

Connexions Centre Info Zones

A guide for staff



October 2008

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Introduction

Information is a key element of local authority (LA) integrated youth support services. It is expected that LAs will provide accurate, up-to-date and objective information on opportunities, progression routes, choices, where to find help and advice, and how to access it.

The Info Zone is an essential feature of all Connexions Centres. It is the place where

- Young people can access information about learning, work and life without assistance
- Young people can access info whilst being supported and assisted by a member of staff
- Members of staff can update their own knowledge
- Parents, carers or staff from partner agencies can find information to help young people.

Young people and staff should feel confident that the Info Zone

- Is as easy to use as possible
- Holds up-to-date information
- Has a comprehensive range of resources
- Has information from authoritative and reliable sources
- Is well maintained
- Has staff on hand who are knowledgeable about the range of resources and how to use them

This document sets out the standards that Connexions Centre Info Zones should meet and poses questions you need to address in order to achieve the required standards.

The Standards

Procedures and planning

Provision of Connexions information features in relevant procedural documents and area planning.

- Do your staff have a consistent approach to using resources to support different operational activities: For example, which resources to give to callers looking for work, which resources to take to school parents' evenings, which to use in introductory group work?
- Do annual operational plans make reference to resources and the development of the local information service?
- Is development and maintenance of the information zone and use of resources incorporated into supervision and appraisal discussions?

Staffing

There is effective management and staffing for the provision of information.

- Is there a named member of staff with overall responsibility for your Info Zone? Are they and other members of staff clear about what their role entails?
- Is there a staffing rota for the Info Zone? Do staff on the rota understand their duties?

Location and accessibility

Resources can be accessed by individuals or small groups.

- Is the Info Zone clearly signposted?
- Is there enough space to house the information resources comfortably?
- Are there sufficient tables, chairs, and materials such as paper and pens provided?
- Can all users, including those with mobility problems, get in to the Info Zone and access all the resources?
- Is it clear to users that they can access resources in large print format, alternative formats such as Braille or audio-tape?

- Do staff know the procedures if such requests are made?
- How do you deal with information requests made over the phone or via the website?

Organisation

Paper and electronic information is organised and presented in a logical and user-friendly way.

- Do you use the CRCI system to organise paper information so that items can be located easily? See Appendix three.
- Do you signpost and label materials appropriately?
- Do you store paper information in a way so that it is kept tidy eg using ring-binder files or magazine boxes?
- Do you have procedures in place for staff to update/ send away for info/keep the area tidy on a regular basis?
- Do you organise the icons on the pc desktops according to Appendix two?
- Do you have enough suitable pcs and associated hardware?

Content

An appropriate range of up-to-date resources are held and regularly maintained.

- Do you have all the key information resources listed in Appendix one?
- Do you have the key electronic resources listed in Appendix two?
- Do you guide users between paper and IT resources?
- Has your content been checked to ensure that it adheres to equal opportunities legislation?

Support for users

Support is available, to those users who require it, to assist them in their research.

- Are instructions on how to use the facilities, including software, displayed?

- Are there photocopying facilities available with instructions for use?
- Are staff aware of copyright restrictions?

Staff understanding

All staff understand the organisation and content of the information provision appropriate to their role.

- Is there a procedure for informing all staff about new resources and developments to the Info Zone?
- Are staff shown how to use paper resources in their induction and on an on-going basis?
- Have staff received appropriate training regarding software packages and web navigation?
- Have staff been trained in customer care techniques?

Evaluation

There is a system in place to monitor and evaluate the use of the information service to inform developments.

- Do you undertake the Info Zone Quarterly Surveys?
- Do you use other means to find out what users think of the facilities?
- Do you act upon any feedback?

