



connexions
SOMERSET

Connexions Somerset Limited
Strategic Plan: 2008 - 2010





Introduction

In a changing global market, choices for individuals and sustainability for organisations becomes more complex. Connexions Somerset Limited has the expertise to work with a range of strategic and delivery partners to improve the economic and social wellbeing of individuals and to increase the opportunities and experiences available to them. We offer services to organisations in order to increase their capacity and support their sustainability.

Connexions Somerset Limited offers a wide range of services to enhance the provision of organisations and the experiences of individuals including:

- Impartial Information, advice and careers guidance
- Educational and enterprise experiences
- Education business links
- Employer partnerships
- Enterprise, work related and vocational learning
- Preventative NEET & the Foundation Learning Tier
- Professional and curriculum development
- Consultancy to organisations
- Services to employers
- Accredited training and development routes for young people and adults
- Employability activities leading to engagements and progression
- Motivational and engagement activities to improve retention in further education

We hold a number of contracts funded by Somerset County Council, the Dorset and Somerset Learning and Skills Council, the European Social Fund, Dorset County Council, Devon County Council and a range of individual schools, colleges, voluntary organisations and individuals.

In addition to successfully delivering contracted services Connexions Somerset Limited also offers additional services to young people, adults, employers, training providers and educational institutions through its portfolio of services.



Vision

Working with and for individuals, organisations and communities, enabling them to respond and succeed in a changing social, educational and economic climate.

Through the provision of impartial information, advice, guidance and experiential learning we deliver services that promote career success and development and equip individuals to manage careers throughout life.

Our workforce is our most valuable resource and the support and development of our workforce is a priority. The knowledge, skills and creativity within the organisation is recognised and valued. Staff involvement and influence on our decision making processes and policy development is integral to our future direction.

We have the knowledge and expertise required to assist young people to make progressive and sustainable choices when considering the four main routes of learning available to them, ensuring their participation and achievement.

We work with other organisations and agencies to enhance provision, overcome rural isolation, and create innovative services and solutions through technology and creative ways of working.

Promoting and nurturing service excellence, enterprise, and responsiveness, both internally through our structures and systems, and externally through our continuously evolving portfolio of services and exploration of new markets.



Mission

With a focus on early intervention and prevention we will support young people at key transition points to ensure their participation and achievement.

We will work towards developing services to adults and employment and training providers to extend and enhance our information, advice and guidance provision and make interventions more meaningful for individuals and organisations.

The availability of an appropriately skilled and flexible workforce is a key driver of productivity and this applies to the people we employ as well as to our customers and clients. We will achieve this by developing a workforce that is up-to-date with curriculum changes and informed about labour market trends and the implications of a global and changing economy.

We will judge our success on the perception of those around us and our performance in the markets in which we operate.

Through innovation and technology we will continuously improve and strive to be the best.



Guiding Principles

We will:

- Provide services which are personalised, accessible and visible.
- Raise participation and achievement in ways which are progressive and suitable for individuals.
- Assess the needs of individuals, the local, regional and national economy so that provision is informed and responsive to the pace of change.
- Provide information advice and guidance which is impartial, up-to-date and relevant.
- Invest in workforce, product, and service development.
- Maximise resources through collaborative effort with other organisations on the delivery of services and continually review provision to ensure value for money.
- Promote equality recognise talent and celebrate diversity linking people considering careers to those who have experience of them.
- Proactively seek to maximise opportunities and to influence policy and practice regionally and nationally.

We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- Offering a welcoming, friendly and trusting approach both to our colleagues and our customers that displays value and respect.
- Involving colleagues and customers in influencing provision and new developments.
- Creating opportunities for innovation and involvement by recognising and celebrating difference, talent and aspiration.
- Encouraging and enabling collective aspiration so that challenge and improvement comes from within.
- Striving for excellence through evaluation quality and accountability.
- Seeking new opportunities and adapting and responding to change.



Our Strategic Priorities

1. A one company approach which offers integrated and complementary services that add value, demonstrate quality and encourage innovation.

- a) One professional development plan for all staff across the company that enhances opportunities for staff development.
- b) One marketing plan which incorporates public relations, the company image, branding and communication strategies.
- c) A performance management system which adds value, ensures the achievement of quality awards and guarantees continuous improvement.
- d) To define and bring together one offer for careers education and guidance across the company.
- e) To define and bring together one offer for services to employers, work based learning providers, and develop labour market information.
- f) To develop and define an integrated company calendar to inform and enhance service delivery.

2. The exploration of new and existing markets and ways of working which will enhance the sustainability of the company, provide opportunities for growth and ensure ongoing competitiveness.

- a) To agree an approach for business development, to secure current contracts and position us for new and additional opportunities.
- b) To develop a process involving key staff that generates information, which demonstrates our unique selling points, cost effectiveness, innovation and efficiency and ensures the organisation's competitiveness in the future tendering process.
- c) To succession plan to attract and maintain the knowledge, skills and understanding the organisation needs to develop.
- d) To undertake an analysis of current practice, identify added value and economies of scale to ensure the company is fit for purpose.
- e) To explore future options for the company including collaborative working with other organisations to safeguard our position in a changing market.
- f) To build sustainable internal and external relationships through effective communication channels and networks.
- g) To performance manage current contracts, assess risk and plan contingencies.

Priority 1 - A one company approach which offers integrated and complementary services that add value, demonstrate quality, and encourage innovation.

