

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

22nd JANUARY 2009

**CONNEXIONS SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN
LOOKED AFTER**

**MIKE CARR - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN
FAMILIES & LEARNING**

**GILL ROLLINGS – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To update the Corporate Parenting Board on the support provided by the Connexions Service to children looked after by the local authority.

BACKGROUND

2. Members will be aware that the Connexions Service disaggregated to Middlesbrough Council in April 2007 and is now fully integrated within Children Families and Learning.
3. The Connexions service aims to support children looked after in their progression into adult life. A successful outcome is that children looked after should be engaged in either education, employment or training until the age of 19 and economically independent by the age of 21.
4. Each Looked After Child is offered Tier 1 (intensive) support from Connexions and is able to receive the highest frequency of quality intervention from the service. This equates to 3 hours of interpersonal contacts or 6 interventions in any twelve month period. However, in reality, this is often exceeded, in order to deal with the needs, often complex, of Looked After Children.

5. Statistics provided for the Middlesbrough Children Services Local Authority area review in December 2008(JAR), showed 82% of care leavers in education, employment or training, a 20% improvement on previous figures. Figures shown in the 2007 OFSTED data report were less positive than those based on Connexions information. It was realised that the Client Centred Information System (CCIS) focused on all young people including young people from other local authority areas for whom the responsibility to provide support lay with that authority.
6. A partnership agreement, which is reviewed regularly and re-issued annually in September, exists between the Connexions and the Children Looked After Services of Middlesbrough Council, and enables dedicated and specialist Connexions support to be delivered to Children Looked After. This complements that support already in place, and offered by generic school based Personal Advisers. This provision directly contributes to the Achieve Economic Well being outcome of Every Child Matters.
7. Two Personal Advisers are jointly managed by both services, and receive regular and comprehensive management supervision, relevant contemporary joint training, with members of the Looked After Children (LAC) team, and appraisal from both Departments.
8. Specific PA roles and responsibilities beginning in Y9, and continuing are to:
 - Introduce themselves as named Personal Advisers and introduce the Connexions Service to young people, their parents and carers.
 - Liaise with Key Workers in schools to ensure support and progression
 - Help young people to decide on their career options, plans and pathways.
 - Agree Action Plans with young people to aid career progression
 - Make appointments at venues, relevant to the young person.
 - Help to complete application forms for education, employment and training.
 - Attend multi-disciplinary team meetings regarding young people looked after.
 - Undertake assessments on young people to obtain an individual profile using the Connexions Service Assessment Plan Implementation and Review (APIR) format.
 - Contribute to Section 140 assessments for young people with special needs.
 - Support planned transitions from the LAC service to the Leaving Care Service.
 - Supporting out of school, holiday activities, organised by the Looked After Team.
 - Update the Connexions Client Centred Information System following each intervention.
9. Since September 2008, all Y10 and Y11 Looked after Children in Middlesbrough have been seen at least once by the named Personal

Adviser. The process of progressing the individual young person into a positive future destination has begun.

10. A new innovation, launched in September 2008, has been the introduction of formal vocational guidance interventions with those in Y9. This has been introduced to enable informed key stage 4 course choices to be made prior to entry into Y10 in September 2009.

Table 1. Proposed Post 16 Destinations for Year 11 Looked After Young People in Middlesbrough (December 2008).

Destination	Male	Female	Black	Other
College	5	4	1	
E2E	2			
Work based training	2	2	1	
Employment				

11. Connexions works very closely with the Leaving Care Service based at Middlesbrough Independence Network (3 Park Road North) and joint working is firmly embedded in both services. Joint training and development activities continue for the Connexions Personal Advisers and for the Pathway Team. The benefits of this approach are reflected in the development of clear career progression plans for all young people.
12. The Connexions Service has continued to dedicate two specialist Personal Advisers to the needs of care leavers. In line with the proposals in the 2007 Care Matters, Time for Change White Paper. Negotiations are underway for Connexions to extend support to all care leavers up to the age of 24.
13. Work has taken place with the Connexions, Leaving Care Service and Middlesbrough College to develop “wrap around” support for young people embarking on college courses. This will be piloted in the college and if successful will then be offered to young people following E2E (Entry to Employment) and other work based training programmes.
14. Connexions Personal Advisers have worked with the Youth Development Worker from the Leaving Care Team to develop the ‘What Makes a Difference Programme’. This programme, which was nationally recognised in October 2007, offers our care leavers the opportunity to have work placements within Middlesbrough Council departments.
15. There is a funding bid in process via the Pathways Team, supported by Connexions, to secure monies to pay the young people on the Make A Difference Programme a wage.
16. Connexions Personal Advisers continue to support the Preparation for Independence programmes offered to all care leavers and accredited by the Open College Network.
17. We have more 19 and 20 year olds accessing college and E2E than ever before. A particular area of success is the two young people now attending university.

Table 2: Care Leaver Destinations 2008 for 16 – 20 year olds

Destination	Male	Female
College	17	16
E2E	3	2
Work Based Training	5	2
Employed	6	8
Higher Education	1	1
NEET Available	6	1
NEET Not Available	12	10

OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT

18. This is a joint approach with proven success however the Connexions Service is open to any suggestions of new methods of working and ways of giving fuller support to all young people.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

19. There are no specific financial or legal implications arising from this report. Services for children looked after apply to all wards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to advise the Executive to note the information relating to Connexions Support for children looked after.

REASONS

21. To enable elected Members to be aware of the support provide by Connexions to children looked after.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Report to Corporate Parenting Board 31st January 2008
- Middlesbrough Council Connexions Plan 2007 – 09

Author: John Keelty, Connexions Manager
Tel: 01642 240081

Address: Connexions Middlesbrough, Ground Floor, Church House, Grange Road, Middlesbrough TS1 2LR

Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>