

**What Makes The Difference?
TOOLS and RESOURCES**

NAME OF TOOL/RESOURCE: Coventry and Warwickshire Protocol for provision of careers service to care leavers.

NAME AND REGION OF AGENCY/ORGANISATION THAT DEVELOPED THIS TOOL/RESOURCE:
Warwickshire County Council – Midlands

Purpose and brief description of tool/resource:

An agreement between agencies working together to meet the needs of young people leaving care. The agreement sets out the main principles for the local working arrangements between Coventry and Warwickshire Local Authorities including Social Services and Local Education Authorities, Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council, the Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions Service and local Learning Providers – to provide appropriate counselling, guidance, education and training opportunities and progress through individual “tailor made” programmes to care leavers.

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Contact details for further information about this tool/resource

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Evidence for the effectiveness/ impact of this tool/resource

Positive impact of this tool/resource:

Unknown.

Coventry & Warwickshire

Our

PROTOCOL

Local Learning & Skills Council
Connexions Service,
Colleges of Further Education,
Local Education Authorities,
Social Services Departments.



The Colleges of Further Education,
Coventry & Warwickshire



2005 - 2006

AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN AGENCIES WORKING TOGETHER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE

STATEMENT OF ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE LOCAL
AUTHORITIES (SOCIAL SERVICES AND LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES),

COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL,

COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE CONNEXIONS SERVICE,

LEARNING PROVIDERS INCLUDING SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND TRAINING
ORGANISATIONS.

Background

The Leaving Care Act 2000 put a responsibility on local authorities to provide a Multi Agency Pathway Plan for all young people who leave the care of the local authority. Research continues to demonstrate clearly that children leaving care are very vulnerable and at greater risk of educational underachievement, unemployment, crime, homelessness and poverty than their peers. The Act was drafted after proposals contained in the consultation document “Me, Survive, Out There? – New arrangements for Young People Living in and Leaving Care”.

While the lead responsibility rests with local authorities the implementation of the act depends on active partnership with a wide range of other agencies and organisations. Key are the Local Learning Skills Council, Learning Providers including Schools, FE Colleges and Training Organisations, and the Connexions service who all have targets relating to meeting the educational, training and employment needs of all young people. The Connexions Service is responsible for providing a comprehensive counselling and guidance service for young people aged 13 to 19, the Learning and Skills Council takes responsibility for the local provision of further education, work based training and sixth forms that are delivered by a network of schools, colleges and training providers across the sub-region.

The requirement for these organisations to work together is crucial to ensuring that there is appropriate provision on the ground to meet the educational needs of all young people leaving care in Coventry and Warwickshire.

The Children Act 2004

The Children Bill received Royal Assent on 15 November and is now the Children Act 2004. The Act provides a legislative spine for the wider strategy for improving children’s lives. The Act covers the universal services which every child accesses, and more targeted services for those with additional needs.

The overall aim is to encourage integrated planning, commissioning and delivery of services as well as improve multi-disciplinary working, remove duplication, increase accountability and improve the coordination of individual and joint inspections in local authorities. The legislation is enabling rather than prescriptive and provides local authorities with a considerable amount of flexibility in the way they implement its provisions.

Introduction

1. This agreement sets out the main principles for the local working arrangements between Coventry and Warwickshire Local Authorities including Social Services and Local Education Authorities (referred to hereafter as the LA's), Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council (referred to hereafter as the "LLSC"), the Coventry and Warwickshire Connexions Service (referred to hereafter as the "Connexions Service"), and local Learning Providers.
2. The Agreement covers the relationship necessary to ensure that all young people leaving care (referred to hereafter as "young people") in Coventry and Warwickshire receive appropriate counselling, guidance, education and training opportunities and progress through individual "tailor made" programmes to successful outcomes.
3. The agreement is intended as a working document and was subject to extensive consultation within the Local Authorities, Connexions Service, the LLSC, Learning Providers and with key stakeholders.
4. Where a formal contract exists between any of the organisation the requirements of the contract take precedence over and are in addition to this agreement.

