

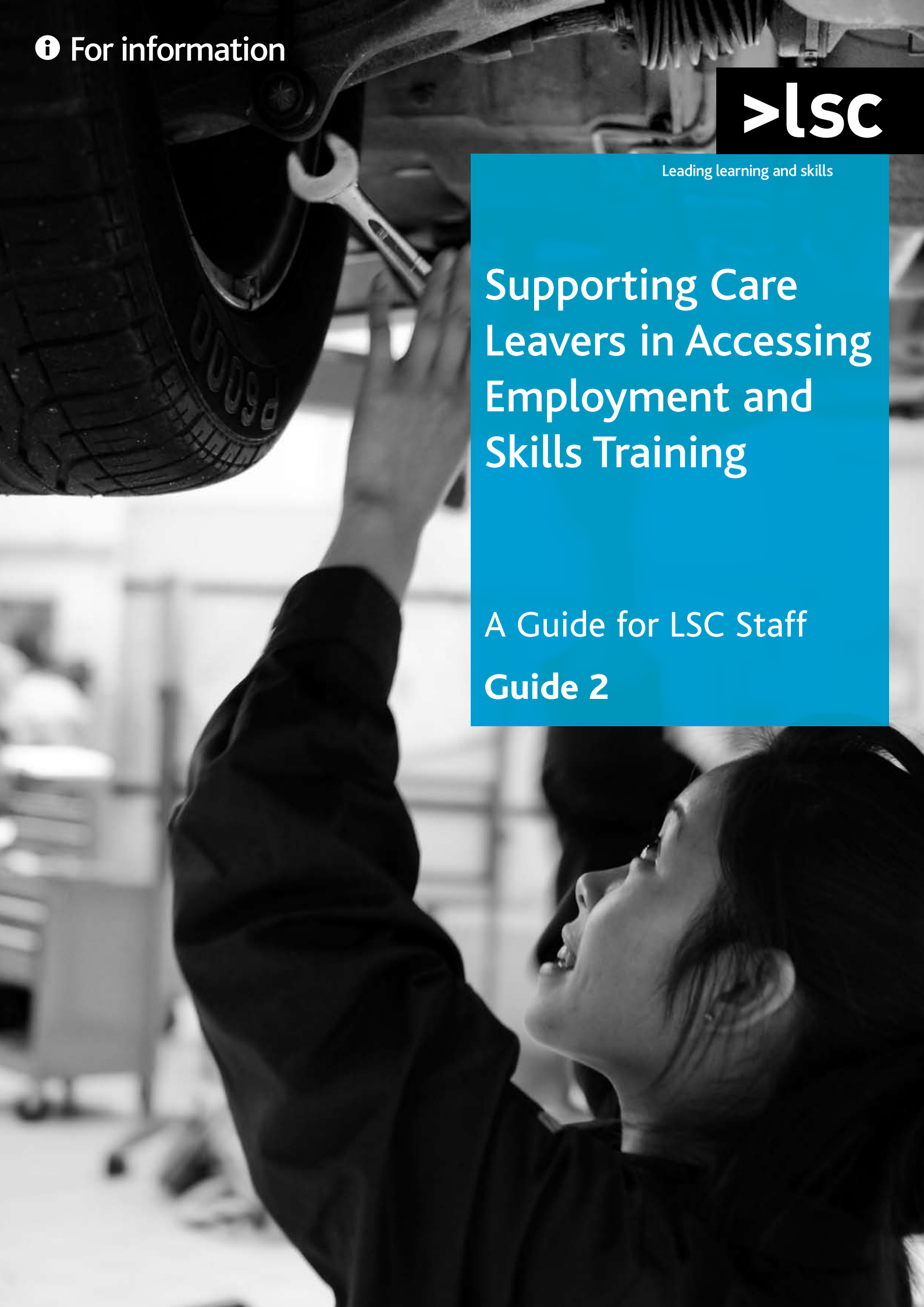
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Leading learning and skills

Supporting Care Leavers in Accessing Employment and Skills Training

A Guide for LSC Staff
Guide 2



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Foreword



John Korzeniewski
Regional Director

The LSC has a single goal – *to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards*. It’s a goal that is often interpreted in terms of business and employment – giving people the skills to achieve the career they want, helping employers access training to improve their bottom line – but this is only half the story. The LSC also supports work to help society’s more vulnerable people access training and employment, and no group is more vulnerable than that of young people leaving care.

The 2007 White Paper *Care Matters: The Time for Change* made it clear that despite advancements in recent years there was still a significant gap between the outcomes of young people in care and leaving care and all young people.

Only 45% of looked after children in the North West achieved five or more GCSEs grade A* to G in 2007, compared to 91% of all children across the region. 34% of 19 year old care leavers in the region who had been in care at the age of 16 were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

In 2008 the LSC in the North West commissioned Amion Consulting to develop Good Practice Guides for professionals working with care leavers. While the LSC recognises that local authorities lead on provision for care leavers we also believe that by working closely together and sharing good practice, we can make a real difference to the lives of thousands of young people across the region.

This guide is one of a series of five aimed at LSC strategic and operational staff, strategic managers in statutory organisations, learning and training providers and leaving care teams. Each guide includes an overview of the policy context in which support for care leavers is being developed, key contacts, and frequently asked questions. They also feature case studies from across the North West, which illustrate how different partners are working together to meet the needs of care leavers.

The guides, however, are just a starting point, and best practice can only be developed through close communication, co-operation, and support. We are all aware of the huge challenges many care leavers face; by working together we can address these challenges, and help greater numbers of care leavers to access appropriate training and employment.

John Korzeniewski

Section 1

Introduction and Guide Structure

Introduction

Looked after children and care leavers are some of the most deprived and excluded people in society.

- Young people negotiating a difficult transition such as leaving long-term care are particularly at risk of falling into persistent exclusion.
- 40% of care leavers are NEET (not in employment, education or training) compared to 20% of all young people.
- Evidence suggests that 20% of care leavers experience homelessness within two years of leaving care (see Annex for full profile of care leavers in North West).

Over the last year, NW LSC has commissioned development work by AMION Consulting, to support the production of a series of Good Practice Guides to:

- raise awareness of the particular circumstances/issues affecting care leavers, many of whom are vulnerable learners; and
- facilitate an increase in the numbers of care leavers accessing, completing and sustaining skills training and apprenticeships.

The objective of this Guide is:

- to inform and raise awareness of LSC Partnership Teams of the needs of care leavers – one of the most socially excluded groups of young people; and
- to promote better understanding of what can be done by practical, joint working with employment and training partners and 'corporate parents' to support these care leavers in their journey towards sustainable employment.

