

contact

News from CONNEXIONS

'One 1Six' (we're your number) the new Connexions One Stop Shop for young people in Watford, opened in June

The new Shop will provide young people with information, advice, guidance and counselling on anything that concerns them, whether it be education and training, health related issues or simply finding leisure activities. In addition to staff being available to provide one to one support, young people will be able to access a wide range of services on the Internet.

The Watford Connexions One Stop Shop is a partnership between statutory and voluntary agencies registered under the name of South West Herts Youth Advisory and Counselling Service. Partners include Hertfordshire Children Schools and Families Youth Service, Watford Borough Council, Signpost, Hertfordshire Learning and Skills council, Watford YMCA, Herts Young Homeless Group, Here There & Everywhere Project, West Herts College and others.

For further information contact

Wendy Bristow, Communications Manager on
01992 531971/ email wendy.bristow@hertscc.gov.uk

Rural Stress Network

The Rural Stress Network plans to run an event in Hertfordshire in late September with the Rural Forum and Herts Together Community Strategy partners.

Contact **Thelma Wadsley** at the Rural Stress Network for more information on Thelmaw@rsin.org.uk

Update from the Editor

This edition contains advance information about the new Funding and Support programme for 2005-06. The prospectus for the new programme will be available in the middle of August 2004 with a deadline for applications on the 19th of November. Organisations who currently receive School Lets Fund awards will be particularly interested to know that this fund will now be part of the annual Funding and Support programme. This will mean an end to the six-month application cycle that many voluntary organisations found inconvenient. Please see the article at the end of Contact for more details about the changes.

Also in this edition are articles about the work of voluntary organisations across the County who provide valuable counselling, mediation and support services for children and young people in an exciting and innovative way.

Mike Smith can be contacted on
01727 423026

email

mike.smith@hertscc.gov.uk

Voluntary organisations sign up to FRANK

'FRANK needs the help of local organisations to raise awareness locally about drugs and drug issues,' says Lucy Bailey, Young People's Substance Misuse Training Co-ordinator for the Hertfordshire Drug Action Team. 'Many people will know by now that FRANK is the new national drugs help-line. It offers confidential, anonymous, discreet and well-informed advice, information and support on drug issues. FRANK can be contacted either by telephone or by logging onto the web site.'

'There are two big advantages of registering your voluntary organisation with FRANK,' says Lucy. 'First of all your organisation will be able to order great free resources, receive up-to-date information about the national campaign and get ideas about ways of using resources in an effective way locally. Secondly, if you have an event aimed at young people or parents and carers and you are registered with the campaign then FRANK can be present at your events.'

Register with Frank on the web site www.drugs.gov.uk/campaign
Various Hertfordshire web sites now feature direct links to FRANK. These include Herts Direct www.hertsdirect.org (Parents Page and Young People Channel), Health Promotion Hertfordshire www.nhsinherts.nhs.uk/hp, and the Drug Education Forums educators and trainers web site www.hertsdef.org

Lucy Bailey can be contacted on
01438 219080
e-mail
lucy.bailey@hertscc.gov.uk

Update from MECSS

The CSF Minority Ethnic Curriculum Support Service has supported projects run by the voluntary sector including:

Bosnian & Herzegovina Supplementary School - Hertfordshire's UK-Bosnians had a high profile in the recent Bosnia School festival in Coventry, showing off their new poetry, sport and literary skills in the language of their mothers and fathers.

Watford Chinese Community School - This year has seen the addition of an extra GCSE Chinese class. Currently 6 pupils attend the 2 year course. Text books are designed and adapted by the Chinese Community School Federation in Britain.

Additionally 104 pupils attend different classes throughout the school. The newly established Mandarin conversational class in the afternoon is up and running and well supported by the pupils and parents.

St Albans African Caribbean Complementary School

Children, parents and committee members from the St Albans African Caribbean Complementary School recently welcomed Jenny Stroud, the Mayor of St.Albans, who made an official visit to the school. The children's work was on display as well as photos of past events and a resource library of black history, books by black authors and mainstream educational documents. The school is held every Saturday during term time at Fleetville Infant school.