Purpose

5. The purpose of this Agreement is to:
 - set out the principles that will guide all business between the organisations
 - establish standards of service
 - define what is expected of each party,
 - provide guidance to staff

Principles

6. The central driving principle is that of putting the needs of young people first through:
 - raising aspirations – agreeing high expectations with every individual,
 - meeting individual needs and overcoming barriers to learning,
 - providing clear routes through education and training
 - taking account of the views of young people – individually and collectively
 - facilitating clear financial arrangements to support young people through agreed programmes of learning,
 - inclusion – keeping young people in mainstream education and training and preventing them moving to the margins of their community,
 - partnership – agencies collaborating to achieve more for young people, parents and communities than agencies working in isolation,
 - community involvement and neighbourhood renewal – through involvement of community mentors and through personal advisers brokering access to local welfare, health, arts sport and guidance networks,
 - extending opportunity and equality of opportunity – raising participation and achievement levels for all young people, influencing the availability, suitability and quality of provision and raising awareness of opportunities,
 - evidence based practice – ensuring that new interventions are based on rigorous research and evaluation into "what works".
7. Role of Social Services Personal Adviser:

All young Care Leavers under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 are required to have a Personal Adviser nominated by Social Services. The Personal Adviser helps to compile, complete and review a Pathway Plan which takes into consideration all aspects of a young person's life. The Personal Adviser under the Act is required to act as a Co-ordinator to stay in touch with a Care Leaver until they are 21 or 24+ if still in education.

The Connexions Personal Advisor role is to liaise with Social Services and support the young person and ensure appropriate education, training and employment opportunities. They will continue to advocate on behalf of their client and liaise with learning providers to ensure appropriate provision is available.

8. Dialogue between young people's advisers, members of the organisations and other partners is based on honesty and openness to facilitate relationships of mutual trust and respect.
9. There is regular and effective communication between the LA's, Social Services, LLSC, the Connexions Service and Learning Providers that includes staff at all levels. Partnership working between the organisations is encouraged at all levels to enable problems to be dealt with appropriately, quickly and in the interest of young people leaving care.
10. Roles and responsibilities in relation to individual young people are clearly set out and agreed between the organisations.
11. All significant issues that affect the delivery of education and training services to young people leaving care are quickly debated and jointly agreed.
12. We actively learn about the needs of young people, communities and partners.
13. We celebrate achievement of all kinds.
14. There is a commitment to equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

Responsibilities

15. There is a joint commitment in the form of active partnership between the organisations, to ensure access for young people in care and leaving care to counselling, guidance and educational and training programmes that meet their specific needs as well as the needs of the community in which they live.
16. The organisations work together to increase the resources available to support young people leaving care and jointly submit project proposals and bids for additional funding when opportunities arise.
17. The LLSC is responsible for ensuring that appropriate educational and training programmes are available that meet the needs of young people and enable them to progress to opportunities in the local, regional and national labour market. Alternative or enhanced provision is offered during Key Stage 4 to facilitate the engagement and progression of young people into post-compulsory education and training. Where funding is an issue pre-16 agencies collaborate to find financial solutions where possible.
18. Local Authorities are responsible for working directly with young people in care in a parenting role in order to encourage them towards positive participation in education, training and employment.

19. The educational and training opportunities arranged by the LLSC reflect the best balance between meeting labour market needs, prompt availability and responding to the aspirations and availability of young people.
20. Learning Providers respond flexibly and quickly to provide appropriate programmes that meet the needs of young people leaving care.
21. Learning Providers proactively support students/trainees on their courses who are leaving care with sensitivity and with discretion. Each learning establishment has a designated member of staff who has an understanding of the care system and its impact upon education.

The designated person also ensures speedy transfer of educational information between agencies.

The establishment should enable the designated person to fulfil their role by ensuring that they have received appropriate training which should cover all aspects of the care system, the impact of care upon education, responsibilities under the Children Act and associated regulations.

22. Appropriate education and training opportunities are made available to reflect the best balance between meeting labour market needs, prompt availability and responding to the aspirations and capabilities of young people.
23. The Connexions Service and others identify and notify learning providers of those young people who are likely to require additional support if they are to benefit and succeed in education or training. Personal Advisers advocate on behalf of these young people at case conferences and review the additional support provided and envisioned every six months.
24. The Connexions Service and others ensure that all the educational and training options available to young people are presented to schools, carers, young people and employers objectively and on an equal footing.

