

igen - BRIEFING PAPER FOR LEEDS CITY COUNCIL SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

Introduction

igen is a not for profit partnership company established in 1996 by key local partners, including the City Council, to provide a statutory careers service for Leeds under contract to government office. Since 1996, the company has remained focussed on its key purpose whilst also extending its activities into other related services within Leeds and other parts of Northern England. Connexions work now accounts for 50% of our income, with the other 50% generated through contracts with Learning and Skills Councils and Jobcentre Plus for the provision of preparatory training for young people (e2e and e2v) and nextstep services (Information, Advice and Guidance for adults).

As a key partner in the delivery of the Connexions Service in Leeds (see Diagram 1 below), we share the mission of Connexions West Yorkshire: to provide 'the best possible start in life for all young people in West Yorkshire' and the vision 'to provide all young people in West Yorkshire with easy access to services in order for them to become successful adults and citizens'. Achieving this requires us to work in close partnership with other Connexions Service providers in Leeds, actively collaborating towards shared goals through the Local Management Committee (LMC) and responsive to the voiced needs of young people. The Connexions service will transition into Children Leeds from March 2008 and partnership work is currently underway to determine appropriate arrangements.

Leeds Careers, a Division of igen (see Diagrams 2 and 3 below), is the main provider of 'universal' careers guidance, information and advice services for young people in Leeds (mainly under contract to Connexions West Yorkshire), as well as a range of 'targeted' services, and operates from its site in Leeds city centre as well as in educational institutions and community sites. The services primarily address the Economic Well Being key outcome of Every Child Matters, but the other four key outcomes are also impacted upon, in support of the Children and Young People's Plan for Leeds. The provision of a careers service is a statutory duty placed on the Secretary of State for the DfES (1973 Employment and Training Act as amended by the 1993 Trade Union Reform and Employee's Rights Act) and currently delivered through Connexions.

The Connexions service has as its main priority the reduction in number of those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). This emphasis has resulted in the development by Leeds Careers of a differentiated and prioritised service based on individual needs assessment, together with increased multi-agency working and community-based operations.

The Future Pathways Division of igen delivers a wide range of complementary Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded initiatives which support young people into learning and employment opportunities in Leeds:

- e2e (entry to employment) targets young people aged 16-19 who have not yet achieved a level 2 qualification. Using a programme of activity comprising key skills, personal and social development and employability, young people are readied for apprenticeships and work. Future Pathways leads a partnership of 12 providers from the voluntary, private and Further Education sectors in Leeds.
- e2v (entry to vocational learning) commenced in September 2005. It targets young people who are not ready for e2e on account of having social, emotional and commitment problems. Many have offending backgrounds, a history of substance use and chaotic lifestyles. The programme uses a range

of innovative themes – music, sport, art, IT to attract young people to the programme. Thereafter, by providing intensive personal support, introducing key skills and addressing personal issues, learners progress to e2e, further education, work based learning or employment.

Partnerships

Working in partnership is central to igen's activities in support of young people. To this end operational delivery agreements are negotiated by Leeds Careers with all secondary educational institutions by the end of September each year and reviewed at the end of Autumn and Spring terms. Agreements are also held with all the further education colleges, SILCs (Special Inclusive learning Centres), St John's School for the Deaf, PRUs (Pupil Referral Units), Wetherby Young Offenders Institution and Eastmoor Regional Secure Unit.

Delivery agreements are negotiated annually by Leeds Careers with other key delivery partners: - Jobcentre Plus, Education Leeds, the Education Welfare Service, the Youth Service, Social Services and the Youth Offending Service.

Leeds Careers staff play a major role in supporting the Connexions network in Leeds and in support of the emerging Children's Trust (Children Leeds) arrangements. This includes membership of:

- The School Improvement Partnership Board (which replaced the Excellence in Cities Partnership Board) and its executive group.
- MALAP (the Multi Agency Looked After Young People Partnership), which is reviewing and evaluating services for young people in care and feeding in to the Children and Young People's Plan.
- Children Leeds task groups – Involvement and Participation; Building Partnerships; Inclusion, Equality and Diversity; Integrating Strategy; Integrating Processes; and Refocusing and Integrating Front Line Services.
- The Leeds Connexions Local Management Committee (LMC). The Director of Leeds Careers also co-chairs its Operations Group and chairs its Local Delivery Planning Group. Leeds Careers managers are members of the LMC's task groups for the Future of Connexions (transition to Children Leeds), Connexions Access Points, Young Peoples Participation, Training, NEET/CCIS and Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.
- 14-19 Learning Strategy Group and its 14-19 Co-ordination Team.
- The Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Partnership Board.
- The Director recently presented information on Information Advice and Guidance at the series of Children Leeds Open Forums held in October 2006 and attended the Outcome Conversation on Economic Wellbeing.