The Guide is one of a series of five – each of which focuses on individual corporate parent 'partners' – and includes LSC strategic and operational staff, senior strategic staff within statutory organisations, training and learning providers, as well as Leaving Care staff.

Together, the Guides are a statement of NW LSC's commitment to its role as part of the 'corporate family' to support care leavers in successfully accessing training and employment.

Guide Structure

This Guide is structured as follows:

Section 2 poses key questions around the profile, policy context and specific employment and training needs of care leavers.

Section 3 recommends key action for LSC Partnership Teams in taking this priority forward locally with partners, providing some good practice examples.

Section 4 summarises the need for co-ordinated 'corporate family' support for care leavers.

The annexes provide details of specific contacts in relation to Leaving Care teams, ConneXions' Looked After Children leads and LSC funded initiatives. A detailed profile of care leavers in the North West is also included.

“Looked after children and care leavers are some of the most deprived and excluded people in society...”

Section 2

Frequently Asked Questions

What barriers face care leavers in accessing employment and training?

The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) www.nlcas.org and Rainer Trus's project *What Makes The Difference?* (WMTD), has been working to identify ways to improve poor outcomes for older children in care and leaving care in England (2006-08).

Their research with care leavers has found the following key issues:

- That there has been a real focus on improving education outcome for care leavers over the last few years and some improvements have been made, although achievements continue to be measured against hard outcomes, predominantly GCSE results, which is a limited measure of individual achievement.
- That a significant number of care leavers are, for various reasons, unlikely or unwilling to achieve within formal education settings – preferring more hands on, practical learning opportunities such as work experience, traineeships /apprenticeships and employment.
- Low levels of self-confidence – care leavers did not believe in themselves and often had no understanding of how to behave in the workplace.
- Some care leavers do not feel ready to engage with work, given that their housing circumstances were unsettled and they were experiencing other disruptions in their personal lives.
- Often care leavers were reported to have short-term aims such as getting any job, rather than having long-term career aspirations.

- Many felt they required additional support due to their special needs; disability, physical and/or mental health.
- A key issue was the need for improved motivation of those young people who had been NEET (not in education, employment or training) or 'doing nothing' for a considerable period of time.
- A need for care leavers to be supported in having realistic expectations, so that they would not expect to achieve too much too soon.
- That a range of other issues were impact upon care leavers' chances of entering employment, including pregnancy and parenthood, behavioural problems and other social barriers including homelessness and offending.

Why can't all care leavers just get involved with E2E provision, and then move into Level 2 provision?

- Young care leavers face huge life challenges at the ages of 16-19, with issues of accommodation, managing finances, and sometimes coping with being socially isolated if they are now living alone, after leaving residential care.
- Many are trying to live independently for the first time – usually much earlier than many young people who live with parents until their twenties. Many young care leavers have very poor educational attainment and very negative experiences of formal education – having been moved many times around various placements.
- As a result many care leavers need intensive support – beyond that offered on E2E provision. To meet these needs many local authority Leaving Care teams now offer tailored support (see all Guides for examples) which engages care leavers and offers intensive and ongoing personal development support. In addition some are working with training providers to develop more personalised support as part of E2E delivery.

“A significant number of care leavers are, for various reasons, unlikely or unwilling to achieve within formal education settings...”

Section 2

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are the LSC investing time and resources into this target group?

In 2007, in the White Paper *Care Matters: The Time for Change* identified that, despite improvements in socio-economic outcomes in recent years, there remained a significant gap between the outcomes of those in care and leaving care and other young people.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/timeforchange/docs/timeforchange.pdf>

In the same year, the government identified care leavers as one of four priority groups, with a key priority being that of improved access to quality education, training and employment for them – through the *Public Service Agreement Delivery Agreement 16: To increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training*.

In January 2009, the *New Opportunities for the Future* White Paper was published by the Cabinet Office. This identified substantial support for young care leavers including:

- a national employment support programme for care leavers, as part of the wider drive to improve the quality of transition from care to adulthood. The Government will fund the National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) for the next two years to work with local authorities to develop and test models of support for care leavers into employment. NCAS will work with nine local authorities in year one with a view to extending support to half of all local authorities in year two as the first phased step of a national roll-out;
- as part of this new programme, the creation of a national network of employers from the private, public and third sectors who will sign up to a commitment to develop employment support initiatives in their organisations for young people leaving care. Employers will offer opportunities for work experience and mentoring support, matched to the specific needs of the young person and including a package of training;

- from September 2009, the offer of an Apprenticeship place to all suitably qualified care leavers by the National Apprenticeship Service which will work with NCAS; and government intend to make this a legal entitlement from 2013; and
- over time, all care leavers will be offered an enhanced career planning pathway that will cover their next two to eight years, using a personalised, flexible model to help tackle barriers to work.

In addition, over the next two years NCAS, government offices and specialist youth homelessness advisors will work with local authorities as part of government's drive to improve access to suitable accommodation for care leavers.

The LSC 14-19 Board is considering a range of key actions to support these proposals (*Young People Not in Education, Employment and Training – Proposed LSC approach up to April 2010 – 14-19 Board – 13 February 2009*)

“Over time, all care leavers will be offered an enhanced career planning pathway that will cover their next two to eight years...”

What is a 'corporate parent'?

Local authorities represent the 'corporate parent' of all young people in and leaving care.

Corporate parenting places collective responsibility on local authorities to achieve good parenting for all children in their care, including those young people moving into adulthood and independent living. It requires ownership and leadership at a senior level, this includes all elected members.

The NW LSC recognises its place as one part of the corporate 'family', to work with these corporate parents, to ensure that all care leavers are fully supported in successfully accessing employment, training and learning – and to move towards and maintain a successful career path.

Which partners are involved in supporting care leavers trying to access training and employment?

Leaving Care Services support care leavers in every aspect of their lives, with particular emphasis on accommodation, education, health and personal development.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 required Local Authorities to give a far more consistent 'aftercare' service to their care leavers (young people aged between 16-21 who had been in local authority care prior to this age).

http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/54846B7D5EFEC58C5A0E652683A3CE8F.pdf

The main provisions include:

- a duty on local authorities to assess and meet the needs of eligible people aged 16 and 17 year olds who are in care or care leavers. Wherever the young person lives, the duty will rest with the local authorities to keep in touch with care leavers until they are at least 21;
- every eligible young person in care to have, when they turn 16, a comprehensive pathway plan mapping out a clear route to independence;
- local authorities to provide all eligible 16 to 17 year olds who are in care or are care leavers with personal and practical support to meet their objectives identified in their pathway plans;
- each young person to have a young persons advisor who will co-ordinate provision of support and assistance to meet the needs of the young person. Particular emphasis will be placed on helping the young person into education, training or employment;
- a financial regime for care leavers to ensure they have comprehensive financial support; and
- continuing assistance for care leavers aged 18-21 especially with education and employment. Assistance with education or training continues to the end of the agreed programme, even if it takes someone past the age of 21.

