

Psychological Support Services for Ballyfermot: Present and Future

Commissioned by:
URBAN Ballyfermot

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Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
1.1 Terms of reference	4
1.2 Methodology	4
Results of Needs Assessment	7
2.1 Priority Needs at Primary School Level	7
• Speech and language	7
• Bullying	9
• Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder	11
• Self-esteem including body image	12
• Emotional support: Short-term and long-term	12
• Parental involvement and family support	13
• Emotional and educational needs of Traveller children	15
• Lack of extracurricular activities	15
• Screening to identify children's problems	16
• Teacher-Pupil interaction	18
• Problems of school attendance	19
2.2 Protective Factors at Primary School Level	20
• Expressed willingness to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate	20
• Ability to talk to at least one person if feeling sad	20
2.3 Other issues	21
• Change to the physical environment of the school to facilitate student ownership of their learning environment	21
2.4 Priority Needs at Secondary School Level	22
• More sex education and relationship education	22
• Emotional support	23
• Teacher-student interaction	24
• Bullying	25
• Substance abuse	26
2.5 Protective Factors at Secondary School Level	27
• Expressed willingness to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate	27
• Ability to talk to at least one person about stresses	28

3.1	Psycho-Social Support Services for Children in Ballyfermot	28
	• Description	28
	• Gaps	33
3.2	Community-based versus school-based counselling	34
4.1	Recommendations	37
	• Overall aims of the project	37
	• Guiding principles	37
	• Outline of the recommended model	38
	• Key points regarding the model	40
	• Tasks of members of the project team	40
	• Opportunity for coordination with existing services	43
	• Management Committee	44
	• Budget	45
	• Location of the project team	46
	• Evaluation Criteria	47
	Appendices	49
	Acknowledgements	67
	Bibliography	69

Executive Summary

The recommended psychological support service includes *both* a school *and* a community based team. This team is complementary to but not a duplication of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). A dual level of referrals from the schools to the community based team is proposed – a) from principals/teachers and b) from the childcare workers who do groupwork and some subsequent individual work with at-risk students. This dual level of referral means that it is not simply those exhibiting serious behavioural difficulties in the classroom who are referred for support but also those whose serious problems are more hidden and internalized rather than externalized. The community based team will have capacity to work with an identified child/youth at individual and/or family levels, whereas NEPS in Ballyfermot does not work at the family level. Upskilling members of the community is a key function of the team:

- Parents' intervention skills will be developed for targetted children with speech and language problems, and attention difficulties respectively
- Teachers' intervention skills will be developed for speech and language interventions, as well as self-awareness for conflict resolution
- Students' skills regarding peer support will be developed for issues such as bullying and mentoring.

Gaps in local psychological support services in Ballyfermot exist regarding availability of counselling for those in late primary and the 12-15 age range, while there is a need for more family therapists and speech and language therapists. The community based team will be located in a centralized location in Ballyfermot; members of the team will also be available onsite for family work with travellers in Labre Park, and for individual work with children most at risk in Cherry Orchard's AfterSchool Project. The choice of the individual student is a key factor regarding whether individual counselling takes place in the school or community based setting.

A student-centred needs assessment methodology was employed. Results from these questionnaires and focus groups across the local schools highlighted: a) particular distress among a range of primary school students regarding bullying, b) a link between non-attendance at school and bullying, c) the need for emotional support, particularly regarding esteem for girls, and d) the lack of extracurricular activities at primary level. At secondary level, the need emerged for a) more emotional support, b) sex and relationship education, and c) interventions for problems of binge drinking affecting school performance for a significant minority of students. The importance of facilitating improved teacher-student interaction with some students was highlighted by comments at both primary and secondary level, and resonates with a view of the school environment as a mental health system. Other priority needs at primary level highlighted by the schools include interventions to improve targetted children's speech and language, and attention problems. Installation of sound-field amplification systems in six primary level classes will be evaluated with regard to their benefits for pupils' speech and language, and attention levels. Further features of the child and student-centred psychological support service include elected student representation at management committee level and a role for secondary school students in the naming of the service. Funding to establish the recommended psychological support service will be provided by URBAN Ballyfermot, the Local Drugs Task Force and Ballyfermot Partnership.