New home for Homeless Project

The Herts Young Homeless Group (HYHG) moved into new offices recently in the centre of Old Hatfield. 'It's a relief to be moving to a bigger office,' said Sue Frost, the Director. 'We're a growing organisation. The Homelessness Act 2002 increased the legal obligations of local authorities to house homeless 16 and 17 year olds and the work we've been commissioned to do on their behalf has meant a big expansion for the organisation. When I took over as Director in 2000 we had 17 staff. We now have 42 and we are still growing.'

HYHG was created in 1998 and it adopted its current title in 2000. Its major aim is to improve support and provision for Herts young people across the 16 to 25 age band, who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

'One hurdle we have to get over is explaining to people what we mean by homeless,' said Sue. 'Many people have an image of somebody sleeping rough on the streets. That's an extreme. Usually young people aren't roofless but they are homeless. For all sorts of reasons they have left the family home and they may be sleeping on a friend's floor or a relative's sofa. They're homeless with all the problems and stresses that implies.'

'Homelessness is a complex issue and that's reflected in the different approaches we use,' said Sue. 'Firstly we have local teams in each of the 4 quadrants areas of the county. Local projects are based on drop in and appointment systems. The first contact a young person will have is usually with a Project Worker who will gather information about their accommodation and support needs, and make referrals to other organisations such as the local authority housing department or Children, Schools and Families. Our job doesn't end when we help young people find somewhere to live. Usually they're coping on their own for the first time and it is difficult for young people. They need help and

support in recognising their responsibilities and also with things like budgeting which they haven't had to do before. Our Floating Support Workers help young people who are aged 16 & 17 years to maintain their council tenancies. Our Resettlement Workers support young people in temporary accommodation up to the age of 25.'

'A second major initiative is the Herts Health Action with Homelessness (HHAH!). This project will help to improve access and provision to health services for homeless people across the county. Often homeless people have poor access to health professionals. Many are not registered with a doctor. They might have poor knowledge about health services. Homeless young people can be very vulnerable. HHAH!'s services include 2 drugs and homelessness workers, a mental health link worker and a counselling network.'

'Our third initiative is about fulfilling a very real need,' said Sue. 'The Crashpad Mediation Scheme offers young people aged 16 to 17 year old the opportunity to live with host families for up to three weeks while undertaking mediation with their families or carers. The aim is to enable them to build bridges and return to their family home if appropriate.'

'Other services we provide include preventative work in schools and youth groups; support for young offenders who are homeless; rent deposit guarantee schemes and volunteering opportunities.'

'One of our biggest problems is helping young people in Hertfordshire to come to terms with the real lack of options available to them when they leave home. They often have unrealistic ideas about the council giving them a flat to live in if they are homeless. This may eventually happen but often not before a long haul through hostels or other temporary accommodation'.

Sue Frost can be contacted on
01707 251384 email director@hyhg.org

Address: 2nd Floor,
York House,
Salisbury Square,
Old Hatfield,
Herts AL9 5AD

Update on Herts Together Community Plan

‘Investing in Children and Young People Theme’

Herts Together is the countywide strategic partnership. It brings together the public sector, district local strategic partnerships, business and the voluntary and community sectors. Following consultation on the draft Community Plan in March and April, Herts Together has identified five key priorities for investing in children and young people. These reflect the themes of the Children Bill.

Key Priorities:

1. Help children and young people be healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
2. Help children and young people stay safe: being protected from harm and neglect and growing up able to look after themselves
3. Help children and young people enjoy and achieve: getting the most out of life and develop broad skills for adulthood
4. Help children and young people make a positive contribution to the community and to society and not engage in anti-social or offending behaviour
5. Help children and young people achieve economic wellbeing

Kathy Dale, Pre School Learning Alliance, represents the voluntary sector on the small task

group of the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership which is drafting an action plan to take forward the objectives identified for each of the priorities.

