

Keeping you in the LOOP

Leicestershire 13-19 Area Prospectus

January 2007
No 2

connexions
LEICESTER SHIRE

Launch Day - 16th January

The launch of the interim prospectus will be marked by an open event at the City Learning Centre at Beaumont Leys on Tuesday 16th January from 1-30pm – 4.00pm. Click here for location. www.clc-leicester.org.uk/location/
Please feel free to drop in if and when you can. You will have the opportunity use the interim prospectus and the online application system, LeCAP.

There will also be an opportunity to offer feedback about the site and discuss the development of the full 14-19 prospectus. Refreshments will be available.

Interim prospectus

The existing Futures4me learning prospectus created by the S-cool software company has been customised for Leicestershire and local course data added. We are grateful to all the schools and colleges that have sent in their list of QAN numbers (QCA's unique code for each qualification) to enable the compilation of this data. We are expecting the few remaining schools to supply theirs by the time this newsletter is distributed.

This interim prospectus, to be called 'Course Finder', will be launched on 16 January. After that date you will be able to view it via www.coursefinder-leics.org

Progress

In the first edition of 'Keeping you in the Loop' we outlined how the County and City Councils are working with the LSC and Connexions to fulfil the DfES plan that all areas of England should have an electronic prospectus covering all courses for young people from 14-19 years.

Most schools and colleges have now supplied course data to enable the launch of an interim 16-19 Prospectus in January. We have also drawn up a draft specification for a major upgrade of this prospectus and to link it with the LeCAP application system.

Data Collection

In the last Newsletter we listed the potential data which we will need to collect from all course providers (schools, colleges and apprenticeship providers).

We are still keen to hear your views on the suitability of the data fields proposed and on the practicalities of providing the data.

Copies of the newsletter can be downloaded from the 'Partners and Staff' section of the Connexions web site www.connexions-leics.org/mags click on Staff Mags. Alternatively copies can be obtained from Roz Smith – details under Contacts.

Involving Young People

In November a group of young people from the Connexions Youth Executive viewed and evaluated a range of web sites offering course searches and information, including the prototype Futures4me and Cracking Choices sites.

The young people commented on the search methods, the information content and presentation, the language used and the visual impact of the sites.

Their views have been valuable in planning an upgrade for the full 14-19 Prospectus and they will again be invited to comment on the draft designs.

"Cracking Choices"

During 2006 South Leicestershire College and local schools have been collaborating on a combined 16+ prospectus for their area.

This project has resulted in a very attractive and user-friendly site, which should soon be available for public use. Their experience of collecting and organising data, as well as their ideas for the site design, has greatly benefited the city/county wide project.

Reference Group

The reference group drawn from a wide range of schools, colleges and other stakeholders has met twice to review progress and comment on development proposals. The next meeting will be: **18th January 2007** 3pm - 4.30pm at Connexions head office, 6 Millstone Lane Leicester

We would like every stakeholder to have the opportunity to be part of this group.

If you or a representative would like to attend, please contact Roz Smith – details under Contacts.

Upgrading to the full 14-19 Prospectus

The full prospectus will be launched in September 2007.

A specification has been drawn up based partly on previous experience with LeCAP and the Connexions course database and with major contributions from Cracking Choices, the Youth Executive and with guidance from the Reference Group.

Some Features of the Upgrade

- The site would be searchable by subject (eg Business, Mathematics), Qualification (eg A level, BTEC) or provider (eg Regent College, CITB)
- Users can also choose to limit their search to an age range.
- Apprenticeships will be searchable by occupations.
- Data will be partially generic relating to nationally available qualifications and maintained centrally and partially course/programme specific. The latter will be the responsibility of individual course providers.
- Content will be managed similarly to LeCAP in that data can be updated directly online or supplied to a central database manager on a spreadsheet template.
- An educational glossary will be included with explanations of the qualifications structure and routes through it.
- The pages giving information about course providers can include their logo, a picture and a 'message' from the Principal/Head.
- A calendar of Open Days and links to advice and supporting information (eg on finance, and course choice) will be accessible from the site's home page.
- Plain English standards will be applied to all pages
- An attractive and uncluttered presentation will be aimed at to suit both students and parents.

Link with LeCAP

The LeCAP online application system is now in its second year. The first pilot year revealed some technical and design improvements which were all implemented for this autumn 2006.

LeCAP is now being used successfully in over 10 schools in the City and County. The autumn 2007 version will take its course data directly from the 14-19 Prospectus, so course providers will only need to update one database each year.

Students viewing the prospectus will be able to store a basket of favourite courses. When they come to make their applications they can transfer this basket into LeCAP. A similar link will be made to the electronic Individual Learning Plan (eILP) developed by Loughborough College – more about the eILP in the next Newsletter.

Timetable

	Key dates
January 2007	Launch of interim Post 16 prospectus and feedback on it
February 2007 onwards	Draft designs of the full prospectus available for comment
February 2007 onwards	Collection of basic course data for Pre 16 courses
March 2007	Training for all schools, colleges and training providers in the maintenance and updating of course data
April - June 2007	Adding optional data and updating course lists for courses commencing September 2008
September 2007	Launch of the Leicester and Leicestershire area prospectus

Training

As part of our contract with S-Cool they will provide training for school or college staff on inputting course data.

Each institution will need to nominate a member of staff to attend the training.

Further details will be available in the next newsletter.

Contacts

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Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments you have about the prospectus developments and we will do our best to help.

For more information

Please contact any of the above for more information