

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007

**PRESENTED BY:** Acting Strategic Director – Children and Young People’s Directorate

**SUBJECT:** Youth Matters/Connexions Transition

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To provide information on developments regarding Youth Matters and Connexions transition.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 To support the development of proposals and options to secure Integrated Youth Support from April 2008.

2.2 That the information is noted and the actions proposed in section 6.0 agreed.

2.3 That a further report is presented to the Executive Board in October 2007.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 National Policy**

3.2 The Publication of the Green Paper – Youth Matters presented proposals to

- Give young people more influence over the activities and facilities available to them locally – including sporting activities
- Engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive
- Extend opportunities for all young people to make a contribution to their communities, for example through volunteering;
- Provide more and better information for teenagers and their parents about what they can expect in their area;
- Modernise the provision of information, advice and guidance on subjects important to young people and their parents, bringing it closer to young people at times, in places and in ways that will suit them; and
- Improve services to disadvantaged young people by encouraging better integration and collaboration of services for them.

The reforms build upon the Every Child Matters agenda and take into account the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper proposals.

3.3 Youth Matters proposed the merger of a range of existing Government funding streams, which are targeted at young people. These will be devolved to

Local Authorities working through Children's Trusts to encourage a more holistic approach to meeting the needs of young people at a local level.

- 3.4 The subsequent Next Steps document cemented the proposals following consultation and identified four key themes as priorities for delivering services to young people. These being:
1. Empowering young people – things to do and places to go
  2. Young people as citizens – making a contribution
  3. Supporting choices – information, advice and guidance
  4. All young people achieving – Reforming targeted support
- 3.5 Within the key themes were specific actions which set down:
- The development of services to young people under the umbrella of 'Integrated Youth Support'
  - The reform of targeted support based on the needs of young people using the concept of lead professional
  - The introduction of Information, Advice and Guidance standards
  - The development of a national organisation for volunteering
  - The transfer of funding and responsibility of Connexions to Local Authority working within Childrens Trust Arrangements
  - The proposed timescales for implementation of the changes is April 2008.
- 3.6 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 consolidated these requirements placing new statutory duties upon Local Authorities to ensure that young people have access to a wide range of positive activities which empower them to shape the services they receive.
- 3.7 2007 has marked an increase in the pace of change with a range of policy and guidance published. In summary these are within an overarching Treasury/DFES thematic review of Children and Young People which will inform the Comprehensive Sending Review and will herald a 10 year Youth Strategy.

Specific guidance/information recently published include:

- Integrated Youth Support (IYS)
  - Guidance on framework for development of IYS expected April 2007
- Targeted Youth Support (TYS)
  - Prospectus for development expected April 2007
- Youth Work
  - DFES planning work on Strategy Youth Work guidance in 2007/2008
- Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
  - Consultation on IAG standards ends in March, with final standards to be published in April 2007
- Connexions Transition
  - Ministers confirmed use of Connexions branding to continue
  - Health check by Government North West in 2007 (possibly September) on how transition and development of IYS is proceeding with each Local

Authority area.

- NEET
  - National NEET delivery plan expected April 2007 which in turn will inform local NEET plan.

#### 4.0 Connexions Transition

- 4.1 Connexions are an information, advice and guidance organisation, which predominantly delivers services to 13-19 year olds. It employs Personal Advisors who are based in a variety of settings including schools, high street centres and multi agency teams. Whilst it is viewed as a universal service it has increasingly targeted its support to meet the national not in education, employment and training (NEET) agenda.
- 4.2 Connexions in Halton is delivered as part of Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP). GMCP is made up of the boroughs of Halton, Liverpool, Wirral, St Helens, Sefton and Knowsley.

In order to ensure effective transition a GMCP Transition group was established with representatives at Chief Executive or Director of Childrens Services level from all six boroughs.

The terms of reference for the group included:

- Agreement of a transition plan
  - Assessment of risks and liabilities
  - Assessment of options for future Connexions service delivery
  - Consultation with Key stakeholders
  - Reporting progress to Government North West and DfES
- 4.3 The group published an interim report in January 2007, which set down a framework for development including agreement on the following:
- Partnership – ***GMCP will continue to operate as a discrete legal entity***
  - Structure, employment and legal continuity – ***GMCP will continue to employ all staff, hold property leases and other contracts***
  - Multi disciplinary working – ***operation of Connexions staff should be determined locally***
  - Integrated leadership and Management – ***Connexions Area Manager will join management structures of CYPD***
- 4.4 A further issue, which is particular only to Halton, is that Connexions are currently contracted to deliver the Youth Service until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. The contracting out to Connexions was a complicated process involving TUPE issues. The current youth service workforce is employed on a combination of JNC and Connexions terms and condition.