In summary the Act aims to ensure that care leavers have the same opportunities as other young people in the community and to reduce the numbers of care leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET).

“Corporate parenting places collective responsibility on local authorities to achieve good parenting for all children in their care...”

Section 2

Frequently Asked Questions

How do we find out more about Care Leavers and the Leaving Care Team in our Partnership Area?

Each local authority's Children and Young People Department has (or commissions) a Leaving Care team. These contacts are listed in Annex 1. Link up with these contacts to find out more about the current profiles of looked after children and care leavers in your locality.

Where do we go to find out who the local Connexions' Looked After Children lead is?

Go to Annex 2 in each of these Guides or contact your local Connexions service. Identify your local office through:

- Connexions Cheshire and Warrington;
- Connexions Cumbria;
- Connexions Lancashire;
- Connexions Greater Merseyside; or
- Connexions Greater Manchester.

What type of information are Leaving Care teams and Connexions likely to want?

LSC Partnership Teams can assist corporate parent partners through the provision of clear, current information about what type of training and learning provision is available in the area – which is jargon free and clearly states entry criteria and specific support for vulnerable learners.

“Find out more about the current profiles of looked after children and care leavers in your locality...”

Section 3

Supporting Effective Employment & Skills Training Provision for Care Leavers – Potential LSC Partnership Team Roles

LSC Partnership Teams have three important roles in implementing LSC's commitment to this group of vulnerable learners:

- to raise awareness of local training provider network around the needs of care leavers in accessing and sustaining training, learning and employment;
- to promote, with other corporate family members, the development and adoption of joint working protocols related to provision for care leavers; and
- to ensure effective commissioning of services which can provide suitable support for all care leavers.

Role 1: Raising Awareness of this priority group

- Work with local 14-19 Partnerships to ensure that ensure that Connexions and Leaving Care Services are informing them of the numbers of NEET care leavers in each LA area, and the specific issues related to these care leavers who may be trying to access local provision.
- Work with other 'corporate family' partners to raise the profile of these employment and training needs of care leavers: through training provider forums, 14-19 Partnerships, NEET Strategic Groups, youth offending service plans, teenage pregnancy strategies, DAAT activities and youth service work.
- Work jointly to consider how various support for care leavers can be linked together to form progressions pathways, which support them towards employment and training.
- Find out more about each Local Authorities' Care Matters Pledges, which must include consideration of employment and training support for looked after children and care leavers. Rainer Trust has published a guide to developing pledges – Booklet 4 in their guide to corporate parenting. Download it from www.leavingcare.org – go to the professional section, then the products section at the top of the menu on the left hand side.
- Identify any targeted, specific provision for care leavers available locally and raise awareness amongst 14-19 Partnerships.

Leaving Care Service Barnardos, Manchester

Contact: Ruth Welford-Hunte
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Barnardos supports young care leavers aged 16-21 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) in making a positive transition to independent living. This year, in partnership with other young people's agencies, the charity has developed two programmes focused around liveability support: *Learning Zone* and *Care Leavers Enhancement Project*. These projects target a number of priority groups within the broader LAC cohort, including young people with a history of offending, BME young people and individuals affected by LDD and mental health issues.

Learning Zone

This offers care leavers a flexible curriculum of practical support that is shaped by the needs and circumstances of the participants. The programme operates as a one-stop-shop for care leavers and can be accessed on a drop-in basis where one-to-one advice and guidance is available. Barnardos is supported by a Connexions secondee as well as volunteers from Barclays Bank, who deliver group two hour employability and lifestyle sessions on, amongst other issues, job searching, CV writing, money skills and preparing for FE. Up to 150 care leavers are expected to benefit from The Learning Zone programme will also support work placements for 17 young people with funding assistance from the Oglesby Charitable Trust. The Zone is funded by Working Neighbourhoods Fund and ConneXions monies.

Care Leavers Enhancement Project

Barnardos and Community Service Volunteers (CSV) work together to provide a social and learning space for care leavers in Manchester. The Project delivers flexible Level 1 accredited training in media and healthy living, and aims to assist 130 care leavers aged 16-19 years in moving from NEET to EET. Support will also be offered to thirty 14-16 years olds at risk of disengaging from mainstream education and training.

The Care Leavers Enhancement Project allows young people to try out different aspects of courses without committing to a full programme of learning. The programme receives funding from LSC, Making It Work and CSV Training.

Section 3

Supporting Effective Employment & Skills Training Provision for Care Leavers – Potential LSC Partnership Team Roles

Pure Innovations Stockport

Contact: Sarah Sturme
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Based in Stockport, Pure Innovations works across Greater Manchester to assist vulnerable groups and individuals who are unemployed to overcome personal barriers and move into sustainable employment. Amongst other vulnerable groups, the not-for-profit company offers intensive support and guidance to looked after children and young people (LAC) aged 16 to 19 years who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Social Workers from the Looked After Children Team of Stockport MBC work closely with Children's Services, Education Support Team and ConneXions in identifying and referring suitable candidates to Pure Innovations for support.

Established in 2002, the LAC project is committed to matching young people to suitable career opportunities that result in sustainable placements. Consequently, Pure Innovations has established a specialist LAC team comprising two Employment Officers and representatives from its Youth Transitions Team. Together the LAC team

seeks to engage with their target group and deliver pre-recruitment support in preparation for entry into identified employment opportunities. Post-recruitment support is also delivered by the team to candidates whose background and personal history might cause difficulties in settling down during the early part of their careers.

Employment Officers invest time in establishing positive relationships with clients and employers alike, adopting the role of mentor to looked after young people and employment broker to local employers. In most cases Pure Innovations works with an employer to ensure a work-based mentor is identified and available to the young person.

Employers are encouraged to become Corporate Parents. Employment arrangements vary by age. Year 10 and 11 pupils are required to complete a 12 week unwaged work trial before they can secure a 12 month, waged full-time contract; while older participants commence a fixed-term contract from the outset. Throughout the initial period of adjustment Pure Innovations continues to deliver job support to the young person and employer, conducts regular mentoring visits and provides an anytime call-out service to employers should problems arise.

