Providing Integrated Support for Pupil Attendance, Participation and Retention in Education

Report of the Consultation for the National Educational Welfare Board

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1   Introduction

This report presents the findings of a consultation process undertaken by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) from June 2011 - December 2011 on the integration of the Education Welfare Service (EWS), the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) and the School Completion Programme (SCP). This consultation was undertaken by an external company, SMCI Associates (SMCIA[1]). The consultation work was overseen by a working group of the Integrated Management Team (IMT) at NEWB.

1.1   Background

Through the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) Programme the Department of Education and Skills provides additional support for those children and young people most at risk of educational disadvantage. These supports include:

- The Home, School, Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL), whose remit is to strengthen links between families, schools and communities.
- The School Completion Programme (SCP) which provides a range of in-school, after school, out-of-school and holiday time supports to children at risk of leaving school early.
- The Education Welfare Service (EWS) which has statutory responsibility for addressing school attendance.

In 2009, The Department of Education and Skills extended the remit of the NEWB to bring together the three services to provide an integrated support service in DEIS schools. The integrated service aims to support children and young people, families and schools to achieve the best possible educational outcomes for each child and young person. The service will be designed and structured to deliver on the theme of 'One Child, One Team, One Plan – maximising student attendance, participation and retention.'

In June 2011, the functions of the National Educational Welfare Board transferred to the newly established Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

1.2   The consultation process

The objective of this consultation was to ensure that the implementation of the NEWB integrated service is informed by the perspectives of the people who deliver the service, and the children, young people and families who are supported by the service. This 2011 consultation on the integrated service is a key way that the voices of the staff and management of the three services, school staff, parents/guardians, children and young people and other relevant stakeholders have been heard by the NEWB. The consultation described here was carried out in three phases in 2011:

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[1] See www.smciassociates.com

Phase 1   September– October 2011

An on-line questionnaire was distributed to all the key stakeholders noted above. This was followed by analysis of key findings to inform the consultation themes for Phase 2.

Phase 2   November 2011

A series of consultation workshops were provided for staff and management of the services and schools; and a series of small group discussions with children, young people and their parents/guardians were also provided. These workshops and discussion groups considered key themes arising from the questionnaire analysis.

Phase 3   December 2011- January 2012

The findings from Phase 1 and 2 were analysed and are presented in this report. Each element of the consultation was designed to inform the next phase. This is followed through in the presentation of the report which is structured as follows:

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	The consultation approach and method
Chapters 3-10	The key findings:

	Chapter 3	What is working well at present
	Chapter 4	Scope for the integrated service to strengthen attendance, participation and retention
	Chapter 5	Strengthening the network of support
	Chapter 6	Vision for the future of the integrated service
	Chapter 7	Challenges in developing an integrated service
	Chapter 8	Supporting staff and managers to provide an integrated service
	Chapter 9	The consultation workshops
	Chapter 10	The consultation with children, young people and parents/guardians

Chapter 11	Conclusions
Chapter 12	Recommendations

2   The consultation approach and method

This chapter describes the consultation approach and method. It covers the following topics:

Section 2.1   The questionnaire consultation
Section 2.2   The consultation workshops
Section 2.3   The consultation with children, young people and their families
Section 2.4   The consultation process – key messages for the NEWB.

2.1   The questionnaire consultation

2.1.1   Dissemination of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was drafted by a working group from the Integrated Management Team (IMT) at the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), with support from SMCIA. SMCIA developed the questionnaire for web-based dissemination and completion. See the questionnaire in Appendix 1.

NEWB disseminated a postal invitation to complete the consultation questionnaire, providing details of how to access it, and a briefing paper on the integrated service. The letter and briefing paper were posted to all staff and managers in the three NEWB support services: the Educational Welfare Service (EWS), School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL); DEIS Schools and non-DEIS Schools with SCP[2]. A total of 1323 consultation questionnaires were distributed.

The questionnaire was provided on the NEWB website from Friday 16th September, 2011 and closed on Friday 14th October, 2011. A paper version of the questionnaire was available on request. Twenty five questionnaire respondents used this option. SMCIA provided telephone and email support to questionnaire respondents on completion of the questionnaire.

2.1.2   Response rates

There were 769 responses to the questionnaire, providing an overall response rate of 58.1%. This gives a high level of validity to the findings.

Over half of SCP (54%, 135 responses) staff responded[3]; two thirds of HSCL co-ordinators (68.2%, 275 responses) and over three quarters of the EWS (87.1%, 61 responses) and just under one quarter of school respondents (24.2%, 145 responses). See Table 1 below.

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[2] The questionnaire was sent to principals of DEIS and non-DEIS schools with SCP but other staff may also have completed the questionnaire.

[3] School Completion Programme: SCP sample included all SCP Chairpersons. As the majority of SCP Chairpersons are school principals (SCP database, 2012), it is likely that their response is located in the 'school' category below. 101 out of 135 responses in the SCP category were from SCP Local Co-Ordinators, representing a response rate of 81%.

Table 1: Overall response rates to the questionnaire by service

	No of responses	% of overall number of responses	Target numbers for each service	% of target numbers for each service
Education Welfare Service	61	7.9%	70	87.1%
Home/School/Community Liaison	275	35.8%	403	68.2%
School Completion Programme	135	17.6%	250	54.0%
School	145	18.9%	600	24.2%
Other	10	1.3%	n/a	n/a
Role not described	143	18.6%	n/a	n/a
Total number of respondents	**769**	**100%**	**1323**	**58.1%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point[4])

2.1.3 Analysis

The questionnaire asked staff in the services and schools to respond to open questions to ensure the most comprehensive feedback. The consultation team (SMCI Associates) developed a detailed coding framework from the responses to each question which prompted the key headline and sub-themes throughout this report. As the analysis developed, additional sub-themes were prompted. This way of developing the framework ensured it was responsive to the information provided by questionnaire respondents, and that key themes were validly captured.

Some individual respondents provided extended answers and some responses were group responses. Each discrete point made in a response was coded in order to capture as much data as possible; consequently the total number of responses to each question varies.

The analysis captures the richness of the responses to the questionnaire by supporting the findings with quotations. The quotations are selected from the responses to the questions being analysed and are used to illuminate the key points. The respondents are identified by service only.

The analysis of the 769 questionnaires was completed within a three week period and a summary of the findings was circulated to the IMT working group. The IMT, with support from SMCIA, used the summary findings of the questionnaire consultation to structure the consultation workshop programme, in particular, to prepare key topics for the workshop group discussions. In this way the Phase 2 consultation built on the findings from Phase 1.

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[4] This rounding process means that rounded totals may not always add up to precisely 100%, i.e. where a precise figure is 7.873%, and it is rounded up to the nearest decimal place, it is given here as 7.9%. This leaves 0.027% (7.9 minus 7.873), which means that the overall total adds up to 100% minus 0.027%. Cumulatively, this can result in percentage totals of 99% - 100%. See parliamentary guidance on rounding: www. parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN04443.pdf

2.2 Consultation workshops

The consultation workshops were designed to engage stakeholders in considering the headline findings of the questionnaire consultation, and provide further qualitative data on strengthening prevention, effective intervention and key practical actions for the NEWB to take in implementing the integrated service.

A series of five half-day regional consultation workshops was held during November 2011. See Table 2 below. The workshops were for staff working in the SCP, HSCL, EWS, school principals and staff, Boards of Management of DEIS schools, and non DEIS schools with SCP. A total of 513 participants attended the workshops. (See Table 3 below). This was a first opportunity for the services and schools to meet to discuss the integration process at a national level.

NEWB staff organised the five venues and the registration of participants; and a NEWB manager attended each event to deliver an introductory presentation. SMCIA prepared the workshop programme and materials, facilitated each workshop, presented an overview of the analysis from the questionnaires and organised the note-taking for the group discussions. Please see the workshop programme and materials in Appendix 2 and 3.

Table 2: Consultation workshops: dates, locations and participants

Workshop locations and dates	HSCL	SCP	EWS	Schools	Other	Total
Charleville, 15th November, 2011	43	26	13	25	5	112
Portlaoise, 16th November, 2011	32	32	6	20	0	90
Drumcondra, 17th November, 2011	47	23	11	22	6	109
Tallaght, 22nd November, 2011	58	31	9	29	5	132
Cavan, 23rd November, 2011	28	19	8	14	1	70
Total number of participants	**208**	**131**	**47**	**110**	**17**	**513**

Source: SMCIA NEWB Workshop Consultation 2011

Table 3: Overall workshop participation by service

Service	No of workshops participants	% of total workshop participants
Educational Welfare Service	47	9.2%
Home School Community Liaison	208	40.5%
School Completion Programme	131	25.5%
Schools	110	21.4%
Other/did not answer	17	3.3%
Totals	**513**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

Participants were assigned to small groups which combined staff from across the three services and schools. Following the presentation of summary findings from the questionnaire consultation by SMCIA, each group was asked to address two key questions drawn from the questionnaire analysis and defined by the NEWB Integration Management Team (see appendix 3 for details of group work questions):

1. Strengthening prevention: How do we use the collective resources and skills of school staff and the three services in an integrated way to help all pupils to attend, participate and stay in school?
2. Effective intervention with individual pupils experiencing difficulty: How do we work in teams to implement 'One Child, One Team, One Plan'? What would this mean for local practice?

The key points from each small group discussion and the plenary discussions were recorded and analysed thematically.

2.3 Consultation with children, young people and their families

The consultation included a series of focused discussion groups with children, young people and parents/guardians. These discussion groups were designed to hear directly from children, young people and parents/guardians about the enablers and barriers that pupils faced in attending or participating in school and the supports that had worked well for them. The discussion groups were held as the last element of the consultation so that the key themes from the questionnaire and the consultation workshops could be drawn out in these discussions.

The groups included the users of the three strands of the NEWB service, some who had direct experience of the services and others who were potential NEWB service users.

The groups were convened by NEWB managers and supported by the relevant group worker/leader. The discussions were facilitated and recorded[5] by SMCIA and held in four locations: Dublin, Clonmel, Cork and Waterford. A total of 84 people participated in the groups: 25 parents/guardians and 59 children and young people. The group profiles are outlined in Table 4 below. Groups asked not to be identified by name or school/project.

SMCIA circulated guidance notes for group leaders, parental consent forms and information sheets to the groups in advance (see appendix 4, 5, 6 and 7). This briefing material outlined the purpose of the discussion group and how it would link to the wider consultation. Participants were also given assurances around confidentiality. The discussion groups took the form of an open conversation where key topics were introduced and notes taken by the facilitator. Discussions lasted from about 30 minutes for younger groups to 90 minutes for the groups with parent/guardians. The participants discussed the problems they faced in relation to school attendance and participation, and the supports that had worked well for them.

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[5] Using paper notes with not audio or video recording

Table 4: Consultation with children, young people and their families – group profiles

Composition of groups	Type of group
9 women all of whom had children of school age	A parent group supported by an HSCL Co-ordinator.
5 young men and 2 young women aged 16 to 18	Early School Leavers education project. All from DEIS schools.
1 young man and 1 young woman	Young people with experience of the care system.
6 young men aged 16-18 (5th and 6th year pupils)	A post-primary age group being supported to remain in school by the SCP.(This school has no HSCL as it has lost its DEIS status.)
4 women – their 6 primary age children joined the group later	A parent group, all of whom had/have intensive support from the HSCL coordinator with support from EWS and SCP as appropriate.
7 girls around 12 years old	A youth project, comprising young people who have been referred/helped by HSCL to access the activities provided.
2 young women and 4 young men newly arrived in Ireland (mixed ages)	A homework support group, concentrating mainly on helping new entrants to Ireland access the school curriculum, through hands-on help with homework; these young people were referred by SCP and HSCL.
3 girls and 4 boys between the ages of 7 and 12	A primary age after-schools activity group, which supports children through a variety of games/activities; this group works very closely with the HSCL cluster, both to target and to provide appropriate activities.
12 women all with school age children	A parent group who were participating in a personal development course with a view to returning to education and/or to the work force supported by HSCL.
6 young women and 4 young men aged 14 to 16	A post-primary age group being supported by the SCP.
4 boys and 4 girls primary age	A primary age group being supported by the SCP.

Source: NEWB Regional Managers

2.4   The consultation process: key messages for the NEWB

- There was a strong response and engagement with the three elements of the consultation - the questionnaire, the workshop consultations and the discussion groups with children, young people and families.

- All three NEWB services and schools were well represented in the questionnaire responses and the overall return of 769 completed questionnaires (58% response rate) gives strength and reliability to the findings.

- All three services and schools were well represented in the workshops with 513 participants from across the regions. This was the first opportunity for the services and schools to discuss the integration process away from the day to day work in their own area. There was enthusiastic take up of places and engagement with the workshop programme, particularly the round table format discussions.

- The focused discussion groups included children, young people and parents/guardians who may have accessed – or would benefit from – NEWB services. These groups also engaged very positively with the discussions and were keen to share their experiences of using the services.

- Overall the very positive engagement with the consultation process demonstrates to NEWB there is good engagement with the integration process and enthusiasm from staff and managers to take part in and inform the implementation of the integrated service.

3   What is working well at present?

This chapter provides the analysis of the responses to the following questions in the questionnaire consultation:

- Please give us examples of what is working well within any of the services.
- Please give us examples of what is working well collaboratively amongst the EWS, HSCL, SCP.

The findings are presented in the following sections:

Section 3.1   What is working well in the EWS?
Section 3.2   What is working well in the HSCL?
Section 3.3   What is working well in the SCP?
Section 3.4   What is working well collaboratively across the services?
Section 3.5   What is working well? – key messages for the NEWB.

All questionnaire respondents were asked to comment on each of the services. The analysis highlights the key points made about each service in an overview of responses. The main areas identified by respondents as working well for each service are then analysed in more detail with respondent comments and quotations used to illustrate key points.

3.1   What is working well in the Educational Welfare Service?

Questionnaire respondents identified the approach to attendance (69.8%, 463 of all responses), as the key aspect of EWS which is working well, including joint work on attendance issues across the three NEWB services. Another key strength of the EWS is seen as working with families (19.5%, 129 responses) in particular engaging parents/guardians on attendance and using sanctions in attendance work. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: What is working well in the EWS: overview of responses
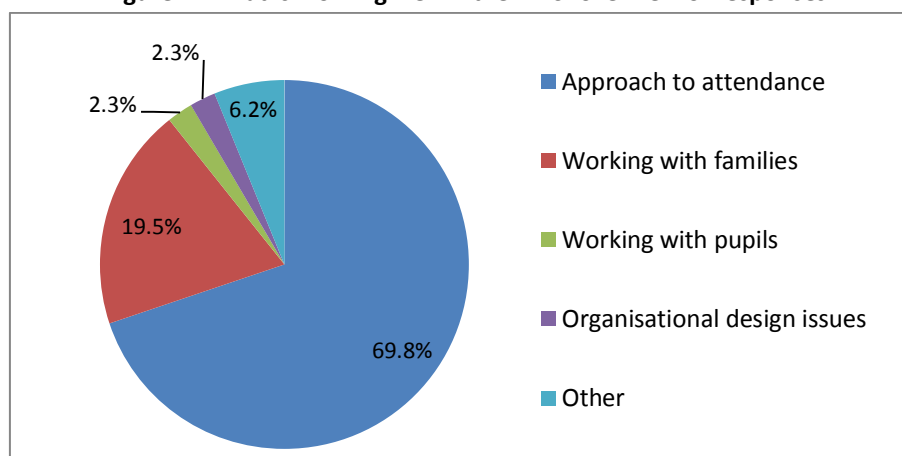
	Total number of responses	% of overall responses
Approach to attendance	463	69.8%
Working with families	129	19.5%
Working with pupils	15	2.3%
Organisational design issues	15	2.3%
Other	41	6.2%
Totals	**663**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

3.1.1   Approach to attendance (69.8%, 463 responses)

The key areas that questionnaire respondents believed are working well are the approach the EWS adopts to attendance (35.6%, 236 responses), including by joint work across the three services (18.6%, 123 responses) and schools (6.6%, 44 responses) on attendance. See Table 5 below.

Table 5: What is working well in the EWS: breakdown of approach to attendance responses

	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Approach to attendance	236	35.6%
Joint work across the 3 services	123	18.6%
Work with schools	44	6.6%
Interagency working	30	4.5%
Excluded pupils	26	3.9%
Retention	4	0.6%
Totals	**463**	**69.8%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

3.1.1.1   What do respondents value about the EWS approach to attendance? (35.6%, 236 responses)

Questionnaire respondents identified the following strengths of the EWS approach to attendance:

- The EWS provides a structured approach to attendance through regular and consistent monitoring of children's attendance, tracking and follow up with targeted pupils/families, participation in targeted attendance groups in school and participation in monthly cluster meetings.

  o *There is a timely follow-up from the EWS in relation to pupil absences and attendance. The transfer from primary to post-primary has improved greatly, due to the EWS (School respondent).*

- The EWS provides a proactive and supportive approach to work on attendance by supporting pupils in advance of attendance issues becoming a concern. This includes visiting schools, classes and assemblies to support attendance; participation in interagency meetings with schools to monitor attendance; using a pre-referral checklist system; educational welfare case conferences and meetings with parents and children, including home visits.

- o *Supporting/advising school personnel in advance of attendance becoming a legal issue, supporting pupils in advance of attendance issues becoming a concern (SCP respondent).*
- o *When the EWO has an attendance issue with a student they contact the school and the HSCL can go out and visit the home and liaise between the home, school, and EWO. We work together to resolve the situation in a positive manner (HSCL respondent).*
- o *We have good access and communication with EWO even though she is the only one in the county. We speak regularly and do joint parent meetings (SCP Respondent).*

- The EWS fulfils a statutory duty to provide formal support for attendance by ensuring that parents understand their legal obligations; it also has a duty to enforce the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 through the legal/courts system. EWS supports those children and young people out of school, those expelled and young people in care to access school places.

  - o *Follow up on non-attendance to ensure parents are aware of the importance of children attending school and that they are informed of the stipulations in place for non-attendance and also how children are monitored re attendance and retention. The EWO supports parents and children who find difficulty in accessing school places (HSCL respondent).*

3.1.1.2 What do respondents value about EWS joint working across the three services and schools'? (25.2%, 167 responses)

Respondents considered that the EWS links effectively with the other services and schools: to provide advice, support and information, particularly on legal issues; to work together in monthly meetings; to work together in care teams; to discuss and agree how to deal with target families and other preventative work.

  - o *This is an excellent service with emphasis on welfare, monthly meetings in schools with the EWO who is excellent, works very collaboratively with SCP, HSCL and formal school structure, even though this is a statutory body with the ability to prosecute parents re non-attendance the EWS feels more about supporting parents/school/SCP to engage student effectively in school (SCP respondent).*

3.1.2 Working with families (20.4%, 129 responses)

Respondents noted that the EWS works well with families by engaging parents/guardians on attendance issues and by using sanctions in attendance work. A small number of responses said the EWS is effective in engaging parents/guardians on home visits. Some of these included joint visits with HSCL staff.