Examples of the positive outcome of this partnership approach have been:

- the inclusion of Information, Advice and Guidance as a key entitlement for young people the 14-19 Learning Strategy and in the draft Children Leeds Universal Offer
- two recently successful bids for additional resources through the European Social Fund:
 - Stepping 2 Success (Looked After Young People), providing additional PA resources for both Leeds City Council's Social Services and igen to provide development opportunities for young people in care;
 - Effective Transitions (Teenage Pregnancy), a project responding to the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Partnership's concerns about the lack of opportunities for teenage parents who did not want to continue in full time education, providing funding an additional igen PA.
- a joint project with Education Leeds, on behalf of the 14-19 Learning Strategy Group, for the implementation of the On-line Learning Prospectus for Leeds, due to be operational from September 2007.

Connexions related contracts

igen (through Leeds Careers) holds 4 Connexions West Yorkshire ‘core funding’ contracts, 1 Connexions/Youth Justice Board contract, and 1 ‘innovation fund’ contract for Connexions staff development and training:

- Main Personal Adviser (PA) contract – provides for the delivery of the statutory careers service to young people aged 13-19 and their parents/carers in Leeds and other Connexions services, including information, advice, guidance and transition support.
- Effective Transitions contract – provides for more intensive targeted support for young people in transition from school to post-16 learning. PAs are school and college based, including specialist work with teenage parents .
- Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities contract - provides for additional PAs to deliver intensive targeted support for young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD) aged 13-25, including the delivery of the statutory ‘Section 140’ assessments of young people’s needs in relation to their post-school learning.
- Tracking contract - provides for additional PAs to undertake follow-up work with young people who have or are about to become part of the ‘Not Known’ cohort. This work contributes significantly to the Leeds Connexions Strategy for NEET and Not Knowns.
- Connexions/Youth Justice Board contract - provides for PAs to deliver intensive support for young people at Wetherby Young Offenders Institution in respect of their transition to post-custody employment and learning. This contract is undertaken in partnership with the Youth Offending Service and Wetherby YOI, the latter providing igen with funding for additional PAs to undertake work on this project.
- Staff Development and Best Practice Co-ordinator – provides for a 0.5 Co-ordinator to work on behalf of the Connexions partnership in Leeds, delivering training needs analysis and in-service training primarily for PAs.

In total these Connexions contracts provide for 103 Personal Advisers (full time equivalent). The total Connexions funded PA cohort in Leeds is approximately 144, the others being predominantly employed in the voluntary sector and youth service, delivering intensive support to the NEET group in particular communities. We would seek to ensure that the support to young people currently provided through the Connexions service continued in the new Children Leeds arrangements.

The Connexions cohort in Leeds is approximately 55,000 young people, all of whom have a PA allocated to them. The average PA caseload in Leeds would be 382 young people, but because those PAs working intensively with targeted young people with significant barriers to progression only have caseloads of about 50 or less, the average caseload of igen PAs delivering the ‘universal’ service is 700 young people (i.e. meeting the potential needs of 93.6% of the cohort).

Delivery

Leeds Careers operational delivery is structured to provide an integrated, client focussed service (see Diagram 3). Personal Advisers in the five **area teams** (which map onto the city’s 5 wedges) provide a **universal** impartial careers information, advice, guidance and transition support to young people aged 13-19 in all maintained secondary schools (up to 25 for those with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities), and to parents/carers. This service is also made available to young people in independent schools. Delivery in schools focuses on providing appropriately assessed support to pupils and students at key transition points in Years 9, 11 and in post-16 education. This is negotiated and reviewed through a Delivery Agreement