“LSC Partnership Teams have three important roles in implementing LSC’s commitment to this group of vulnerable learners...”

Rathbone Training and Wigan After Care Programme

Contacts: Sue Benson, sue.benson@rathbone.org.uk
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For the last three years Rathbone Training, in partnership with Wigan Council's Leaving Care Programme, has delivered an intensive programme of personal development activities focused around confidence building, key skills, communication skills and career advice. This target looked after young people identified by Wigan Leaving Care Team as at risk of becoming NEET. Delivered throughout the six weeks summer break, the programme provides a seamless link between Years 11 and 12 to prevent disengagement of care leavers over the course of the holidays. The young people – mostly aged 16 years and living in local care homes – are supported in identifying, applying for and commencing a preferred Employment, Education or Training placement in early September. Over the three years it has been running, the initiative has been financed through a variety of funds including ESF, NEET Hotspot monies and Leaving Care budgets. The aim of the programme is to secure positive progression outcomes for at least 65% of the looked after young people.

Commencing with a five day residential trip led by Wigan Leaving Care Team, the group then embarks on a five week programme of activities and training. A varied timetable of

day trips, guest speakers and class-based activities has been constructed to encourage team building and develop self-esteem and confidence. Accredited skills and lifestyle workshops address issues specific to looked after young people, such as saving money, applying for a passport, expectations of FE providers. A social worker from Wigan Leaving Care is available daily for members of the group.

Financial incentives of £25 are awarded to participants upon commencement of the course and on completion, as they progress in to education, employment or training. Further bonuses are available throughout the course upon completion of a key skill or soft outcome, in addition to which is a £5 daily attendance payment. Travel expenses are also met by Rathbone Training.

Rathbone works closely with Wigan Leaving Care Team to ensure all participants maintain a satisfactory level of attendance to retain their place on the course. Rathbone, in turn notifies Wigan After Care of each young person's future plans. Participant tracking is conducted by Rathbone Training at 4, 8 and 12 weeks following course completion. A significant number of looked after young people progress onto vocational routeways including, amongst others, construction, motor vehicle, sports development, electronics and beauty therapy.

- Most NW local authorities have commissioned or operate individual initiatives which provide some form of engagement, training or employment for care leavers. Identify and contact these to raise awareness of all local partners.

Section 3

Supporting Effective Employment & Skills Training Provision for Care Leavers – Potential LSC Partnership Team Roles

Blackburn with Darwen Public Sector Apprenticeship Project / Champions Group

Contact: Dawn Stead
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The project was launched in July 2006 by Blackburn with Darwen Connexions in partnership with CXL. Supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (with Working Neighbourhood's transitional funding until March 2009), the project works with 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training to help them find Apprenticeships and placements with public sector employers such as the local authority, the police force and the NHS. The key aims are:

- to increase the number of Public Sector opportunities for those young people Leaving Care (up to the age of 19);
- to reduce the number of 16-18 young people in NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) within Blackburn with Darwen;
- to increase the number of Apprenticeships currently offered within the Public Sector – with Lancashire LSC funding these places. They include either college or work based training as well as on the job experience. The apprenticeships are completed in 12-18 months or 36 months for Advanced Apprenticeships, with a wide range of occupational areas offered;
- to increase the number of e2e (entry 2 employment) placements within the Public Sector with a view to a smooth transition onto an Apprenticeship – this is a learning programme that aims to help those who are not ready or able to enter Apprenticeship programmes, further education or employment. It can include skills work such as communication, problem solving, team working and preparation work for entering college or Apprenticeships. Can also include working towards a basic qualification;
- to offer Taster Days within the Public Sector to those NEET young people who are unsure of their occupational career path; and
- to promote and create a positive image of Public Sector Employers and encourage the Public Sector to serve their community more effectively.

A Local Public Service Board [LPSB] has been established as an innovative forum to develop initiatives that cut across the agendas and shared concerns of all public sector partners. Connexions was selected as the most appropriate agency to lead on the initiative due to its focus on NEET and knowledge of the 16-19 age group. A Champions Group (including an LSC representative) has been established for the project with a representative from each organisation being nominated to champion and promote the project. Each champion has the following roles:

- to liaise with internal departments within the organisation to find additional Apprenticeships, Placements and Opportunities;
- to identify any challenges/issues within the organisation and find appropriate solutions;
- to liaise with HR/Recruitment to encourage a positive change in policies and procedures; and
- to encourage departments to give vulnerable young people within Blackburn with Darwen the opportunity to progress.

Outcomes for 2007/2008 include 22 young people being offered Apprenticeships in their chosen occupation – seven were care leavers, three have young children and four are from a BME background. 18 young people secured Public Sector e2e Placements.

Role 2:

Support the development of Local Protocols/Quality Standards and Raise Awareness of Good Practice

- Promote/support the development of protocols by training and learning providers to support/progression for care leavers accessing provision – including information exchange, day to day protocols around attendance, counselling, and additional advice and guidance support.

Joint Working Protocol Barnados Manchester Leaving Care Service, Making It Work, CAFRASS and ConneXions; and Manchester Colleges

Contact: [Barnados, Manchester](#)

A joint working protocol has been established between Manchester's four further education colleges and organisations concerned with the delivery of services to vulnerable young people in Manchester aged 16 to 21 years, specifically Manchester Leaving Care Service (MLCS), Making It Work (MIW), Children and Families Refugee and Asylum Seeking Service (CAFRASS) and ConneXions. The protocol aims to commit partner organisations to working together to achieve positive educational, training and/or employment outcomes for care leavers under the care of Manchester Leaving Care Service. Four common objectives bind the organisations together:

- to make 'College' as flexible and attractive option as possible to those not currently at College, but who might be interested in, or capable of so being;
- to give the maximum level of support possible to those 'in' College, both to ensure they last the course and succeed, or that they are on the 'right' course from them in the first place;
- to give the same mixture of pastoral and academic support to ensure such young people 'progress' to their full potential whilst in College; and
- to ensure that all steps are taken to feed young people into appropriate employment/ further education etc when the time comes for them to leave College.

With the individual consent of each care leaver, MLCS/ CAFRASS share basic personal data on a six monthly basis with a named individual within student support services at each of the four Colleges. Colleges can use this data for statistical purposes, to positively 'target' care leavers with information and guidance on their support entitlements, and to explore with MLCS how a more personalised service might be provided by the College to individuals.