Introduction

1.1 Terms of reference

The objective of this report is to identify and develop a service to meet the psychological needs of students of schoolgoing age in Ballyfermot which are not being catered for by the current psychological services offered by:

- the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)
- the Health Board

Planned interventions of both NEPS and the Health Board to meet the psychological needs of children in Ballyfermot are also to be investigated to ensure that a duplication of services does not occur. The Report of the Planning Group of the National Educational Psychology Service (1998) describes the different areas of concern for NEPS and the Health Boards respectively:

- NEPS has a primary concern with the identification and assessment of special educational needs, with making recommendations for meeting those needs and with contributing in appropriate ways to provision¹.
- Health Board psychologists have a primary concern with the identification and assessment of specific health and treatment needs of individuals and with appropriate contributions to care and treatment.

Identification of unmet psychological needs of children in Ballyfermot must necessarily involve consultation with local stakeholders such as parents, schools, and community/voluntary/statutory groups. URBAN Ballyfermot seek to initiate *innovative* projects in the hope that such projects can:

- be mainstreamed after the initial trial period, in this case two years
- offer models of best practice for other areas and countries

In brief, the task of this report is to outline a model of an innovative service targeted towards resolving unmet psychological needs of the children of Ballyfermot

1.2 Methodology for needs assessment

Two fundamental principles governed the consultation process:

- The importance of hearing the opinions of people from and working in the local community about their perceptions of the unmet needs of the children of Ballyfermot
- The importance of a child-centred consultation process so that young people are actively consulted regarding issues affecting their own welfare

A range of local community, voluntary and statutory groups, including parents groups were consulted (see Acknowledgments) through face-to-face and telephone interviews. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland, espouses the child-centred principle that children have a right to be consulted and to have their voices heard in matters related to their own welfare². Young people's input into the consultation process was obtained through:

- a) questionnaires given to a range of classes in both primary and secondary schools throughout Ballyfermot and

¹ NEPS also has a broader role, for example, in "engaging with teachers, either individually or in small groups, as a partner in a shared endeavour, the psychologist can work co-operatively in identifying issues and in developing strategies and programmes" (Report of Planning Group, 1998)

² See also the National Conjoint Child Health Committee Report (2000, p.30) on direct consultation with young people

- b) focus groups of students selected on the basis that they represented a range of abilities and ages in the schools, and were not simply the students of high ability or those least problematic for teachers (see Patton 1987 on the 'logic of maximum variation').

It was hoped to obtain 100 questionnaire responses in total from at least four different classes in each school:³

- in the 4th-6th class range for the primary schools,
- the 1st-2nd year and 5th year classes for the secondary schools

The secondary school exam years (3rd and 6th years) were not included in the questionnaire sample in order to minimise inconvenience to schools and students during the month of May 2002 when the majority of the questionnaires were distributed.

342 questionnaires (180 girls, 162 boys) were returned in total from the primary schools in Ballyfermot:

Girls' national schools

- 74 were returned from St. Louises,
- 54 from St. Gabriels⁴,
- 52 from St. Michaels

Boys' national schools

- 104 were returned from De la Salle
- 58 from Mary Queen of Angels

20 focus groups were held in the primary schools

- 9 boys focus groups
- 11 girls focus groups

173 questionnaire responses were received from the three participating secondary schools (Kylemore, Caritas, St. Dominics). The boys secondary school in Ballyfermot, St. John's College, have despite several attempts to contact it, not indicated a willingness to participate in the research⁵

- 49 were returned from Kylemore College (33 male and 16 female),
- 43 from Caritas (All female)
- 81 from Dominics 81 (26 male and 55 female)

with twelve focus groups taking place in total, as well as a consultation meeting with the student council from Caritas College.

Each questionnaire stated that:

- the answers given are private
- they do not go to the police, school, family or friends
- there is no right or wrong answer to any of the questions
- students were not being judged on the basis of their answers

The questionnaires were answered in the classroom in the presence of a teacher. The questionnaire responses were to be returned to what was requested to be a sealed envelope for collection.

³ Due to time constraints regarding distribution of the questionnaires in the schools before the summer holidays, it was not possible to run a pilot questionnaire to see if the wording of particular questions were fully comprehensible to students.