  - o *We have ….. personal, regular contact with the Educational Welfare officer which allows her to know the circumstances of our pupils and build a relationship with the families where attendance is an issue (School respondent).*

3.2   What is working well in the Home School Community Liaison Scheme?

Questionnaire respondents identified working with families (83.4%, 876 responses) as a key aspect of the HSCL which is working well, especially engaging parents/guardians in home visits and in their own education and personal development. A second identified strength is collaborative work with the other services (10.2%, 107 responses), in particular in relation to attendance, retention and interagency working. See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: What is working well in HSCL: overview of responses
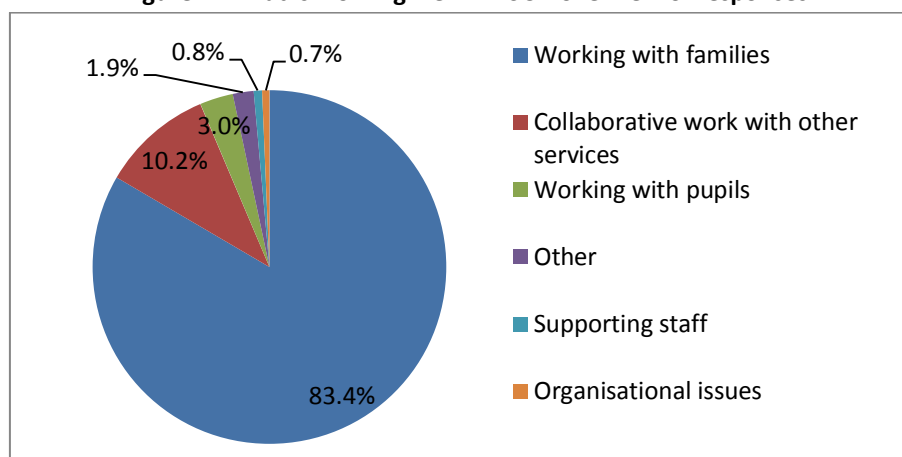
	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Working with families	876	83.4%
Collaborative work with other services	107	10.2%
Working with pupils	32	3.0%
Supporting staff	8	0.8%
Organisational design issues	7	0.7%
Other	20	1.9%
Totals	**1050**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

3.2.1   Working with families (83.4%, 876 responses)

The key areas of working with families that questionnaire respondents identified as working well are engaging parents/guardians through home visits (50.9%, 534 responses) and engaging parents/guardians in education and personal development programmes (23.5%, 247 responses). See Table 6 below.

Table 6: What is working well in the HSCL: breakdown of working with families responses

	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Engaging parents/guardians in home visits	534	50.9%
Engaging parents/guardians in education	247	23.5%
Engaging parents/guardians on attendance	35	3.3%
Targeted work with families in need	31	3.0%
Signposting to other services	29	2.8%
Totals	**876**	**83.4%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

3.2.1.1 What do respondents value about the work of the HSCL in engaging parents through home visits? (50.9%, 534 responses)

All services noted the importance of engaging parents/guardians through home visits. Respondents considered that:

- Home visits contribute to building effective two-way communication links between the school and parents.
- Home visits are key to fostering good relationships between schools and marginalised families and to strengthening the links between home, school and community.
- Increased contact with parents fosters a more positive parental attitude to school and learning which in turn leads to increased parental engagement. Parents are encouraged and supported to help their children with their school work.
- Home visits help to identify and target families at risk and support families before a problem develops. They can help to identify family situations that may not otherwise come to light and can alert the school to these.
- Home visits have a positive influence on the pupil through supporting homework, encouragement to attend and stay in school, and support for improved behaviour. Respondents noted the importance of this in supporting teenage parents to stay in education.

> o *A vital link between school and homes especially with families in crisis... The support for parents is essential so that students don't fall out of school for reasons of poverty etc. The HSCL teacher is out in contact with families non-stop. This is one of the most vital links in the school as it crosses all boundaries in working with management, Year Heads, SCP, Care team, parent association, and many local committees building "connectedness" (School respondent).*
>
> o *Excellent collaboration with all partners in education, HSCL plays vital role in linking home and school. Allows for early identification of issues and appropriate interventions relating to attendance, attainment and participation (School respondent).*
>
> o *Engagement with parents; breaking down barriers between home and school; being that very important link; enhancing parents' understanding of second level education thereby removing the mystique, and for the more marginalised, removing the inbuilt fear and the perception that Leaving Cert is outside of their realm/their world (HSCL respondent).*

3.2.1.2 What do respondents value about the work of HSCL in engaging with parents in school and education? (23.5%, 247 responses)

Questionnaire respondents noted the importance of the work of the HSCL in stimulating greater involvement of parents in the life of the school – through greater parental participation in-school and after-school activities, in parents' evenings and in planning and decision making through parent associations. This was seen as including:

- Involvement of parents in the life of the school and making systems more inclusive:
  - o Involvement of parents in parent activities in the school.
  - o Involvement of parents in class/school activities.
- Provision of adult education/learning opportunities:
  - o Provision of literacy and numeracy courses.

- Delivery of parenting support courses.
- Delivery of evidence-based parenting programmes.
- Homework support classes.
- Back to education courses (Junior Cert, Leaving Cert, FETAC Level 2-5).
- Maths for Fun.
- Family literacy programmes.

Questionnaire respondents also considered that the engagement of parents in their own education and lifelong learning is important.

> o *Getting parents to buy into adult education for themselves e.g. adult literacy programme, affects parents' understanding and attitude towards their children's attendance. It takes a lot of preliminary work to get parents who have not succeeded in school themselves to take the leap of faith necessary to try education again for themselves but it pays dividends for their children (School respondent).*

3.3   What is working well in the School Completion Programme?

Questionnaire respondents identified working with pupils (71.1%, 586 responses) as the key aspect of SCP which is working well, in particular the provision of SCP support services including one-to-one support and targeted work with pupils at risk. A second identified strength is collaboration with the other NEWB services (20.5% 169 responses), especially relating to attendance and retention. See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: What is working well in SCP: overview of responses

	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Working with pupils	586	71.0%
Collaboration with other services	169	20.5 %
Working with families	42	5.1%
Organisational design issues	15	1.8%
Other	13	1.6%
Totals	**825**	**100%**
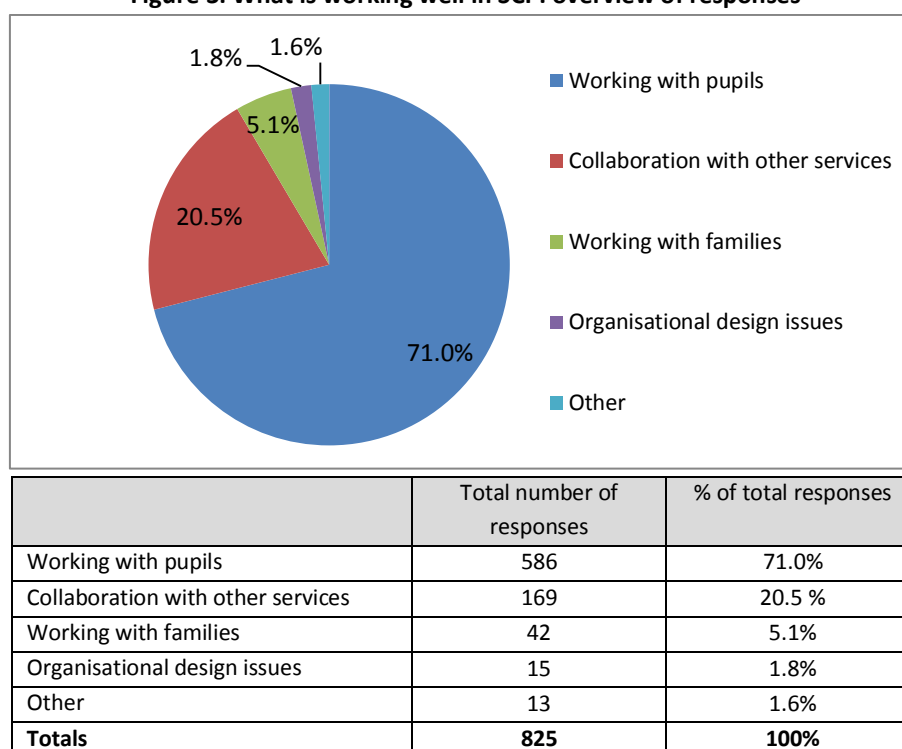
SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

3.3.1 Working with pupils (71%, 586 responses)

The key areas of working with pupils that questionnaire respondents identified as working well are: the provision of SCP support services for pupils (42.4%, 350 responses); early identification of young people at risk (15.4 %, 127 responses) and provision of one-to-one supports (10.4%, 86 responses). See Table 7 below.

Table 7: What is working well in the SCP: breakdown of working with pupils responses

	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Provision of SCP support services	350	42.4%
Early identification of pupils at risk	127	15.4%
Provision of one-to one support	86	10.4%
Making school a positive experience	16	1.9%
Other	7	0.8%
Totals	**586**	**71%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

3.3.1.1 What do respondents value about the provision of SCP support services? (42.4%, 350 responses)

Respondents list a wide range of services including supports provided in school, after school out-of-school and in holiday settings. These include:
- Homework clubs.
- Breakfast clubs.
- School clubs and activities e.g. arts, drama and music.
- Summer camps and holiday programmes.
- Specific behaviour programmes.
- After schools clubs.
- Outreach learning for life programme in collaboration with local firms.
- Personal development programmes in schools.
- Youth projects.
- Funding for a range of activities.

3.3.1.2 What do respondents value about SCP work on early identification of pupils at risk? (15.4%, 127 responses)

Another aspect of the SCP which questionnaire respondents see as working well is the early identification of those children and young people at risk of non-completion. This enables individualised supports to be put in place and progress monitored.

> o *The SCP has worked very well where it has specifically targeted a student, provided support (sometimes in very creative ways) followed through on a student's progress (EWS respondent).*

3.3.1.3 What do respondents value in the SCP 'provision of one-to-one support? (10.4%, 86 responses)

Responses noted the effectiveness of the range of SCP interventions such as personal development programmes in schools. These are designed to help those at most risk of non-completion in a one-to-one situation.

> o *Supports in place for individual children to get them over a difficult patch or to help them make sense of their lives e.g. Rainbows, Art Therapy, Play Therapy (School respondent).*

3.4   What is working well collaboratively across the services?

Questionnaire respondents were asked to give their views on what is working well collaboratively across the three services. Individual services suggest that they are working together effectively and many respondents repeated these points in their responses to this section. The key areas of effective collaboration identified by questionnaire respondents are presented in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: What is working well collaboratively: overview of responses
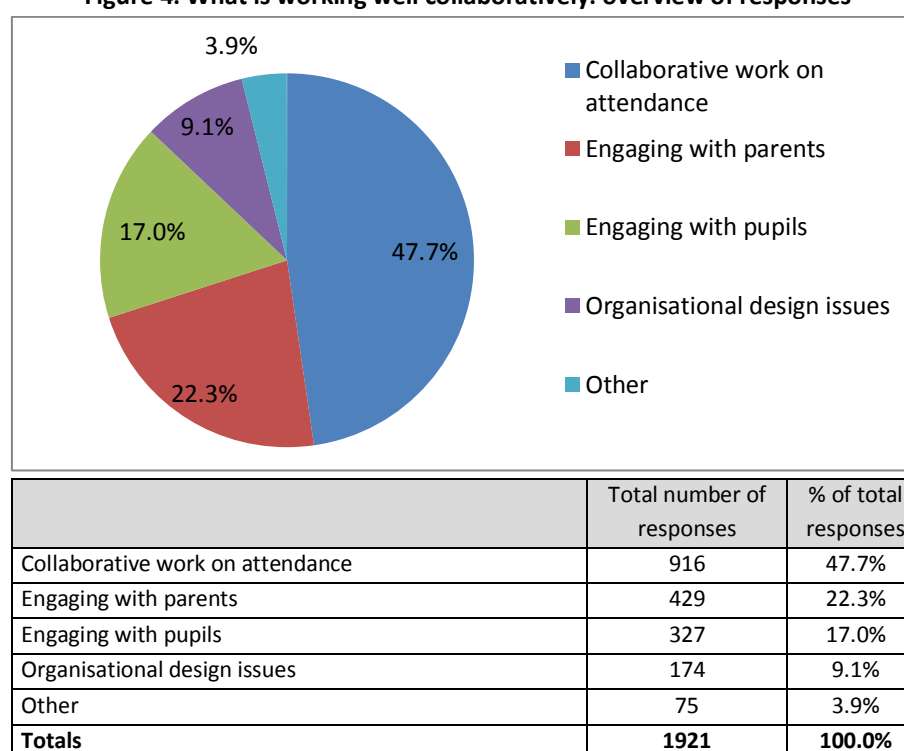
	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Collaborative work on attendance	916	47.7%
Engaging with parents	429	22.3%
Engaging with pupils	327	17.0%
Organisational design issues	174	9.1%
Other	75	3.9%
Totals	**1921**	**100.0%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

Respondents noted collaborative working on attendance as a key area that is working well (47.7%, 916 responses). This includes effective collaborative work across the three agencies and with schools. Respondents also noted work with excluded pupils and interagency working. Respondents stressed the positive impact of regular meetings on collaborative working between the services and with schools. Respondents suggested these are an effective mechanism for ensuring effective collaboration and a communication channel to share knowledge and information.

- *Formal attendance meetings which take place in all of the SCP schools in the cluster and involve the SCP, HSCL, EWS, Principal/Deputy Principal and the Juvenile Liaison Officer in some schools (SCP respondent).*
- *Meetings with school management and SCP take place formally on a weekly basis- informally, much more often. Often these meetings are to pre-empt/ monitor student progress/ difficulties and discuss best course of action. This could include student/ parental input or not. A lot of this information is then fed back to the EWS (Respondent not identified).*

The second key area of collaborative working which respondents identified was engaging with parents (22.3%, 429 responses). This was seen particularly as engaging parents on attendance issues through home visits and engaging them in their children's education and in their own education through courses. Also working well was targeted work with families in need.

- *Targeting in each school, together with the HSCL and SCP co-ordinator, in conjunction with Principals, allow targeting and identification of students and families at risk of educational disadvantage (HSCL respondent).*
- *Inter-agency representation and participation on School Completion Programme Steering Committee by statutory, voluntary and community Agencies (Respondent not identified).*

Respondents also identified effective collaborative work on engaging with pupils through a range of activities and initiatives and collaborative work targeting pupils and families in need.

- *EWO, SCP and HSCL monthly meetings in schools addressing collaboratively the needs of students at high risk of early school leaving (SCP programme).*
- *Regular meetings between all three services to discuss targeted students and put plans in place (SCP respondent).*

3.5   What is working well? Key messages for the NEWB

- The questionnaire consultation explored what is working well in order to establish how the integration process might build on existing good practice. The responses showed a consistent and positive view of the strengths of each service, with collaboration being seen as a strength across NEWB services. This provides an important base of mutual respect and trust on which to build the integrated service. It also provides a strong base from which to develop and strengthen what the services already do well. Stakeholders want to build on what services currently do well, and to maintain the strengths of each service, as roles and responsibilities within the integrated service are developed.

- The approach to addressing attendance is seen as the strongest aspect of the Educational Welfare Service. A key feature is the structured approach that the service adopts to casework with children and families. Regular and timely follow-up of children with problem attendance is a strength. The support EWS provides for prevention work by schools and colleagues in HSCL and SCP is seen as a valuable aid to promoting attendance. The statutory role is seen as very significant, and the access to sanctions when all else has failed.

- The work to engage parents/guardians is seen as the strongest aspect of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme. The work done by HSCL with families is seen as addressing several key barriers to children's outcomes. The core work of engaging with parents through home visits strengthens parental engagement, opens channels of communication with school and builds trust and relationships. Parental involvement in their own learning enables parents to support their children's learning in a variety of ways. The work has a strong preventive aspect in enabling early identification of issues relating to attendance, participation and retention.

- Work with pupils is seen as the strongest aspect of the School Completion Programme; in particular the provision of SCP support services, including the early identification of pupils at risk, and the provision of one-to-one support. The SCP's work with pupils is seen as hugely positive direct support to individual students. The wide ranging supports can address aspects of children's lives, their behaviour, their learning and personal development. These supports can help in an on-going way or at critical times in a child's life.

- Respondents note that there is already a high level of collaboration among the three services and with school teams. There was a particular focus on the worth of regular, formal meetings to exchange information, plan interventions, and monitor children's progress.

4 Scope for the integrated service to strengthen attendance, participation and retention

The questionnaire consultation asked respondents to consider how an integrated service could best help pupils maximise school attendance, participation and retention. Questions[6] focused on four approaches to maximising pupil attendance, participation and retention:

- Opportunities for the integrated service of EWS, HSCL and SCP to work collaboratively to maximise pupil attendance, participation and retention.
- Opportunities for the integrated service to build teamwork with members of school staff to maximise pupil attendance, participation and retention.
- Opportunities for the integrated service to enhance meaningful and respectful collaboration with pupils and their parents/guardians to maximise attendance, participation and retention.
- Scope for strengthening prevention by the integrated service to support schools to help pupils maximise school attendance, participation and retention.

This chapter provides the analysis of the responses to the consultation question in the following sections:

Section 4.1   Opportunities for collaboration across the EWS, HSCL and SCP

Section 4.2   Opportunities for the integrated service to collaborate with schools

Section 4.3   Opportunities for the integrated service to collaborate with pupils and their parents/guardians

Section 4.4   The scope for the integrated service to strengthen attendance, participation and retention: key messages for the NEWB.

4.1 Opportunities for collaboration across the EWS, HSCL and SCP

The consultation questionnaire asked respondents to identify opportunities for an integrated service of EWS, HSCL and SCP to work collaboratively to maximise pupil attendance, participation and retention.

Respondents emphasised that there is scope for developing teamwork, with 59% (607) responses saying there are further opportunities for the integrated service to work collaboratively to maximise pupil attendance and participation, in particular by having regular meetings. See Figure 5 below. Respondents also noted other opportunities related to organisational design, closer work with families, and supporting staff.

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[6] See appendix 1 for consultation questionnaire.

Figure 5: Opportunities for EWS/HSCL/SCP to work collaboratively: overview of responses

	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Closer collaboration/teamwork	607	59.0%
Organisation design issues	202	19.6%
Closer working with families	94	9.1%
Supporting staff	57	5.5%
Closer working with pupils	39	3.8%
Other	30	2.9%
Totals	**1029**	**100%**
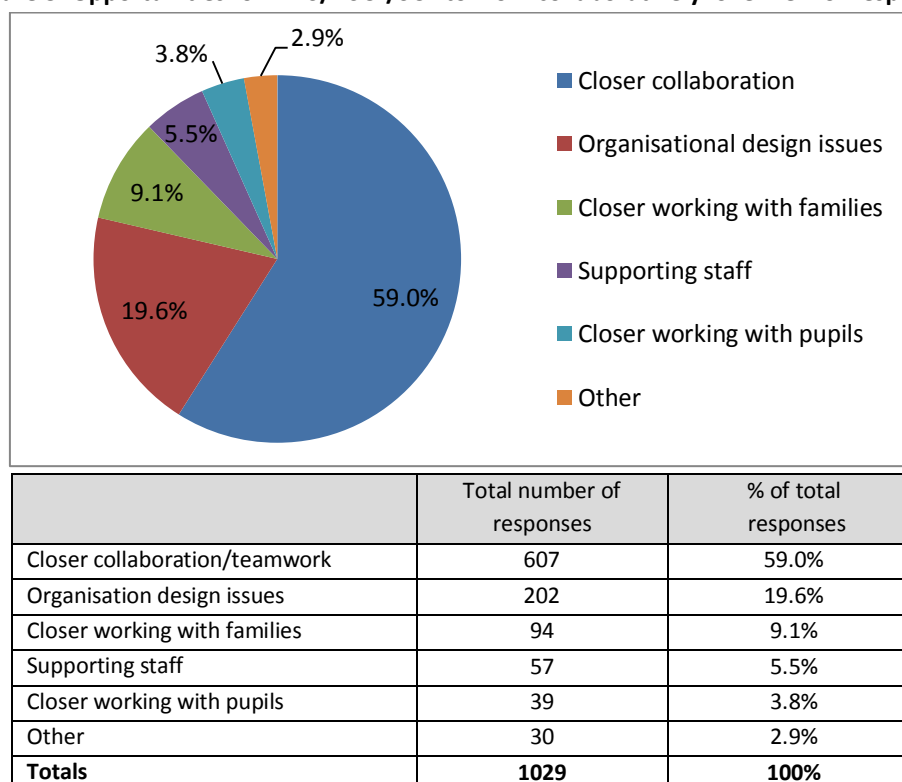
SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

Of the 607 responses identifying scope for closer collaboration, just under a quarter (23.8%, 245 responses) identified opportunities for a regular formal schedule of meetings. Respondents suggested that these could be electronic meetings or virtual meetings, and could also include ad hoc meetings but there was an emphasis on the importance of meeting regularly.