with each institution in which the joint careers education and guidance 'package' offered to students is detailed and then monitored and reviewed. Schools provide a careers education programme which gives their students the knowledge and skills they require to make career decisions. Our PAs provide independent and impartial advice to help them interpret what they have learnt and professional guidance to help them apply it to their own circumstances. They offer group or class sessions to promote the service available and to make sure students are aware of their options. Through a screening process undertaken with schools, they prioritise students for individual guidance interviews, though any student who wants this support may access it through self-referral. Often PAs offer drop-in sessions at lunch times for quick enquiries. Parents are given the opportunity to attend interviews with their children and/or access the service at parents' evenings. The introduction of Key Stage 4 work related curriculum options, the new Specialised Diplomas and the Local Area Agreement Year 9 pilot in Super Output Areas will further increase demand for guidance on option choices in Year 9. Transition support is also provided in Year 11 for those that need it. Young people applying for college courses, training programmes or jobs can access support with the completion of application forms, matching with and submission to vacancies, help with interview skills and presentation, etc. In certain cases, PAs may accompany young people to interviews if required. The area teams also provide on-site support to schools, colleges and other establishments for in-service training, Connexions Access Point provision, and the Leeds Quality Standard for Careers Education and Guidance. PAs in the West team are supporting Children Leeds piloting activity in the West wedge, particularly the use of the Common Assessment Form.

The **16-19 Learning Team** provides universal impartial careers information, advice, guidance and transition support for young people in further education, training or employment to help retain them in such a positive situation or progress successfully from it. PAs working in further education colleges do so in close collaboration with student services staff employed by the colleges to ensure a more coherent service to the students. PAs also link to the work based learning providers to give support to apprentices and other trainees.

Support services for young people 16-19 who are not in learning (predominantly the NEET group) are provided by the **Central Team**, which manages and operates in the Connexions Centre at 1 Eastgate. In addition to information, advice, guidance and transition support this provision includes job placing activities, benefit registration and appropriate financial advice, outreach work, assessment and client casework, including managed referral to other appropriate support services. The Central Team works closely with other agencies who deliver services from the Connexions Centre, especially the Youth Service's Connexions Youth Project team, and the Learning and Activity Agreement Treasury Pilot staff.

The **Vacancy and Support Team** provides a city-wide **targeted** service to the most vulnerable young people, especially those with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD), Looked After Young People (including Refugees and Asylum Seekers), and Teenage Parents, as well as a central vacancy taking and matching service for employers and training providers. This team's work is more specialised - for example, the LDD PAs work with students in the Special Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) and St John's School for the Deaf, and support PAs in the wedges in their work with students with LDD in mainstream secondary schools. They provide staff training, contribute to Transition (and subsequent) Reviews, carry out Section 140 Assessments for relevant school leavers, work closely with families, liaise with specialist agencies and professionals and prepare bids (on behalf of Education Leeds) for funding for young people to attend out of area residential establishments. The Teenage Pregnancy and Looked After Children PAs have developed similar expertise which they can apply to their own clients' cases and offer more widely in the form of advice to other PAs.

Support for the delivery teams is provided through the **Development Team**, who produce, provide and support a comprehensive and high-quality range of information products for individuals, organisations, staff and city-wide annual events (such as the annual Careers on Show, the Buzz LDD event, and HE Fair (the latter drawing visitors from across the sub-region), as well as a wide range of management information and statistical analysis, such as:

- The annual Destinations of School Leavers publication
- Jobfaqs 18+ and Unifaqs, produced jointly with our West Yorkshire careers company partners, and distributed to all schools and colleges.
- Moving On, Where Next, Decisions, Get that Job and Checkout booklets/handouts are produced and distributed to all secondary schools annually.
- West Yorkshire Careers News is produced jointly with our careers company partners and distributed in April, June and September.
- The Leeds Directory of Agencies was updated and reprinted and distributed to PAs across the city.
- The Labour Market Bulletin for Leeds Careers PAs is produced monthly, providing extracts from employer visits.
- The Leeds Labour Market Summary is produced annually and distributed to PAs.

The Development Team also provide **capacity building** co-ordination and support to schools and colleges, in order for them to provide improved information and advice to pupils and their parents/carers, and support the continuing development of multi-agency 'Connexions Networks' within institutions. We promote and encourage the integration of Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) development plans within schools' overall development plans; contribute to the implementation of the new national framework for CEG in schools; encourage schools and colleges to ensure arrangements are in place for the recording of career decisions (as part of Individual Learning Plans as these are introduced); provide In-Service Training (INSET) support; provide Connexions Access Point support including library and information resources; and promote and assess the Leeds Quality Standard for Careers Education and Guidance. The recent publication of 'Supporting Choices 11-19+' and the draft DfES 'Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance Quality Standards' will provide the framework for the content and delivery of quality IAG under Children Services arrangements.