All partners are equally responsible for passing on information relating to significant developments in the lives of their 'caseload' of care leavers as well as feeding back information on their progression in education and training. In this way the protocol works proactively to identify potentially de-stabilising issues and bring care leavers together with partners to work towards solutions without the young person resorting to leaving college.

Partners will give ongoing consideration to ways in which care leavers not currently engaged in training or education can access College, including pre-entry programmes and flexible start dates.

Section 3

Supporting Effective Employment & Skills Training Provision for Care Leavers – Potential LSC Partnership Team Roles

- Support 'stick with it' programmes and promote these activities to leaving care partners, so they are clear about who can support them when care leavers access local provision.
- Make contact with local AimHigher partners to support and link to local approaches to support FE providers in developing their protocols to support care leavers.

Stick With It!

A range of NW providers, including Bolton Community College, Stockport College, Bury Adult Learning Service and Cheshire Lifelong Learning Service (Move On Cheshire) were involved in Motivating Skills for Life Learners to Persist, Progress and Achieve – a two-year national research and development project commissioned by the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA). The aims of the project were to increase the evidence base and to develop tools and techniques to support learners, practitioners and managers as they try to overcome the barriers to completion and continued learning.

The objectives of the project were to:

- support adults as independent learners who are managing their own learning;
- promote approaches to teaching and learning that encourage persistence;
- identify pastoral support, assessment and ICT activities that build motivation;
- develop effective and adaptable tools for practitioners, such as teaching guides and mobile technologies that foster learning beyond the classroom;
- develop practical resources for learners; and
- forge partnerships with more than 100 Skills for Life organisations and share effective practices.

Comprehensive Guides has been produced as a result of this which provide a huge resource for those supporting vulnerable learners to 'stick with it'.

[Supporting Skills for Life learners to Stick with it! \(2.4 mb\)](#)

AimHigher Merseyside

Supporting Care Leavers into Further and Higher Education in Merseyside

Contact: Deirdre Lynskey

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Aimhigher Greater Merseyside (AHGTM) is committed to supporting positive outcomes for Looked after Children and Care Leavers. Since 2004 the AHGTM Partnership has funded the Superstars Programme which supports Y11 Looked after Children, http://www.ahgtm.ac.uk/projects/?page_id=391.

AHGTM has also supported local HEI's in obtaining the Frank Buttle quality Award. It is anticipated that all four HEI's and LIPA will be awarded this status.

The Care Leavers in HE network has now been established and has representatives from all six greater Merseyside Local Authorities, Further and Higher Education, Connexions. This provides a forum for good practice to be shared and an opportunity for partners to develop more effective working relationships.

Discussions about how FE can develop its support for Care leavers are currently taking place and it is the intention that every Greater Merseyside college will have a designated member of staff responsible for the academic and pastoral support of care leavers; based on the designated teacher role within schools and the Frank Buttle Champion in HE.

Representatives championing care leavers also sit on the newly formed Equality and Inclusion Committee which forms part of the Governance of Aimhigher Greater Merseyside.

Role 3: Ensure Effective Local Commissioning

Partnership Teams have a real opportunity to ensure that local commissioning of training provides effective support for care leavers:

- Identify care leavers as a priority group in local LSC statements of need.
- Specify care leavers a specific target group in relevant tenders issued by LSC.
- Ensure that in contracting with providers who are targeting these groups, that LSC colleagues, as well as training providers, have a clear understanding of the intensive support needs of many care leavers and the consequence costs of these, in order to fund adequate support.

Oakmere Community College and Young Person's Advisory Service (YPAS) The Gateway Initiative

Contact: Cath Lydon
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Based in north Liverpool, Oakmere Community College works with young disengaged people aged 16-19 years in delivering an ESF-funded pre-E2E programme of accredited vocational training and basic skills lasting between 18 and 20 weeks. Oakmere is committed to reducing disengagement amongst its learners, a number of which are looked after or young people with drug, alcohol or emotional problems.

The Gateway initiative has an open admissions policy that welcomes referrals from other young persons agencies – such as Connexions, and strives to guarantee prospective learners a start date within two weeks of initial contact.

Vocational training opportunities include plastering, bricklaying, landscape gardening, dance and drama, painting and decorating, carpentry and business administration. Gateway learners are given a personalised learning plan and commence a progression pathway at Oakmere that comprises pre-E2E and E2E training, before moving onto college and to foundation and Level 1 programmes.

The Young People's Advisory Service (YPAS) is a Liverpool-based charity that provides support, counselling and advisory services for vulnerable young people aged 10-25 years. Over the past four years YPAS has established community-based links with young people through their offices at Oakmere Community College. Here, two YPAS advisors and two mentors work with young people in resolving emotional and practical difficulties that might present barriers to effective learning. Mentors host weekly counselling sessions, where learners can access impartial and confidential advice.

Oakmere and YPAS work collaboratively in maintaining an effective relationship with the team of professionals attached to each looked after young person. If requested, a YPAS representative will join care workers and Connexions advisors in attending CORE Group meetings, informing and sharing in discussions relating to the well-being and development of the young person. YPAS acknowledge the value of these meetings in developing an understanding of the issues affecting their client group – such as progression into independent living or financial concerns – and the impact this may have on their pre-E2E training. Support for the young person from Oakmere and YPAS can be tailored accordingly to prevent possible disengagement.

Section 4

Summary

This guide, produced by the North West Learning and Skills Council, is a starting point in meeting some of the employment and training needs of care leavers in the region.

