



**Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services,
National Connexions Network and Youth Access
joint response to strategy paper**

Quality, Choice and Aspiration

The Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services, National Connexions Network and Youth Access jointly support the improvement of outcomes for young people through effective, independent, high quality information, advice, guidance and personal support. This response is written in the context of a wide definition of IAG for young people: one which seeks to empower them to overcome any barriers that may confront them and facilitates their journey towards successful adulthood.

We value the Government's recent strategy aimed at improving information, advice and guidance for young people and look forward to the guidance to follow. The three organisations: the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services, National Connexions Network and Youth Access share the strategy's aspiration that all young people receive effective and individual career advice, information and guidance and personal support. High quality careers advice and guidance is most effective when delivered in a context of a holistic model of personal support. We therefore offer the following comments to support local implementation:

1. We welcome the attention given to ensuring schools, colleges and their partners are adequately equipped to carry out their statutory and other duties in relation to their contribution to improving the delivery of impartial information, advice and guidance. We also support the Government's response and position on the recommendations contained in *Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*.
2. Raising the aspirations of all young people, especially those with multiple needs and supporting them to overcome barriers preventing them from realising their skills and talents, requires intensive and individualised responses. Evidence suggests this is best delivered in a range of settings, including more informal community settings e.g. youth information, advice and counselling agencies often found in the third sector.
3. Integrated Youth Support Services have a key role to play in securing a diversity of provision through the effective, transparent and robust commissioning of providers across the private, public and third sectors. An effective mix of provision able to respond to young people's needs at times, in places, and styles of their choosing contributes to more positive outcomes for all. IYSS also have a role in easing the transition process between services for young people at 19+. We urge the greater use of joint commissioning between youth and adult services to enable providers, particularly in the Third Sector with its more flexible age boundaries, to play an important continuing support role, especially for the most vulnerable.

4. We very strongly agree that young people themselves should be directly involved in shaping the ways in which IAG is provided to ensure all benefit from the delivery of relevant, inclusive and high quality support focussed around individual needs and aspirations. There are excellent examples around the country, often driven by public and third sector youth provision, which could be used to improve the quality and range of this engagement nationally.
5. The personalisation of the learning offer and increased use of personal tutoring for every secondary school student is an excellent method of improving young people's access and use of all available sources of support. Tutors will need to be suitably trained and equipped with information about the services available and the local Youth Offer is an excellent vehicle for this and should be given a higher profile. There are already strong links between many schools and their local IYSS, however work remains to ensure the full engagement of all schools, colleges and other learning providers to enable all young people benefit from the support available. This requires a strong engagement with the arrangements for commissioning 14-19 provision, which will also be in the hands of local authorities by April 2010.
6. We are pleased that a Task Force on the Careers Profession will be established and would urge that a wide range of organisations in the public, private and third sectors, such as ourselves and others with similar skills and experiences are invited to contribute to its work. A review of the specialist careers workforce also requires consideration to be given to what others working in the youth sector need to deliver their contribution to the full spectrum of young people's information, advice guidance and personal support needs.
7. We welcome the proposals to develop resources to enable the young people's workforce to support parents and other significant adults, including mentors, to explore with young people the choices and decisions that they need to make about courses, qualifications, training and careers.
8. The extension of the responsibility for ensuring the whole of the Local Authority, its 14-19 Partnership and the Children's Trust must work together with a range of providers from the third, public and private sectors to ensure the provision of high quality IAG is greatly valued, and must be enacted to ensure the success of the strategy.
9. We strongly endorse the need for all young people, in whichever setting they choose, to be aware of and have easy access to their entitlement to IAG; to receive services which are of consistently high quality provided by suitably qualified and experienced staff.
10. The further development of high quality IAG is an integral part of developing Integrated and Targeted Youth Support underway in many local authorities. This, taken with policy changes and the challenging budgetary circumstances which LA's are now having to manage, makes bringing about the improvements we all wish to see increasingly difficult. There is a strong will to be successful, however it is important that the change process has the support of the local community, and in particular the young people the services seek to support.

Given all of the above we fully endorse the need to thoroughly review local authority delivery of IAG in 18 months time and would be keen to contribute to this.

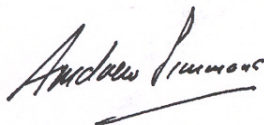
This initial response will be circulated through the networks of the three organisations, and to the Ministers and policy leads from the three main political parties with responsibilities in this area, Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Local Government Association, Association of Directors of Children's Services, Solace, the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services. The three organisations, working together, will complement this initial response with a series of briefing papers under six main headings:

- Helping young people be successful
- The role of parents and carers
- Careers IAG in the context of wider guidance and support needs
- Local authority's roles and responsibilities
- Developing the workforce
- Evaluation, quality assurance and performance management

These will be developed jointly and circulated during 2010 to support the continued implementation of integrated and targeted youth support and the learning opportunity structure.



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