Respondents felt that such meetings could provide a working structure to:
- Plan and deliver attendance, participation and retention strategies.
- Plan for the needs of targeted individual pupils and their families.
- Track and monitor progress on individual cases as well as progress on attendance strategies.
- Share information and knowledge including local knowledge.
- Help decide which interventions are most appropriate for individual children and families.
- Avoid duplication of work which wastes resources and creates confusion for pupils and families.

> o *The 3 services need to meet regularly particularly at start of school year to plan/set targets/discuss target families/develop plans for future development of support structures. The passing of information between the 3 services needs to be developed (HSCL respondent).*
> o *Regular team meetings to discuss children and their progress and agree to delegate responsibility for the child/family to one agency depending on the needs (HSCL respondent).*
> o *Working as teams, with clarity of purpose, training together, communication between service managers (on the ground communication with them). Clarity being given to schools about how we can work with them (EWS respondent).*

4.2 Opportunities for the integrated service to enhance collaboration with schools

The consultation questionnaire asked respondents to identify opportunities for an integrated service to build teamwork with members of school staff to maximise pupil attendance, participation and retention.

Almost three quarters of identified opportunities (73.4%, 730 responses) related to opportunities for the integrated service to build closer collaboration with schools. Other opportunities related to supporting staff (8%, 80 responses), organisational design (7.6%, 76 responses) and working with pupils (4.9%, 49 responses). See Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Opportunities for an integrated service to work collaboratively with school staff: overview of responses

	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Closer collaboration	730	73.4%
Supporting staff	80	8.0%
Organisation design issues	76	7.6%
Closer working with pupils	49	4.9%
Closer working with families	31	3.1%
Other	29	2.9%
Totals	**995**	**100%**
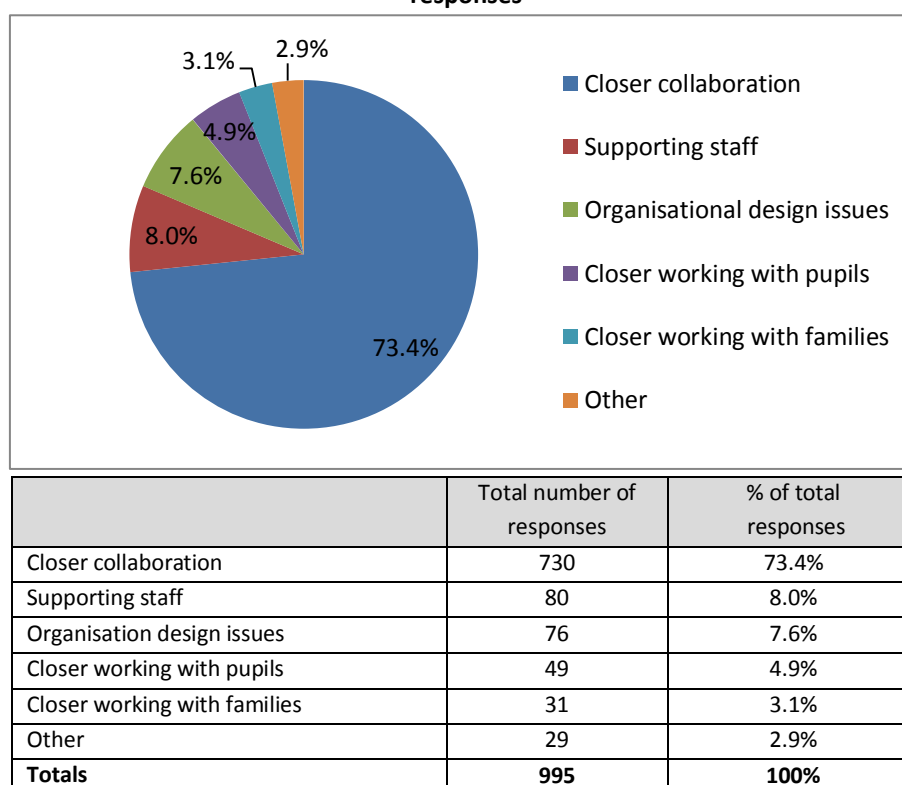
SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

4.2.1 Opportunities to build closer collaboration

The opportunities that questionnaire respondents identified for closer collaboration between the integrated service and schools included opportunities:
- To develop whole school planning.
- To build closer links with care teams and other support services.
- To develop joint work on attendance strategies.

4.2.1.1 Opportunities to develop whole-school planning

A key opportunity identified by respondents to the questionnaire consultation is to build closer integration of the NEWB service at a whole school level.

> o *I think that all three services being involved in formulating the three-year plan would certainly help teamwork. There are very simple things that could be done to strengthen teamwork, e.g., having staff …. present at some staff meetings as well as Board of Management meetings and parents' association meetings, and making sure all members of the school community know about the work each does. Also, making sure that SCP staff and the EWO are part of the staff room gathering and celebration. …Combined in-service would be good (School respondent).*

4.2.1.2 Opportunities to build closer links with care teams and other support services

Respondents considered that there were opportunities for the NEWB to build closer links with the wider school support network, including year heads, guidance staff, staff from the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) and chaplains. Scope is seen for greater involvement of NEWB services in a range of regular meetings such as school care team meetings, pastoral care meetings, year head meetings and monthly DEIS meetings.

> o *The care team is the ideal forum within the school structure for communicating with members of school staff with regard to maximising student attendance, participation and retention. School staff meetings are also opportunities for communication. The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Training Programme provided for us an excellent vehicle for building relationships with school staff and for developing a teamwork approach to supporting the child/young person to engage with and participate in school (SCP respondent).*
> o *Generally the HSCL teacher will work with school staff at care team meetings. The EWO and SCP coordinator will generally work with a limited number of school staff i.e. principal, deputy principal and HSCL teacher (HSCL respondent).*

4.2.1.3 Opportunities to develop joint work on attendance strategies

Respondents suggested there are opportunities for strengthening collaboration specifically on attendance issues. These included having an identified post holder with responsibility for attendance in each school with whom the integrated service could work closely, in particular though regular meetings. Respondents also suggested the integrated service could encourage all teachers to take responsibility for monitoring attendance and highlighting issues to the 'attendance team' in the school. Year heads and relevant class teachers could be part of attendance meetings and educational welfare conferences as required.

> o *Work with school staff around importance of early support and intervention, early detection of patterns, clarify school policy for attendance, raise awareness of all issues in relation to attendance, training offered where required, possibly delivered by SCP/HSCL/EWS to further strengthen teamwork. Possible reverse training from Teachers in relation to participation and retention for SCP and HSCL, objective to build communication and strengthen teamwork among all interested parties (SCP respondent).*

4.2.2 Opportunities to enhance staff support

The main area of opportunity that questionnaire respondents identified for supporting staff related to the development of joint in-service training with teaching staff, for example on attendance, participation and retention issues.

> o *Feedback should be given at staff in-service days to keep everybody informed and to welcome feedback and suggestions from staff about their ideas around attendance, participation and retention. EWO could attend a staff in-service day and give talk about EWS and the effective collaboration between HSCL/ SCP in the school (EWS respondent).*

4.2.3 Opportunities for organisation re-design

Respondents identified opportunities for service redesign and practice development, in particular in relation to role definition, communication and information sharing.

4.2.3.1 *Clearly defined roles and responsibilities*

This was identified as a key area for strengthening collaboration and integration, with respondents seeing a pressing need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all staff in the integrated service. Responses showed concern that role clarification should ensure that the strengths of each service are not lost and that the distinct roles of each service are maintained. Respondents also noted the importance of ensuring that there is mutual respect for the various roles. Effectively communicating the roles and responsibilities of staff within the integrated service was seen as very important both across the three NEWB services, and to schools, pupils and their families.

> o *Each service has a distinct role in helping a child and it is important to recognise that role while acknowledging that the roles need to complement each other (SCP respondent).*

4.2.3.2 *Communication*

Respondents indicated that there is scope for the NEWB to provide regular communications to school staff to enable them to be aware of the work of the integrated service. Opportunities to do this both informally and formally were identified: through NEWB attendance at regular staff meetings to disseminate information and present the work of the integrated service; joint presentations at meetings and participation in the wider life of the school such as assemblies, celebrations etc. The school principal was identified as having a key role in facilitating communication between NEWB services and school staff.

4.2.3.3 *Improved information sharing*

Questionnaire respondents emphasised the scope for strengthening the sharing of information across the integrated service, and between the NEWB service and schools. Information sharing is

seen as a key part of supporting pupils and families, setting targets and monitoring progress. Respondents considered that there is scope for developing more formal information sharing processes within the integrated services, and with schools, in particular during transitions, particularly from primary to post-primary education.

Respondents also considered that the service could improve work with teachers to develop a more structured reporting system which could include sharing reports and work plans with staff and providing regular feedback on progress. Respondents suggested this was important as teachers need to see that action has been taken by the NEWB on absenteeism.

> o *Sharing relevant information with appropriate staff. Information gathering from teachers/project workers, devising in-class or in-school supports where appropriate (HSCL respondent).*
> o *Integration allows for the sharing of relevant information - often one service may have a vital piece of information relevant to a student or family, which will shed light on such areas as behaviour, performance and attendance (SCP respondent).*
> o *Improve the sharing of data and information between all services and indeed between Primary and Post Primary schools (SCP respondent).*

4.2.4 Opportunities to strengthen prevention through collaboration with schools

When asked how the integrated service could strengthen prevention by supporting schools to help pupils to maximise school attendance, participation and retention, teamwork and collaboration were seen as offering the greatest potential for prevention.

Questionnaire respondents suggested several areas where collaboration across the three services and with schools could strengthen prevention:
* Developing a shared vision and setting common goals and working collaboratively to meet them.
* Delivering an effective communication strategy so that staff in the integrated service and schools understand how the service will support pupils and families.
* Developing a team based approach by ensuring the NEWB services staff are part of the school pastoral/care team.
* Establishing a schedule of structured, regular meetings of staff in the integrated service and with schools.
* Developing and using a team based approach to monitoring and tracking attendance and the use of attendance incentives and rewards.

> o *Maintain the loop of support, family support from HSCL, provision of activities of interest by SCP and educational welfare support from EWO (HSCL respondent).*
> o *Increased communication between services would prevent overlap and avoid concerned parties wasting time doing similar functions to the detriment of other equally or more important aspects of their role (School respondent).*
> o *Co-ordination between SCP, HSCL, NEWB and school to target specific children and specific families rather than trying to do a little bit for everyone (School respondent).*
> o *The integrated services can offer schools a menu/options of different levels of interventions and supports at the appropriate level with the 'at risk' children and their families (EWS respondent).*

4.2.5   Building on current good practice

Respondents considered that there is much good practice already in NEWB's collaboration with schools; and that the development of the integrated service should consolidate and further develop this good work.

> o   *There is a huge emphasis on teamwork with school staff, HSCL, SCP and EWS within the school. Classroom teachers maintain strong contact with HSCL and SCP constantly throughout the year. Sharing of information happens on a regular basis. The Care Team Approach to promoting the educational welfare of the child is in place. All professionals involved with the child meet together to share information. A Care Team Meeting generally includes parents and sometimes the child herself can attend. Meetings are held regularly with classroom teachers, support teachers, resource teachers, HSCL, SCP and principals. In relation to a specific child, targets are set out with each staff member taking responsibility for particular targets and work is done collaboratively. Sharing of information and identifying roles is key to developing teamwork (HSCL respondent).*

4.3   Opportunities for the integrated service to enhance collaboration with pupils and their parents/guardians

The consultation questionnaire asked respondents to identify opportunities for an integrated service to enhance meaningful and respectful collaboration with pupils and their parents/guardians to maximise attendance, participation and retention. Most identified opportunities for engaging parents/guardians in home visits and education (61.5%, 608 opportunities) See Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Opportunities for an integrated service to work collaboratively with pupils and their parents/guardians: overview of responses
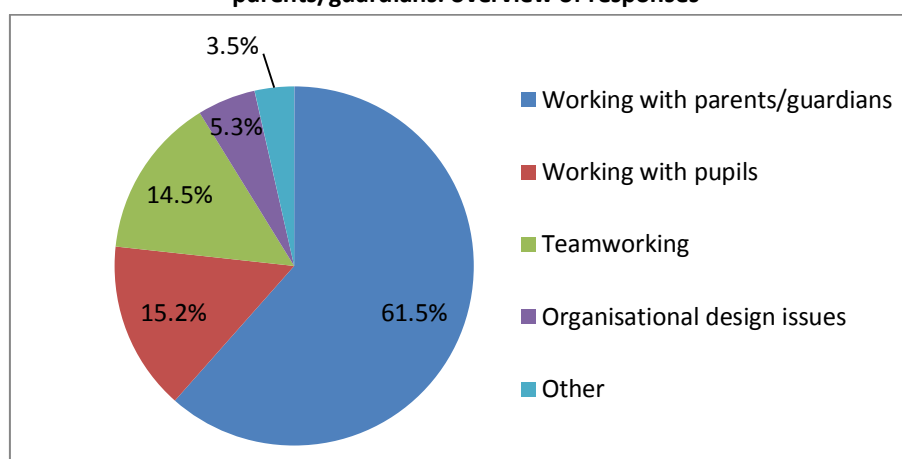
	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Working with parents/guardians	608	61.5%
Working with pupils	150	15.2%
Teamworking	143	14.5%
Organisation design issues	52	5.3%
Other	31	3.5%
Totals	**988**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

Responses from all three services identified working with parents/guardians as the key opportunity for the integrated service to build on. Reflecting the priorities of their service, a greater percentage of HSCL respondents identified working with parents/guardians as the key opportunity compared with the SCP and the EWS. All three services, and in particular the EWS, identified working with pupils as the second key area of opportunity.

4.3.1 Opportunities to enhance collaboration with parents/guardians

Of the 608 identified opportunities for enhancing collaboration with parents/guardians, 36% (359 responses) were about developing the opportunities provided through home visits; and 17% (171 responses) related to opportunities to engage parents in education. Overall, respondents saw these opportunities to enhance work with parents/guardians as strengthening prevention.

4.3.1.1 Home visits

Respondents stressed the importance of home visits and the opportunities they offer for collaborative working with families to establish trust and facilitate early interventions. Home visits were also seen as providing opportunities to make parents/guardians more aware of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.

- o *All services working cohesively to support targeted families: school based personnel, SCP and EWS. Formal meetings to share information with the EWO and HSCL working collaboratively to engage with families and identify barriers to participation (HSCL respondent).*

Questionnaire respondents also identified opportunities for rethinking and clarifying the roles of the NEWB staff in home visits. There were some concerns about the home visit being used for "sanctions" work.

- o *Home visits - Home/School person to be seen as a support to parents/guardians rather than a threat (HSCL respondent).*
- o *Home visits are extremely important to ensure that parents, students, and the services all know exactly what is going on, what is expected from the child in the school, and that this service is a support to both them and their child not a threat (SCP respondent).*
- o *…. HSCL is all about building relationships with parents, I would have serious concerns about interfering with this. HSCL should not be asked to monitor attendance or check up on attendance as this would compromise the trust parents have in us. We can work closely with other services and support parents through home visits and empowering them through courses we provide (HSCL respondent).*

4.3.1.2 Engaging parents in education

Respondents identified opportunities for the integrated service to further encourage parents/guardians to engage positively with education in general, and to support their children's education. Opportunities to better engage parents/guardians in a range of school activities were

identified, including parents' evenings, parents' associations, literacy and numeracy activities, homework clubs, parenting classes, adult learning courses for parents, family learning, school plays, awards nights and IT classes.

> o *It is my opinion that the key to ensuring a child attends, remains and progresses …is dependent on the active involvement of their parents/guardians. It is my experience that schools (through the invaluable support of the HSCL, EWO and SCP) can improve attendance and participation of a student but, more often than not, for a limited time, after which the focus will naturally move to a more pressing or urgent student. Only the parent/guardian can continue to provide the necessary support for any sustainable period of time (School respondent).*

The opportunities to develop closer work with parents/guardians were seen by questionnaire respondents as empowering parents/guardians to take part in decision making for their child. Respondents suggested this could also mean parents/guardians more involved in school policy making and planning.

> o *If the ethos of the school is one of respect for every member of the school community, then this will follow. Effective communication is of huge importance here. Sometimes parents and children are the last to be told about all of the grand plans we have! It is essential to respectfully involve both parents/guardians and children in the planning process and to enable them to become participants rather than 'subjects' (School respondent).*

4.3.1.3   Strengthening prevention through collaboration with parents/guardians

Opportunities to enhance work with parents/guardians were generally seen as opportunities for strengthening prevention. These included opportunities to:
- Develop a more strategic response to supporting families in difficulty.
- Retain the distinctive role of the HSCL in forging strong links between home and schools.
- Work collaboratively to involve parents in a range of school activities and initiatives.
- Provide courses and programmes for parents to enable them build self-confidence and become more active in helping their children engage with education.
- Set up courses in local area, focusing on developing parenting skills.
- Ensure immediate engagement with parents where a pattern of absenteeism is first identified.
- Target families which have a history of poor attendance and put supports in place.
- Ensure greater follow up and sanctions for parents who do not regularly send their children to school.

4.3.2   Opportunities to enhance collaboration with pupils

There was strong support for the idea of 'one child, one team, one plan'. Fifteen percent (15%, 150 responses) of opportunities for enhancing collaboration with parents, guardians and pupils were about specific ways of improving work with pupils. This included:
- Developing the provision of one-to-one support and in-school support activities.
- Targeting pupils most at risk and ensuring early intervention.

- Work to provide a positive educational experience for pupils.
- The involvement of pupils in decisions that affect them.
- Joint planning for individual children and families.