Objective	Tasks
<p>a) One professional development plan for all staff across the company that enhances opportunities for staff development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills audit undertaken by all staff against competencies. • Accredited training routes identified where possible for all staff. • One plan devised to include training, PDPs and conferences. • Appraisals adapted to fit with competencies. • A development entitlement devised for all staff. • Appraisals undertaken. • Access regional and national training programmes to develop staff knowledge, skills and competences.
<p>b) One marketing plan which incorporates public relations, the company image, branding and communication strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development marketing plan. • Internal communication strategy. • Reassess Marketing Group. • Review terms of reference and membership of the Marketing Group. • Develop / review the Marketing Plan to ensure it covers the whole company. • Develop an Internal Communication Strategy. • Re-launch the marketing plan and internal communication strategy. • Establish a communication and PR strategy that includes a schedule of planned press releases resulting in regular media exposure.
<p>c) A performance management system which adds value, ensures the achievement of quality awards and guarantees continuous improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all GIMS. • Review and develop a robust internal audit system to cover both finance and delivery • Continually monitor and review the staff appraisal process. • Further enhance the regular and timely contract reports for both the leadership team and the Board. • Increased scrutiny of the Audit Sub Committee. • Develop a quality award plan with an overview of dates, timescales requirements and responsibilities for the successful achievement of recognised quality awards - Matrix, IIP, and National EBPO Quality Award.
<p>d) To define and bring together one offer for careers education and guidance across the company</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and delivery of a careers education and guidance pathway, which is accredited. • Entitlements devised for all year groups aged 11 - 19. • Devise services to schools and colleges for the Portfolio. • Devise a self-assessment for use by schools and colleges. • Explore the use of e-guidance. • Analysis of schools and colleges buy in and potential markets.

Objective	Tasks
<p>e) To define and bring together one offer for services to employers, work based learning providers and develop labour market information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising for staff. • Develop strategies for engaging employers and work based learning providers. • Define the role of the PA and ETA in working with employers and work based providers. • Staff training. • Identify services offered to employers by EBP, Connexions funded staff, additional contracts. • Identify an additional menu of services for income generation. • Develop an employer pack. • Revisit procedures for vacancy taking, visit reports. • Devise a recording and sharing of information system. Explore web-view, Insight etc. • Develop any promotional materials for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents / carers. - Young people. - Other.
<p>f) To develop and define an integrated company calendar to inform and enhance service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a calendar on the intranet. • Administration to be done centrally. • Set up process to ensure all events are logged. • Review the use of the events calendar on the Intranet. • Set up administration process to ensure the calendar is maintained. • Set up process for staff to update calendar. • Brief staff on types of events to be included and process to be followed to update the calendar.

Priority 2 - The exploration of new and existing markets and ways of working which will enhance the sustainability of the company, provide opportunities for growth and ensure ongoing competitiveness.

Objective	Tasks
<p>a) To agree an approach for business development, which secures current contracts and positions us for new and additional opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop integrated Connexions/EBP Portfolio schools and colleges. • Explore the scope and capacity to develop additional portfolios - Adults; Employers; Organisations. • Make decisions about the feasibility and benefits of becoming an organisation with charitable status. • Make decisions about purchasing 'Grantfinder' online database as a tool to support the identification of new contract opportunities. • Identify opportunities for new contract bidding. Assess and make decisions about the feasibility of tendering for new business taking into account - financial viability, capacity, requisite staff skills and experience, fit with company ethos and objectives. • Monitor success rate in securing new and repeat business. • Confirm existing project activity with scope for integration. • Work with project and team leaders to develop procedures and processes to integrate contract activity.
<p>b) To develop a process involving key staff that generates information, which demonstrates our unique selling points, cost effectiveness, innovation and efficiency and ensures the organisation's competitiveness in the future tendering process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a detailed SWOT analysis with staff & clients to identify strengths & areas for development. • Evaluate income & expenditure to identify efficiencies & potential savings. • Clarify and communicate the company offer. • Review corporate identity & branding. • Identify and communicate our unique selling points internally and externally. • Re-launch the organisation - new corporate brand / identity and PR campaign.
<p>c) To succession plan to attract and maintain the knowledge, skills and understanding the organisation needs to develop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify vulnerable specialist areas. • Risk assess the loss of key members of staff. • Develop plan for successions. • Devise a policy on retention and reward including progression opportunities.
<p>d) To undertake an analysis of current practice, identify added value and economies of scale to ensure the company is fit for purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess costings associated with corporate services. • Determine a fair and equitable way of assigning costs. • Use of cross company specialism's. • Links with specialism's in EBP. • Benchmarking marking excess with other similar companies, bearing in mind commercial sensitivities. • Assess common objectives between contracts eg NEET.

Objective	Tasks
<p>e) To explore future options for the company including collaborative working with other organisations to safeguard our position in a changing market</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope the options available. • Measure each option against identified criteria. • Conduct visits and establish key networks. • Identification of unit costs and implications for structure for Connexions Somerset and potential partners. • Impact of commissioning approaches. • Desk research (neighbouring trends.) • Consultation with commissioners. • Assess impact of options on legal, finance, governance and staffing (SWOT analysis).
<p>f) To build sustainable internal and external relationships through effective communication channels and networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop cross functional groups. • Have 2 company days per year. • Who's who in the company. • Link to communication strategy. • Establish, agree and communicate an internal and external communication strategy - refer to 1b.
<p>g) To performance manage current contracts, assess risk and plan contingencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To performance manage current contracts, assess risk and plan contingencies for all contracts. • All contracts to have delivery plans reviewed and reported on at least quarterly.



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