In order to make services more universally accessible the **wyzup.net** website has been developed. Research using focus groups with school leavers and students aged 13-19 has informed both the content and accessibility of the wyzup site. Features include direct access to vacancies on-line, e-mail access to a Personal Adviser and hotlinks to range of other relevant websites. We are currently updating the website with the involvement and participation of young people.

There is an ongoing requirement for significant resources to be deployed on **infrastructure** support in respect of delivering Connexions services. igen contributes to the building of this capacity in Leeds, through training staff as Personal Advisers; the extended application of ICT to maximise the accessibility of Personal Advisers to young people; improving the range of information available to Personal Advisers; and increasing their flexibility and capacity to work in remote locations, including Connexions Access Points in locations such as libraries and community centres. We continue to contribute to the implementation and operation of the Connexions National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) and the provision of Connexions Management Information (CXMI). Our own client and provider database system, **Aspire**, is CCIS compliant and the implementation of Aspire.net has enabled Personal Advisers to access the system in a secure manner from any

web-enabled computer. The Aspire system would be capable of delivering the required CCIS provision within future Children's Services arrangements in Leeds.

Outcomes

In the 2005-6 contract period Leeds Careers staff undertook/achieved the following:

- 85.02% (7,432) of Year 11 leavers were in learning in the year that they left school (target 83.5%).
- 1.75% (153) of Year 11 leavers for whom there is 'no response' in the year they leave school (target less than 2%).
- 1,894 (63%) young people moved from NEET to EET (target 63%).
- 485 young people placed into jobs, with 435 (90%) of them going into jobs with training. Another 744 were placed into work based learning opportunities.
- 140 young people have been on Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood PAs' caseloads during the year. 73 (52.14%) achieved a learning outcome or a job (target 50%).
- 585 'at risk' Year 11 young people were on school-based Effective Transitions PAs' caseloads during the year. Of these, 463 (79.15%) achieved a learning outcome or a job (target 75%).
- 399 'at risk' students were on college-based ETPAs' caseloads during the year. Of these 331 (82.86%) achieved a learning outcome or a job (target 75%).
- 766 Section 140 assessments were completed with young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities to aid their transition to post-16 learning (target 740).
- Careers guidance interventions with 3,725 young people in Years 9-11 who are at risk of not remaining in learning (target 3,000).
- Guidance interventions with 1,304 'at risk' students in Post-16 education (target 850).
- 12,558 interventions with those 16-19 year olds who are NEET - Not in Employment, Education or Training (target 9,000).
- 22,461 careers guidance interviews in total.
- 7,705 group work sessions.
- 14,193 young people used the Connexions Centre.
- 8,261 calls were taken on the freephone Helpline.
- 1174 learners accessed e2e: 88% above target. 589 learners progressed to positive destinations. Retention rates 52% (target 49%); the national achievement level stands at 43%.
- 49 young people accessed e2v in 2005-06 of whom 40% progressed to a positive destination – e2e, further education, work based learning or employment.

The following results were achieved by the 2005 Year 11 school leavers:

	2005 (%)	2004 (%)
Stayed at school/FE	69.29	67.57
Emp't with training	12.76	14.33
Work based learning	2.97	2.6
Emp't without training	1.31	2.49
Unemployed	7.44	7.61
Other	4.47	3.58
Not known	1.75	1.82
Number in cohort	8745	8888

<i>Full-time education</i>	<i>69.29</i>	<i>67.57</i>
<i>In learning</i>	<i>85.02</i>	<i>84.51</i>
<i>NEET</i>	<i>8.29</i>	<i>8.66</i>

NEET and Not Known

igen contributes to the achievement of NEET and Not Known outcomes for Leeds:

The Leeds NEET target for 2004 (9.3%) was achieved. In August 2006 Leeds had the lowest % of NEET in West Yorkshire (at 10.1%). No target was set for 2005, whilst the target for 2006 is 8.8%.