> o *One team can devise a plan that suits the child and the family – everyone share the one goal (EWS respondent).*
> o *No fear factor we all just want to have a positive impact on the child's education and life (SCP respondent).*
> o *For me, more work needs to be done around the voice of the child, and how this is brought into the process – this should include pre-referral stage i.e. it should be inclusive of schools handling of the voice of the child (EWS respondent).*
> o *Maybe students need a greater voice to express their views about their educational experience and these views be used to inform policy. Teachers are not always right (Respondent not identified).*
> o *Drawing up action plans together for individual children to foster improved attendance (Respondent not identified).*

Specific proposals for strengthening prevention included:
- Develop a strategic approach to identifying pupils at risk.
- Work collaboratively with pupils and ensure they know services are working together to support them.
- Identify pupils at risk of poor attendance or leaving school early.
- Work with targeted pupils around their individual needs.
- Set up targeted initiatives to support those most at risk.
- Fund a range of in-school supports.
- Ensure extracurricular activities are available for all.
- Support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

> o *To support participation, schools need support in addressing the needs of the child with regard to behavioural issues, social skills and emotional literacy (Respondent not identified).*
> o *Assisting students with difficult behaviours, both socially and emotionally, building confidence and self-esteem to help them (SCP respondent).*
> o *Prioritise the emotional needs of children who have little support at home so that they feel somebody cares (School respondent).*

4.4 The scope for the integrated service to strengthen attendance, participation and retention: key messages for the NEWB

The questionnaire consultation explored opportunities for strengthening prevention and maximising attendance, participation and retention. Key messages focused on the following areas:

- There is strong support for continuing to develop a team based approach to work with individual children along the lines of 'one child, one team, one plan.' A unified approach to identifying children most at risk, jointly assessing individual needs, and joint planning of interventions and supports should be based around structured systems of team-based interventions, working through formal meetings and collaborative working. Through this joint engagement staff of the services, along with school staff see scope for:
  - Developing the yearly plan, and setting targets
  - Managing information sharing
  - Having an integrated plan for each student and tracking progress
  - Working on attendance strategies
  - Building relationships
  - Ensuring students and families are actively involved in their own plan, tailored to their unique needs
- Preventive work can be strengthened through closer links with school staff at a whole school level, through participation by NEWB services in whole school planning, and having a joint attendance strategy with agreed targets.
- The continuing need for individualised supports for students emerged strongly, not only in relation to attendance but also to support students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- Respondents stressed the importance of continuing to engage with parents and families both as an important preventive practice and by working closely with families experiencing particular difficulties; home visits are seen as a valuable mechanism for this work. All the services can work to reinforce parental involvement, through their respective roles.
- Respondents felt that this level of collaboration could be built around a shared vision and common goals for the work with students and families. The benefits of closer collaboration would include better use of resources, minimising duplication, and greater clarity of purpose. In terms of service design/re-design, there was strong support for strengthening the team-based approach at school level, with structured participation among school staff, HSCL, SCP and the Education Welfare Service. The integrated service should be part of a wider network of support at school level, including pastoral care team members and other education support services.
- The need for clear role descriptions emerged as an important and urgent requirement, along with an effective communications strategy to ensure all personnel are aware of each other's role; distinct and complementary roles were favoured, along a continuum from prevention to prosecution. The service model should include formal protocols for information sharing, and be supported through joint training opportunities.

5   Strengthening the network of support

This chapter provides the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire consultation in relation to the question:
- What other services/agencies do you think should be part of the network of support to maximise school attendance, participation and retention?

The chapter presents the findings in the following sections:
Section 5.1   Strengthening the network of support: overview of responses
Section 5.2   Health and social services
Section 5.3   Education support services
Section 5.4   Youth justice services
Section 5.5   Voluntary sector services
Section 5.6   Youth services
Section 5.7   Strengthening the network of support: key messages for the NEWB.

5.1   Strengthening the network of support: overview of responses

The questionnaire consultation asked respondents what other agencies (i.e. in addition to NEWB services and schools) they thought should be part of the network of support to maximise school attendance, participation and retention. The sector most identified by respondents was health and social services (42.3%, 772 identified agencies). Other key sectors were: education support services (19.2%, 351 identified agencies); and youth justice (12%, 220 identified agencies). Also important were voluntary sector services (10.6%, 193 identified agencies) and youth services (10.2%, 186 identified agencies). See Figure 8 below. As respondents were not specific about who provided youth services this category combines both voluntary and statutory youth services.

Respondents were also asked to list the reasons for including these agencies and to suggest practical arrangements for more effectively working with them. The commentary which follows provides an analysis in relation to agencies in each of the above categories which received 5% or more responses.

Figure 8: Strengthening the network of support: the most frequently identified sectors

	Total number of identified agencies	% of Identified agencies
Health and Social Services	772	42.3%
Education Support Services s	351	19.2%
Youth Justice	220	12.0%
Voluntary sector	193	10.6%
Youth Services	186	10.2%
Other	104	5.7%
Total	**1826**	**100%**
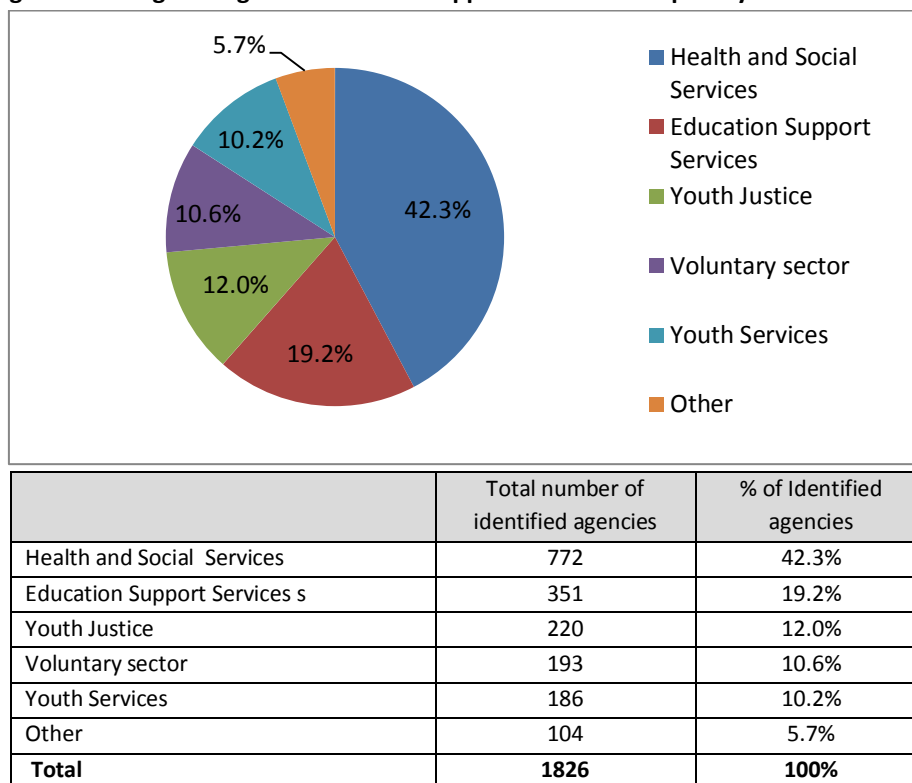
SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

5.2   Health and social services (42.3%, 772 identified agencies)

Many respondents category did not specify which HSE services should be part of the network of support, simply answering 'HSE' (11.2%, 205 identified agencies). The most frequently specified agencies in the HSE sector were social work, family support and mental health services. See Table 8 below.

Table 8: HSE services: breakdown of services suggested

Health and Safety Executive	Total number of identified agencies	% of identified agencies
HSE – service not specified	205	11.2%
Social work	196	10.7%
Family support services	98	5.4%
CAMHS/mental health services	89	4.9%
Other	184	10.1%
Totals	**772**	**42.3%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

5.2.1   Social work: reasons for inclusion and practical arrangements (10.7%, 196 identified agencies)

Reasons for including HSE social work in the work of the integrated service given by questionnaire respondents included:

- They provide an integrated whole family support service and may already be working with the same children, young people and families as the NEWB is working with.
- HSE social work services have expertise and resources for working with marginalised families and can provide access to health services, such as therapeutic and mental health services.
- Marginalised families have a multiplicity of social problems and need a range of services.
- HSE social work has statutory responsibility for child protection.

> o *If a social worker is assigned to a family then they should become part of the Care Team made up of school staff and other services, sharing of information could take place more regularly …open lines of communication between the family, the school and the social worker (HSCL respondent).*

Practical suggestions for arrangements for including HSE social work in the work of the integrated service made by questionnaire respondents included:
- Establishing a formal requirement for HSE social work services to liaise with NEWB services.
- Arranging regular and scheduled interagency meetings, including with HSE social work.
- Developing formal mandatory information sharing protocols between NEWB and HSE social work.
- Delivering joint training and CPD for staff from HSE social work and NEWB.
- Encouraging key HSE social work and NEWB personnel to get to know each other locally.

5.2.2   Family support services: reasons for inclusion and practical arrangements (5.4%, 98 identified agencies)

Questionnaire respondents suggested that family support services should be included in the network of support as parents/guardians may need professional support as well as their children. Respondents also suggested that it is important for the integrated service to link closely with family support services as NEWB service staff may already know and work closely with many of the families which are targeted by family support services.

> o *They [family support services] are in position to offer hands on, out of school hours, practical supports to all members of target family at a number of levels. They are also in a position to support secondary school children who previously in primary school had access to SCP and HSCL but have transferred into a school with no follow up support scheme (HSCL respondent).*

Practical suggestions for including family support in the work of the integrated service:
- Having a regular schedule of meetings between the integrated service, schools and family support services to ensure sharing of ideas and information. Ensuring that all meetings are planned at the start of the school year to facilitate interagency working.
- Organising joint training and CPD between NEWB staff and family support service staff.
- Formalising the referral system from NEWB services to the family support agencies and publicising this.

5.2.3 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: reasons for inclusion and practical arrangements (4.9%, 89 identified agencies)

Respondents suggested that it is important to include Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) in the network of support as they provide important support for children, young people and families experiencing psychological difficulties and mental health issues.

Practical suggestions for including CAMHS in the work of the integrated service:

- Developing a joint working protocol, including a protocol for information sharing and referrals between NEWB and CAMHS.
- Establishing regular collaborative meetings between CAMHS and NEWB staff at a local level.
- Inviting CAMHS staff to deliver talks in schools on mental health issues.
- Involving CAMHS staff to attend educational welfare conferences.
- Liaising with CAMHS at a national level to encourage closer working at a local level.

> o *Attendance/retention/engagement problems can often be the result of mental health problems and/or behavioural issues e.g. school refusal, school phobia, depression, low self-esteem, ODD (EWS respondent).*
> o *Support students with mental health issues. [There is] at least one referral a week from my school to local [CAMHS] clinic … [which] takes referrals from Principals which is a great help to schools (School respondent).*
> o *Regular meetings in an agreed setting between HSCL, CAMHS, HSE, SCP, EWO, parents, school personnel and pupil at risk (HSCL respondent).*

5.3 Education support services (19.2%, 351 identified agencies)

The education support service most frequently mentioned (in addition to the NEWB and schools) by questionnaire respondents was the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) (6.3%, 115 responses).

Respondents suggested that NEPS should be included in the network of support because it provides one-to-one support to children and young people with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties.

> o *As a preventative measure and to share knowledge. NEPS are often requested by a school to become involved to carry out an assessment of a child but NEPS could be also involved in order to support a child's participation and retention in a school by looking at different strategies i.e. Individual educational plans etc (EWS respondent).*
> o *NEPS is hugely important in identifying children with specific educational needs. If a child goes unassessed their poor educational attainment could lead to their disillusionment with school (SCP respondent).*
> o *A lot of our students could benefit from NEPS support e.g. - School refusers need specialist support which NEPS can provide. We need to be able to get beyond the oft-given stock response from some schools that "we can't do anything if he/she is not coming into school" - and when they perceive that they can't, they don't (EWS respondent).*

Practical arrangments for including NEPS in the work of the integrated service:

- Ensuring that assessments are automatically in place for those entering second level education.
- Establishing a clear referrals procedure and communicate this to relevant staff.
- Ensuring assessments are supported by advice and resources for follow up support.
- Ensuring that NEPS staff are involved in meetings with the integrated service.
- Enabling NEWB staff to invite NEPS to case conferences, rather than waiting for the school to do this.
- Rolling out emotional and behavioural management programmes to schools.

5.4   Youth justice services (12%, 220 identified agencies)

Questionnaire respondents' suggestions for agencies to include in the wider network of support included the Garda (4.7%, 86 identified agencies) but did not specify which aspect of Garda work they were referring to. 7.1% (130 responses) identified agencies specifically referred to Garda-led juvenile liaison and youth diversion schemes.

Respondents suggested that it was important to include Garda led juvenile liaison schemes and youth diversion services in the network of support for school participation and completion because Garda-led services:

- Target and support young people at risk of offending who are involved in anti-social behaviour, and whose behaviour is putting themselves and others at risk of harm.
- Provide one-to-one support to children and young people in need.

> o   *Community Gardaí provide excellent out-of-school services/support and are aware of the family situations. Counselling is provided. (HSCL respondent).*

Practical suggestions for including youth justice services in the work of the integrated service:
- Increasing the resources to provide more joint project work.
- Inviting the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) to be part of the team discussing pupils at risk of disengagement with school.
- Establishing regular communication and information sharing between JLOs, NEWB and schools.
- Including Gardaí in regular school/integrated service meetings to contribute to action plans and general strategies.

5.5   Voluntary sector services (10.6%, 193 identified agencies)

The voluntary sector services most frequently suggested by questionnaire respondents for inclusion in the wider network of support were Barnardos and St Vincent de Paul. Others suggested were the ISPCC, Money Advice Bureau, and Traveller Support Groups.

Respondents suggested that the local voluntary providers should be included in the network of support because they can provide a range of support services at local level to support children,

young people and families including practical support (St. Vincent DePaul, MABS), family support services (Barnardos), counselling services (ISPCC) and parenting support (Barnardos).

5.6   Youth services (10.2%, 186 identified agencies)

Questionnaire respondents suggested that youth services should be included as part of the network of support because:

- Youth services provide opportunities for informal engagement and personal development which encourages young people to take responsibility and provides a positive experience.
- Youth services have a great knowledge of the young people and their families and can share this with NEWB to help with the early identification of pupils.
- Youth services work supportively with the target young people and can reinforce school attendance and provide a caring role where there is little family support.
- Youth services work supports the work of other agencies such as the Garda diversion projects, drug workers and counselling services.

> o *Some youth services have a youth worker post specifically to work with young people to remain in school, this service is vital to share resources with, e.g. holidays supports, case conferences and welfare plans for young people (SCP respondent).*
> o *Involve local youth projects in attendance committees and interagency working groups (EWS respondent).*

Practical suggestions for arrangements for including youth services in the work of the integrated service:

- Ensuring official links between youth services and schools and NEWB clusters. Questionnaire respondents suggest that these work well informally in some areas but formal linkages would strengthen the motivation for staff to liaise.
- Inviting youth service representatives on to school boards of management and having school representation on youth service management committees.
- Scheduling regular meetings and having youth services involved in cluster meetings, school meetings and SCP Management meetings.
- Increasing information sharing about young people at risk of non-participation in school – developing information sharing between the NEWB and voluntary sector youth services.
- Encouraging regular structured communication between the NEWB and voluntary sector youth services.

5.7   Strengthening the network of support: key messages for the NEWB

The consultation questionnaire asked respondents to identify services or agencies which should be part of the network of support to maximise school attendance, participation and retention.

- The key message for the NEWB is that the barriers to school attendance, participation and retention are not always located solely in the child or young person. It can be the result of more significant challenges within the whole family. It is vital therefore that NEWB staff build networks locally to facilitate consultation and referral to other support services who can address the wide ranging issues that can be affecting the child. All sectors and services which provide support to children, young people and their families should be part of the wider network of support in maximising school attendance, participation and retention; and that the specific services to include depend very much on the needs of the individual child or young person. The services identified by respondents across the country show that there are many different providers of services to children and families and it is vital to collaborate with these to assist families.

- Respondents saw a clear role for social work services, psychological services (CAMHS and NEPS) and youth justice services. Voluntary agencies are seen as playing a key role in complementing and working alongside statutory provision to maximise school attendance, participation and retention. Family support services were also identified as a key element of the network of support for pupils by providing support to the whole family.

- Key suggestions for practical arrangements to develop the wider network of support were:
  o Formal regular interagency meetings.
  o Formal information sharing protocols.
  o Joint interagency training.
  o Regular structured communication.
  o Opportunities for local networking and getting to know each other.
  o National level linkages between the services to develop more formalised integrated working.

6 Vision for the future of an integrated service

This chapter provides the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire consultation in relation to question:

- Please tell us the three key educational outcomes for children, young people and their families that you would like to see being achieved through the integrated service.

The chapter presents the findings in the following sections:

Section 6.1   Key educational outcomes – overview of responses
Section 6.2   Improved attendance, participation and retention
Section 6.3   A high quality educational experience for pupils
Section 6.4   Improved support for children, young people and families
Section 6.5   Improved attainment and achievement for all pupils
Section 6.6   Vision for the future of an integrated service: key messages for the NEWB.

6.1   Vision for the integrated service – overview of responses

The overarching vision provided by questionnaire respondents was that the integrated service would help children and young people to complete their education, attain well, have a quality educational experience and be supported to do so, in particular those pupils and families who are most marginalised and most in need of support. Four related sets of specific outcomes, linked to this vision, were identified:

- Improved attendance, participation and retention
- A high quality educational experience for children and young people
- Improved support for children, young people and families
- Improved attainment and achievement.

See Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Vision for the future of an integrated service: overview of responses
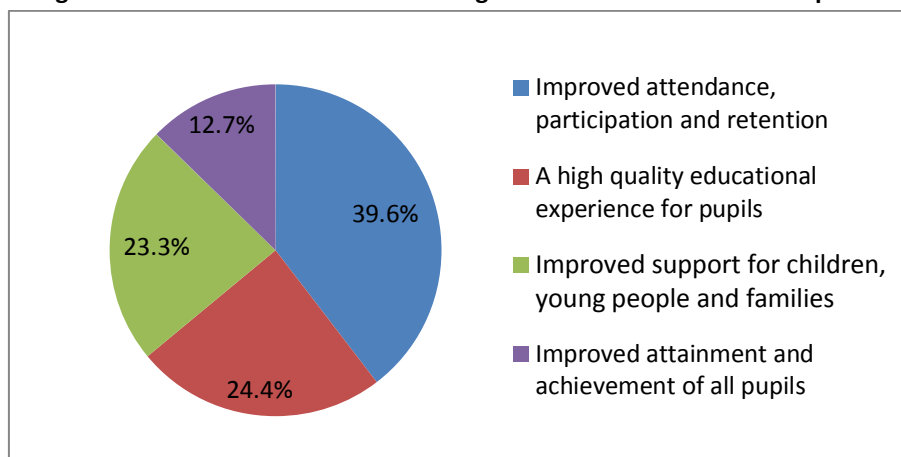
	Total number of outcomes	% of total outcomes
Improved attendance, participation and retention	688	39.6%
A high quality educational experience for pupils	424	24.4%
Improved support for children, young people and families	405	23.3%
Improved attainment and achievement of all pupils	221	12.7%
Totals	**1738**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

6.2 Improved attendance, participation and retention

The outcomes most frequently identified by questionnaire respondents related to improved attendance, participation and retention (39.6%, 688 responses). In particular, these outcomes related to improved attendance (32.7%, 225 identified outcomes); improved retention (18.9%, 130 identified outcomes), and improved participation (14.5%, 100 identified outcomes). Respondents also highlighted more specific retention-related outcomes including completion of the Junior and Leaving Certificate cycles and progression to Third Level education. Overall, outcomes relating broadly to retention totalled (20.9 %, 363 of all identified outcomes). See Table 9 below.