⁴ As St. Raphaels N.S is part of the same building as St. Gabriels and St. Michaels, and as there were already more girls' responses than boys' responses, it was decided that there was no need to ask St. Raphaels to distribute the questionnaires

⁵ Similarly, in contrast to the other secondary schools in Ballyfermot, St. John's College, did not provide figures for attendance levels in their school for the report in 1997 commissioned by the Ballyfermot Partnership (Casby 1997)

A key element of the questionnaires was that most of the questions were open questions which allowed for quite a range of answers so that the students could construct their own representations of both problematic areas and also areas of resilience⁶. While closed questions requiring yes/no answers were sometimes included to ascertain quantitative dimensions to specific issues, the predominantly qualitative approach adopted in this research seeks:

- to examine the *detailed range* of perceptions of problematic issues
- give more voice to *individual responses* than simply a focus on the average response

School input

- School representatives from the Ballyfermot Partnership subcommittee were invited to give a presentation of their felt needs and ways of meeting these needs
- A list of questions was subsequently circulated to the schools in order to build up a profile of each school as well as a more individual profile of the needs and resources of each school. Responses to these questions took place either through phone interviews or postal responses from the schools (from either the school principal, deputy principal or home-school liaison officer).
- The questionnaire included questions requested by some school principals.

Meetings were also arranged with groups of teachers from Caritas college and St. Gabriels National School regarding the met and unmet needs of schools in the area.

⁶ The importance of accommodating a strengths based aspect examining protective factors (as well as risk factors) has already been recognised in the Irish context in the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 (see also McKeown et al 2001).

Results of Needs Assessment

Priority issues at primary school level

- Speech and language
- Bullying
- Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder
- Self-esteem including body image
- Emotional support: short-term and long-term
- Parental involvement and family support
- Emotional and educational needs of Traveller children
- Lack of extracurricular activities
- Screening to identify children's problems
- Teacher-Pupil interaction
- Problems of school attendance

Protective factors

- Expressed willingness to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate
- Ability to talk to at least one person if feeling sad

Other issues

- Change to the physical environment of the school to facilitate student ownership of their learning environment

2.1 Priority issues at primary school level

- Speech and language

Lack of available services

The national shortage of speech therapists has clearly impacted detrimentally on the children of Ballyfermot. Responses from primary schools to the question 'How many children in your school are seen by a speech therapist each month' were:

- a) none
- b) none "because there is no service"
- c) "not aware of any child in the last year"
- d) none "no access"
- e) none

This situation has however recently changed with the appointment of a speech therapist in the Child and Family Centre

Many school principals agree that speech and language difficulties are major problems deserving high priority:

- a 'huge number' of children need to be seen by a speech therapist estimating one third of students 'especially boys' in the junior years
- a 'huge backlog' of children in need of speech therapy,
- a home-school liaison teacher referred to a figure of about 10% of young kids between Junior Infants and First class needing speech therapy
- Another principal stated that 25-30 children need speech therapy which is over 10% of the children in the school.
- It was suggested in the Child and Family Clinic that up to 80% of children with emotional problems have language difficulties.
- Another local organisation's representative has suggested that deaf children are not being identified in Ballyfermot schools

Parents have also emphasised the importance of prioritising speech and language needs of their children. One parent stated that she made an appointment for her son when he was 18 months old and he is 'just 5 now'. Three and a half years after making the appointment she received a letter, just recently, offering her an appointment for her son with a speech therapist

The need for facilitation of parental involvement of treatment for their children

Previous programmes in Clondalkin (e.g. A.P.P.L.E⁷, April 1997-July 1999) involved parents in the treatment of their children, and developed a role for four parent co-workers regarding speech and language interventions (McSkeane 1999). Similarly, according to Mary Fanning, Principal Speech & Language therapist in the Ballymun clinic and Mater child guidance centre, the view of the parent as co-therapist is a central feature of their intervention models. In contrast, there is a lack of facilitation of parental involvement in the treatment of their children for speech and language in Ballyfermot.

In Britain, parental involvement in early intervention programmes for children with developmental difficulties is now in widespread practice (Guralnick 1997). In the words of Glogowska & Campbell (2000):

Speech and language therapists working with children routinely deliver treatments using parents and carers, transferring skills and knowledge to equip them to deliver therapy at home (p.391-2)

Citing Ward (1994) and Gibbard (1998), they observe that some speech and language therapy services in Britain are now specifically targeting their resources at teaching parents the language facilitation techniques to implement with their children.