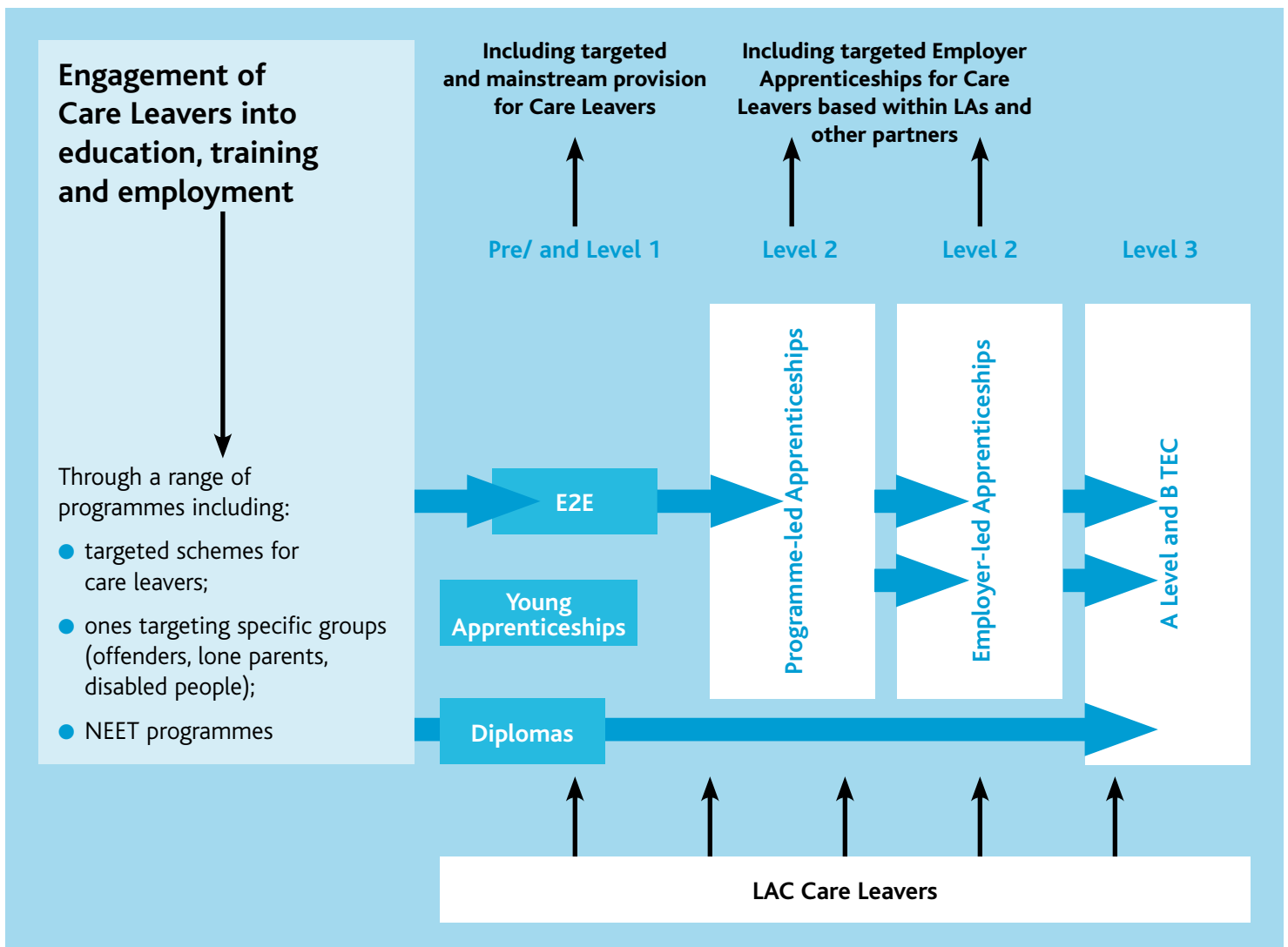
Together with partners, the NW LSC is raising awareness of the needs of this highly excluded group of young people. It is looking to ensure that care leavers, wherever possible, can access mainstream support and, as part of this, access personalised support, to enable them to go on to sustainable employment.

What is happening regionally in relation to care leavers?

Government Office NW is committed to supporting care leavers into employment and training. A working group – the Looked After Children Planning Group – has been meeting for the past year. This is looking to link local activity together, to form a NW regional approach, developing employment and training approaches. The NW LSC is represented on this group.

The National Care Advisory Service is taking forward government plans outlined in the White Paper New Opportunities – which are supporting care leavers into employment and training. Comprehensive good practice databases and guides are available at www.leavingcare.org.

The NW LSC is committed to supporting and developing an integrated progression pathway with flexible options for care leavers, as outlined below:



Key approaches to support moves towards this have been detailed in this Guide. The priority development work includes:

- through working with Local Authority Leaving Care Teams, Social Inclusion Teams and Employment Leads, the LSC need to look at ways of linking various types of provision together, so that care leavers have a progression pathway towards training and eventually sustainable employment;
- this needs to be linked to local authority Corporate Parent Strategy Groups, in order to pull together what is currently a very disparate range of activities (located within HR leads, ConneXions, Leaving Care Teams and contracted voluntary sector organisations);
- staff development – required to raise awareness of this highly excluded group of young people, with Leaving Care Services contributing to this; and
- other members of the corporate parent ‘family’ – eg PCT and key ETE providers need to be included in this process to ensure that care leavers’ profile is championed at a senior strategic level.

The linkages need to be made between mainstream employment and training providers and Leaving Care services, to ensure that all care leavers’ needs are met, not just the few who may be able to, or want to access specialist support.

*“Together with partners, the NW LSC is...
looking to ensure that care leavers...
can access mainstream and... personalised
support, to enable them to go on to
sustainable employment...”*

Annex 1

Leaving Care Contacts – North West Local Authorities

Local Authority	Contact Name / Department	Address / Telephone / Email
Cheshire & Warrington		
Cheshire	Lesley Goode Development and Performance Manager, Leaving Care Team	01270 669 944 lesley.goode@cheshire.gov.uk
Warrington	Terry Irvine Acting Team Manager	01925 444 051 tirvine@warrington.gov.uk
Lancashire		
Blackburn with Darwen	Nick McPartlan Leaving Care Lead	01254 666 501 nick.mcpartlan@blackburn.gov.uk
Blackpool	Penny Maddock Team Manager	01253 477653 penny.maddock@blackpool.gov.uk
Lancashire	Mark Cartridge County Residential Manager	01524 585 520 Mark.Cartridge@SSD.lancscc.gov.uk
Cumbria		
Cumbria	Alan Culley Service Manager, Pathways	01228 227461 alan.culley@cumbriacc.gov.uk
Greater Manchester		
Bolton	Jane Booth Head of Service, Leaving Care	01204 337 470 jane.booth@bolton.gov.uk
Bury	Catherine Slater Head of Service	0161 253 6305 c.slater@bury.gov.uk
Manchester	Ruth Welford-Hunter Manager	0161 226 6722 ruth.welfordhunte@barnardos.org.uk
Oldham	Steve Slater Head of Service	0161 770 6585 steve.slater@oldham.gov.uk
Rochdale	Louise Dunston Manager	01706 925851 louisedunston@rochdale.gov.uk
Salford	Michael Kelly Principal Manager, (Next Step) Leaving Care Service	0161 607 1888 michael.kelly@salford.gov.uk
Stockport	Ian Martin Service Manager	0161 474 2124 ian.martin@stockport.gov.uk
Tameside	Christine Gerrard Team Leader	0161 342 7630 christinegerrard@tameside.gov.uk
Trafford	Ged Crowther Operations Manager, Permanence & Transitions Team	0161 912 3501 gerard.crowther@trafford.gov.uk
Wigan	Sandy McKensie Manager	01942 487151 s.mackenzie@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Local Authority	Contact Name / Department	Address / Telephone / Email
Greater Merseyside		
Halton	Christine Taylor Divisional Manager (LAC)	0151 471 7535 christine.taylor@halton-borough.gov.uk
Knowsley	Julie Griffiths Employability Officer	0151 443 4083 julie.griffiths@knowsley.gov.uk
Liverpool	Steve Moutray Head of Service	0151 233 1910 Steve.moutray@liverpool.gov.uk
Sefton	Gary Clark Service Manager	0151 934 3863 Gary.clarke@cs.sefton.gov.uk
St Helens	Anne Marie Gillespie Service Manager	01744 677094 annemariegillespie@sthelens.gov.uk
Wirral	Brian Ronson Team Manager	0151 604 3676 brianronson@wirral.gov.uk