If you have any queries about the Info Zone, please contact Seema Ragha or Rebecca Rose on 0116 261 5923

Rebecca Rose
Information Manager
October 2008

Appendix one – Key information resources

- The Information team will supply all offices with key paper-based resources.
- Offices should only send off for:
 - HE and FE prospectuses
 - information that relates specifically to their local area.
- Publications held within the Info Zone should be no more than two years old or be the latest current edition.
- Materials supplied by the Information team include:

12 Connexions Info Files (HINTS)

Each file contains information under a CRCI heading such as Work and Training, Free Time, Money etc. Updates will be sent to offices at regular intervals throughout the year.

Connexions Leicester Shire publications

All new editions of publications should be held for reference in the appropriate CRCI section, with additional supplies available for users to take away.

Titles include: 'You Choose 16+', 'Decisions 18+', 'Parents & Carer's Guide', 'Get Learning', 'Get Working', 'Choices for Students with Additional Needs', 'Decisions for Students with SLD' 'Work It', 'Workwise', 'How 2 Survive @16+'.

Reference Books

Occupational Info

- Working In series (Lifetime/DFES)
 - Hospitals
 - Environment
 - Performing Arts
 - Community Healthcare
 - Transport & Logistics
 - Work Experience and Volunteering
 - Food & Drink
 - Schools & Colleges
 - English
 - Music
 - Built Environment & Construction
 - Advice & Counselling
 - Creative Media
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Science
 - Retail & Customer Service
 - Marketing, Advertising & PR
 - Fashion & Clothing
 - Hospitality & Catering

- Art & Design
- Security & Defence
- Animals & Plants
- Energy
- Maths
- Real Life Guides series (Trotman)
 - The Motor Industry
 - The Armed Forces
 - Plumbing
 - Carpentry & Cabinet Making
 - Electrician
 - Construction
 - Hairdressing
 - Catering
 - The Beauty Industry
 - Care
 - Fire Service
 - Police Force
 - Retail
 - Working Outdoors
 - Animals & Wildlife
 - Working with Young People
 - Passenger Transport
 - Distribution & Logistics
 - Engineering Technician
 - ICT
 - Travel & Tourism
- Careers 2008/9 (Trotman)
- Careers With a Science Degree (Lifetime)
- Careers With an Arts or Humanities Degree (Lifetime)
- CLIPS leaflets (Leicester only)
- If I Can leaflets
- If I Were leaflets (Lifetime)
- Jobfile (Lifetime)
- Nursing & Midwifery Uncovered (Trotman)
- On The Spot leaflets (Highflyers)
- Teaching Uncovered (Trotman)
- What Can I Do With No Degree? (Trotman)

Higher Education

- Choosing Your Degree Course and University (Trotman)
- Degree Course Guides (Trotman)
- Degree Course Offers (Trotman)
- Directory of Nursing & Midwifery Courses (Trotman)
- Directory of Teacher Training Courses (Trotman)
- Educational Grants Directory
- Experience Erasmus (UK Socrates Erasmus)
- Getting Into Art & Design Courses (Trotman)
- Getting Into Law (Trotman)
- Getting Into Medical School (Trotman)

- Getting Into Psychology Courses (Trotman)
- Getting Into Physiotherapy Courses (Trotman)
- Green Guides (Trotman)
- How to Complete Your UCAS Form (Trotman)
- Initial Teacher Training (UCAS)
- Open Days (UCAS)
- Progression To.....series (UCAS)
- PUSH Guide (The Independent)
- Sixthformers Guide (ISCO)
- Social Work (UCAS)
- Student Money Matters (Trotman)
- Taking a Gap Year
- The Art & Design Directory
- The Student Book (Trotman)
- The Times Good University Guide (Times)
- University & College Entrance (Big Guide) (UCAS)
- University Scholarships, Awards & Bursaries (Trotman)
- What Do Graduates Do? (UCAS)

Education

- British Qualifications (Trotman)

Choices

- Choosing Your A levels & Post 16 Options (Trotman)
- Choosing Your GCSEs and Post 14 Options (Trotman)
- Decisions 17/18+ (CRAC)
- Which A Levels (Lifetime)
- Understanding the New Diplomas (Trotman)