Table 9: Outcome 1: Improved attendance, participation and retention

	Total number of identified outcomes	% of total Identified outcomes	% identified outcomes in this category
Improved attendance	225	12.9%	32.7%
Improved retention in education	130	7.5%	18.9%
More pupils will complete the Leaving Certificate cycle	117	6.7%	17%
Improved participation	100	5.8%	14.5%
More pupils will progress to third level education	92	5.3%	13.4%
More pupils will complete the Junior Certificate cycle	24	1.4%	3.5%
Total	688	39.6%	100%

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

Respondents' comments about outcomes relating to improved attendance, participation and retention included:

o *Improved (100%) attendance, across the board - leading to improved educational outcomes for every student (School respondent).*
o *Increasing retention, attendance and participation of all to completion of second level education, particularly students from the Travelling community and international students (SCP respondent).*
o *Completion of state exams and the opening up of further educational opportunities. A change in attitude from negative to positive towards the role of education (EWS respondent).*

6.3 A high quality educational experience for children and young people

One quarter (24.4%, 424 of identified outcomes) for the integrated service related to pupils having a high quality educational experience. These mostly related to pupils having a more positive school experience and being able to fulfil their individual potential. See Table 10 below.

Table 10: Outcome 2: A high quality educational experience for children and young people

	Total number of identified outcomes	% of total Identified outcomes	% identified outcomes in this category
Pupils will have a more positive school experience	219	12.6%	51.6%
Pupils will be enabled to fulfil their potential	119	6.8%	28%
Improved life and social skills of pupils	47	2.7%	11%
Equality of educational opportunity – breaking the cycle	39	2.2%	9.1%
Totals	**424**	**24.4%**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

- *All young people should have every opportunity to participate and to reach their potential, in all aspects of their development so that they finish school as confident, mature adults and take with them a sense of achievement (HSCL respondent).*
- *No child left behind, appropriate and professional resources put in at [their] time of most need (SCP respondent).*
- *A transformed school experience for our most vulnerable young people, where school is viewed by them and their parents as relevant, useful, satisfying, respectful, safe and welcoming and where learning is valued by them because they are experiencing SUCCESS (School respondent).*

6.4 Improved support for children, young people and families

The third most frequently identified category of outcomes for the integrated service related to improved support for pupils and their families (23.3%, 405 identified outcomes). Within this, the most important outcome identified was greater involvement by parents/guardians in their child's education (56%, 227 identified outcomes); followed by improved support to marginalised pupils and their families (24.7%, 100 identified outcomes). See Table 11 below.

Table 11: Outcome 3: Improved support for children, young people and families

	Total number of identified outcomes	% of total Identified outcomes	% identified outcomes in this category
Parents/guardians will be more actively involved in their child's education	227	13.1%	56%
Improved support for marginalised pupils and their families	100	5.8%	24.7%
Early intervention and supports for pupils/ families in need	52	3.0%	12.8%
Integrated service provision for families	26	1.5%	6.4%
Totals	**405**	**23.3%**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

- *That parents/guardians have all the supports available to support their children staying within the education system (HSCL respondent).*
- *When children exhibit need for extra support - by their behaviour, non-attendance or presentation they get appropriate help in a TIMELY FASHION (HSCL respondent).*
- *Parents supporting their children's education and taking an active role in it. Parents accessing education themselves (School respondent).*
- *That families would buy into education as a way of improving their lives and that parental negative attitudes towards education would be challenged through the positive experiences their children have in school (School respondent).*

6.5 Improved attainment and achievement for all pupils

12.7% (221 of identified outcomes) for the integrated service related to improved attainment and achievement for all pupils. Most of these were outcomes relating to improved literacy and numeracy skills. See Table 12 below.

Table 12: Outcome 4: Improved attainment and achievement for all pupils

	Total number of identified outcomes	% of total identified outcomes	% identified outcomes in this category
Improved literacy and numeracy skills	180	10.4%	81.4%
Improved attainment and achievement of all children	41	2.4%	18.5%
Total	**221**	**12.7%**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

6.6   Vision for the future of an integrated service: key messages for the NEWB

The consultation questionnaire asked respondents to identify the key educational outcomes for children, young people and their families that [they] would like to see being achieved through the integrated service. The response to this question shows a strong shared vision for the integrated service.

Establishing a common vision and developing shared goals are crucial parts of any change process. This shared vision for the integrated service provides an excellent basis for the implementation of the integrated service.

The shared vision re-emphasises and reinforces the importance of a commitment to helping to ensure that children and young people complete their education, and attain well in school.
In striving for the goal of helping students to stay in school and do well there, the expressed wish is that students will have a positive and high quality school experience, one that puts the child at the centre and that ensures the voice of the child is heard.

Support for the most marginalised children and their families is core to the vision for the future. The consultation affirms the need for the integrated service to ensure that the most vulnerable children are identified early, supported and have the chance for equal opportunities and life chances.

Working to ensure that parents are supported to play their important role, through their active involvement in their children's education, is also core and central to the vision for the integrated service.

7   Challenges in developing an integrated service

This chapter provides the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire consultation in relation to the questions:

- What are the three key challenges in developing an integrated service?
- How might these challenges be addressed?

The chapter presents the findings in the following sections:

Section 7.1   Overview of challenges
Section 7.2   Organisational design challenges
Section 7.3   The challenge of resourcing the service
Section 7.4   The challenges of implementing integrated practice
Section 7.5   The challenges in working with families
Section 7.6   Challenges: key messages for the NEWB.

7.1   Overview of challenges

The consultation questionnaire asked respondents to identify the key challenges in developing the integrated service and to suggest ways of addressing these. The three areas of challenge most frequently identified by respondents related to: organisational design (36.8%, 636 identified challenges); resourcing issues (32.6%, 563 identified challenges) and strengthening teamwork and collaboration (21.3%, 368 identified challenges). A small number of respondents also identified challenges in working with families and pupils. See Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Challenges in developing an integrated service: overview of responses
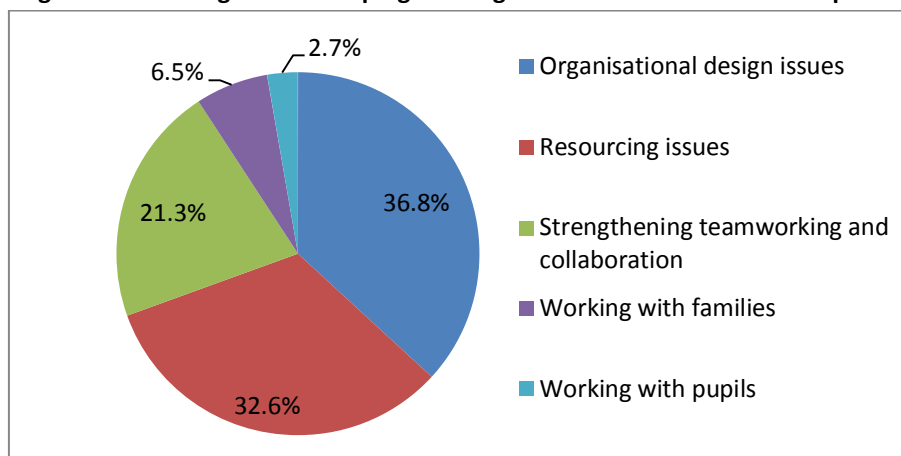
	Total number of Identified challenges	% of total Identified challenges
Organisational design issues	636	36.8%
Resourcing issues	563	32.6%
Strengthening teamworking and collaboration	368	21.3%
Working with families	112	6.5%
Working with pupils	47	2.7%
Total	**1726**	**100.0%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

7.2   Organisational design challenges

The design of the integrated service represented (36.8%, 636 of all identified challenges), particularly in relation to defining roles and responsibilities (40.4%, 257 identified challenges). See Table 13 below. Respondents suggested the challenge here is to:

- Maintain the integrity and distinctive role of each service, avoid duplication of services and achieve clarity of purpose for the integrated service.
- Communicate what the roles within the integrated service are to all related services, organisations and agencies, and to children, young people and their families.
- Develop mutual understanding and respect for the different roles within the integrated service and ensure that staff are not simply protecting their own roles.
- Deal with different perceptions of roles within the integrated service and pro-actively manage the change process.
- Have clarity on employment issues.

Table 13: Organisational design: breakdown of identified challenges

	Number of identified challenges	% of total number of Identified challenges	% identified challenges in this category
Clearly defined roles and responsibilities	257	14.9%	40.4%
A unified model of working	61	3.5%	9.6%
Needs led service rather than caseload led	52	3.0%	8.2%
No duplication of services	43	2.5%	6.8%
Information sharing across NEWB services	41	2.4%	6.4%
Clearly defined integrated service	39	2.3%	6.1%
Effective management	38	2.2%	6%
Unified terms and conditions	29	1.7%	4.6%
Integrated management structures	27	1.6%	4.2%
Cohesive working practices	25	1.4%	3.9%
Job security	24	1.4%	3.8%
Total	**636**	**36.8%**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

Consultation respondents suggested that organisational design challenges could be addressed by:
- Consulting and collaborating on the redefining of the roles within the integrated service – this could include consultation with schools.

- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all the staff in the integrated service, and how they relate to school roles and responsibilities.
- Revising and circulating new job descriptions and addressing associated employment issues.
- Launching the integrated service – a national rollout.

> o *Roles need to be defined within the integration process and all services are brought together for in-service on the integration process and what it means (SCP respondent).*
> o *Reassure that SCP, HSCL and EWS still have the old roles and responsibilities but now are communicating more and sharing more relevant best practice and information (HSCL respondent).*
> o *Clear vision of what we will do to support our students to be developed by NEWB, and disseminated to all staff in all services (HSCL respondent).*
> o *Securing the commitment and support of school management in order to develop integrated service (EWS respondent).*

7.3   The challenge of resourcing the service

Questionnaire consultation respondents identified resourcing 32.6% (563 identified challenges) as a key challenge for the integrated service, with schools most strongly identifying this as an issue. See Table 14 below.

Table 14: Resourcing the service- breakdown of identified challenges

	Total number of identified challenges	% of total number of identified challenges	% identified challenges in this category
Insufficient resources	322	18.7%	57.2%
Effective use of time	184	10.7%	32.7%
CPD for staff - non specified	30	1.7%	5.3%
EWS staffing resources	14	0.8%	2.5%
Allocate resources fairly	7	0.4%	1.2%
Sharing good practice	5	0.3%	0.9%
Developing evidence base for good practice	1	0.1%	0.2%
Totals	**563**	**32.6%**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

The responses noted existing deficiencies in resources and perceived threats to resourcing in the future. Many responses relating to resourcing simply stated the resourcing challenge. Those responses which were more specific generally addressed the challenge of providing sufficient funding to keep staffing at effective operational levels. Specifically identified resource challenges included:
- Reduced numbers of EWOs.
- The withdrawal of rural co-ordinators.
- The withdrawal of the Visiting Teacher for Traveller service.
- Inequitable distribution of resources across all schools.

Respondents suggested that resourcing challenges could be addressed by:

- Ensuring that more funding is available to ensure adequate staffing to deliver the integrated service and achieve the desired outcomes.
- Making more effective use of resources, such as sharing information and strategies.

> o *If the government is serious about promoting educational equality and participation, then the organisation must be appropriately funded and staffed. The current policy of stretching personnel to the limit is unsustainable and actually masks the problem. It would be far better to put our hands up and say we can't deliver a service without appropriate funding and staffing levels (EWS respondent).*
> o *A review of resources with a view to more equitable distribution (HSCL respondent).*
> o *SCP has experienced a reduction in finance each year in real terms (even in the Celtic Tiger years) as incremental increases in wages have never been recognised in our budget allowance. We need enough finance to provide a consistent service. Our local SCP has gone from using 76% of budget on salaries to 94% since 2005. This has a huge impact on personnel and provision of resources. Even with this increase in % of budget on salaries we have had to reduce our staffing levels (SCP respondent).*
> o *Pooling of resources - as happens to an extent at HSCL at present (School respondent).*
> o *Resource issue should be constantly highlighted and how NEWB has only received a fraction of the personnel that was suggested by the Rochford report conducted before the service was established (EWS respondent).*
> o *I believe that an integrated collaborative approach is the best way forward, to maximise resources and outcomes for the children with work with. However what becomes of the schools that do not have HSCL and SCP? What level of service will or won't they receive? A large amount of my work is with children from such schools. What happens in areas where there are stand-alone EWO officers, how can the integrated model be utilised? (EWS respondent).*

7.3.1   Managing limited capacity/time

A key aspect of the resourcing challenge related to time for collaboration and teamwork – time to do the work, time for meetings and time to engage with families. Questionnaire respondents suggested that the problem of time was exacerbated by staff shortages.

Respondents suggested time/capacity management challenges could be addressed by:
- More effective planning and more focused targeting of services to those who need them most.
- Clearly defined roles to avoid duplication of work – more certainty over roles.
- More effective time planning including setting meeting schedules at the start of school year.
- CPD and in-service training days for teachers with cover.
- The development of a national framework to develop and co-ordinate the activities of the personnel involved.

> o *Time is a huge challenge as three services are already working to their full capacity (HSCL respondent).*
> o *Finding time to work together. SCP remit is so wide and each cluster has so much going on that sometimes it's hard for coordinators to prioritise just one aspect (SCP respondent).*
> o *Timetabled periods for class teacher to meet NEWB personnel working with their students (School respondent).*

7.4   The challenges of implementing integrated practice

Whilst questionnaire respondents identified many opportunities for the integrated service to strengthen teamwork and collaboration (see chapter 4), they also identified many challenges in actually implementing the integrated practice. Just over one fifth (21.3%, 368 of all identified challenges) related to strengthening integrated practice; these included challenges in managing change and improving communication. See Table 15 below.

Table 15: Strengthening teamwork and collaboration breakdown of identified challenges

	Number of identified challenges	% of total identified challenges	% identified challenges in this category
Teamwork across the services and with schools	192	11.1%	52.2%
To manage change	67	3.9%	18.2%
To improve communication	66	3.8%	17.9%
To overcome mistrust	22	1.3%	6%
To deal with personalities	13	0.8%	3.5%
Interagency working	8	0.5%	2.2%
Totals	**368**	**21.3%**	**100%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

Respondents suggested that the challenges in implementing integrated practice include:
- Developing flexibility and openness in approach.
- Creating honesty, trust and respect.
- Managing change and combating the fear of change.
- Dealing with potential personality clashes and competing agendas.
- Developing a holistic approach to attendance, participation and retention.
- Keeping the focus on the task and not the process (i.e. of integration).
- Sharing information effectively and improving communication systems.

Respondents suggested the challenges may be addressed by:
- Developing more effective communication between the three services and with schools.
- Building a team approach based on a shared vision.
- Encouraging respect for the contribution of each service.
- Fostering a willingness to accept change.
- Developing targets and measurable outcomes.
- Developing clear guidelines and structures for information sharing, including a shared database.
- Having a national attendance tracking system in schools so that pupils with attendance problems can be clearly identified.

- Ensuring that all agencies are involved in integration meetings.
- Ensuring that internal referral processes are clear.
- Ensuring integrated planning.
- Thinking about how to share spaces and offices.
- Having a key person in each school with responsibility for a teamwork approach.
- Providing schools with a streamlined approach which is clear to all and avoids duplication.
- Considering how the service can be embedded within care/pastoral care teams.

> o *Relationships on the ground are key. Developing these is vital (EWS respondent).*
> o *Set up protocols for work so that interagency work is not optional (SCP respondent).*
> o *Shared vision, all stakeholders to buy into vision, clarity of roles defined, build relationship of trust, 3 services to have input as to whether case is progressed through court system (HSCL respondent).*
> o *One school, one co-ordinator, one budget school based and managed under clearly defined parameters (School respondent).*

Respondents suggested the challenges of closer integration with schools may be addressed by:
- Ensuring there is clear communication from the NEWB to schools about the integrated structures.
- Ensuring clear directives at a national level.
- Delivering training for principals and staff and combined in-service for the whole school.

> o *No one service bearing all the responsibility. It will only work if everyone buys into it (School respondent).*
> o *Schools need to be clearly informed about the new integrated service and what is expected of them. Engagement from schools may need to be mandatory (SCP respondent).*
> o *Teach the teachers!!! and the school authorities (HSCL respondent).*
> o *A clear directive that this is now the way to work and what is expected of individuals professionally. Possible in-service for the integrated personnel together (School respondent).*
> o *Educating school staff on the different roles in the integrated service (SCP respondent).*
> o *One school one coordinator, one budget school based and managed under clearly defined parameters (School respondent).*

7.5 The challenges in working with families

Questionnaire respondents emphasise again the importance of working with families as an integral part of the integrated service; in particular they identified the challenge of securing the cooperation and engagement of parents/guardians, building and maintaining trust of parents/guardians, and making families aware that the services are working together. Further identified challenges for the integrated service in working with families included:
- An increasing number of families who need support.
- Targeting families at risk.
- Ensuring that parents/guardians are aware of their legal responsibilities for their children's school attendance.

- The need for timely early interventions.
- Addressing issues which are beyond the remit of the integrated service.

Respondents suggested that working with families could be enhanced by:
- Ensuring more resources.
- Improving joint planning, including cluster planning.
- Delivering more focused interventions with relevant referrals to other agencies.
- Combining in-service training for the integrated service and with schools.
- Developing more forums for sharing information and networking.
- Developing greater public awareness of the laws governing school attendance and their application.

> o *Clearer procedures for dealing with parents who are not engaging with the service (SCP respondent).*
> o *Make parents aware of the negatives outcomes for children without a decent education (SCP respondent).*
> o *Irrespective of the economic situation we need to invest proper resources into the families who need it in order to effect change - otherwise we are repeating the mistakes of the past (SCP respondent).*
> o *Need for a national TV and radio campaign on the issue of parental responsibility for school attendance: it has worked for other areas of social policy!,(School respondent).*
> o *Legislation change to include under 6s will allow early intervention for all agencies (School respondent).*

7.6   Challenges: key messages for the NEWB

The consultation questionnaire asked respondents to identify the main challenges in developing an integrated service. Four areas of challenge were identified:
- The organisational task of designing the integrated service.
- Developing the integrated model of service to children and families.
- Providing resources and supports for the work of the integrated service.
- Responding to the growing need for support for families.

- **The organisational task of designing the integrated service**
  The need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities within an integrated service is seen as a top priority. Respondents see a need to balance the requirement for maintaining the integrity of the current distinctive roles, with a need to avoid duplication of service and have a strong common purpose. The change management task will need effective communication of the new roles and responsibilities, as well as support for building strong mutual trust. In particular, a national strategy for consulting and communicating around role definitions, responsibilities and structures was underlined by respondents. Securing the support of school principals for the change process was emphasised.
  In addition to the main focus on role clarity some specific issues were raised in relation to terms and conditions and job security. The need to build integrated management structures was also raised.

- **Developing the integrated model of service to children and families**
  Developing the integrated service model is one of the key challenges identified in the consultation process. This service model will support collaborative work among the three services and also for the work with schools. Respondents emphasised the need for national guidelines and information sharing protocols, joint assessment and planning processes around children and families, a lead person or key person role and clearly defined links to school teams.

  Respondents also emphasised the need for staff to be able to invest the time needed for collaborative work; clear schedules and effective longer term planning was seen as part of the solution to the allocation of time, as well as opportunities for continuing professional development within the integrated service and with school staff.

  Respondents highlighted the importance of strengthening support for students and families, continuing investment in home visits to parents, timely early intervention, and clear targeting of the increasing number of families in need of support. The approach should be to raise family awareness about the integrated service, and build trust and engagement, while also making parents more aware of their responsibilities for the children's education.

- **Providing supports for the work of the integrated service**
  Respondents identified resourcing as a key challenge for the integrated service, and resource restrictions as a threat to future development. Both the overall reductions in resources and

reductions in provision for marginalised groups were a concern, as well as reduced numbers of staff in particular services. The importance of equitable resourcing was emphasised. In terms of fairness and equitable resourcing, the need to give consideration to children outside DEIS schools was raised.

