

# Youth Connexions Hertfordshire

## *Developing and delivering positive outcomes for young people*

### **What is a Personal Adviser?**

Personal Advisers form a critical link in bringing together effective support for young people. This support may range from providing basic information, advice and guidance, to helping vulnerable young people requiring more substantial one-to-one support. They act as a confidential and safe 'ear'.

Personal Advisers make sure that the needs of young people are met so that they are able and motivated to pursue education, training and work opportunities and achieve their full potential.

Some of the duties of a Personal Adviser are:

- working with young people to establish their needs and offer information, advice, support and guidance where necessary;
- helping young people face challenges that may affect their capacity to take part in learning and work opportunities;
- working with and supporting schools, colleges, training institutions and employers in designing a range of local courses that will meet the needs of young people;
- working with voluntary, statutory and community agencies and commercial bodies to ensure a co-ordinated approach to overcoming the barriers to learning and employment faced by young people;
- working with parents, carers and families to support young people;
- managing information effectively to facilitate the process of meeting the needs of young people;
- renewing and reflecting upon their own professional practice to achieve continuous improvement in performance.

### **Different areas of focus**

All Personal Advisers are trained to provide help on personal, family and relationship issues. Beyond this, some are specialised in delivering careers advice and guidance and are attached to several schools or may work in a college. Every state secondary school and Further Education College in Hertfordshire has a Connexions Personal Adviser and resources with up-to-date information about the various learning choices and career pathways, and Personal Advisers are key in helping young people to make the most of these materials and resources.

Other Personal Advisers work in the community, and may be specially trained or qualified to help certain audiences such as care leavers, young parents or young people with a learning difficulty or a disability.

## How do Personal Advisers work in Hertfordshire?

One of the main priorities of Personal Advisers is to reduce the number of young people who are **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**. To tackle this challenge, work has to follow two approaches: *preventative*, helping young people at risk of becoming NEET to stay in education or find work, and *problem-solving*, helping NEET young people to gain the skills or confidence they need to progress.

Some of the innovative ways that Hertfordshire has addressed the challenge of reducing the number of NEET young people are:

The **Budget Holding Lead Professional (BHLP)** programme has been developed to give Personal Advisers discretionary budgets that they can use flexibly based on a young person's specific needs. In each case, a personal plan is drawn up with the young person to identify the most important priorities and set out a plan to get the young person back on course. Often the funding is used for training to increase both 'soft' skills such as confidence and ability to communicate, and 'hard' skills such as a manual trade or a qualification in basic Information Technology.

The **Young Employee Support Scheme (YESS)** is a job-matching service that encourages employers with a junior or entry-level vacancy to employ NEET young people. Our trained Employment Team puts forward suitable, job-ready young people and provides mentoring support for successful applicants.

The **Employment Team**, based in Letchworth, also operates a detailed **tracking system** to keep in touch with young people after they leave full-time education. Any young people needing help to find work can receive help with their CV, advice on interview techniques, and guidance on how to keep a job as well as find one.

The **AccessAbility Team** is a dedicated team of Personal Advisors who can help young people aged 13-25 who have a learning difficulty or a disability. Some work within Special Schools and others with young disabled people.

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# Youth Connexions Hertfordshire – Our aims

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire was created in early 2008 from the merged resources of Connexions Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire Youth Service. This service has developed in response to the Government's two key policy documents, *Youth Matters* and *Youth Matters Next Steps*. Youth Connexions Hertfordshire is based within and reports to the Hertfordshire Children's Trust Partnership.

The Government's vision as identified through *Youth Matters* and *Next Steps* called for more integrated and customer focussed support arrangements for young people.

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire is well placed to respond to these challenges, as already in Hertfordshire we have a strong and active partnership of key organisations working under the Hertfordshire Children's Trust Partnership arrangements to support the needs of young people. The service will utilise this strong foundation in order to develop arrangements that create a more integrated, young person centred approach to prevention work within the county.

The key structures that are already in place which will support us to meet our targets are:

- District Children's Trust Partnerships (DCTPs) based on the 10 District/Borough Council areas across Hertfordshire
- 14-19 Strategic Area Partnership Groups (SAPGs) planning and co-ordinating the delivery of 14-19 learning provision and support in seven 'travel to learn' areas across the county.
- The development of Extended School arrangements in 38 local consortia

## **Integrated Practice**

Common systems and processes will also be important to embed the work of Youth Connexions Hertfordshire within the wider Children's Trust work. The development of the Lead Professional role, the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) will underpin its work.

## **Key strands**

At the heart of this new service is the desire to ensure that all young people have access to the range of information, advice, support and development opportunities that they need to make the best choices for them. The five key strands to be delivered are:

- 14 - 19 Learner Entitlement
- Access to information, advice and guidance
- Targeted Support for those not progressing well
- Positive Activities / Youth Work

- Volunteering & Community involvement

### **What next?**

The new service is now moving from a transition phase into set up arrangements and will be expected to:

- deliver on commitments
- be led by the needs of young people
- seek to continuously improve services
- involve young people and advocate on their behalf

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