

Executive Summary

The aim for this financial year is to build on the positive work taking place across the company. Both Local Authorities are very involved at strategic level and are working closely with the leadership team within the company to address targets for children and young people. This includes the pilot work now underway to implement the Integrated Youth Support Service plans.

With the economic downturn and the squeeze on public sector spending, 2009-2010 is the year to sensibly forward plan seamless services to young people in each locality, through the creation of multi agency services working together. This will pose its challenges on infrastructures and current working arrangements but our goal is to enhance the services to young people and to continue to offer excellent information, advice and guidance to young people during these challenging economic times.

Our plans are informed by the following documents :

- The statutory specification for Connexions delivery (Action Note CX211)
- Section 3 of our Business Plan which provides an economic market analysis
- The National IAG Quality Standards
- National directives from the DCSF, including "Raising Expectations; raising the participation in learning age"
- Local Area Agreements, including the Multi Area Agreement, and Children and Young People's Plans.

Our headline plans for 2009- 2010 are as follows :

1. To achieve the national average NEET target of no more than 8.1% between November 2009 and January 2010.
To achieve a not known figure of no more than 5%
2. To provide a universal Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service to all young people from year 9 onwards which will help young people make the right learning and career choices so that they are able to succeed. This will include access to a Personal Adviser for all young people, including those who are confused about their future direction. The universal service includes access to a range of printed and web based information to help young people, with their parents and carers, make appropriate choices. Course Finder, the on line prospectus and Common Application Process has significantly enhanced access to post 16 options for young people, parents, carers and providers. Further work will be undertaken during the year to link this process with Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).
3. To provide a targeted IAG service to vulnerable young people most at risk of disaffection, who may become NEET. Through our vertical caseloading arrangements, young people 13-19 have continuity of Personal Adviser support. Vulnerable groups include those young people with learning difficulties and / or disabilities, teenage mums, those at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded, those who are known to the Youth Offending Service, those who are looked after and those who are set to leave care. We currently deploy specialist Personal Advisers working within these services.
4. To work with Local Authority colleagues to manage the smooth transition of the Positive Activities for Young People programme back to the Local Authorities. We will continue to manage the ESF and VCS programme for the most vulnerable young people, who are presently unable to access e2e provision. We will set up a strategic group with Local Authority colleagues to forward plan targeted provision to maximise

the use of resources available. We are keen to carefully manage our relationships with the VCS sector who have programmes to effectively engage young people.

5. To provide advisory support to schools and colleges for managing and developing their careers education programmes and personal development within the curriculum. This support will include training, consultancy, advice and support using the Career Mark quality award as a framework for development. We intend to explore income generating opportunities where schools and colleges wish to buy more than the core funding will permit.
6. To strengthen employer engagement so that we build apprenticeships, work experience and curriculum related opportunities with employers. Our intended merger with Leicestershire Education Business Company will enable us to join up all employer engagement activity for 13-19 year olds, so that we work smarter and make effective use of resources. This is particularly important with the roll out of Diplomas and planned growth in apprenticeships which will necessitate stronger links with the Sector Skills Councils. Moreover, many young people seek employment opportunities at 16 and beyond therefore our advocacy role with employers is very important. We are key players on strategic groups and will represent young people and their interests in the regeneration plans for the City and County.
7. To be a key player in the development of Integrated Youth Support Services in the City and County. Our unique contribution will be the one to one work which we are able to provide to young people to help them become more self reliant and better able to manage their personal and career development, including learning.
8. To track the progress of all young people, using our sophisticated and comprehensive Profile database, which allows us to record attainment and current destination data of all 13-19 year olds, by gender, ethnicity, ward and postcode. This is a very effective M.I.S system which could be further developed as a M.I.S. tool to benefit both Local Authorities.

To deliver our plans our key resource will be our staff. The IAG National Standards provide a framework to enable us to self assess our delivery effectiveness. We are very aware of the changing landscape and recognise that we must perform to the highest standards in all aspects of our work.

We have Service Level Agreements with all schools and colleges which sets out what they can expect from us. At strategic level we will meet with heads and principals to articulate our plans and discuss any further work which they wish to purchase from us.

We will continue to play an active and supportive role as an inter authority partner to further opportunities to help young people achieve and minimise potential NEET. We currently take the lead on IAG policy and practices which we influence through the inter authority Careers Education Information and Advice and Guidance Group (CEIAG), which includes stakeholders from the post 16 sector.

We will pursue other funding sources to support our overall objectives, such as ESF.

We will maintain a strong partnership with the voluntary and community sector, by providing financial resources as part of the Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Programme to address Connexions business objectives. We will also commission providers who are able to offer creative solutions to tackle disengagement in our disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

We have an excellent record of involving young people. We currently involve young people in all aspects of our work, from the appointment of staff, to the planning and design of service delivery, to quality inspections and reviews of our own and other agency services, to the development and moderation of both printed and web based information. The nationally

recognised Hear By Right Standard is the audit tool for our youth involvement work and we are self-assessed at advanced status.

We strive to continuously improve our delivery. Through our regional and national links we will keep abreast of others' practices so that we can introduce tried and tested new ideas to current provision.

We look forward with enthusiasm to the year ahead and to the contribution which we will make to the economic well being of the City and County.