Similar developments have also occurred in the US where a movement has occurred from an individualized, isolated service delivery model in the clinic or treatment room to client-based intervention taking place in a wider variety of settings involving not only the clinician and the child but others in the child's environment or social system, i.e., family members and other professionals (Andrews & Andrews 1986). In the words of Kelly (1995) in the US context:

The impetus for this change has come, at least in part, from our realization and acceptance that others are impacted by and have impact on the child's development. The desired changes in speech, language and fluency behaviors are best served by expanding our treatment teams beyond the clinician-client partnership (p.101)

⁷ Area Partnership Programme for Language Enrichment

Kelly (1995) also emphasises the need, if possible, to involve fathers as well as mothers in the child's speech and language development, as for example, she observed that fathers tend to interrupt their child's utterances more than mothers, and produced nearly double the number of words, syllables and morphemes than mothers (of children who both do and do not stutter) in their interactions with their child.

Glogowska & Campbell's (2000) review of the fears of parents in their initial meetings with speech therapists offers a guide for best practice in overcoming such fears but also *the implication that such fears are arguably even greater in the context of educationally disadvantaged parents*. Glogowska & Campbell note the needs of some parents:

- to have an opportunity to discuss their ideas with the speech therapist especially during the early phase of their involvement
- to be actively involved in intervention with their own child rather than simply in assessment; they cite the complaint of one parent "‘But we didn't really ever do anything...’cos I didn't have any set things that I was supposed to be doing with him'" (p.400)
- for *ongoing* support from the speech therapist or professional, so that the parent would not simply feel left to 'get on with it' without ongoing guidance
- for adequate time and suggestions about activities to accomplish the large role in treatment to be given to parents prior to their intervention role
- for the speech therapist to communicate explicitly to the parents their active role in the speech therapy of the child
- for more information about what progress entails, about appropriate communication levels with regard to their child's age

Other lessons from the A.P.P.L.E model in Clondalkin which would be important to incorporate within a programme involving parental intervention include:

- developing a programme specifically for young mothers where there is a high concentration of young, first time single parents
- train more parent co-workers
- run the parents groups at convenient times for the parents i.e. not the mornings and to include evening times⁸
- design promotional materials which are accessible to people with a low level of literacy

• **Bullying**

Relationships have been found between bullying others on a frequent basis and conduct disorders and poor global self-esteem (see O'Moore et al 1997). Thus *interventions seeking to develop students' self-esteem are clearly complementary to approaches which directly tackle issues of bullying*. The need for such interventions clearly emerges from the frequent references to themes of bullying across the different schools though with quite a range in the levels of bullying even between different classes in the same year

Questionnaire and focus group responses revealed extremely variable levels of prevalence of bullying – not only *very large degrees of variation within the same school but also between different classes in the same year in the same school*. For example, in one girls school, responses to the question 'How many in your class have been bullied?' differed, as follows, between 4th class groupings:

- "a good few" (4th class, F, Q),
- "There were lots bullied in the class" (4th class, F, Q),
- "I don't know but lots" (4th class, F, Q),
- "I don't think anybody has been bullied" (4th class, F, Q)
- "None in my class have been bullied" (4th class, F, Q).

⁸ See also Pitcher (1995, p.14) on the difficulty for working parents in the U.S to attend school meetings during the day

Gender differences were not evident regarding levels of bullying. Some male and female classes revealed extremely high numbers of victims of bullying while others of both gender had quite a low number⁹. Nevertheless even low numbers of victims of bullying do not minimise the pain experienced by individual victims so that even 1 or 2 victims of bullying in a class is a problematic situation, often of intense degree, for those individuals.

- Numbers of people in the class bullied ranged from *all* to *none* depending on the class
- the variation was much more marked between classes than between schools as all the schools had both very low estimates of bullying as well as high levels
- Estimating a number of those bullied obviously also depends on issues of definition of bullying including frequency and intensity of bullying, as well as distinctions between physical and relational aggression. This ambiguity of definition, aptly expressed in a questionnaire response such as “one or some” by one 5th class boy, nevertheless cannot mask the problematic levels of bullying across all the surveyed schools in Ballyfermot

See Appendix A for a sample of quotes giving very high and very low estimates in response to the question ‘How many in your class have been bullied?’

An indication of the seriousness of the problem in the eyes of many pupils is the fact that *bullying was frequently raised as a problem by the pupils themselves when replying to questions which were not directly related to bullying*: ‘If you had the power what would you change in your school?’ ‘What are the biggest problems your friends have? How can they be helped?’