- **Responding to the growing need for support for families**
  The increasing number of families needing support, and the complexity of their support needs, pose a challenge for the integrated service. Respondents believe that this reality underlines the importance of identifying those who may be risk, providing timely and early interventions, and supporting parents to take up their responsibilities for the children's learning.

8   Supporting staff and managers to provide an integrated service

The questionnaire consultation asked staff and managers in the EWS, HSCL and the SCP to consider what supports they require to provide an integrated service for pupils and families. This chapter provides the analysis of the responses to the consultation question on staff and management support in the following sections:

Section 8.1   Supporting staff to provide an integrated service: an overview of responses
Section 8.2   Staff contribution to the development of an integrated service
Section 8.3   Supporting managers to provide an integrated service: an overview of responses
Section 8.4   Management contribution to the development of an integrated service
Section 8.5   Supporting staff and managers: key messages for the NEWB

8.1   Supporting staff to provide an integrated service: an overview of responses

Consultation questionnaire respondents who worked in the EWS, HSCL or the SCP were asked to identify which of the following supports would help them in their work. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each support on a scale of 1-7, where 1 was most important.

- Role definition.
- Clarification of responsibilities.
- Peer support.
- Management support structure.
- Relevant continuing professional development.
- Opportunities for networking with others.
- Knowledge data and information sharing.

The response to the questionnaire consultation showed that NEWB service staff consider that:

- Role definition is the most important support, ranked the most important by 52% of respondent staff. In relation to role definition, staff would like to have their own roles clarified and to have these roles clearly communicated to all relevant staff.
- Knowledge, data and information sharing across the NEWB services is the second most important support, ranked the most important by 39% of respondent staff. This includes the development of guidelines including guidelines on data protection, confidentiality and record keeping.
- Management support structure was ranked as the most important staff support by 26% of respondent staff. Staff referred to the potential for integrated management structures, clear lines of accountability and national guidance.
- Clarification of responsibilities was ranked as the most important staff support by 24% of respondent staff. Staff would like to have their own responsibilities clarified. They would also like to have other staff responsibilities clarified.
- Relevant continuing professional development was ranked as the most important staff support by 20% of respondent staff. Staff indicated that the support required is joint CPD and training across the three services. They would like training on new developments, legislation and guidelines and to have on-going training.

- Opportunities for networking were ranked as the most important staff support by 14% of respondent staff. This related to networking support through a regular schedule of meetings.
- Peer support was ranked as the most important staff support by 14% of respondent staff. Staff respondents said that they would like to enhance peer support through regular meetings. See Figure 11 below.

Figure 11: Supports required by EWS, SCP and HSCL staff: overview of responses
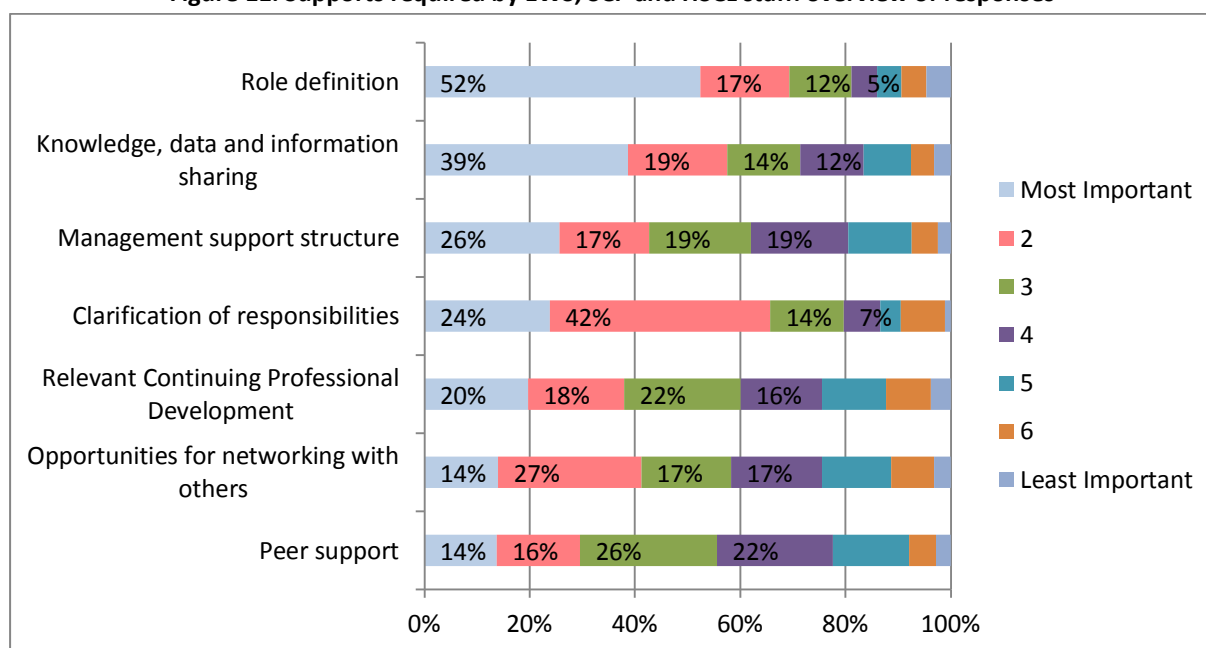
SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

8.2 Staff contribution to the development of an integrated service

The questionnaire asked staff to consider how they might in their specific role, contribute to the development of an integrated service. Staff respondents noted the importance of working collaboratively (24.9%, 114 responses) and in most of these responses the route to achieving this was identified as being through regular joint meetings. Responses were characterised by positivity towards engagement and a willingness to work on integration. See Table 16 below.

Table 16: Staff contribution to the development of an integrated service

	Total number of responses	% of total responses
Working collaboratively - through joint meetings and planning	114	24.9%
Specific job related tasks	92	20.1%
Did not answer[7]	65	14.2%
Being flexible, open to change, and new ways of working	60	13.1%
Sharing knowledge and information on families and services	41	9.0%
Sharing practice and experience with other services	40	8.7%
Contributing to open and transparent communication	38	8.3%
Other	8	1.7%
Total	**458**	**100.0%**

SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

Respondents comments on ways in which they could contribute **positively** to the development of an integrated service included:

- *By providing good leadership, contributing to on-going discussions. Looking at the bigger picture, not vested interests. Keeping the best outcomes for children to the forefront of what I do (EWS respondent).*
- *Having clarity of my own role. Taking a lead locally in co-ordinating some interventions. Committing to change (EWS respondent).*
- *I would be delighted to take on a more active role if asked but as for now I will contribute fully to the process and implement any agreed changes for the good of the service to young people. Young people are my priority and therefore remain my focus at all times, I think that if we can instil this simple ethos in all service providers it will go a long way towards establishing a best practice model (SCP respondent).*
- *I am very open to developing myself both personally and professionally. I welcome the new challenges the integration of this scheme will bring and see the integration as a positive step to make all the services work together for the benefit of the students and their families (HSCL respondent).*

8.3   Supporting managers to provide an integrated service

Consultation questionnaire respondents who were school principals, members of school boards and Chairs of SCP committees were asked to identify which of the following supports would help them in their work. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each support on a scale of 1-7, where 1 was most important:

- Role definition.
- Knowledge data and information sharing.
- Communication.
- Sharing good practice.
- Guidance and direction.

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[7] Respondent answered the first two elements of the question but did not answer the element asking what contribution they might make.

- Governance and management support.

The response to the questionnaire consultation showed that managers consider that:
- Role definition is the most important support, ranked the most important by 41% of respondent managers.
- Knowledge, data and information sharing is the second most important support to managers, ranked most important by 40% of managers.
- On-going communication was ranked most important support by 31% of managers.
- Sharing good practice was ranked most important by 29% of managers.
- Guidance and direction was ranked most important by 20% of managers.
- Governance/management support was seen as the least important support by managers, (ranked most important by 8% of managers).

See Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Supports required by managers
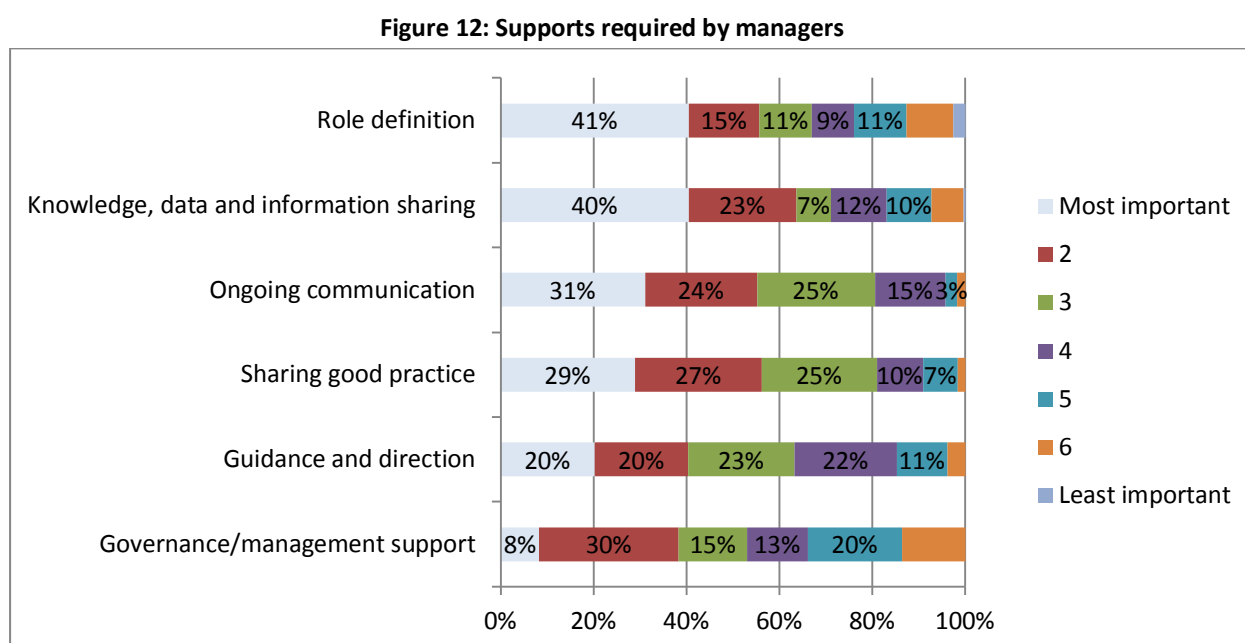
SMCIA NEWB Questionnaire 2011 (Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point)

8.4   Managers contribution to the development of an integrated service

Managers were asked to consider how they might in their specific role, contribute to the development of an integrated service. One fifth of responses (19.9%, 36 responses) related to working collaboratively, with managers suggesting they could play a role in facilitating and participating in joint meetings and committees. Other contributions suggested by managers were: sharing practice and professional experience with school staff and the integrated service (9.4%, 17 responses); sharing relevant information on pupils and families with school staff and the integrated services and other agencies (6.6%, 12 responses) and contributing to open communication between school staff and the integrated service staff (6.1%, 11 responses). Responses were characterised by positivity towards engagement and a willingness to work on integration.

- *I am already involved in an integrated approach to attendance and retention. I attend monthly attendance meetings and I along with other principals in the area sit on the SCP Board. There is open communication and sharing of ideas. There is wonderful support from SCP, HSCL, EWS and other principals. We have a common attendance strategy (School respondent).*
- *I'm a Principal and the most important way I can help is to be enthusiastic, to believe that this is the right approach and, especially in these hard times, to model hope. I have to be really positive about it and believe it can be achieved. All of that said, I have to keep myself informed, look at models of good practice and put really practical steps in place, in consultation with the key stakeholders, to ensure it happens (School respondent).*
- *By sharing info, by contributing to team meetings. I would like to see online, electronic sharing of info and online discussion forums (School respondent).*
- *Through a willingness to work collaboratively with the EWS, SCP and possibly the HSE by attending joint meetings, serving on joint committees with a view to setting clear structures to work with pupils and their families on an individual and whole school level. However, there is a lot of good work already happening in this area and it may simply require further honing and strengthening of present systems (School respondent).*
- *Make time to meet with personnel on an integrated approach at beginning of the year where roles are clearly defined. Introduce personnel to school staff. Allow staff to ask questions and put forward concerns to other agencies. Develop a way of reporting the challenges/successes (School respondent).*

8.5   Supporting staff and managers: key messages for the NEWB

The questionnaire consultation asked NEWB service staff and their managers to rank the importance of listed supports which could help them in their work.

- The feedback about the support priorities of staff and managers clearly mirrors their vision for the integrated service and their views about where the challenges and opportunities lie in moving towards an integrated response to students' attendance, participation and retention.

- Once again, clarity about roles and responsibilities are a core focus, emphasising people's wish for certainty about how their professional role will develop into the future as part of NEWB's model of integrated practice.

- Continuing professional development, networking and peer support all form part of well-established mechanisms for enabling staff to develop their practice. Clearly staff and managers place a high premium on having access to opportunities for such supports to help them to make the transition to integrated working processes.

- Sharing knowledge, data and information is fundamental to multidisciplinary working. Staff and managers reinforced the importance of good systems for this critical aspect of 'one child, one team, one plan'.

- The management structure through which staff at local level are provided with effective leadership, systems of accountability and on-going guidance are seen as an important part of the organisational support for integration.

- A central message from this part of the consultation is the strongly positive commitment and interest on the part of staff and managers in contributing practically to the development of the integrated service.

9 The consultation workshops

This chapter provides the key findings from the five regional consultation workshops held during November 2011.

The chapter is structured as follows:

Section 9.1   Overview of emergent themes
Section 9.2   Improving attendance, participation
Section 9.3   Strengthening integrated practice: One Child, One Team, One Plan
Section 9.4   Measuring progress
Section 9.5   Key actions from plenary sessions
Section 9.5   The consultation workshops: key messages for the NEWB.

9.1   Overview of emergent themes

Participants in the consultation workshops (see chapter 2 for details) were asked to consider two questions:

- Strengthening prevention: How do we use the collective resources and skills of school staff and the three services in an integrated way to help all pupils to attend, participate and stay in school?
- Effective intervention with individual pupils experiencing difficulty: How do we work in teams to implement 'One Child, One Team, One Plan'? What would this mean for local practice?

In response to both questions, three overlapping themes emerged. The consultation workshops showed a strong expectation that the integrated service should:

- Improve attendance, participation and retention.
- Strengthen integrated practice.
- Measure progress.

9.2   Improving attendance, participation and retention

The workshop discussions confirmed the finding of the questionnaire consultation that the vision for the integrated service is improving attendance, participation and retention.

Improved attendance was seen as a key outcome for the integrated service, and workshop participants had a shared vision for improving attendance for pupils of all ages and backgrounds, and at all stages of their education.

Strengthened participation was also seen as a key outcome for the service, with participants considering that all pupils should be actively engaged in all aspects of school life, and have a positive school experience, both academically and socially. They considered that this would create a sense of belonging with pupils feeing valued and supported to reach their full potential. Workshop

participants also stressed that improved pupil participation would be enhanced by improved parental engagement and support.

Participants emphasised the importance of increasing the number of pupils staying in school longer. There were varying aspirations, including that:
- There would be 100% successful transfer rate from primary to post-primary level.
- All pupils would complete the Junior Certificate.
- All pupils would complete the Leaving Certificate, and would progress to third level education or training.

Workshop participants highlighted the practices that they considered to be especially important as preventive measures and to support better attendance, participation and retention:
- Ensuring effective early intervention.
- Fostering a positive and welcoming school environment.
- Providing a flexible curriculum.
- Managing effective transitions.
- Engaging and supporting pupils.
- Engaging and supporting parents/guardians.
- Implementing a national attendance strategy.

9.2.1   Ensuring effective early intervention

Workshop participants stressed the importance of early intervention, in particular the importance of establishing good practice in the early years and of educating parents/guardians on the importance of school and education. Several groups suggested that this focus on the early years should include a review of the Educational (Welfare) Act 2000 to include children under 6 and those aged 16-18. Participants considered that progress made through successful intervention in the early years should be maintained by ensuring effective transitions at all stages, including crucially from primary to post-primary settings.

9.2.2   Fostering a positive and welcoming school environment

Workshop participants stressed that the school environment should provide recognition and positive affirmation for pupils and their families - this should include recognition of different children's individual learning needs and circumstances. All children should be able to participate equally in school life. A key objective would be to enhance the quality of relationship between pupils and school, and provide a happy environment both socially and academically. They considered that, within the integrated service, all staff should understand their role and accountabilities in ensuring school is a positive experience for all pupils.

9.2.3   Providing a flexible curriculum

Workshop participants considered that schools should provide a flexible curriculum responsive to individual needs and which would use a variety of methodologies, for example, school mentoring, group work, social skills, skills to participate in school; cross curricular programmes such as drama and the arts.

9.2.4   Managing effective transitions

Workshop participants considered that children should have appropriate literacy and numeracy levels prior to transfer to post primary schools. They should be supported during various transitions and all relevant information about them should be transferred during transitions. Suggested strategies for managing effective transitions included peer support, mentoring by a significant adult and formal transitioning programmes.

9.2.5   Engaging and supporting pupils

Workshop participants noted the importance of engaging positively with pupils to reinforce their attendance and participation in school. Workshop participants considered that schools should continue to offer a range of supports such as breakfast clubs, homework clubs, and after school clubs to support individual pupils. Behaviour support programmes and services should also be available for those who require these individualised supports. Access to therapeutic interventions for those who need it was also seen to be important.

9.2.6   Engaging and supporting parents/guardians

Workshop participants considered that parents/guardians should be encouraged by the integrated service to become more engaged in their child's education through a combination of activities and services.

Participants considered that there could be increased opportunities for parents/guardians to engage with school life and get involved in school activities e.g. Maths for Fun, reading programmes, school musicals and sports activities. The integrated service could provide support for parents/ guardians through regular communication, involving parents in activities directly related to their child's education e.g. parents evenings and transition programmes, and engaging parents/guardians in their personal educational development. A number of groups mentioned the need to restore services for Travellers such as the Visiting Teacher for Traveller (VTT) service.

9.2.7   A national attendance strategy

Workshop participants stressed that a national standardised attendance strategy should be implemented across all schools and could include:
* Ensuring proactive whole school attendance policies/practices in schools – e.g. all absentees could be phoned, parents/guardians informed and parents/guardians could be encouraged to phone school to report non attendances.

- Having school level structures focused on attendance such as post holders in school with this responsibility with links to the pastoral care team.
- Having sufficient EWO resources to ensure that legal requirements are implemented.
- Using incentivising rewards system to engage pupils – e.g. points system and certificates.
- Ensuring that monitoring and tracking systems are in place, the data analysed and the results used by NEWB to promote pupils engagement with school.
- School level attendance targets.
- Provision for local integrated tracking and monitoring of attendance, with joint plans developed by local network meetings.

9.3 Strengthening integrated practice – one child, one team, one plan

Consultation workshop participants stressed that effective intervention should involve a model of integrated service provision that would harness the NEWB service, schools and other relevant agencies, including both statutory and non-statutory provision, to improve attendance, participation and retention.

Workshop participants suggested that ways of strengthening integrated practice included:
- The development of a robust and child centred model of integrated service provision with clear roles.
- A care team model.
- National guidelines to support local practice.
- An effective change management process.

9.3.1 A robust and child-centred model of integrated service provision with clear roles

Workshop participants considered that the model for the integrated service should build upon the strengths and expertise of the three NEWB services, for example:
- Engaging parents/guardians through a range of practice (HSCL).
- Working directly with the child to create a positive impression of school and reward attendance (SCP).
- Co-ordinating the plan and dealing with court procedures, referrals (EWS).