Other themes of the Herts Together Community Strategy also relate to children and young people and they are, **Healthier communities**, **Creating Safer Communities** and **Building a Prosperous and Inclusive Society**.

There will be further news about this strategy in the next edition of Contact.

The full plan will be launched in September and will be available on the web site www.hertsdirect.org or

from **Fiona Breaker-Rolfe**
email hertstogether@hertscc.gov.uk
or Hertfordshire County Council,
Economic and Community Development Unit,
County Hall,
Hertford SG13 8DE.

Information on the Investing in Children and Young People theme and developing action plan is available from **Dorothy Blatcher** on telephone number **01992588762**
email dorothy.blatcher@hertscc.gov.uk



children's fund

Time 2 Talk

‘Going through separation and divorce can be a tough time for the whole family,’ says David Richards, the chief executive of the Hertfordshire Family Mediation Service, based in Old Hatfield. ‘However it can be particularly hard on children who can be distressed and confused by what is going on. That’s why we put in a bid to the Herts Children’s Fund for a counselling service for children whose parents are separating.’

The new service is called **Time2Talk** and it complements the work of the Family Mediation Service. ‘Our bread and butter work is helping couples to work things out without resorting to the courts, said David. ‘We’re very conscious that the legal system is highly adversarial, costly and often painful. Using mediation saves money and speeds up the process. Otherwise the alternative is going through the Children and Families Court. On average 700 couples are referred to us each year and we help 150 to come to a mutual, signed agreement.’

The children’s counselling project is a free service for children aged 5 to 13 whose parents are separating or divorcing. ‘This is a new and unique service for

children in the area,’ said David. ‘We use professional counsellors who work in a specially converted ‘child friendly’ meeting room. We recognised at an early stage that having a ‘child friendly’ room was essential. That is why we are currently only able to offer the service in our Old Hatfield office. The out stations that we use in St.Albans, Stevenage and Hemel Hempstead aren’t ‘child friendly’ enough. We recognised that when you cover such a large area from a single base then lack of transport might create a barrier to the service. However so far it hasn’t been a problem.’ For more information about **Time2Talk** contact: **David Richards** at Hertfordshire Family Mediation Service on **01707 257400**.

The Children’s Fund is an important part of the all sector preventative strategy 0-19 in Hertfordshire and is funding projects which are making a difference to the lives of our children and young people aged 5-13. For more information see the websites www.hertsdirect.org/childrensfund and www.hertsdirect.org/preventativestrategy

Useful websites

www.hertsdirect.org/specialneeds

to access information about a range of services available for disabled children

www.koolcarers.org.uk

an exciting new website for young carers which includes useful contacts and news

Social Enterprise

Working Herts Ltd

In the last issue Sue Nelson explained how social enterprise organisations, that use trading income to support social and community objectives, are a growing segment in the voluntary and community sector. Working Herts is a good example of a social enterprise project. It trains and supports unemployed young people aged between 16 and 25.

‘By being a social enterprise we are able to provide young people with a lot more,’ said Paul Watkinson, chief executive of Working Herts. ‘Funding for training isn’t generous these days and our trading income makes all the difference. We give young people the opportunity to undertake a range of environmental projects such as home insulation, domestic water conservation, and community safety work.

Young people who join, through referrals from the Connexions, (E2E) or through Jobcentre Plus, will become part of a team of six with their own supervisor, minibus, and smart uniforms. They are collected from home every day, trained in the work they do, provided with driving lessons or motorcycle lessons and

test, and given high levels of training and personal support for their time on the course (3-6 months) before being helped to find permanent jobs or further training.’

Working Herts started in 1997 as a social enterprise with a single team recruiting from the Hertsmere district. There are now teams working in Watford, Three Rivers, Hertsmere, Welwyn Hatfield, with recruitment extended to Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and towns in-between, with two other teams in Luton Marsh Farm and Luton/Dunstable districts. Sponsorship for the environmental projects

undertaken comes from local authorities, housing associations, Three Valleys Water plc and other agencies. This money is used to supplement support through ESF, SRB and training fees from Jobcentre Plus and both the Herts and Bedfordshire Learning and Skills Councils. This allows us to finance the higher levels of support and supervision enjoyed by trainees.