## **5.0 Halton Progress**

- 5.1 A multi agency Youth Matters Steering group has been established and specific terms of reference set. The group will answer directly to the Universal Task group within the Children's Alliance Board framework. At the last Youth Matters Steering group a proposal for a smaller time limited Integrated Youth Support (IYS) working group to be established was endorsed. The main aim of this team will be to plan, co-ordinate and deliver a multi-agency change plan.
- 5.2 A specific multi agency half day event has already taken place which launched the transition process. The aim of this event was to identify the overarching outcomes of IYS and to develop a detailed change plan to enable implementation.
- 5.3 A plethora of opinions and ideas informed the workshop. The crucial issue of consultation and communication being at the forefront of the discussion. To this end the following key outcomes have been agreed:
- A specific large scale event with young people and professionals scheduled for June / July.
  - A series of workshops with staff including briefing and questions and answer sessions. Also suggested is a discrete linked website for improved communication.
  - A series of ongoing participation events with young people and parents / carers.
- 5.4 Furthermore Connexions Transition funding has secured the half time secondment of the Connexions Area Manager to the Local Authority to add capacity to develop the agenda, the secondment began on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

## **6.0 Halton Next Step Actions**

- 6.1 Taking into account the decisions made at the GMCP Transition group and the key messages from central and regional government regarding forthcoming guidance the following actions are to be agreed:
- i. A multi-agency change plan will be developed by April with a comprehensive implementation plan to follow. The change plan will concentrate on identifying the options for future developments.
  - ii. To explore the option of IYS becoming a mini trust. In the first instance the pooling of the resources for Connexions and Youth Services would occur. Following this the possibility of pooling other resources such as commissioned services could be pursued.
  - iii. Following the agreement of outcomes and consultation with key stakeholders the core structure of IYS (initially Connexions and YS) will be developed. This would include links to Halton Borough Council management structures.

- iv. The current contract arrangements to continue with Connexions whilst future options are explored.
- v. A report to be tabled to the Council's Executive Board and Children & Young People Alliance Board in October 2007 to propose specific recommendations and options.

## **7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Youth Matters is an integral part of the Every Child Matters programme. The development of Integrated Youth Support and the transition of Connexions will inform and influence the Halton Children & Young People Alliance Network concept. Furthermore the issue of integrated workforce development will be key to the successful implementation of the Youth Matters proposals.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Youth Matters – Next Steps indicated that from April 2008 funding will come to Local Authorities for Connexions in a single grant.
- 8.2 However the level of Connexions grant funding devolved to HBC from 2008 is not yet known. DfES has recently approved a team of consultants to make recommendations for apportioning the national Connexions grant allocation to individual Local Authority areas.
- 8.3 GONW has indicated that allocations will appear as aligned budgets within LAAs for 2007 -2008
- 8.4 The GMCP transition group is discussing the financial implications of Connexions transition. A specific risks and liabilities sub group of the transition group has been formed to develop these issues.

## **9.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 9.1 Failure to propose the model for Integrated Youth Support will present the following risks:
  - The Local Authority and its partner will fail to implement the Youth Matters proposals.
  - The Local Authority will be in a weakened state in regard to Joint Area Review scheduled for March 2008.
  - The Local Authority will fail in its statutory duties within the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

## **10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 10.1 The multi-agency change plan will incorporate a range of equality and diversity matters.

## **11.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

Integrated Youth Support is a key cornerstone of Youth Matters and integral to securing the delivery of Education and Inspections Act 2006.

## **12.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

None.

## **13.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

To be agreed with proposals in October 2007.

## **14.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 197U2**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Children Act	Grosvenor House	Lorraine Butcher
Every Child Matters	Grosvenor House	Lorraine Butcher
Youth Matters	Grosvenor House	Lorraine Butcher
Education & Inspection Act	Grosvenor House	Lorraine Butcher