Sharing information

25. The LA's, the LLSC, The Connexions Service and Learning Providers exchange:
 - a) information to help plan individual Pathway Plans for Young People leaving Care, in particular information regarding:
 - details about the young people known to be leaving care,
 - young people's destinations from education;
 - current analyses of the aspirations of the young people involved in the guidance process;
 - the Connexions Client Database
 - any mismatches of provision
 - b) information to help track the making of offers and destinations or training packages.
 - c) feedback on any barriers to access appropriate education or training packages encountered by young people or those trying to support and resolve them.
 - d) feedback on the results of individual case conferences and reviews held about young people leaving care.

Permission of the individual young person must be obtained before exchanging personal information about them. Each organisation checks that written agreement has been received by young people to allow information to be shared.

- e) copies of frameworks and rules relating to LLSC educational and training programmes including any priorities.
- f) details of available learning opportunities within Coventry and Warwickshire.
- g) The results of recruitment and starts and completers in education and training programmes.

26. The LA's, LLSC, the Connexions Service and the Learning Providers undertake specific additional analyses and local reviews when required and pool management information in order to improve the effectiveness of educational and training programmes for young people leaving care.
27. Common formats for data exchange have been developed and used across the sub-region.

Planning

28. The LA's, LLSC, the Connexions Service and the Learning Providers consult each other in the preparation of their Annual Service Plans and ensure that the plans are consistent and compatible where they directly affect provision for young people leaving care. During Year 11 all partners meet to agree the leaving care group and arrangements for maintaining their progress.

Communication Processes

29. Liaison is conducted at multiple levels. These are:
- a) Strategic Level. The organisations have agreed appropriate representation at Board level in each of the organisations to ensure that the needs of young people leaving care are properly taken into account ie LSC Council, College Governing Bodies, Cabinet, Connexions Strategic Partnership Board, Local Management Committees.
 - b) Management Level. Relevant Managers meet regularly to review the arrangements documented in this agreement.
 - c) Day to Day. Specific service issues and matters relating to individual young people are conducted by named staff on a day-to-day basis.
30. Each organisation provides an up to date organisation chart to each other annually and informs the other about significant staff changes when they happen.

ICT

31. The organisations facilitate effective communication between staff, learning providers and young people through using computer based systems especially e-mail and Internet.
32. Where information about young people is recorded or conveyed using information technology then organisations are registered appropriately under the Data Protection Act and staff comply with the recommended procedures.

Quality Standards

33. The LA's, LLSC, the Connexions Service and the Learning Providers jointly undertake to adopt the principle of continuous improvement. They will work together to support the Joint Area Review process.
34. Specific service and quality standards are through the planning processes agreed between the organisations.

Evaluation and Review

35. All services and programmes are regularly reviewed and evaluated in order to increase their effectiveness and to improve the outcomes for young people.
36. Whenever a project or programme is established planned outcomes and the process for review and evaluation are agreed and timetabled at the outset.

Joint Projects

37. As partners the LA's, LLSC, the Connexions Service and the Learning Providers will continue to develop and jointly fund improved access to education and training opportunities for young people leaving care.
38. Where the organisations are working on a joint project an appropriate person from one of the organisations may be commissioned to manage the project on behalf of the partnership.
39. Each organisation will notify the other of funding bids it will be submitting and where necessary agree how it will complement and not conflict with existing services and initiatives.

Staff Development and Training

40. The LA's, LLSC, the Connexions Service and the Learning Providers will provide staff secondments and short term shadowing opportunities to staff who require an in depth understanding of the other organisations.
41. Briefing sessions for the other organisation's staff at least annually, and provided centrally.
42. Organisations promptly provide information on relevant national and local developments in a suitable briefing format for distribution to staff.
43. Joint training is organised for staff of all organisations where this will promote the work of the partnership.