‘Joining us is easy,’ said Paul. ‘Young people aged 16 to 17 can give us a call and we’ll arrange a two day taster’

Contact Paul Watkinson or
Dave Crewes on
0208 386 4848
email thatsit@btinternet.com

CSF funding in action

C Thru Da Bottle

Over 80 people recently attended a preview of C Thru Da Bottle, a video about young people and alcohol and substance abuse. The video was made by Youth Create, the Sawbridgeworth arts and drama project, which receives funding, and support from the CSF Short Term Fund.

‘Sawbridgeworth might not be associated with crime and disorder,’ said Carol Russell, director of Youth Create. ‘But the problems are still there. Earlier in the year we had problems in the town. A lot of it was anti social behaviour caused by too much alcohol.’

‘This was an inter-agency project,’ said Carol. ‘We got together with the Police, Connexions and the CSF Youth Team and looked at ways in which we could allow young people to explore issues around their use of alcohol in a safe and positive environment. Many people think that drugs are the big problem but the reality is that alcohol is potentially far more serious.’

‘We identified young people in and around year 11 who were on the fringes of anti social behaviour and not doing well at school. We did the project in the Easter holidays. Nineteen young people turned up at the Memorial Hall for the three day workshop.’

‘The first session was very difficult,’ said Carol. ‘The behaviour of the young people was sometimes very challenging. But by the end of the day they helped to clear up

which is always a good sign that things are going well. Over the next days staff and young people worked hard together, building up trust and confidence in each other.’

‘It was fun and we all enjoyed it,’ said Cookie, one of the young people who took part. ‘We all did a bit of everything. I did two interviews plus some editing and using the camcorder. It taught me to take care of myself and not to be stupid about drink. Working on the video was about trust. At first we didn’t trust the adults and it was difficult to talk about it. But now I love them all!’

‘I think it was a life changing experience for many of the young people involved,’ said Carol. ‘They built up confidence and self esteem and learned to work with adults for the first time.’

Youth Create was started in 1987 as an outlet for the creative energy of local young people. Currently the membership is over 140 young people between the ages of 4 to 25. Youth Create operates an open door policy, making every effort to accommodate young people of all abilities.

**Carol Russell can be contacted on
01279 721219
email youthcreate1@tiscali.co.uk**

CSF funding in action

Youth Talk

‘Counselling works!’ according to Steve Seaton from Youth Talk, which offers a counselling and support service for 14 to 25 year olds in St.Albans and Harpenden. ‘Counselling isn’t a magical cure for all the ills of society, and it doesn’t work every time. But counselling can and does make a big impact on the vast majority of young people who are able to engage with it. It can really make a difference.’

‘Young adults are referring themselves to us with a wide range of problems,’ says Steve. ‘The big five issues are: family problems, relationship problems, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. Many of our clients’ issues can be connected with family life. One quarter has had suicidal thoughts, and one eighth have actually attempted suicide. Growing numbers have drugs and alcohol problems. Many have suffered from abuse that can be physical, sexual and emotional. While not all our clients have serious disturbance, many do, and it seems to me that the level of severity of complaints is getting worse, and that the age of clients is getting younger.’

Although most young people refer themselves, a small number are referred directly by GPs and mental health professionals. ‘We offer a counselling programme which varies according to the clients’ needs, but overall young people tend to receive one 50 minute session per week over an average of three months,’ said Steve. ‘Sometimes we provide additional sessions if circumstances demand. The average length of a counselling programme used to be around 11 weeks. But recently this average has increased to 13 weeks, which may reflect the fact that more serious problems are increasingly being brought to us.’

