support programmes offering taster experiences in work and training, coupled with personal skills development.

Base 51

Scheme: Independent voluntary project

operated by a charitable company called HINT

Target group: Disengaged and age 12–25

Drop-in centre for young people aged 12–25, providing a café, creche and access to services including one-to-one support programmes, groupwork, counselling, mediation, medical treatment and other facilities.

Birmingham Rathbone Society

Scheme: Charitable organisation

Target group: Moderate learning difficulties, at risk and age 14–18

Offers vocational training, Learning Gateway Lifeskills option and a 12-week Alternative Curriculum option for year 10/11 pupils at risk of disengagement.

Career Direct

Scheme: Careers service, working with schools, colleges, training providers and employers

Target group: At school and at risk of underachievement, disengagement or unemployment and age 13–16

Career Direct evolved from a Careers Club in Schools project in the Plymouth area. It targets pupils in year 9/10 who are at risk of underachievement or disengagement, and year 11 pupils who are not motivated to continue in education or training and are at risk of being unemployed. Programmes are negotiated with schools.

County Durham Partnership Scheme for Young People: PIEL and LAC

Scheme: Led by County Durham SRB Partnership.

Multi-agency partnership working with schools and others

Target group: Disaffected and underachieving children including those looked after by Social Services.

Primary and secondary age range

Positive Intervention and Enrichment Links (PIEL) works with comprehensive schools and their partner primary and special schools to support young people who are disaffected or disillusioned with school. PIEL provides access to alternative, more supportive learning opportunities, including vocational link courses at local colleges.

Looked After Children provides intensive support for young people in social services care, through counselling, groupwork, access to education coordinators in children's homes and named links in schools.

Dalston Youth Project

Scheme: Community-based, managed by Crime Concern

Target group: Offenders, truants, age 11–14 and 14–18

Education and mentoring project aimed at diverting young people from crime. One-year programme of basic skills, IT and communication skills. Also provides evening and weekend discussion groups using drama and video and a key stage 3 programme for local schools to prevent truancy and exclusion.

East Leeds Family Learning Centre

Scheme: Local authority (Department of Training)

Target group: At risk, disengaged and age 14–16

The overall aim of the Centre is to contribute to local area regeneration through work with unemployed adults and by tackling underachievement in schools. Provides a complementary curriculum for the disengaged and for at-risk school pupils, in addition to family learning opportunities.

INCLUDE Project (at New College Nottingham)

Scheme: National charity/FE

Target group: Multiple problems, excluded, disengaged and age 13–15

INCLUDE contracts with New College to provide 'Bridge' alternative education programmes for 13–15 year olds. These involve a combination of work experience and personal and social education.

MITWOW (Moving into the World of Work)

Scheme: Multi-agency partnership led by Youth and Community Education Service

Target group: Disengaged, at risk and age 16–25

Targets 16–25 year olds who are disaffected and marginalised through their education, home life and life experiences. Offers a 13-week roll-on roll-off education and training programme, one-to-one mentoring, supported work experience, groupwork, outdoor education.

Nelson and Colne College

Scheme: FE college working in partnership

Target group: Disaffected, disengaged and age 14–19

Nelson and Colne is a major provider of mainstream post-16 education and training. Also provides learning opportunities for young people who are disaffected or disengaged. Offers a range of programmes in partnership with other agencies and services.

New Start, Blackburn with Darwen

Scheme: Multi-agency partnership

led by Council Education and Training Division.

Delivery via ON-TRACK Enterprises

Target group: Disengaged and age 16–19

A DfEE second round New Start project, targeting 16–19 year olds not engaged in education, training or employment, with a focus on the most disadvantaged and socially excluded young people. The programme offers group training sessions on basic skills, life skills, working with others, etc; individual training sessions planned around trainee's interests; and a personal adviser offering one-to-one support.

Opex Plus

Scheme: Multi-agency, including careers service and City Council. Led by TEC

Target group: Not in education, training or employment and age 16–18

Integrated support package to help young people find training or employment. Initial support and peer work is followed by assessment and development training lasting up to 12 weeks, then placement with a training provider. Transition to employment is supported by a careers adviser.

REACH (Refusing, Excluded, Accommodated, in Care and Homeless)

Scheme: LEA (Education Welfare Service) in multi-agency partnership including social services

Target group: At risk – school refusers, excluded pupils, young people in care, homeless.

All ages, mainly secondary, with support for primary-secondary transfer

This scheme aims to reintegrate pupils into education; to provide rapid intervention in response to school exclusion; to support and advise families and to facilitate effective interagency communication.

Activities include a drop-in centre, a twice-weekly school lunchtime club, group activities, visits and residentials.

