

// Our Vision

Helping young people as they turn their dreams into reality

// Our Values

Integrity, respect, inclusion

// Our Purpose

To make a difference and find solutions for young people, so that they can take control of their lives and overcome barriers to achieve success.

To provide an inclusive support service for all young people that meets individual needs, advocates on their behalf, raises their aspirations, encourages and challenges them to develop and learn throughout their lives.



// Our company

Connexions Cumbria Limited is a successful, high achieving responsive modern organisation from which to drive forward an integrated service for young people aged 13-19 and up to the age of 25 for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. An independent company that operates as an inter-agency Partnership and has been developed with the involvement of young people. Connexions Cumbria delivers its services effectively by evaluating what works best for young people; it is well placed to support the development of a multi-disciplinary approach.



Connexions Cumbria provides integrated support for all 13-19 year olds, so that they have the best possible chance of successful transition to adulthood.

Direct delivery of services is undertaken through a team of three Area Managers covering the North, South and West of the County. Each Area Manager, supported by Team Leaders, co-ordinates and line manages teams of trained and qualified staff, drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, who deliver services for young people, advocate on their behalf and work with partners as part of multi-agency teams.

Connexions Cumbria offers good value for money and has a strong track record of partnership working with schools, colleges and other agencies across all sectors.

Connexions Cumbria is already at the heart of the children's trust approach and the National Skills Strategy by:

- // Offering every young person access to impartial information, advice, guidance, personal development opportunities and by providing support for their parents;
- // Working with young people to develop their employability skills and their ability to make informed decisions about future learning and career choices;
- // Enabling young people to be involved in the design, planning, evaluation and governance of a service that over 90% of young people rate as satisfactory or better;
- // Using the unique Connexions database to keep in touch with every young person and provide strategic planning data.

Consultation shows that young people trust Connexions staff; they see them as knowledgeable and friendly; helping them to make good choices about learning and work, and offering practical help with anything that delays progress and achievement.

Working in partnership, Connexions Cumbria also provides a high quality and impartial information, advice and guidance service for people over 20 years of age. The service promotes economic growth and social inclusion, targeting priority groups, to support and develop motivation, confidence, skills and ultimately improve employability.

// The strategy

The Connexions Cumbria strategy and model, works well for young people and is valued by them. We believe it meets the vision outlined in the Green Paper 'Youth Matters' and provides us with an opportunity to work in partnership to give all young people the best chance in life to succeed. Its implementation in Cumbria should now be built on and developed to meet the entitlement of all young people, enabling them to achieve the five outcomes described in Every Child Matters - Change for Children:

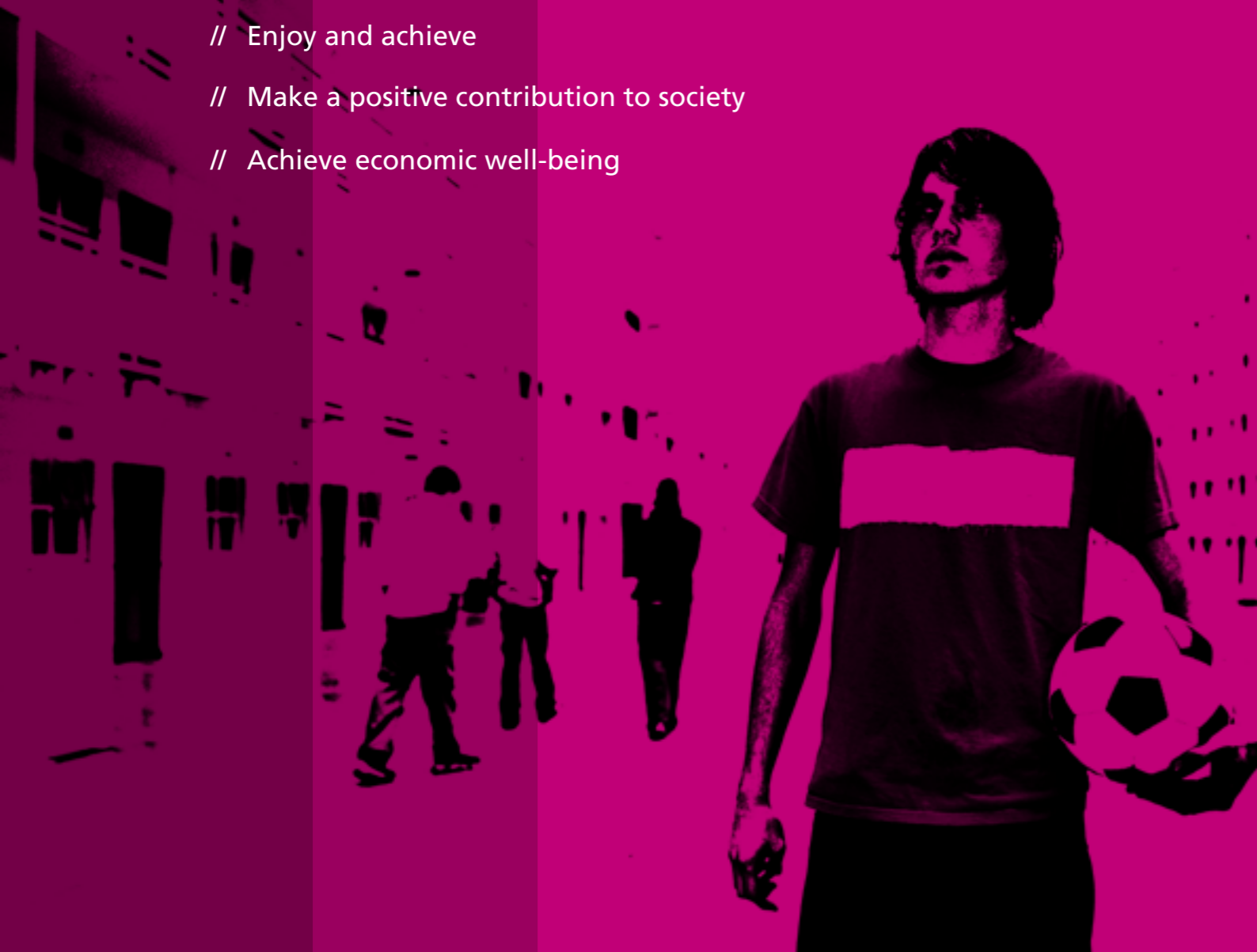
- // Be healthy
- // Stay safe
- // Enjoy and achieve
- // Make a positive contribution to society
- // Achieve economic well-being

Connexions Cumbria contributes to the aims outlined in the recently published white papers, Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work and 14-19 Education and Skills, which outline the strategy to meet the government's aim of 'employability for life' for every young person.

We will establish closer links with employers in the public, private, voluntary and community sector. We will develop closer integration of our information, advice and guidance services for young people and adults.

Our strategic planning priorities

- // Support young people to develop skills, so that they can contribute socially and economically throughout their lives;
- // Support young people at key transition points and when they are making decisions about their lives;
- // Continue to involve young people in the design, delivery and development of the service;
- // Build on our current programme of support for parents;
- // Work with partners to meet the entitlement of all young people, enabling them to achieve the five outcomes described in Every Child Matters: Change for Children;
- // Support the government's National Skills Strategy, Cumbria Strategic Partnership Community Strategy and Cumbria Vision in its aim for economic development and regeneration;
- // Undertake continuous professional development to ensure staff have the skills and qualifications to do their job;
- // Work with partners to provide an effective and coherent information, advice and guidance service for people over 20 years of age and influence the development of all age guidance service(s).



// Achieving the outcomes for young people



Be healthy

Connexions Cumbria will support young people to have a healthy lifestyle, including the best possible physical, mental, emotional and sexual health.

For example, by:

- // Delivering positive parenting programmes for teenage mums and dads to minimise health risks for children and young people. This includes working towards Youth Achievement Awards.
- // Personal Advisers taking referrals from the Teenage Community Midwives to support young mum's physical and mental health.
- // Working in partnership to provide young people's sexual health clinics at all main Connexions centres and delivering sexual health programmes for young people in schools living in isolated rural areas.
- // Working in partnership to provide a young people's substance misuse service at all main Connexions centres.
- // Working with school pupils in partnership with the school nurse, on a smoking cessation project.