- “I’d have guards to guard me to stop anyone starting on me” (4th class, M, FG¹⁰)
- “I would put cameras on the walls so they would know who is bullying” (4th class, M, Q)
- “bullys, blow up the school” (5th class, M, Q)
- “I would make all the school a bullyfree zone” (6th class, M, Q)
- “If I had the power I would change the bullies out of the school” (4th class, F, Q)
- “I would change all the bullies in my school to geeks” (6th class, F, Q)
- “One of the biggest problems” in the school is bullying (5th class, M, FG) but “you don’t wanna be a rat” (5th class, M, FG)
- “If their hair is different or if they’re smaller they would get called names get more people on yard duty” (5th class, M, Q)

Some parents emphasise the problem of bullying on the streets as well as in school and suggest the need for some mediation involving the parents of the bully and the victim. It was suggested that some ‘angry defensive parents tell children to hit back because they were bullied in school themselves’. They highlight the need generally for support for parents in dealing with their children who have been bullied, though also noting an increasing willingness of children to admit that they have been bullied.

This issue of bullying outside school suggests the need for programmes confronting bullying to be run both in a school context and also a community based context as bullying is not simply confined to school.

Given the high level of distress reported by many pupils regarding bullying the following words of a parent clearly need to be endorsed (in response to the question ‘What would you like to change in the schools’): “Accept children are telling the truth when they are being bullied”

⁹ O’Moore et al’s (1997) nationwide study revealed a statistically significant difference between boys and girls at both primary and secondary levels; boys had a higher incidence of bullying than girls. However, a statistical focus on average levels of bullying may obscure the extremely high levels of variation in bullying from class to class.

¹⁰ FG = Focus Group Response, Q = Questionnaire Response

One Home-School Liaison teacher emphasised the need to support children who are dyspraxic and that they may be targeted for bullying. Another identifiable group of children named by pupils as being at risk of bullying are children who are overweight

An important theme emerging from some responses is *the link between being bullied and not attending school*:

- “I would be absent because sometimes I get bullied” (5th class, M, Q)
- “No-one will end up in school if they keep getting bullied” (6th class, M, FG)
- “Yes I was absent I was being bullied” (5th class, M, Q)
- “One of my friend is being bullied. They can go to a teacher...If I didn’t go to school it would probly be because someone was bullying me” (6th class, F, Q)

What would make you want to go to school more often ?

- “If there was no bulllys around” (5th class, M, Q)

If you had the possibility not to go to school, would you ?

- Yes because I am bullied” (5th class, M, Q)

- **Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)**

The following points were made by different individuals during the course of the consultation:

- concern was expressed by more than one individual at the very high levels of children from Ballyfermot taking Ritalin for ADD/ADHD
- ‘ADD/ADHD is the biggest problem in Ballyfermot’
- Some principals stated that management of disturbed children (including those with ADD/ADHD) is the most important issue in their schools
- Approximately 7 kids in one school have been formally assessed as having ADD/ADHD but ‘probably a lot more’
- Parents of children with ADD/ADHD are looking for support
- 2 per class are hyperactive, by first class it is more noticeable
- there is a need for early assessment especially for ADD/ADHD as it is sometimes 6th class before the assessment is complete
- there is a danger of ‘pigeon holing’ those with ADD/ADHD by separating them from their peers whereas many common issues such as self-esteem, anger management can be dealt with in groups including both ADD/ADHD students and their peers without ADD/ADHD
- In the words of Stephanie Mahony from the parents representative group HADD (North Brunswick St.) for parents of children with ADD/ADHD, there is a need for ‘someone who has done a behavioural management course who understands these children...parents don’t know where to go for behaviour management therapy’
- ADD and Conduct Disorder are problems for up to 60% of drug users (Ballyfermot Drug Task Force Strategic Plan 2001-2002)

Pffifner & Barkley’s (1998) discussion of treatment of ADHD in school settings states that the:

need to establish interventions in all settings in which problems occur should be stressed to parents and school personnel as changes in one setting rarely generalize without intervention to other settings (p.461)

To implement this combined approach from both school and home:

- continuous support needs to be provided for the teacher beyond one day in-service on ADHD (Pffifner & Barkley 1998)
- parent training in behavioural management methods is needed and is best suited to children with (mental) age 3-11 (Anastopoulos et al 1998)

The benefits of both parents participating in a behavioural management programme for their child is to be emphasised:

Joint participation can increase the parenting alliance, reduce marital tensions related to child management, and facilitate parental efforts to gain control over their child's problem behaviours (Anastopoulos et al 1998, p.378)

- **Self-esteem including body image**

Rosenberg (1965) describes self-esteem as feeling that you are 'good enough'.