Sandwell Education Business Partnership

Scheme: Education Business Partnership

Target group: Age 14–17

Supports the Youth Link programme, targeted at 14–17 year olds who are at risk or excluded from school. Clients undertake activities to improve basic skills and confidence. Vocational guidance and work tasters are offered.

Second Wave

Scheme: Community

Target group: Disaffected young people with arts interest and age 13–24

Youth arts provision including evening and weekend workshops, summer schools, young volunteer programmes, productions and platform events.

Shropshire Learning Gateway

Scheme: Careers service in partnership with CCTE, youth service, social services, Youth Offending Team

Target group: At risk, not in learning and age 16–17

Offers a two-week assessment course followed by a 12-week life skills course.

Stoke on Trent YMCA Foyer

Scheme: Charity/multi-agency

Target group: Disengaged and age 16–18

12-week lifeskills course for unemployed residents with few or no qualifications. A modular programme covering world of work, lifestyles, outdoor and leisure activities forms part of an assessment process to enable the young person to make decisions about the future. Residents can progress into other courses such as basic skills, parenting, IT.

Tyneside Careers Club

Scheme: Careers service working in partnership e.g. with voluntary organisations such as YMCA, Fairbridge

Target group: Unemployed and age 16–18

Previously a Job Club, this is viewed as the most successful of a number of Careers Clubs run by Tyneside Careers. Now classed as a training provider, the Club provides a 13-week Open College accredited programme with a set curriculum entitled *Stop, Look and Achieve*, covering confidence building, jobsearch skills, interview techniques and career action planning.

WAC Performing Arts and Media College

Scheme: Partnership with local FE college

Target group: Unemployed with arts interest and age 16–22

Range of provision for 5–25 year olds. For example, the ARCO Plus programme is targeted at unemployed 16–22 year olds with few or no qualifications. It combines arts provision with key skills development. Strong emphasis on IT and performance skills; web-page design, digital video and music technology are options as well as performing arts subjects.

Key elements of the six principles of good practice

PRINCIPLE 1

Strategies for targeting and recruiting young people, initial assessment and guidance

Key elements

- A clear policy on the client group(s) to reach, linked to differentiation of programmes
- Effective strategies to reach young people
- Effective strategies to engage young people
- Systematic initial guidance and assessment, integrated into a process of continuing assessment (see principle 3)

PRINCIPLE 2

Programmes and interventions that motivate, engage and encourage progression

Key elements

Content

- A clear rationale for the programme or intervention
- Effective arrangements for identifying clients' needs, abilities and options and deciding on an action plan
- The content of the programme or intervention is matched to the client's needs
- The right mix of elements to meet individual requirements
- Clear and realistic progression routes for each client, including guidance on the options

Delivery

- An ethos of respect for young people
- Effective strategies for reinforcing clients' motivation and their commitment to continuing with the programme or intervention
- Effective individual support for clients

PRINCIPLE 3

Strategies for monitoring individual progress and assessing achievement

Key elements

- Regular reviewing and recording of progress with individual clients, designed to recognise learning and behavioural change
- Timely opportunities and encouragement for young people to obtain nationally-recognised accreditation or qualifications
- Rewards for achievement other than qualifications
- Follow-up of clients who leave before completing the programme
- A final review with the client to determine the next steps
- Well-managed and supported transition to the next stage
- Tracking of clients' destinations following completion

PRINCIPLE 4

Effective links, partnership and multi-agency approaches

Key elements

- Coordinated, inter-agency strategies for intervention with disaffected and disengaged young people
- Support from a range of agencies and professions matched to clients' individual needs
- Effective links between organisations, to enable progression by learners and to provide safety nets for those who leave a programme early or are unable to make a successful transition to the next stage

PRINCIPLE 5

Resources conducive to good practice (staffing and funding)

Key elements

- Staff in place with appropriate skills, values and attitudes
- Effective staff development, training and support arrangements
- Adequate staffing levels
- Accessible venue(s)
- High quality learning environment
- Good funding arrangements

PRINCIPLE 6

Good procedures for management and accountability

Key elements

- Management recognition and support of the work
- Quality assurance, including standards and indicators against which to measure provision
- Budgetary control
- Reporting to partners
- Long-term planning

This report summarises a study commissioned and funded by the DfEE. The recommendations are those of the Learning and Skills Development Agency (formerly FEDA). The DfEE is expected to respond to the recommendations in due course.

There are two additional publications related to this study under the title *Back on track: successful learning provision for disaffected young people*.

- **Good practice guidelines**
(available March 2001, £10)
- **Full research report**
(available now, free).