Equal Opportunities

- Able To Succeed (CASCAID)
- COPE Directory (Lifetime)
- Disability Rights Handbook (Disability Alliance)
- Disabled Students Guide To University (Trotman)
- Into HE (SKILL)
- Into Nursing & Midwifery (SKILL)

Working/ Studying Abroad

- International Voluntary Work
- Summer Jobs Abroad (Vacation Work)
- The Directory of Jobs & Careers Abroad (Vacation Work)

Work & Training

- CVs and Applications (Lifetime)
- Excel at Interviews (Lifetime)
- GET (CRAC)
- I Can't Do That Can I?
- Job Book (CRAC)
- Jobs & Careers After A Levels (Lifetime)
- Readymade CVs (The Times)

- Readymade Job Search Letters (The Times)
- Successful Interview Skills (Lifetime)
- Summer Jobs in Britain (Vacation Work)
- Winning CVs for First Time Job Hunters (Trotman)
- Winning Interviews for First Time Job Hunters (Trotman)
- Working for Yourself Uncovered (Trotman)

Money

- Guide To Housing Benefit & Council Tax (Shelter)
- Welfare Benefits & Tax Credits (CESI)

Health

- Addictions – Real Life Issues (Trotman)
- Confidence and Self Esteem – Real Life Issues (Trotman)
- Eating Disorders – Real Life Issues (Trotman)
- Mental Health – Real Life Issues (Trotman)
- Stress – Real Life Issues (Trotman)

Relationships

- Bereavement – Real Life Issues (Trotman)
- Bullying – Real Life Issues (Trotman)
- Family Break-Ups - Real Life Issues (Trotman)
- Prejudices - Real Life Issues (Trotman)
- Sex and Relationships – Real Life Issues (Trotman)

Appendix two – Key IT resources

Centres should have the following programs available on their public access pcs:

- Adult Directions*
- Careerscape
- CV3
- Exodus*
- Funder Finder*
- JED
- Kangaroo
- Kudos

*Selected centres only.

In addition there should be links to the following websites/databases:

- Coursefinder
- Jobs4u
- UCAS

- www.connexions-leics.org

Public access PC desktops

An icon should appear for all the programs and websites listed above. No other icons should exist unless agreed with the IT Dept.

Appendix three – The CRCI system (Connexions Resource Centre Index)

Information Zones should contain the following eleven main sections:

- Choices
- Education
- Free Time
- Health
- Housing
- Law, Your Rights and Citizenship
- Money
- Relationships
- Travel and Transport
- Where to Get Help
- Work and Training

Any information held should be allocated to one of these sections.

A series of colour-coded graphic symbols has been devised to represent each of the eleven sections above and also twenty-three occupational groupings. These should be used within the Info Zone. Graphics can be downloaded from <http://www.connexions-leics.org/staffroom/crci/icons.asp>

The eleven main sections should be sub-divided as follows:

Choices

- Directories of occupational info
- Year 9
- Year 11
- Post 16

Education

- FE prospectuses
- HE prospectuses
- Choosing an HE course
- HE applications
- Student life
- Taking a gap year
- Studying abroad
- Equal opportunities in learning
- Money for studying

- Qualifications
- Part-time and distance learning

Free Time

- Societies and organisations
- Sport and leisure
- Volunteering and personal development programmes

Health

- General info
- Sexual health, contraception and pregnancy
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Keeping safe

Housing

- General info
- Law, Your Rights and Citizenship
- General info

Money

- Managing money
- Benefits

Relationships

- General info

Travel and Transport

- General info

Where To Get Help

- National helplines and organisations
- Local helplines and organisations

Work and Training

- General info
- LMI
- Job hunting
- Apprenticeships
- E2e
- Self employment
- Equal opportunities at work
- Work abroad