Complaints and Compliments

44. Written details of any significant or unresolved complain from a young person, or other interested party regarding the quality or scope of the service provided by any of the organisations will be sent to the relevant manager and marked "confidential".
45. Complaints will be responded to immediately in accordance with the complaints procedures that apply within the LA's, LLSC, Connexions Service and the Learning Providers.

46. Compliments and praise from whatever source will be communicated to the staff concerned and celebrated by the relevant organisations.

Annex

Section 4 – Confidentiality

1. Introduction

Connexions (Coventry and Warwickshire) Policy on Confidentiality is underpinned by the Human Rights Act 1988, in particular Article 8 and the Children Act 1989, Section 31, para 9. As with all confidentiality policies there are no absolute criteria to define when a Personal Adviser should break confidentiality without the consent of the client – *see para 4*. The test is simply a judgement made by the Personal Adviser that in not breaking confidentiality the client's health, safety and welfare is put at serious risk.

All young people are made aware of the information that is held on them, why and with whom this is shared. Written consent to the recording and sharing of personal data is sought by each Personal Adviser during Year 9 – *see para 3*.

Human Rights Act 1998, Article 8

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Children Act 1989, Section 31

- (9) 'harm' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development
'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development
'health' means physical or mental health and
'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical.

(10) Where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health and development, his health or development shall be compared with what could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

See also- Section 5 – Child Protection procedures.

2. Release of client data

2.1 To themselves

If a client requests a copy of the data held about them this is to be provided, by their Personal Adviser, in printed/written format within one working day. (This will allow time for the record to be checked for accuracy and currency). The client is entitled to have details of all the information held about them.

2.2 To a third party

2.2.1 *Request from the client's parent(s)/guardians(s):*

2.2.1.1

If the request is made over the phone the phone number should always be obtained and the parent/guardian phoned back (this is to check the validity of the request)

2.2.1.2

Before passing on any information, PA ensures client's consent is obtained.

2.2.2 Requests from other parties (e.g. Police/Probation Service/Social Services/Employment Service/Employers)

2.2.2.1

If the request is made over the phone the phone number should always be obtained and the organisation phoned back (this is to check the validity of the request).

2.2.2.2

Information is shared regarding the client unless the client's signed consent form states otherwise.

2.2.2.3

There may be instances where information has to be shared regardless of client's wishes – see *para 4*.

2.2.3 Requests from the other Connexions Services

2.2.3.1

If the request is made over the phone the phone number should always be obtained and the organisation phoned back (this is to check the validity of the request)

2.2.3.2

A printout is sent of the record from Aspire with any relevant hard copy file we hold with the consent of the young person

2.2.3.3

The client record is updated accordingly.

3. Written consent

Personal Advisers are required to gain the informed consent of young people (in writing) to the recording and sharing of information with a third party and explain that young people have the right to withdraw consent at any time – see *para 5*. The informed consent will take place as part of a group session in Year 9 with every young person where information will be provided on the services offered by Connexions and the rights and responsibilities of each young person, as detailed in the Young People's Charter. (This Charter was developed, designed and agreed by working group of young people.)

It is the Personal Adviser's responsibility to;

- explain all about confidentiality and the times it may not apply (see *para 4*)
- obtain a consent signature from every young person in Year 9
- explain how a client may withdraw their consent (see *para 5*)
- explain how a young person can access information about themselves (see *para 2.1*)
- check with client, on a yearly basis, that their consent form reflects their current wishes.

4. Break of confidentiality

There are exceptions where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and these are explained to clients:

- where child protection issues are involved
- where there is a significant threat to life
- where the young person needs urgent medical treatment
- where potential or actual serious criminal offences are involved

- in the context of the information sharing arrangements in place with the Employment Service with regard to young people's eligibility to benefits

5. Withdrawal of consent

Personal Advisers explain to clients that they can withdraw their consent by putting this in writing to the Personal Adviser. Personal Advisers must again explain that in some circumstances (see para 4) confidentiality may not be respected.

6. Record Keeping

Up to date records are kept of signed forms showing client's consent/withdrawal of consent by Person Advisers.

Client's consent to sharing/not sharing of information is also recorded on Aspire under 'Client Record/Other Screen/Data Partner Permissions Section' – for details on how to input information onto a Client record see *ICT user guide*.