Annex 2

North West ConneXions – Looked After Children Leads

Provider	Contact Name	Telephone / Email
Cheshire & Warrington		
Cheshire	Lyn Hamlett	ConneXions Cheshire and Warrington Meadow Court, Meadow Street, Northwich, CW9 5FP 01606 350 753 Lyn.Hamlett@connexions-cw.co.uk
Warrington	Lyn Hamlett	ConneXions Cheshire and Warrington Meadow Court, Meadow Street, Northwich, CW9 5FP 01606 350 753 Lyn.Hamlett@connexions-cw.co.uk
Cumbria		
Cumbria	Deborah Naylor	01900 604 674 07919 220 194 Deborah.Naylor@connexionscumbria.co.uk
Greater Manchester		
Bolton	Gail Airey PA Operations Manager	ConneXions Bolton Children's Services, Bolton Council, 3rd Floor, Paderborn House, Le Mans Crescent, Bolton, BL1 1UA 01204 334 485 gail.airey@bolton.gov.uk
Bury	Jenny Arnall Care Leavers Lead Rob Turkas LAC Lead	ConneXions Bury 13-15 Broad Street, Bury, BL9 0DA 0161 253 7733 j.k.arnall@bury.gov.uk r.i.turkas@bury.gov.uk
Manchester	Jeff Mills LAC Lead Andy Kears LAC Coordinator	0161 437 4288 Jeff.Mills@connexions-manchester.com 0161 226 8609 Andrew.Kears@connexions-manchester.com
Oldham	Vicky Sowerby Young People of Compulsory Education Age Joe McDonagh Care Leavers in the Post-16 Sector	0161 621 9459 vickysowerby@positivestepsoldham.org.uk 0161 621 9674 joemcdonagh@positivestepsoldham.org.uk
Rochdale	Alison Marchini Community Operations Manager Donna Baldwin	01706 622 770 alison.marchini@connexions-rochdale.org.uk donna.baldwin@connexions-rochdale.org.uk

Provider	Contact Name	Telephone / Email
Salford	Julie Riley NEET Improvement Manager	ConneXions Salford 0161 743 0163 Julie.riley@connexions-salford.com
Stockport	Fiona Rivett	0161 474 2195 fiona.rivett@connexions-stockport.co.uk
Tameside	Chris Harris Team Manager	ConneXions Tameside 2-5 Clarence Arcade, Stamford Street, Ashton under Lyne, OL6 7PT 0161 330 1528 chris.harris@connexions-tameside.com
Trafford	Ann Wilcoxon Personal Advisor	ConneXions Trafford 0161 911 8600 ann.wilcoxon@trafford.gov.uk
Wigan	Elaine Dann Acting Strategy Manager Jane Stephens	Department of Children and Young People's Services ConneXions, Wigan Investment Centre, Waterside Drive, Wigan, WN3 5BA 01942 705 357 (ext. 5357) Elaine.Dann@wigan.gov.uk Jane.Stephens@wigan.gov.uk
Lancashire		
Blackburn with Darwen	Carla Fazackerley Operations Manager	ConneXions BwD delivered by CXL St Johns Court, Ainsworth Street, Blackburn, BB1 6AR 01254 267 780 carla.fazackerley@cxl-uk.com
Blackpool	Jim Cross	Jim.Cross@blackpool.gov.uk
Lancashire	Sandra Bilsborrow Assistant Operatives Director	01772 532 784 sandra.bilsborrow@lancashire.gov.uk
Greater Merseyside		
Halton	Ian Moncur	Widnes ConneXions Centre 0151 422 9120 ian.moncur@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk
Knowsley	Richard Seddon Team Manager	Kirkby ConneXions Centre Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby, L32 8RX 0151 545 5400 07736 476 972 Richard.Seddon@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk

Annex 2

North West ConneXions – Looked After Children Leads

Provider	Contact Name	Telephone / Email
Liverpool	Carol Brady Leaving Care Team Manager – Liverpool City South	The Door, Abney Building, Hanover Street, Liverpool, L1 4DY 0151 709 5400 07970 156 063 carol.brady@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk
Sefton	Helen Young	ConneXions Sefton 44 Burlington House, Crosby Road North, Waterloo, Liverpool, L22 LPJ 0151 928 8952 helen.young@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk
St Helens	Karen Warriner	01744 677 088 karen.warriner@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk
Wirral	Lorraine Gardner Team Manager	Birkenhead ConneXions 0151 666 4385 lorraine.gardner@connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk

Annex 3

LSC and ESF Funded Projects

Reducing NEET – All projects funded until July/December 2010

Provider	Contact Name	Telephone / Email
Cheshire and Warrington – Energisers – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/12/2010		
Blacon Community Trust	Louise Davey	01244 371 716
Reaseheath College	Margaret Bardsley	01270 613 204 margaretb@reaseheath.ac.uk
Total People	Nick Robertson	01606 734 004
Cheshire and Warrington – Learning and Support during Key Stage 4 – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/12/2010		
Foundation for Peace	Lynn Hitchen	01925 581 236 lynn.hitchen@foundation4peace.org
Total People	Nick Robertson	01606 734 004
Vale Royal Borough Council	Mark Groves	01606 867 599 mgroves@valeroyal.gov.uk
YMCA Training	Anthea Bradburne	0161 945 3415 07970 471 311
Warrington Collegiate Retention in Post 16 Learning	Carole Williams	01925 494 683 carole.williams@warrington.ac.uk
Cumbria – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/12/2010		
Rathbone		
Bolton Council	Carol Cantwell 14-19 Partnership Manager	Life Long Learning Unit 5th Floor Paderborn House Bolton BL1 1UA 01204 333 998 carol.cantwell@bolton.gov.uk
Bury Council		
Manchester		
Barnardo's	Ruth Welford-Hunte	0161 226 6722 ruth.welfordhunte@barnardos.org.uk
Economic Solutions		
NACRO	Anna Morrell Project Coordinator	NACRO, Unit One, Cuthbert Centre, 877 Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, Manchester M11 2NA 0161 233 3568 07967 393 530 anna.morrell@nacro.org.uk
Oldham – Positive Steps	Steph Bolshaw PSO Strategic Lead	
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Gary Kelly 14-19 Participation Strategy Development Manager	01706 925 147 gary.kelly@rochdale.gov.uk
Salford City Council and Connexions Salford (until July 2010)	Julie Riley Connexions Salford	0161 743 0163 julie.riley@connexions-salford.com