Development of self-esteem is an important protective factor against conformity to peer pressure regarding risk behaviour such as substance abuse. It is also positively associated with school achievement (Purkey 1970; Brookover et al 1964; Hay, Ashman & van Kraayenoord 1998).

Global self-esteem as well as body image were considered as big problems of their peers for girls in particular. This is illustrated by the following range of responses to the question regarding the biggest problems your friends have:

- "help them build their confidence" (6th class, F, Q)
- "They don't like themselves" (6th class, F, FG)
- "slagging" (4th class, F, FG)
- "jealousy" (5th class, F, FG)
- "They think they're fat but they're not really" (6th class, F, FG)
- "I'm overweight" (6th class, F, FG)
- "I'm underweight" (6th class, F, FG)
- "..Because she's fat" (5th class, F, FG)
- "She hardly eats anything anymore" (6th class, F, FG)
- "Me legs...they're huge !" (6th class, F, FG)
- "Their weight or hair problems" (6th class, F, Q)
- "too fat...talking to someone" (5th class, M, Q)
- "my figure" in response to what he likes about himself most (5th class, M, Q)
- "attitude problems thinking they're great, they can't be helped" (6th class, F, Q)
- "I have no friends to help" (4th class, F, Q)
- "Probably not getting enough attention" (4th class, F, FG)
- "They're judged because they're not intelligent" (6th class, F, FG)

- **Need for emotional support: short-term and long-term**

A variety of issues highlighting the need for emotional support¹¹ arose from some questionnaire responses. Perhaps the most extreme was the response regarding attempted suicide:

"one of my friends tried to kill themselves" (6th class, F, Q)

Other responses emphasising the need to talk to someone for emotional support¹², in response to the question regarding 'the biggest problems your friends have' are as follows:

- "I go to al-teen and I find that helpful to understand my problems" (5/6th class, F, FG)
- "It's good to talk about your feelings you feel relaxed and relieved instead of holding your breath" (5/6th class, F, FG)
- "sadness – by talking out about it" (6th class, F, Q)
- "some of my friends have loved ones that they have losed. I would cheer them up" (6th class, F, Q)
- "problems maybe at home and to talk to somebody about" (6th class, F, Q)

¹¹ A key objective with regard to prevention in the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 is: "To equip young people and other vulnerable groups with the skills and supports necessary to make informed choices about their health, personal lives and social development" (p.109)

¹² See also the following responses: 'Do you think most people are pretending to be happy even if they are not ?' "The happier they act the sadder they are" (5th class, M, FG), 'Do you think you want to stay on at school to finish your Leaving Certificate ?' "I don't think I will because everybody gives me a hard time...I would change all the people because they all hate me" (6th class, F, Q)

- "my friend hates her Dad" (6th class, F, Q)
 "my friends parents are breaking up" (4th class, F, Q)
 "They need to loosen up and understand each other more" (6th class, F, Q)
 "sometimes they get a bit upset you just have to be there for them when they need to talk" (6th class, F, Q)
 "boys just want to kiss you all the time and feel you up especially after mass" (4th class, F, FG)
 "Being called a frigid if you fancy loads of people and they don't fancy you back" (5th class, M, FG)
 "I swore I wouldn't say anything but you could get someone in the school who she could go to about this" (6th class, F, Q)
 "I can't tell?" (4th class, F, Q)
 "anger problems" (5th class, M, Q)
 "I don't fit in with me friends" (5th class, M, FG)

Several responses were of the view that their friends had either no or minor problems¹³

Issues of bereavement, attempted suicide and problematic family relationships all point to the need for availability of counselling and group work to provide emotional and social support. However, such counselling must not be restricted to an eight or ten week course but must be available on an ongoing basis as otherwise it may simply open up problems which still need to be dealt with after such a short intervention. It is important to emphasise also that *it is not only those pupils who display emotional/behavioural difficulties in the classroom context who are in need of emotional support* (see also Doll 1996 on the danger that the needs of students with internalizing problems e.g. depression, anxiety disorders, somatic disorders, will be underidentified by adults)

The schools gave the following responses to the question:

'Is there now a personal development project where students are taken out of schools for a few hours each week...how could your school be supported in implementing this¹⁴?