Despite the problems of sustaining voluntary sector community counselling organisations, Steve is encouraged by the support and recognition that counselling is receiving both locally and nationally. ‘The new Children’s Bill suggests the government is recognising the importance of early intervention and prevention. Equally, without support from local agencies, especially CSF, we wouldn’t have survived. The new Compact and contracting system has been crucial in helping to build our relationship with CSF, and hence to sustain our service.’

**Steve Seaton can be contacted on
01727 868684
email steve.seaton@youthtalk.org.uk**

Making links

Conference 16th October attend workshops on with up to 100 adults and young people getting together to raise the profile of the voluntary youth sector in Hertfordshire”

The Herts Council for Voluntary Youth Services (HCVYS) is organising a conference at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield. The aim of the conference is to raise the profile of HCVYS and to improve networking. The conference is for adult leaders and young people aged 13 - 19. Adults will be able to attend fundraising, substance misuse, team building and quality standards. For the young people there will be activities on drug and alcohol abuse, recreation, confidence building and music.

“This is the first time that HCVYS has run an event on this scale,” said Geoff. “This should be a very exciting day

Contact **Geoff Kirby** on
01727 769518
email geoff.kirby@hertscc.gov.uk

Mapping services for children and young people

Margaret Marshall would like to thank people who responded to Simon Gentry's request for mapping information in the last issue. Margaret, the newly appointed Information Sharing project manager, has taken over the project. She is still keen for any information or mapping that organisations have done in the past to contribute to a comprehensive county wide information resource of services for children and young people.

Contact **Margaret Marshall** on
01992 556981

email

margaret.marshall@hertsc.gov.uk

Alternatively mail your contribution to

Margaret Marshall,

c/o Room 21,

County Hall, Pegs Lane,

Hertford, SG13 8DF.

New CSF Counselling Support Strategy

CSF is committed to developing a Counselling Support Strategy, as outlined in the CSF Plan for 2004/05. 'The County already has well developed Child and Family Clinics and voluntary counselling services that offer professional counselling,' explained Jan Moore, the CSF Counselling Manager. 'However there are increasing demands for support from schools, families, children and young people and this is why we needed to develop new ways of meeting those demands.'

'The new strategy is about developing high quality counselling services for children and young people aged 7 to 19 that build on local and national developments in counselling,' says Jan. The counselling service offers children and young people the opportunity to access one to one confidential

counselling with qualified counsellors in school settings.

One of the principles of the new strategy is to further encourage and support voluntary sector involvement and capacity building. 'Although we think there is a strong argument for making a distinction between school and community based counselling it's important that we build services that are complementary and not in competition.'

Cross-Herts Community Counselling (CHeCC) is a pilot project which aims to create a county wide network of young people's counselling services by investing in and developing the services which are already well established in communities around the county.

The CSF Counselling Support Strategy will work in partnership with CHeCC to produce a coherent approach to children and young people's counselling services. It will offer children and young people the opportunity to access counselling services in a range of settings.

Contact **Jan Moore** on **07789 063249**
email **jan.moore@hertsc.gov.uk**

Funding Opportunities

Big Lottery Fund

June saw the launch of the Big Lottery Fund. This is the merger between the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund. A major new programme in the pipeline is the Young People's Fund.

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

Futurebuilders launched

Guidance and application forms are now available for Futurebuilders, the major new fund for the voluntary and community sector. It differs from previous initiatives because the awards are loan based. It has £125 million to invest in the voluntary and community sector over the next three years, ranging from loans of £30,000 to several million pounds.

The priority areas for Futurebuilders are identified below:

- Community cohesion

- Crime
- Education and learning
- Health and social care
- Support for children and young people

Funding will primarily be available for capital investment such as a new building, vehicle, or an IT system, rather than project costs. The first funding "window" will be between the 5th July 2004 and 31st October 2004.

To find out more, visit the Futurebuilders web site on: www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk

www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk

Microsoft Community Learning awards

Microsoft has announced that it will support groups and charities across the UK who are tackling digital exclusion by providing opportunities for disadvantaged young people and adults to learn about IT through community-based technology and learning centres. The awards will distribute 25 prizes of £2,000 to community groups in the UK. The closing date is the 9th August 2004.