NEET Trends in Leeds

June 2003 - 9.8%
 June 2004 - 8.9%
 June 2005 - 8.7%
 June 2006 - 9.2%

NOT KNOWN Trends in Leeds

June 2003 - 11.1% (low figure due to different calculation method employed by DfES)
 June 2004 - 21.3%
 June 2005 - 13.0%
 June 2006 - 12.4%

Involvement and Feedback from Young People

The involvement of young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of services is well established in Leeds Careers, for example in the design of the recently refurbished Connexions Centre at 1 Eastgate. Young people are also involved in the recruitment and selection of all Personal Adviser staff, and in governance through the Leeds Careers Advisory Group. Leeds Careers staff contribute to partnership young people involvement activities and developments through the Connexions Youth Involvement Group and the Leeds Participation Team. Staff have also met with representatives of the Leeds Youth Council to discuss the provision of information, advice, and guidance.

Recent examples of young people involvement are:

- members of the Leeds Careers young people's advisory group have put together a bid to develop leadership skills among young muslim males. The project was their idea and the young people are being supported in developing a submission to Children in Need.
- 14 young people took part in redesigning the Leeds Careers website – wyzup.net
- 13 young people took part in organising and delivering the annual Careers On Show exhibition, held this year at the Royal Armouries on 28/29 November.
- In August 21 young people were trained to take part in recruitment and selection at Leeds Careers. The training was co-delivered by 2 young people. 8 of the young people trained took part in PA interviews over the Summer
- 90 young people have participated in focus group activities in 15 school/colleges. Two of these were undertaken with specific ethnic groups in one school around BME achievement in school.
- A focus group was also held with young men involved in participation projects over the summer to inform how to get more young men involved in the future.

- Young people have been trained to assist in the running of their Connexions Access Points (CAPs) in 3 schools in Leeds – supported by their PAs. The training of CAP Assistants in more schools is planned.

“Yourconnexion” - feedback from young people

Yourconnexion feedback boxes (a process and mechanism designed by young people) are sited at schools and colleges, and the Connexions Centre. In 2005-6 responses were received from 828 young people, with 94.6% saying that the help they got was either excellent or good. Of those posted in the Connexions Centre 71% of respondents said they had sought help with careers, 42% with money and 4% with housing. Comments from the young people were overwhelmingly positive e.g.

- ‘Very helpful, there is nothing else you can do now; I’ve just got to make some decisions for myself.’
- ‘Advice and help was fantastic and I felt welcomed and appreciated the help.’
- ‘The help I received was thoroughly detailed and welcome. Thanks!’

We would anticipate that this high level of young people involvement will continue in the new Children Leeds context.