Continued overleaf

Annex 3

LSC and ESF Funded Projects

Provider	Contact Name	Telephone / Email
Stockport College – Improving Life Chances in Stockport by Reducing the Number of Young People who are or may become NEET – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/07/2010		
Tameside MBC	John Symington 14-19 strategy Manager	Tameside MBC Room 2.38 Wellington Road Ashton-Under-Lyne OL6 6DL 0161 342 3242 John.symington@tameside.gov.uk
Greater Manchester – Reducing NEET in Trafford – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/07/2010		
Trafford Council	Susan Denny Project Lead	0161 911 8601 Susan.Denny@trafford.gov.uk
Greater Manchester – Reducing NEET in Wigan – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/07/2010		
Wigan Council	Peter Smith Secondary Personalised Learning Consultant – Children and Young People’s Services	Professional Development Centre Park Road, Hindley Wigan WN2 3RY 01942 767 112 peter.smith@wigan.gov.uk
Greater Merseyside (excluding Halton) – Learning and Support during Key Stage 4 for those at Risk of Disengaging and Transition Support		
Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership	Caroline Swarbrick	0151 254 6648 Caroline.Swarbrick@connexions- gmerseyside.co.uk
Knowsley MBC		
Oakmere Community College	Cath Lydon	Cherry Lane, Liverpool L4 6UG 0151 521 3563 cath.lydon@oakmere.net
Sefton Council		
Wirral Council		
Greater Merseyside (including Halton) – Retention in Post 16 Learning – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/12/2010		
Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership	Caroline Swarbrick	0151 254 6648 Caroline.Swarbrick@connexions- gmerseyside.co.uk
Knowsley Community College		
Sefton Council		
St Helens College	David Williams	Water Street, St Helens, WA10 1PP 01744 623374 dwilliams@sthelens.ac.uk
Wirral Council (Children and Young Peoples Department)		

Provider	Contact Name	Telephone / Email
Greater Merseyside (including Halton) – Progression Pathways Programme – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/12/2010		
Halton Borough Council	Ken Hughes Project Manager / Head Teacher KS4 Gateway (PRU and Engagement Service)	The Bridge School Chadwick Road, Astmoor, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 1PW 01928 565 456 ken.hughes@halton.gov.uk
Knowsley Community College		
Merseyside Youth Association		
Oakmere Community College (2 projects)	Cath Lydon	Cherry Lane, Liverpool L4 6UG 0151 521 3563 cath.lydon@oakmere.net
Shaw Trust		
St Helens Chamber	Pauline Devine Starting Point Centre Manager	4-6 Hardshaw Street, St Helens WA10 1RE 01744 698 800 pauline.devine@thestartingpoint.org
Wirral Council (Children and Young Peoples Dept)		
Lancashire – Reducing NEET in Blackburn with Darwen – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/12/2010		
CX Limited		
Lancashire – Reducing NEET in Blackpool – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/12/2010		
CX Limited		
Lancashire – Reducing NEET in Lancashire Local Authority Area – Duration: 01/05/2008 – 31/12/2010		
Preston College		
University of Central Lancashire		
Greater Manchester – Prevention of NEET Young People in Salford – Pre 16		
No contact information available		
Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing in Area) – Employer Pool and Integrated Career Development Mentoring Programme		
No contact information available		
Lancashire – Reducing NEET in Lancashire Local Authority Area		
No contact information available		

Annex 4

Profile

The North West Profile of Looked After Children and Care Leavers – 2008

- The DCSF profile of North West looked after children revealed that at 31st March 2008, there were 10,300 children in local authority care. 70% (7,190) of these young people were looked after as a consequence of abuse or neglect.
- Of North West local authorities, Manchester has responsibility for the greatest number of looked after young people (1,425), followed by Lancashire (1,280).
- In 2008, 29% of North West children in care were placed outside the geographical boundary of the responsible local authority.
- There were 1,680 LAC in the North West who were 16 years and over on 31st March 2008 and 1,090 young people who were 16 or older who had ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31st March 2008.
- 500 of the 790 (63%) North West care leavers aged 19 years who were in the care of the local authority aged 16 were engaged in education, training or employment. However 34% were not in education, employment or training (NEET), and the remaining 3% were not in touch with the local authority.
- In the North West 39% of care leavers aged 19 years were living independently at this time and just 16% were living with parents or relatives. Community homes and various forms of supported living accommodation account for the remaining care leavers.
- Only 72% of North West looked after children sat at least one GCSE in 2007 and just 68% obtained one or more GCSEs at grade A*-G. In comparison, 97 per cent of all children in the North West obtained one GCSE at grade A*-G.
- 45% of North West looked after children achieved 5 GCSE grades A* to G, compared to 91% of all children across the region (2007).
- 13% of LAC in the North West achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) compared to 60% of all children in the North West (2007).

Table 1:

Number of LAC aged 16 and over looked after on 31st March 2008 and number of LAC who left care in year ending 31st March 2008

	Children aged 16+ years looked after on 31.3.08	Children aged 16+ years leaving care between 01.04.07 and 31.03.08
Blackburn with Darwen	50	20
Blackpool	40	20
Bolton	55	35
Bury	50	35
Cheshire	80	55
Cumbria	85	60
Halton	15	15
Knowsley	35	25
Lancashire	230	135
Liverpool	150	90
Manchester	325	220
Oldham	50	35
Rochdale	40	25
Salford	90	60
Sefton	45	30
St Helens	25	25
Stockport	60	35
Tameside	40	40
Trafford	35	25
Warrington	20	15
Wigan	65	40
Wirral	80	60
North West total	1,680	1,090

Source: DSCF 2008

For further regional information go to: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/catego.shtml#m3>.



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