Community groups and registered charities in the UK that are seeking funding for Internet related projects are being invited to apply for the AOL Innovation in the Community Awards. AOL UK and Citizens Online are offering 30 awards of £2,000 to projects that can demonstrate how the internet can make a real difference to their community.

<http://www.microsoft.com/uk/community/community/awards/>

Cash boost for volunteering

Voluntary organisations are being urged to apply for a share of £5.4 million to help them attract more volunteers. A total of £4 million over the next two years is being made available to increase group volunteering and outreach grants which are aimed at engaging people who do not normally volunteer.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/item.asp?ID=35>

Changes to CSF funding

The 2005-06 CSF funding round for the voluntary sector will begin in mid August with the publication of the Funding and Support prospectus. This year's funding round will begin on August the 16th when the prospectus and application form is distributed in hard copy form and also posted on the Internet. The deadline for applications is three months later, on November the 15th to comply with the Herts Compact guidelines.

This year will see a number of changes to the CSF funding streams. Firstly the Short Term Fund and the Early Years Initiative Fund will merge to form a new combined fund called the Early Intervention and Prevention Fund. The reason for this merger is that both funds had a very similar focus in meeting the priorities of the preventative strategy. By combining and clarifying the application criteria the new fund should make it easier for voluntary and community organisations to apply.

Another significant change will see the School Lets Fund incorporated into the Funding and Support programme for the first time. Up until now the School Lets Fund, which gives awards to voluntary organisations to subsidise their use of school premises, has operated on a six monthly cycle.

The School Lets Fund will now be given out on an annual basis as part of Funding and Support.

This should make life easier for voluntary organisations who will only have to make one application a year instead of two. The move to the Funding and Support programme will also see a simplified application form.

The Hertfordshire Funding and Support prospectus and application form will be published on August 16th and will also be available online at HertsDirect (www.hertsdirect.org/funding).

Organisations who are on our mailing lists will be automatically sent an application .

Contact Mike Smith on 01727 849274
email mike.smith@hertsc.gov.uk

Praise for Compact

Hertfordshire have received the Westminster seal of approval for its work through the County Compact. The Compact is an agreement between the government and the whole voluntary and community sector designed to improve relationships for mutual advantage.

'We are very pleased to have been commended in the Parliamentary Review of Compacts in

recognition of our work with partners in the voluntary and community sectors,' said Michael Janes, Hertfordshire's Executive Member for Partnership 'It is widely recognised that closer working relationships between these groups and local authorities are the way forward for delivering better public services, and these continue to be strengthened by the formal agreement of good working practices through the local Compact.'

Key Fund tackles disadvantage in employment

The Hertfordshire Community Foundation will be managing the Key Fund for another three years. The Key Fund aims to help specific groups of people who are disadvantaged in the labour market and are aged between 16 and 63. Young people age 13 - 16 can benefit from the fund projects if they are in danger of exclusion from school, or are not attending school for any reason. Some examples of target groups of young people are:

- young people with low-level skills and/or now experience
- young people excluded from school or with a

- poor attendance record
- young people expected to leave school with few, if any, qualifications
- young people who have grown up in care
- lone parents
- minority ethnic communities
- travellers

The scheme is part of the European Social Fund and is match funded by the Community Foundation and local partners to create a single funding pot. The minimum grant available from the Key Fund is £500 and the maximum is £10,000. The next deadline for applications is the 30th August.

Contact **Lucy Bardner** at the Hertfordshire Community Foundation on **01707 251351**.

Have we got your details right?

Please remember to let CSF know if your organisation changes address or personnel.

Please inform Alex Brace of any changes to your contact details.

Alex Brace 01992 556988 e-mail: alex.brace@hertscc.gov.uk

Organisation:

Contact Name:

Address:

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Telephone:

E-mail:

OLD CONTACTS

For past issues of Contact visit:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/yrccouncil/hcc/csf/homelife/familyproblems/preventing/>