Diagram 1

Structure of Connexions in Leeds

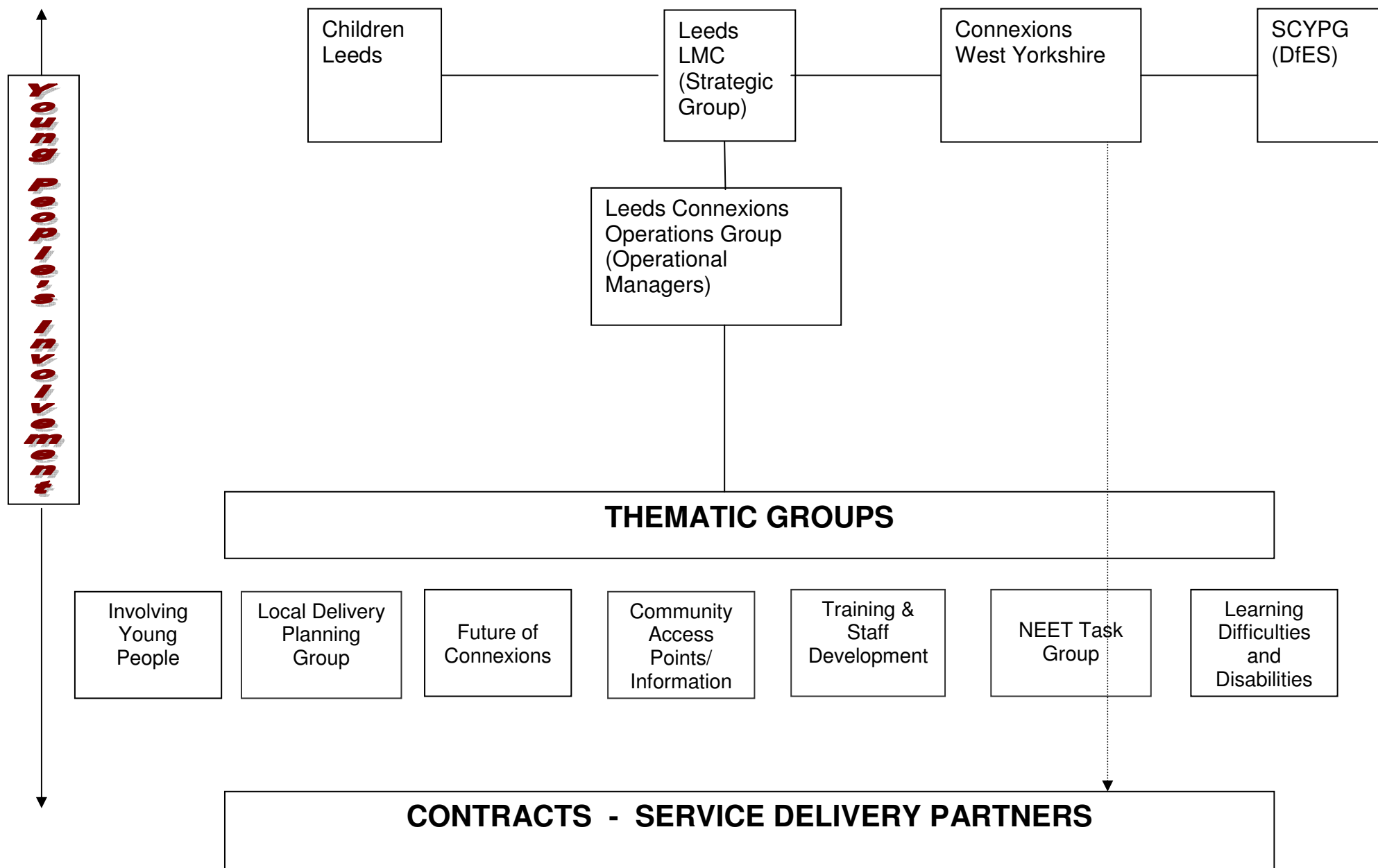


Diagram 2 **igen**

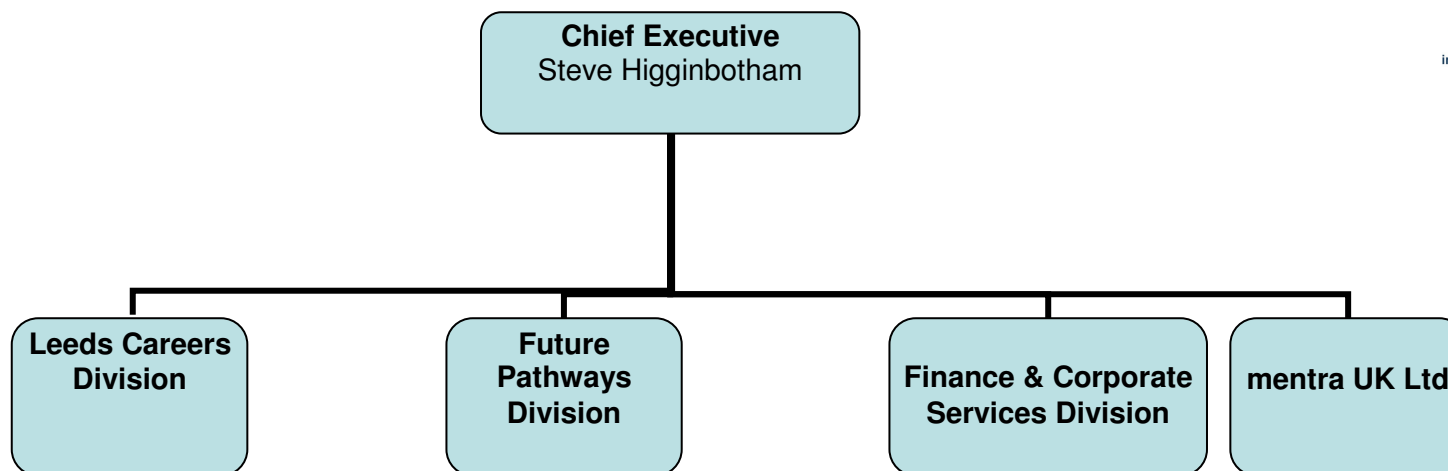




Diagram 3 **Leeds Careers**