Workshop participants also considered that – through clarification of roles – the integrated service could develop effective working links with other support services, in particular HSE services. Clear role definition would avoid duplication of services and ensure the most appropriate interventions from the most appropriate service/staff.

Workshop participants considered that the integrated service model should require development of child centred intervention plans, achieved through a schedule of regular team meetings including a requirement to attend, time for meetings, agreement to minuted actions, and follow up and review of minuted actions. Participants also considered that there should be full and open communication

with effective and timely sharing of information. Participants also considered that the integrated service model should include appropriate participation of pupils and their families.

9.3.2   A care team model

Workshop participants suggested that a 'care team' model at both primary and post-primary levels to support pupils experiencing difficulties could strengthen effective intervention. Most groups which suggested this approach did not specify who should be in the care team; however, some groups suggested that the following should be involved: the school principal, parent, class teacher and integrated service staff, the GP, and the social worker. They stressed that this model should result in the implementation of a care plan with a standardised approach to recording and evaluating progress.

Participants identified the need for relevant in-service training provision to enable them to address children's issues including difficult behaviour. They also identified a range of evidence based intervention programmes providing support to children and families.

9.3.3   National guidelines to support local practice

Workshop participants called for the development of national guidelines which would provide a national framework defining, for example, roles and responsibilities within the integrated service, and the requirement to have regular, minuted and follow up inter-agency meetings, together with support for local practice and individual interventions for pupils in need of support. Participants stressed that national guidelines should include guidance on effective information sharing between all relevant services; criteria for identifying children with difficulties in terms of attendance, participation and retention. Participants also wanted the development of a national attendance strategy with clear terms of reference around the process and an agreed plan and priorities.

9.3.4   Effective change management

Workshop participants considered that the model of integrated practice could be promoted through a change management process that would be designed to build trust between the integrated service, other relevant services, parents and pupils.

9.4   Measuring progress

Participants identified a range of approaches to measuring progress including:
- Collating statistical data.
- Monitoring parent, pupil and staff experience.
- Capturing learning about the progress in implementing the integrated service.

9.4.1 Collating statistical data

Workshop participants stressed that school and national education statistics should demonstrate improved attendance, participation and retention. These statistics should include:

- Improved school attendance statistics monitored through the national attendance returns to NEWB. These statistics should be used to measure:
  - Early school leaving rate.
  - Percentage transfer from primary school to post-primary school.
  - Suspensions and expulsions.
- Improved school exam completion statistics which measure:
  - Percentage of pupils taking Junior Certificate.
  - Percentage of pupils taking Leaving Certificate or equivalent.
  - Percentage of pupils going on to third level education.
  - School attainment for all pupils.

9.4.2 Monitoring pupil, parent and staff experience

Monitoring would include school self evaluation which would incorporate feedback from pupils, parents/guardians and from school staff. Improved engagement by parents/guardians could be measured by the level of involvement at parents' evenings and other school events.

9.4.3 Capturing learning about progress in implementing the integrated service

Participants suggested that progress could be demonstrated by:

- The establishment of an integrated service model with clear role descriptions for all services.
- The implementation of care teams with agreed individualised care plans for pupils.
- The development, implementation and monitoring of action plans.
- The establishment of Information sharing protocols.
- A recorded increase in interagency working.

9.5 Key actions from plenary discussions

In the final plenary session of each consultation workshop, groups were asked to identify 'one key practical action proposal' 'about strengthening prevention and effective intervention'. Some groups contributed more than one action. The three top priority actions which workshop participants would like to see are:

- The development of an integrated service with interagency working.
- National guidelines on the definition and clarification of roles.
- National guidelines on team based planning through a regular schedule of meetings.

9.6 The consultation workshops: key messages for the NEWB

The consultation workshops were designed to engage stakeholders in considering the headline findings of the questionnaire consultation, and to provide further qualitative data on strengthening prevention, effective intervention and key practical actions for the NEWB to take in implementing the integrated service.

- The staff of EWS, HSCL and SCP and school principals who participated in consultation workshops had a very clear view that the integrated service must make a visible and measurable difference to student's attendance, participation and retention.

- They endorse the importance of a continuum of support for students. This should range through preventive whole-school approaches and early intervention to the intensive support that can be offered by teams to individual children experiencing difficulty. Participants underline the need to intervene early with children and parents; many advocate for ensuring that services focus on those under 6, with legislative change if necessary to support involvement with this group.

- There was a strong focus on promoting children's engagement with school by offering a welcoming school environment, and a flexible, child-centred approach to curriculum and learning, along with individualised supports matched with assessed need. Support for active parental engagement, strengthening parental awareness of the importance of education, and highlighting their responsibilities for students' school attendance should continue to be a core part of the approach. There is support for child-centred care team approaches, with pupil and family participation, and participation by the key personnel who can help to generate whole-child care plans. Access to individualised supports for students, including in-school and after school supports will continue to be essential to respond to individual need.

- Participants advocate the need for a well-defined model of integrated practice and teamwork that is supported by clear guidance about roles. They propose national guidance for the key aspects of team practice including identification of children needing intensive support, conduct of team meetings, information sharing, assessment, recording and evaluation as well as guidance for national attendance strategies.

- Participants advise that progress should be measured at two levels – progress towards outcomes for students, and progress towards the organisational objective of integration. They suggest three approaches to measurement and evaluation – data collection on key indicators, monitoring the experience of all the stakeholders, and capturing learning about progress towards integrated ways of working.

- Participants make the case for good professional development support and effective processes to build trust among all the participants as the work of integration goes forward.

10 The consultation with children, young people and parents/guardians

This chapter provides key findings from the eleven focused discussion groups with children, young people and families. The groups were convened by NEWB managers and supported by the relevant group worker/leader.   A total of 84 people took part in eleven groups: this included 25 parents/guardians and 59 children and young people. The group profiles are described in chapter 2.

The discussion groups were designed to hear directly from children, young people and parents/guardians about the enablers and barriers that pupils faced in attending or participating in school and the supports that had worked well for them.

The chapter is structured as follows:
Section 10.2   Using incentives to encourage attendance
Section 10.3   Creating a positive school experience
Section 10.4   The importance of engaging parents/guardians in their child's education
Section 10.5   The skills and qualities of the staff
Section 10.6   The issues for young people in care and leaving care
Section 10.7   Supporting families in transition.
Section 10.8   The consultation with children, young people and their families: key messages for the NEWB.

10.1 Using incentives to encourage attendance

In the focused discussion groups, parents/guardians unanimously reported the success of various attendance rewards and incentives within schools. Children were typically given stars or ticks on wall charts in classrooms by teachers for each day of attendance; and special pencils, calculators and certificates were handed out by someone senior within the school to reward attendance. Some parents/guardians spoke with great pride about the certificates that their children had received – some said that they had the certificates framed. Parents/guardians also talked about how eager their children were to get to school on time in order to maintain a good attendance record after they had experienced such incentives.

Parents/guardians comments about incentives and rewards to encourage attendance included:

> o   *He's the one who gets me up out of bed in the morning – 'Mum, get out of bed it's time to go to school'.*

Children themselves became very animated in the discussion groups when they told the researcher about receiving various rewards; and the excitement of, for example, shaking the hand of the head teacher in front of all of their class friends. Children's faces during the discussions were alight with smiles and excitement when they told the researcher about their attendance certificates – with their hands shooting into the air to explain how many they had received.

10.2 Creating a positive school experience

The primary age pupil discussion groups described a very happy school experience, and shared a long list of all the things that they liked about school. For example, one group listed P.E., art, maths, Irish, playing, breakfast club, homework, swimming, English, teachers, poetry.When asked about their dislikes at school, children in the discussion groups generally had a much smaller list than their 'likes'. The 'dislikes' lists included teachers who shout, maths, being kept back and homework. When discussing their dislikes of school with the researcher, the children were laughing and engaging in an open positive manner. The children said they enjoyed school and looked forward to meeting their friends each day.

10.2.1 Accessing before/after school services

Parents/guardians and children in the discussion groups were very positive about breakfast clubs. They appreciated the free nature of the service and the fact that it was an incentive to bring their children to school early. Children told the researcher that they liked talking with friends and eating toast and jam.

The discussion groups included young people in a homework support group (many for whom English was not their first language). Pupils comments about how support services can enhance school experience included:

> o *It's difficult to approach a teacher at my school. My English is not so good. I can work in my own time here. Here it's trusting and it's a small group. My parents can't help. They don't speak English.*

One young person also raised the importance of the actual physical space provided by out-of-school services:

> o *There is no-where to do homework at home.*

10.2.2 Exploring negative experiences of school

In contrast to the primary age children, the discussion groups which engaged post-primary and older age groups of young people had mostly lost their enthusiasm for school. These young people clearly expressed their boredom with school, their dislike for authority figures within school and their dislike of homework. One group of young people spoke about their lack of motivation to come back to school after the school lunch break – preferring to stay at home and watch television – especially if the weather was bad.

Young people participating in the discussion groups wanted to be in much smaller groups in school, rather than in current classes which they thought were too big. When prompted about the optimum class size by the researcher, young people said that somewhere between 8 and 12 in a group would be ideal. They raised two key reasons for this: firstly being able to work at an individual rather than

at a class pace; and secondly the belief that would be 'listened to' in a smaller group. Young people who were attending an alternative education programme said:

> o *You can do things at your own pace here…at school it's too fast.*
> o *People have time to listen to you here.*

Many of the young men participating in the discussion groups expressed a frustration at not being treated as young adults at school:

> o *Seventeen or 18 can be too old for the rules put on you.*
> o *They want us to act like adults but treat us like children.*
> o *We still get treated like little kids.*

10.3 Engaging parents/guardians in their child's education

Parents/guardians engaged in the focused discussion groups highlighted the importance of schools being open, welcoming and non-judgemental. They also considered the influence their own engagement in education had on their children and of their ambitions for their children's education.

The parents/guardians participating in the discussion groups spoke at great length and with enormous admiration for the work undertaken by various professionals in engaging them in their child's education. Parents/guardians comments included:

> o *It's a good school, you can come and talk to the teachers, and they don't 'be-little' you. There's no favourites. It's about team work – parents and teachers. It's a very open school.*
> o *They (schools) need to get the message out that your kids are thrilled to see you in school.*
> o *We benefit from it, you can talk to others if you have problems, we support each other and share parenting, and everyone is welcome.*
> o *It (being in school) opens the lines of communication, not just between you and the kids – but between you and the teacher.*
> o *The children seeing us learn makes the children learn.*
> o *I used to get frustrated at their behaviour but she's shown me creative ways to develop the kids.*
> o *Since I've sat down and done homework with my child the communication with her! It's a different (positive) relationship.*

The consultation included discussion with women who had been supported by NEWB staff to complete their Junior Certificates; and who were intending to complete the Leaving Certificate. They said this was a direct consequence of belonging to the parent groups, the influence of the group leader and wanting to do 'the best' for their child and themselves. They said:

> o *I want her to have a better future than I did. I don't want her to make the same mistakes I did.*
> o *She tells us about opportunities for our children.*
> o *She tells us that college is for our children.*

One parent/guardian since attending the parents group had started a course at college and remarked:

> o *Who would have thought that someone from my background would do that?*

Another parent/guardian commented:

> o *I've learned more since coming to school with my child than I ever did when I was as school.*

Young people participating in the discussion groups reinforced the points made by parent/guardians. The young people considered that if their own parents/guardians had completed the Junior Certificate then maybe there would be a 'push' from home for them to complete their Junior Certificate. In one discussion group a brief conversation concluded that parental success in education could mean that parents/guardians would support their own children to succeed in education.

The theme of parental school completion/success was discussed by a group of young men being supported to remain in school by SCP. It emerged that they thought that the fact that their own parents had completed the Junior Certificate had contributed to their (the young men's) decision to stay on at school. Although the school was situated in an area of significant disadvantage this group was from a local area of owner-occupied housing. They commented that some young men (all from an area of local authority housing) had dropped out of the group and school. They thought that was partly because the parents of that particular group had not completed their own education, and partly because of the culture of the area.

10.4 The skills and qualities of the staff

One focused discussion group with young people talked with great appreciation of the group leader and said that it was a key reason why they attended the group. Indeed, the personal qualities of group leaders appeared to be paramount when the researcher prompted why children/young people attend after school activities/clubs. They said:

> o *She's up for a laugh. She gets 'you'.*

The parent/guardians also noted that the key to the success of attracting and maintaining members were the personal qualities of the professionals who ran the groups:

> o *They don't make you feel like you're a no-body.*
> o *She is a 'doer, she's genuine and doesn't judge you. She doesn't feel like an 'authority' figure.*
> o *She goes beyond her job – they all do in here.*
> o *She's a between person, a sort of go-between. If I don't have the confidence or don't want to go to a certain teacher to say my child has a problem I know I can tell her and she will sort it out.*
> o *I found trust, and I can tell you it's the last place I expected to find trust after all the trouble I've had.*

10.5 The issues for young people in care and leaving care

Two young people with experience of care participated in a discussion group. Particular issues identified during the discussion group included:
- The need to a maintain school place despite moves in the care system.
- The sharing of information about their care arrangements with school staff and the need for this to be managed with sensitivity and in consultation with the young person concerned.
- A sense of feeling different and having to manage different challenges that their peers did not have to think about.
- One of the young people who used to be in care talked about the impossibility of being able to concentrate on his education when he was always thinking about his 18th birthday, when technically he became an adult and therefore had to leave the care/fostering system. He talked of the sudden reality of having to find somewhere to live and look after himself:

> o *How can you concentrate on exams if you know you are going to be put in a hostel?....You can't go to school feeling rotten at school.*

10.6 Supporting families in transition

Some parents/guardians spoke about the importance of work undertaken by staff around transition from primary to post-primary schools for their children, for example taking families to see the new school and meet some of the staff. This helped to allay potential anxieties for both themselves and their children.

10.7 The consultation with children, young people and parents/guardians: key messages for the NEWB

The focused discussion groups with children, young people and parents/guardians considered the enablers and barriers that pupils faced in attending and participating in school and the supports that had worked well for them.

Children, young people and parents/guardians identified the following enablers of school engagement:
- Rewards and incentives to encourage attendance.
- Accessing out-of-school services such as breakfast clubs.
- A happy school experience**.**
- Engaging parents/guardians in their child's education.
- Staff having the right skills and qualities to engage pupils.
- Support through the transition from primary to post-primary school.
- Smaller class groups.
- Being able to work at your own pace.
- Being listened to.

Children, young people and parents/guardians identified the following barriers to engagement in school:

- Boring classes.
- Not being treated like young adults.
- Dislike of homework and a lack of space at home to do homework.
- Poor communication with staff.
- Worries about life, including worries that young care leavers have about leaving the care system at 18.
- Big class groups and not being listened to.

11 Conclusions

11.1 Strong support and unified vision for the integrated service

A central message from the consultation is the strongly positive commitment and interest on the part of staff and managers in contributing practically to the development of the integrated service. The level of mutual respect and trust demonstrated in the course of the various stages of the consultation process provides a strong base for moving forward towards an integrated service. Another key message was the engagement of school personnel in the consultation process and a positive view on the opportunities for greater collaboration in trying to address the needs of children in school.

There is a strong shared vision for the integrated service, with stakeholders expecting the service to help children and young people to complete their education, attain well, have a high quality educational experience and be supported to do so, in particular those pupils and families who are most marginalised and most in need of support. Strengthened participation was seen as being enhanced by ensuring that pupils have a high quality school experience, and that parents/guardians continue to be supported by the service.

Establishing a common vision and developing shared goals are crucial parts of any change process. This shared vision for the integrated service provides an excellent basis for the implementation of the integrated service.

11.2 Building on the existing base

Stakeholders across the three services and schools have a shared positive view of the strengths of each service, with collaboration seen as a strength across all NEWB services.

- Respondents value the structured approach that the EWS adopts to working with individual children and their families, and the support EWS provides for prevention work by schools and colleagues in HSCL and SCP. The statutory role is also seen as significant, and the access to sanctions when all else has failed.

- The core work of HSCL in building trust between home, school and communities and in engaging marginalised parents in their own personal development, in order that they can better support their children's learning was seen as highly valuable. The work has a strong preventive aspect by enabling issues relating to a student's attendance and participation to be identified early.

- The work of SCP with students, both in and out of school, in particular the wide ranging supports for many aspects of children's lives, their behaviour, their learning and personal development was seen as hugely positive. These supports can help in an on-going way or at critical times in a child's life. The flexible approach at local level, and the collaboration built up with the other

services was seen as important in addressing attendance issues and non-engagement in the education system.

- This consensus on the key strengths of NEWB services provides an important base of mutual respect and trust on which to build the integrated service. This also provides a strong base from which to develop and strengthen what the services already do well and demonstrates a mutual recognition that the NEWB integrated service is not starting from scratch. Stakeholders want to build on what services currently do well, and to maintain the strengths of each service, as roles and responsibilities within the integrated service are developed.

11.3 Shaping the future of the service

Respondents gave their views on the future shape of the integrated service, the challenges involved in moving to an integrated service, and how those challenges could be met successfully. Views centred on:
- Developing the integrated model of service to children and families.
- The organisational task of designing the integrated service.
- Providing resources and supports for the work of the integrated service.

11.3.1 The integrated model of service to children and families

There is strong support for a multi-dimensional model that includes prevention, early intervention, and teamwork with individual children along the lines of 'one child, one team, one plan.'

Respondents see the need for structured teamwork practice involving a unified approach to identifying children most at risk, jointly assessing individual needs, and joint planning of interventions and supports based around structured team-based interventions, working through formal meetings and collaborative working. The benefits of closer collaboration would include better use of resources, minimising duplication, and greater clarity of purpose. A core value for respondents is that students and families would be actively involved in their own plan, tailored to their unique needs.

Preventive work in particular can be strengthened through closer links with school staff at a whole school level, through participation by NEWB services in whole school planning, and having a joint attendance strategy with agreed targets. There was a strong focus on promoting children's engagement with school by offering a welcoming school environment, and a flexible, child-centred approach to curriculum and learning, along with individualised supports matched with assessed need.

The continuing need for individualised supports for students emerged strongly, not only in relation to attendance but also to support students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Respondents stressed the importance of continuing to engage with parents and families as part of the model of integrated working, both as an important preventive practice and by working closely with families experiencing particular difficulties; home visits are seen as a valuable mechanism for this work. The integrated service should be part of a wider network of support at school level, including pastoral care team members and other education support services.

Respondents suggest that the approach to working with individual students and families should be supported by joint yearly plans, based on a whole-school approach, protocols for information-sharing, and effective joint continuing professional development (CPD).

A key message for the NEWB is that the barriers to school attendance, participation and retention are not always located solely in the child or young person. It is seen as vital that, as part of the model of integrated practice, NEWB staff build networks locally to facilitate consultation and referral to other support services who can address the wide ranging issues that can be affecting the child. Key suggestions for practical arrangements for supporting the inclusion of services and agencies in the wider network of support were:

- o Formal regular interagency meetings.
- o Formalised information sharing protocols.
- o Joint interagency training and CPD.
- o Regular structured communication channels.
- o Opportunities for local networking and getting to know each other.
- o National level linkages between the services to develop more formalised integrated working.

11.3.2 The organisational task of designing the integrated service

The need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities within an integrated service is seen as a top priority, emphasising people's wish for certainty about how their professional role will develop into the future as part of NEWB's model of integrated practice. Distinct and complementary roles were favoured, along a continuum from prevention to prosecution. Respondents see a need to balance the requirement for maintaining the integrity of the current distinctive roles, with a need to avoid duplication of service and have a strong common purpose.

