

A Career In Childcare Connexions Personal Advisor (PA)

What is a Connexions Personal Advisor?

A connexions personal advisor is someone who is specially trained to provide advice to young people aged 13 to 19 (and up to aged 25 for people with special needs).

Personal advisors (also called PA's) can help you choose the right career, find a job or get valuable training. PA's can also provide help and support with personal problems, bullying or relationships at school, at home or work.

What does a Connexions Personal Advisor do?

The work involves both the provision of basic information, advice and guidance and more substantial one to one support for vulnerable young people.

Tasks include:

- Working with young people to help them establish their needs;
- Offering the necessary information, advice, guidance or support;
- Helping young people to cope with challenges affecting their ability to participate in learning and work opportunities;
- Working with parents, carers, families and other organisations to support young people;
- Working with schools, colleges, employers and other organisations to discuss issues relevant to young people's needs and to design local courses;
- Managing information so that it meets the needs of young people; and
- Various administration, record keeping and information management tasks.



Much of the work involves direct one-to-one contact with young people, with group work such as giving talks or leading discussions. Some personal advisors specialise in providing intensive, long-term support to a small number of clients facing severe problems, while others work less intensively with larger numbers of people.

All personal advisors are expected to spend some time reviewing and reflecting on their professional practice.

Most connexions advisors work during the day, Monday to Friday, some advisors may need to cover evenings and weekends. The service may offer flexitime, part-time work, job-sharing or work during term-time only.

Advisors could be based in a school, college, connexions centre or connexions one stop shop. The work usually involves local travel, as outreach work is common.

Skills and Abilities

To be an adviser you should:

- Be non-judgmental and able to gain the trust and respect of young people;
- Have excellent communication skills, and the ability to respond sympathetically to young people's problems;
- Be flexible, creative and imaginative in your approach to solving problems;
- Be enthusiastic and committed to helping young people make the most of available opportunities;
- Have patience, flexibility and a sense of humour;
- Be able to work as a team member, and to organise your own workload;



- Be self-critical and willing to adapt your working methods where necessary; and
- Have administration and computer skills.

How do I become a Connexions Personnel Advisor?

Entrants to training should normally be 21 or older and have experience of work with young people. Additionally, the endorsement of a Connexions Partnership is required. A background in careers advice and guidance, youth work, education, youth justice or social work is particularly useful. Recent graduates and adults with experience in other occupations may be recruited.

Fully qualified personal advisors must have a relevant professional qualification, such as careers advice and guidance or youth work at NVQ/SVQ level 4, or equivalent. You would then undertake connexions specific training to work with young people.

All professionals working with children must be physically fit and hold an enhanced certificate of disclosure issued by the criminal records bureau.

**If you require any further information, please telephone
0800 731 1518 or visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk/oldham
or www.oldham.gov.uk/childcare**

