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**REDUCTION IN SERVICE TO 12-19 (YOUTH AND CONNEXIONS SERVICE)**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Cyndi Hughes,  
Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Murray Rose, Director of People**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with additional information and clarity regarding the proposal to reduce the 12-19 years service by £127,000 for 2012/13.

**Summary**

2. Changes in national guidance and legislation impact upon local authority statutory responsibilities in relation to careers guidance. The reduction of three Connexions Personal Advisors is a consequence of that change and need for financial efficiencies.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) Cabinet note the report and contextual information.
  - (b) Members agree a reduction in the budget for 12-19 services of £127,000 for 2012/13, and a corresponding reduction in the level of service as detailed in paragraph 11 subject to approval of the MTFP by Council.

**Reasons**

4. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
  - (a) Changes in national guidance and legislation.
  - (b) Financial efficiencies within the service.

**Murray Rose  
Director of People**

## Background Papers

No background papers were used in the production of this report.

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S17 Crime and Disorder	Service retaining focus on those young people deemed NEET (Not in Employment Education or Training).
Health and Well Being	No direct impact.
Carbon Impact	No impact.
Diversity	No impact.
Wards Affected	All wards.
Groups Affected	Young people 12-19 years.
Budget and Policy Framework	The proposed saving will form part of the MTFP proposed to Council.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Focus on young people who are NEET or 'at risk' of NEET.
Efficiency	Increased targeting of the service to those most vulnerable.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

#### Background

5. The Government announced last year that a National Careers Service would be established to cover all ages from April 2012. This service will be funded through the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and is in recognition that people return to learning or need to re-train at a variety of ages and the approach should be consistent. Alongside this schools were to be made responsible for independent careers advice and guidance for those under 16 years from September 2012.
6. The impact of this is primarily on the Personal Advisers (previously Connexions service) which currently provides impartial careers guidance.
7. Local authorities remain strategically responsible for those 'most vulnerable' including young people deemed as NEET (Not in Employment Education or Training) or those with a disability/special need.

#### Proposal

8. The full proposal covers two financial years. The 2012/13 proposed budget reduction is £127,000 achieved via the reduction of three full time equivalent Personal Advisor posts.
9. The 2013/14 proposal detail will be based on a review of the 12-19 year budgets and level of service, ensuring the statutory minimum service is maintained and services which are most effective in working with the vulnerable young people are maintained. This will be subject of a future report to Cabinet.
10. The change in responsibilities, outlined above, provides the context to the current budget reduction proposal. The reduced service will still fulfil the Authority's responsibilities, as schools and the national careers service assume the universal responsibilities.
11. In line with the Zero Based budget process, this proposal will reduce the service to absolute minimum in line with statutory responsibilities. The exercise has been undertaken using current figures of the young people cohort.

#### Impact

12. The reduction in numbers will result in a prioritisation of work and assumes the new services will provide a full and effective universal service.
13. Concern has been expressed during consultation that the 12-19 year vulnerable cohort is likely to increase due to the broader economic situation. This, however, will require a broader response than the single service could provide and is subject of national and local discussions (see **Appendix 1**).

## **Service Delivery**

14. The focus since establishment of the new model of Early Intervention Teams (May 2011) has been to integrate the working and training of the 12-19 workforce. This will continue to include a 'core training' to all staff with (dependent on professional background) different skills and expertise. This will increase flexibility across the workforce and also result in consistent advice and guidance to vulnerable young people.
15. The LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) have young people's employment as a priority and are actively seeking creative solutions and responses to this situation, via focus groups and actions.

## **Outcome of Consultation**

16. A consultation process is in place, as part of the wider budget process. Issues raised have focussed on the broad employment issues relating to young people and impact of reducing this service, as covered in paragraph 13.