- School a) 'No. Making qualified personnel available to schools'
- School b) Had a personal development programme involving 2 groups of 6 kids run by Ballyfermot Youth Services. It was very action/practically orientated involving cooperative, team games and also circle time type games. The Equine Centre also took 6 kids, generally 5th and 6th class are targeted
- School c) A bereavement course but it was not so successful as it was so short 6-7 weeks with no follow up support
- School d) 'No. How ?' The issue of funding for it was raised
- School e) No. But club in Decies Road, 'Beyond 96', targets 5th class pupils with emotional problems and/or no place to go after school. Run 8 week programmes including programmes on drugs as well as emotional support for the past 2-3 years. This homework club was running in September 2001 until after Christmas

The question arises as to whether this emotional support is to be made available through on-site counselling in the school setting or through community based counselling

• Parental involvement and family support

The need to involve parents more actively in their children's education was recognised in the national programme of special measures for schools in disadvantaged areas (1984) and the report of the Irish Department of Education Working Party on the Primary School Curriculum and the Disadvantaged Child (1985). The Irish White Paper on Education 'Charting our Education Future' (1995) reaffirmed the crucial role of parents "in forming the child's learning environment" and pointed to the need for positive attitudes to education and to encourage self-esteem. The Casby (1997) report for Ballyfermot implicitly echoed these concerns and noted the low extent of parental involvement in education in Ballyfermot.

¹³ "my friends don't have problems" (6th class, F, Q), "They don't have really big problems just little small things like school or periods...to talk to someone" (6th class, F, Q), "I don't remember my friends having problems" (6th class, F, Q), "I don't know any of my friends problems" (4th class, F, Q)

¹⁴ Recommendation in the report by Aoife Casby (1997)

In the British context, a practitioner and academic consensus has developed over a large number of years that a lack of dissonance between home and school - and parents' involvement in their education in both settings - is in students' best educational interests (David 1993). While acknowledging the need for some boundaries between school and home contexts from the student's point of view, Edwards & Alldred (2000) state that this prevailing view on the centrality of parental involvement transcends the British context:

Across the political spectrum, parental involvement and home-school partnership are regarded as, variously, enhancing the educational performance of children from deprived socio-economic backgrounds, or as a market mechanism or communitarian approach to improving schools' effectiveness for all children. This orthodoxy is evident not merely in Britain but, given the global nature of the processes of familialisation and institutionalisation, is either entrenched or growing internationally

School responses to the question: 'Do you have procedures for community and parent input into school policies and procedures? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this' were as follows:

- School a) The Home-School-Community Liaison Teacher consults parents on policies, there are Parent-Teacher meetings every year, Parents are involved in Communion/Confirmation. There is no parents group as such but would like to see one. 3 attempts in the past 6 years to establish parents groups. Have parents on the Board of Management
- School b) Have parents' association and parents on the Board of Management. Invited parents to meeting on retention policies but only 2 came. The Home-School Liaison teacher consults some parents regarding school policies
- School c) 'The Home-School Liaison teacher would get parental involvement'
- School d) "In theory" a parents council
- School e) Groups of parents are called in to be involved

School responses to the question 'Have paired reading programmes been set up in your school?'¹⁵ were as follows:

- School a) Home-School Community Liaison Teacher organises meetings with parents, has done "extensive work" with them. "Paired-shared reading working well and teachers find it helpful. Parental involvement nearly full in some classes, 50% in others. Parents can no longer though just come into the school at any time of day. Parents where kids have emotional problems rather than special needs would be much less likely to keep appointments"
- School b) "was set up but was not successful as the attendance was not great"
- School c) "Paired reading takes place three mornings a week all the year round. There are about 12 parents and approx. 16 children involved"
- School d) "on and off not on a regular basis". There is a "need for greater priority in the school" to be given to the role of parents beyond interaction with the Home-School Liaison Teacher
- School e) Yes. Perhaps 80 pupils involved

Pupil responses to the question regarding increased visitation of the school by their parents was very varied with large numbers agreeing that they would like more parental participation but also equally large numbers saying they would not. While pupils tended not to explain the reasons for their response to this question, one reason for not wishing for more parental participation was that both their parents were working during school hours. See also appendix B for some comments by pupils in response to this question

¹⁵ This question is concerning a specific recommendation of the Casby report (1997)

The following response of a pupil was also one echoed by some parents: "I think they would like to visit my school more for plays or days like that" (4th class, F, Q).

Another parent responded to the question 'What would you like to change in the schools': "Old Victorian attitudes. Teachers should be called by first names and have a more personal and friendly connection with children"

More than one parent who attended the same primary school as their child felt that some teachers, who remembered them as children, tended not to view them now as adults.

