



**HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE IN CROYDON DEVELOP THE SKILLS AND
CONFIDENCE
THEY NEED FOR THE FUTURE**

March 2006, London, *Life Routes*, a national programme to help young people develop essential life skills relaunched at a major conference in London.

Life Routes is managed by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and funded by Nokia as part of their global Make a Connection programme committed to promoting positive youth development at a grass roots level.

Croydon one of the *Life Routes* pilot areas was supported by the programme to help a group of young people develop the skills essential for living and achieving in today's society.

Originating eight years ago the Croydon Oak Avenue Project has supported young people in Croydon through different projects and is currently working closely with the Local Authority Care to develop their programme further. The *Life Routes* programme has enabled the project to set up a 'Life Skills Club' where the opportunity for fun and socialising is combined with group work for developing life skills. Young people are invited to attend evening group work sessions where they are given the opportunity to explore and discuss issues relevant to them, as well as providing them with accurate information in a creative way which helps them make informed decisions and choices in life. Group members are also invited to attend, music workshops with RAP Academy, Summer Schemes and Independence weekends.

The project is marked by examples of great successes including the story of Sonia Garnett – the project's Lead Facilitator. Eight years ago, Sonia was referred to social

services as a young person that was considered as not engaging with any services. Having joined the group in Croydon, she soon found that she was not being instructed but rather invited to share her views and opinions and learnt to explore issues that affected her life at that time. Sonia quickly became a regular group member and with her commitment growing over time, she began facilitating the sessions and eventually securing a job within the project.

Working within schools and communities, *Life Routes* aims to help young people develop the skills and confidence they need to achieve the five outcomes for children which has been laid out in the government's Every Child Matters strategy. This project focuses on self-confidence and responsibility; problem solving and communication; team work and respect for others.

The conference marked the launch of the new *Life Routes* resource for those working with young people most in need of guidance in a range of out of school settings. It offers practical ideas for working with 13 to 16-year-olds to help them develop the skills essential for living and achieving in today's society. The resource builds on the success of the Make a Connection schools programme which has helped over 27,000 children and trained over 1000 teachers in the UK since its launch.

“All young people need to learn skills to help them negotiate and manage everyday challenges,” explained Sophie Wood, Project Manager at NCB. “This is especially true for young people with behavioural or emotional difficulties and those who have experienced traumatic events in their lives and are less resilient as a result. By encouraging young people to develop life skills, we help them to resist negative influences and have the confidence to make informed choices. These skills can have a major influence on their long-term outcomes.”

Mark Squires, Head of Communications at Nokia UK, added: “In the high pressure world we live in, we can sometimes overlook the need for young people to be given the self-confidence and life skills to face the day-to-day physical and emotional pressures that are a normal part of growing up. *Life Routes* is about helping them to maximise their potential and connect in richer ways with others.”

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For more information about this release please contact:

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Notes for editors:

- 1) Life Routes is a project to promote the learning of life skills in schools and community settings. The project is managed by the National Children's Bureau and funded by Nokia.
- 2) Life Routes aims to help young people achieve the five national outcomes outlined in the government's Every Child Matters strategy. These are to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well-being.
- 3) Nokia funds Life Routes in the UK as part of the global Make A Connection programme. The programme aims to help young people learn and apply personal, social and academic skills to real life through practice in working with others, making decisions, exercising good judgement, solving problems and setting and achieving goals.
- 4) NCB promotes the voices, interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives. As an umbrella body for the children's sector in England and Northern Ireland, we provide essential information on policy, research and best practice for our members and other partners. For more information visit www.ncb.org.uk
- 5) Nokia is a Gold member of NCB's Corporate Partner Programme. For more information about how NCB works in partnership with the business community email corporatepartner@ncb.org.uk