Stay safe

Connexions Cumbria will contribute to the protection of young people and, with the support of key partners, help safeguard them from harm. For example, by:

- // Working with young men to explore issues around masculinity, exploring risk taking behaviour, perceptions of choices and consequences, costs and benefits.
- // Giving young people the skills to undertake work with their peers on bullying. This includes strategies in defusing bullying situations.
- // Developing peer support groups with young people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- // Engaging young people in young fire-fighters projects with Cumbria Fire Service to raise self esteem, promote self discipline and develop life saving and fire fighting skills.
- // Undertaking detached work, making contact with and engaging with young people who may not access activities or support services.

Achieving the outcomes for young people



Enjoy and achieve

Connexions Cumbria will support young people to enjoy their teenage years and achieve their aspirations. For example, by:

- // Co-ordinating the Summer Learning and Skills programme to promote enjoyment of learning, achieve accreditation and increase participation in post 16 learning.
- // Co-ordinating and delivering a range of personal development programmes for young people such as ASDAN, Fair Deal, Duke of Edinburgh, PAYP, young fire fighters and sports and creative activities.
- // Delivering after school study clubs to help young people achieve their academic goals.
- // Developing alternative curriculum programmes to engage young people in sports and arts activities they enjoy and develop an aspiration for lifelong learning.
- // Providing certificated programmes that develop an understanding of passive, aggressive and assertive communication.

Make a positive contribution

Connexions Cumbria will support all young people to improve local services for them in their area and community. For Example, by:

- // Facilitating discussions between young people and government ministers as part of the North West Regional Assembly Youth Now initiative.
- // Encouraging and supporting young people to participate in decision making and in the regeneration of their communities.
- // Helping young people to develop socially and emotionally through Anger Management workshops.
- // Co-ordinating Positive Activities Programme for young people at risk of offending to reduce anti social behaviour.
- // Developing a peer support group for young people from minority ethnic heritage backgrounds.
- // Working in schools to provide anti-social behaviour awareness programmes, which target young people at risk, in partnership with the police, fire service and others.

Achieving the outcomes for young people

Achieving the outcomes for young people

Achieve economic well-being

Connexions Cumbria will provide impartial high quality information, advice and guidance to encourage and support young people to enter and remain in education, training and employment. For example, by:

- // Supporting young people to access learning opportunities, which has to date reduced youth unemployment in Cumbria by 25%.
- // Co-ordinating transport initiatives, such as the Wheels to Work programme and the Mobile unit, to help young people access learning and work opportunities.
- // Providing local labour market information and an employment vacancy and placement service for young people and employers.
- // Delivering benefits advice for individual and groups of young people to ensure they receive their entitlements.
- // Advocating for homeless young people to obtain safe and decent homes, by working effectively with housing support agencies and housing providers.
- // Supporting the Learning Theme Park and providing a range of Opportunity Fairs to raise young people's awareness of learning opportunities, such as the Jumpstart events.

Contributing to the National Skills Strategy

Connexions Cumbria will support young people to enter the labour market and bridge the skills gap within key growth sectors. Connexions Cumbria will increase the number of young people in education, training and employment as a result of our interventions. For example, by:

- // Working with young people to develop their employability skills and their ability to make informed decisions about their careers, which promotes economic growth and social inclusion.
- // Researching the needs of employers and working with them to increase the number of young people in employment with training.

- // Working in partnership with schools, colleges and other learning providers to ensure young people have opportunities to influence provision and its delivery.
- // Delivering intensive personal guidance, support and planning for young people.
- // Supporting the implementation of Cumbria's framework for the strategic planning of 14-19 provision to ensure all young people receive their learning entitlement.

Connexions Cumbria will provide a high quality and impartial information, advice and guidance service for people over 20 years of age. For example, by:

- // Delivering easily accessible information, advice and guidance on learning and work opportunities for adults.
- // Co-ordinating Adult Learners' Week activities to promote success stories and highlight the benefits of getting back into learning.
- // Providing a universal service whilst targeting services at those most in need.
- // Ensuring continuous improvement by training staff, sustaining accreditation to the Matrix Standard, evaluating and reviewing effectiveness and measuring impact to ensure value for money.
- // Working with other organisations to raise the profile of the nextstep brand.

Building on Success

Having exceeded the 2004 target for reducing youth unemployment, Connexions Cumbria will take a lead in achieving the following Government targets by 2010:

- // Number of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment, or training (NEET) reduced by 2 percentage points
- // 90% of 17 year olds in learning