The management structure through which staff at local level are provided with effective leadership, systems of accountability and on-going guidance are seen as an important part of the organisational support for integration.

The change management task will need effective communication of the new roles and responsibilities, as well as support for building strong mutual trust. In particular, a national strategy for consulting around and communicating around role definitions, responsibilities and structures was underlined by respondents. Securing the support of school principals for the change process was emphasised.

Participants had a clear view that the integrated service must make a visible and measurable difference to student's attendance, participation and retention. They advised that progress should be measured at two levels – progress towards outcomes for students, and progress towards the organisational objective of integration. They suggest three approaches to measurement and evaluation:

- o Data collection on key indicators.
- o Monitoring the experience of all the stakeholders.
- o Capturing learning about progress towards integrated ways of working.

In terms of the scope of the service, many participants advocated for ensuring that the services focus on those under 6, with legislative change if necessary to support involvement with this group, and that those over 16 should be able to access the integrated service.

11.3.3 Providing resources and supports for the work of the integrated service

Continuing professional development, networking and peer support all form part of well-established mechanisms for enabling staff to develop their practice. Clearly staff and managers place a high premium on having access to opportunities for such supports to help them to make the transition to integrated working processes. In terms of fairness and equitable resourcing, the need to give consideration to children outside DEIS schools was raised.

Respondents identified resourcing as a key challenge for the integrated service, and resource restrictions as a threat to future development. Both the overall reductions in resources and reductions in provision for marginalised groups were a concern, as well as reduced numbers of staff in particular services. The importance of equitable resourcing was emphasised.

12 Recommendations

1. Given the very positive engagement by staff of the services, school personnel and principals, with the consultation process, NEWB should aim to move the integration forward quickly to capitalise on that interest;

2. NEWB should utilise the feedback from the consultation to propose a strong vision statement for the integrated service that will help to build a sense of common purpose. The vision statement should capture the commitment to placing children at the centre of the service, and recognising their parents and families as partners in the educational task.

3. NEWB's approach to integrated service delivery should consider and build on the views documented in the consultation, in particular the many practical and workable proposals around structured arrangements for team working. The Board should look at ways of continuing to research, refine and share existing good practice.

4. The integrated model of practice should be supported through clear role descriptions, responsibilities, provision of practice guidelines, joint CPD, joint planning and information sharing.

5. The importance of close working relationships with schools and school management should inform the model of integrated practice; NEWB should continue to build a partnership with schools that respects and makes use of the knowledge and expertise of school staff, and that recognises the profound impact of school and school culture on attendance, participation and retention. The development of NEWB Guidelines on School Attendance Strategies, as provided for in the Education Welfare Act 2000 should be of considerable assistance in this regard.

6. As part of a whole-child approach to service provision, NEWB should strengthen linkages and develop practical working arrangements with other agencies documented by respondents to be vital to the 'network of support'.

7. NEWB should continue to hear the views of parents / guardians and children who avail of NEWB services to ensure that the service is meeting their needs.

8. NEWB should develop a structured approach to measuring outcomes for children, taking account of the proposals made in this consultation for a multi-faceted approach to gathering data on outcomes.

9. A programme of professional development for integrated working, as well as opportunities for on-going peer support and shared learning will be an important support for an effective integrated service.

10. Consideration should be given by NEWB to the policy implications of the views about equitable access to the services of the Board, including those under 6 years old, those over 16 or who have left school, and children outside DEIS areas who experience marginalisation and disadvantage.

11. NEWB should work with relevant government departments, particularly DCYA and DES, to ensure the best outcomes for children through an integrated service approach. Part of this work is to ensure that resources are maintained to deliver best outcomes for children in relation to attendance, participation and retention.

Appendices

1. Consultation questionnaire

2. Consultation workshop programme

3. Consultation workshop groupwork

4. Consultation with service users briefing note for group leaders

5. Consultation with service users briefing note for parents

6. Consultation with service users briefing note for young people

7. Consultation with service users consent form

1. Gathering the views of stakeholders

The Department of Education and Skills has charged the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) with bringing together the School Completion Programme (SCP), the Home/ School/Community Liaison programme (HSCL) and the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) into one integrated service in order to support student attendance, participation and retention.

NEWB is now undertaking a consultation to gather views from all key stakeholder groups about how the integrated service should be structured.

Please see the briefing document at www.newb.ie for further information.

Responses to the questionnaire are confidential. Responses may be anonymous if you wish.

LATEST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES IS FRIDAY 14th OCTOBER 2011

The responses to the consultation questionnaire will be analysed independently on behalf of NEWB by SMCI Associates. SMCI Associates is registered under the UK Data Protection Act 1998: registration number Z1092649.

The feedback will be used to inform proposals for an integrated service and will be further explored in a series of consultation workshops to be held in November 2011.

A summary report will be provided in due course at www.newb.ie.

If you have any queries about completing the questionnaire, please contact Heather Norris at heather@smciassociates.com.

If you have any queries about the integration of the EWS, HSCL and SCP, please contact Elaine O'Mahoney at elaine.omahoney@newb.ie

2. What is working well at present?

What is working well at present?

Here we are seeking views about the most effective ways in which the services (EWS, HSCL and SCP) currently support students to maximise school attendance, participation.

1. Please give us examples of what is working well within any of the services?

Educational Welfare Service	
Home/School/Community Liaison Scheme	
School Completion Programme	

2. Please give examples of what is working well collaboratively amongst the services of the Educational Welfare Service, Home/School/Community Liaison Scheme and School Completion Programme (i.e. all three services or two of the services).

1.

2.

3.

3. Scope for strengthening collaboration and integration

Scope for strengthening collaboration and integration

Here we invite views about where new opportunities lie for strengthening the supports for students, families and schools through the integration of the EWS, HSCL and SCP. These questions focus on three guiding principles for this process:
1. Strengthening prevention,
2. Strengthening teamwork - One Child, One Team, One Plan - working cohesively to secure better outcomes for children, and
3. Strengthening the network of support - reinforcing connections to other services whose work offers essential support for helping students to remain in and benefit from education.

3. Strengthening prevention.

How could an integrated service best support schools to help students maximise school attendance, participation and retention?

Please list in order of importance.

1. [   ]
2. [   ]
3. [   ]
4. [   ]

4. Strengthening teamwork.

What opportunities exist for an integrated service of EWS, HSCL and SCP to work collaboratively to maximise student attendance, participation and retention?

5. Strengthening teamwork.

What opportunities exist for an integrated service to build teamwork with members of school staff to maximise student attendance, participation and retention?

6. Strengthening teamwork.

What opportunities exist for an integrated service to enhance meaningful and respectful collaboration with students and their parents/guardians to maximise attendance, participation and retention?

7. Please identify any aspects of the current service(s) which could be adapted or modified to further support integrated practice.

Education Welfare Service

Home/School/Community Liaison

School Completion Programme

4. Strengthening the network of support

Strengthening the network of support to maximise school attendance, participation and retention.

Working with other services and agencies in a child-centred and cohesive approach is required to produce quality outcomes for students and their families ('Strengthening the network of support'). The NEWB under the aegis of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs is charged with devising a single strategic response to attendance, participation and retention. Integration of services will both enable and compel all to ensure that quality outcomes for children and families are secured through engaging in shared approaches to measuring outcomes, sharing knowledge, skills and data, and working together to a joint child-focused agenda.

What other services/agencies do you think should be part of the network of support to maximise school attendance, participation and retention?

8. Most important service/agency to include:

Service/agency name	
Why should this be part of the network of support?	
What practical arrangements could be put in place to support this?	

9. Second most important service/agency to include:

Service/agency name	
Why should this be part of the network of support?	
What practical arrangements could be put in place to support this?	

10. Third most important service/agency to include:

Service/agency name	
Why should this be part of the network of support?	
What practical arrangements could be put in place to support this?	

11. Fourth most important service/agency to include:

Service/agency
name

Why should
this be part of
the network of
support?

What practical
arrangements
could be put in
place to
support this?

5. Vision

12. Vision for the future of an integrated service.

In this section we ask about your hopes and expectations for achieving the best possible educational outcomes for children, young people and their families through a strengthened integrated service provision.

Please tell us the three key educational outcomes for children, young people and their families that you would like to see being achieved through an integrated service.

1. [   ]

2. [   ]

3. [   ]

6. Challenges

13. Challenges.

What are the three key challenges in developing an integrated service?

1.
2.
3.

14. Challenges.

How might these challenges be addressed?

1.
2.
3.

7. Demographics

So that we can analyse your response from the perspective of your service, organisation or agency, please tell us about your role in the following questions.

✱15. What is your service, organisation or agency?

○ School Completion Programme

○ Home/School/Community Liaison Scheme

○ Educational Welfare Service

○ School

○ Other (please specify)

8. School Completion Programme

✱16. Which of the following most closely describes your role?

○ Local Co-Ordinator

○ Project Worker

○ Chairperson of Local Management Committee

○ Member of Local Management Committee

○ Other role in the School Completion Programme (please specify)

9. Home School Community Liaison Scheme

*17. Which of the following most closely describes your role?

○ HSCL Co-Ordinator

○ Other HSCL role (please specify)

10. Educational Welfare Service

*18. Which of the following most closely describes your role?

○ Educational Welfare Officer

○ Senior Educational Welfare Officer

○ Other EWS role (please specify)

11. School role

*19. Which of the following most closely describes your role?

○ Principal

○ Teacher/staff member

○ Chair of Board of Management

○ Member of Board of Management

○ Other school role (please specify)

12. Other organisation

*20. Please describe your role.

13. EWS, HSCL & SCP staff only

21. In order to provide an integrated service for students and families, which of the following supports would help you in your work?

	1 most important	2	3	4	5	6	7 least important
Role definition	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clarification of responsibilities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Peer support	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Management support structure	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Relevant Continuing Professional Development	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Opportunities for networking with others	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledge, data and information sharing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other/comments

22. Please indicate what support you require in these areas:

Role definition

Clarification of responsibilities

Peer support

Management support structure

Relevant Continuing Professional Development

Opportunities for networking with others

Knowledge, data and information sharing

Other/comments

23. How might you, in your specific role, contribute to the development of an integrated service?

14. School Principals, Boards and Chairs of SCP Committees only

24. In order to provide an integrated service for students and families, which of the following supports would help you in your work?

	1 most important	2	3	4	5	6	7 least important
Role definition	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Governance/management support	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ongoing communication	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Guidance and direction	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sharing good practice	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledge, data and information sharing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other/comments

25. Please indicate what support you require in these areas:

Role definition

Governance/management support

Ongoing communication

Guidance and direction

Sharing good practice

Knowledge, data and information sharing

Other/comments

26. How might you, in your specific role, contribute to the development of an integrated service?

15. School type

27. Please describe your school (or school cluster) type, if relevant. Please tick all that apply.

	Primary	Post-primary
DEIS	☐	☐
Non DEIS with SCP	☐	☐
Non DEIS	☐	☐

28. Please describe your school (or school cluster) sector, if relevant. Please tick all that apply.

	Primary	Post-primary
VEC	☐	☐
Community/Comprehensive	☐	☐
Voluntary Secondary	☐	☐

Other (please describe)

[   ]

16. And finally ...

29. Please provide any additional comments/observations you wish to make in relation to the integration of the Educational Welfare Service, Home/School/Community Liaison Scheme and the School Completion Programme.

30. THIS IS THE FINAL QUESTION - IF YOU'D LIKE TO REVIEW YOUR RESPONSES SO FAR THEN YOU CAN GO BACK TO REVIEW THEM, CHANGE THEM OR PRINT THEM OFF.

ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED THE QUESTIONNAIRE, YOU CAN RETURN TO IT (USING THE SAME COMPUTER) TO REVIEW OR CHANGE YOUR RESPONSE.

If you wish, please provide your details here:

Name

Job title

Agency/service/school

Appendix 2

**Providing integrated support
for student attendance, participation and retention in education**

Consultation workshop, November 2011

PROGRAMME

10.00 am   Registration and coffee/tea

10.30 am   Welcome and introduction to the workshop

10.35 am   What the consultation questionnaire told us

11.05 am   Introduction to the groupwork

11.10 am   Groupwork with coffee/tea:

1. Strengthening Prevention:
   How do we use the collective resources and skills of school staff
   and the three services in an integrated way to help **all** students to
   attend, participate and stay in school?

2. Effective intervention with individual students experiencing
   difficulty:
   How do we work in teams to implement 'One Child, One Team,
   One Plan? What would this mean for local practice?

1.10 pm   Plenary

1.25 pm   Closing remarks

1.30 pm   Lunch and depart

Appendix 3

Providing integrated support
for student attendance, participation and retention in education

Consultation workshop, November 2011

Group facilitator
We have identified a facilitator for each group. The role of the facilitator is to keep the group discussion focused on the issues that we are asking you to consider.

Group scribe
We have also identified a scribe for each group. The role of the scribe is to note the groups agreed response to each issue, and to note any key areas of disagreement, using the worksheet provided. **The worksheet should be used to note the conclusions of your group, and handed to the facilitators – you don't need to do any writing up after the workshop!**

In your group please consider what needs to be done to provide an integrated support service for student attendance, participation and retention in education in relation to:

1. Strengthening Prevention:
   How do we use the collective resources and skills of school staff and the three services in an integrated way to help **all** students to attend, participate and stay in school?

2. Effective intervention with individual students experiencing difficulty:
   How do we work in teams to implement 'One Child, One Team, One Plan? What would this mean for local practice?

Finally, reflecting your discussion about strengthening prevention and effective intervention, please identify **one key practical action/proposal** to make at the plenary discussion session.

Please remember to hand this worksheet to one of the consultation team – this will inform the report of the consultation on an integrated service

Appendix 3

Providing integrated support for student attendance, participation and retention in education

Groupwork 1: **Strengthening Prevention: How do we use the collective resources and skills of school staff and the three services in an integrated way to help ALL students to attend, participate and stay in school?**

What outcome do we want to achieve?	How do we achieve this outcome?	How will we know when/if we've achieved the outcome/measure success

Please remember to hand this worksheet to one of the consultation team – this will inform the report of the consultation on an integrated service

Appendix 3

Appendix 3

Providing integrated support for student attendance, participation and retention in education

Groupwork 2:   **Effective intervention with individual students experiencing difficulty:**
                      How do we work in teams to implement 'One Child, One Team, One Plan? What would this mean for local practice?

What outcome do we want to achieve?	How do we achieve this outcome?	How will we know when/if we've achieved the outcome/measure success

Please remember to hand this worksheet to one of the consultation team – this will inform the report of the consultation on an integrated service

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

National Educational Welfare Board
Providing integrated support for student attendance, participation and retention in education

Consulting with children, young people and parents/carers on the new integrated service

What is the consultation?

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) has been asked by the government to bring together the School Completion Programme (SCP), the Home / School / Community Liaison scheme (HSCL) and the Education Welfare Service (EWS) into one integrated service. This new service will work to support students to attend, take part in and stay in school.

In autumn 2011 we are running a consultation survey and workshops for staff working in these services, including school principals. We are also running a number of group discussion meetings for children, young people and their parents/carers to gather their views.

Who are we inviting?

We are inviting groups of children, young people and parents to take part in small informal discussion groups of no more than 8-10 people. We are inviting people to take part through existing networks and groups. This means we will organise the discussion where the group usually meets and at a time when the group usually meets. The length of time of the discussion will vary according to age and the nature of the group. The maximum time will be one hour.

What is the purpose of the discussion?

The purpose of the discussion is to ask children, young people and parents/carers to share their experiences of the above services. Their experiences and their views will be really helpful in designing the new service and so helpful to other children, young people and parents/carers in the future. The discussions will explore their views on what would make a better service through a series of simple questions such as:
- Who have you previously come into contact with that made a difference to your/your child's involvement with school?
- What was it that they did that helped?
- What would make a difference to you in the future?

Who will attend?

We understand that not everyone may wish to take part in the discussion. Participation is entirely voluntary and we would be happy to meet with some of the group if others wish to withdraw. If the group wishes, they can have one of the group workers to sit in on the discussion.

Appendix 4

What happens to the information?

The discussion will be led by a researcher who will make some notes of the key points. These will be combined with the information being gathered from staff working in the services and schools. This information will guide NEWB in the design of the new integrated service.

Please note: The discussion is completely confidential – we do not need to know any names of pupils, schools or where the group is meeting.

Appendix 5

Consulting with children, young people and parents/carers
on the new integrated service

BRIEFING FOR PARENTS/CARERS

What is the consultation?

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) has been asked by the government to bring together the School Completion Programme (SCP), the Home / School / Community Liaison scheme (HSCL) and the Education Welfare Service (EWS) into one integrated service. This new service will work to support students to attend, take part in and stay in school.

In autumn 2011 we are running a consultation survey and workshops for staff working in these services, including school principals. We are also running a number of group discussion meetings for children, young people and parents to gather their views.

Who are we inviting?

We are inviting groups of children, young people and parents to take part in small informal discussion groups of no more than 8-10 people. These groups will take place across Ireland.

What is the purpose of the discussion?

The purpose of the discussion is to ask children, young people and their parents/carers to share their experiences of school support services. Your experiences and views will be really helpful in designing the new service and to be helpful to other children, young people and parents/carers in the future. The discussions will explore their views on what would make a better service through a series of simple questions such as:

- Who have you previously come into contact with that made a difference to you?
- What was it that they did that helped?
- What would make a difference to you in the future?

What happens to the information?

The discussion will be led by a researcher who will make some notes of the key points. These will be combined with the information being gathered from staff working in the services and schools. This information will guide NEWB in the design of the new integrated service. The researchers are not employed by NEWB – they are independent.

The discussion is completely confidential – no names will be used in the report.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers – we really want to listen to your views.

Tea and coffee will be available – the groups will last no more than an hour.

Appendix 6

Talking to young people about support to go to school

Hello – please tell us what you think about school

We would like to ask you if you would take part is a small group discussion (about 6-8 other young people) for about **one hour** with a researcher (Alan). The discussion is because the Government together with the schools are trying to improve the experience of going to and staying at school for young people.

Alan will ask you some questions – questions to which only you can answer. The discussion is really about listening to your views – not the views of parents/carers, teachers or other adults.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers – it is not a test. We really want to hear what you think.

What is the discussion about?

Alan will ask you questions around:
- What could someone do to help you enjoy school and help you want to come to school in the morning and take part in lessons?
- Can you give Alan any examples where someone has done something like this? What did they do? Why did this help?
- Who are the best people to help you with coming to school and taking part in lessons? Why these people in particular?
- What are the best ways for adults to listen to your views on making school more enjoyable, somewhere you want to come in the morning and where you want to take part in lessons ?

What happens to the information?

Alan will make some notes of the key points. Teachers, parents/carers and other staff who work with schools are having their own small group discussions. All of these views will be combined and fed back to the Government and schools to help design a better service for young people that helps them attend, take part and want to stay in school.

The discussion is completely confidential – this means:
- **That no names are used in the report and that it will not be possible to trace any comment or point of view back to an individual.**
- **Alan will not tell teachers or parents/carers what any individual person said – only the general point of view of the group.**

Tea, coffee and juice will be available – the groups will last no more than an hour

Appendix 7

The name of your **son / daughter / young person you care for**:

………………………………………………………….

I give permission for my **son / daughter / young person I care for** to be given the opportunity to take part in the group discussion.

Signed: ………………………………… Date: ………………

Name: …………………………………

Address: …………………………………

                 …………………………………

                 …………………………………

Please return this form to the worker who is explaining the project to you.