Regarding family support:

- One school refers to a "core group of very marginalised families" needing particular attention. The need to target particular families for help has also been echoed by some local organisations.
- The Early School Leavers Working Group view family support and coordination between services as the two most immediate priority needs for children in Ballyfermot
- There is a need to support those families where parents are addicted to alcohol and/or illicit drugs, and those in abusive relationships, so that their children can get to school with adequate food and clean clothing. According to the project leader of Cherry Orchard After School Project, Marian Taggart, the need is extensive in Cherry Orchard for such support services for these at-risk children and with the assistance of the Home School Liaison teachers, they could fill their project 'ten times over'.

- **Emotional and educational needs of traveller children**

According to Kathy Bradley, Visiting Teacher for Travellers, in Ballyfermot, Traveller participation in schools is as follows:

- Pre-School 8
- Primary School 50 (approximately, including Our Lady of the Wayside NS in Bluebell)
- Secondary School 8 (all girls, only one girl in the 12-15 age range is not attending secondary in Labre Park. No boys in this age range are attending secondary schools)
- Youthreach 13 (girls 15-19 age group. Some are studying for their Junior Certificate exams. Again no Traveller boys attend Youthreach)

Many Traveller children are functioning below their age despite each of the schools having a Resource Teacher for Travellers. Low attainment levels and lack of transfer and progression options for boys in particular are a major problem. Many Traveller children, especially boys, present with emotional and behavioural difficulties and need a lot of support around behaviour and anger management. There is a clear need for self-esteem and assertiveness programmes, while sex and relationship education is also very important, though it must be culturally appropriate

- **Lack of extracurricular activities**

Participation in even one extracurricular school activity is associated with a reduction in rates of early school dropout, particularly for high-risk youth (Mahoney & Cairns 1997). Mahoney (2000) defines participation as one or more years of involvement in the extracurricular activity and states:

The participant is attracted to the activity and is likely competent in that area or may even excel. Unlike preventive interventions that attempt to correct academic or social deficits by remedial work, extracurricular activities may foster a positive connection between the individual and school based on the student's interests and motivations. The specific activity pursued may be less important than the act of participation itself (p.503)

Morgan (1998) cites a study by Beacham (1980) which found that over 60% of high school drop-outs were not involved in any extracurricular activities during their high school years – a level which is significantly higher than any estimates of the overall number not participating in such activities. This study arguably has much relevance also to the primary school context.

Responses of primary school principals and home school liaison teachers to the question 'What extracurricular activities are available in your school?' included:

- a) 'none'
- b) 'very little organised by us after school hours'. Issues of security and safety were raised including the need for a formal arrangement to pay a caretaker to stay on site if such activities were to be arranged
- c) an 8 session bereavement course for some of the kids/football based in the nearby sports complex
- d) gardening/speech and drama
- e) basketball once a week/dancing

Even since these responses, the situation has worsened given the closure of the sports complex near to Mary Queen of Angels school. The need for extracurricular activities was also a theme in pupil responses regarding the biggest problems of friends and how they can be helped:

- there is "nothing to do" (4th class, F, Q)
- "they want a playground in Cherry Orchard and how you can help is by building one!" (4th class, F, Q)¹⁶
- Some parents emphasise the importance of opening the Sean Dunne swimming pool in Ballyfermot again and of teaching children how to swim. They also emphasise the need for more afterschool activities.
- Many parents emphasise the need for "more facilities, play areas and clubs"

Overall figures in response to the question 'Do you do anything in your school after school hours? If yes, what?' may tend to overestimate the level of school-based extracurricular activities as some students interpreted the question to mean any activity after school rather than activities in the school itself. Even given this, there was an overwhelming majority of 4th to 6th class students who do not participate in any extracurricular activity:

No activity:	239
Yes ¹⁷	87
No answer	16

See Appendix C for other responses to the question regarding activities in the school outside school hours

• Screening to identify children's problems

The Report of the Planning Group for NEPS (1998) advocated 65% assessments and 35% other kinds of intervention for the service. The schools suggest that not enough assessments are being carried out and they tend to want NEPS to concentrate on assessments in order to obtain learning support and resource teachers on the basis of circular 8/99 (for primary schools only). As is also the case with equivalent school psychological services in the United States (see Reeder 1997), NEPS do not wish to confine their role simply to assessment. This tension between the schools' wishes and NEPS is by no means unique to the Irish context. The vast majority of time of school psychologists in the US is also being spent performing assessments to determine special educational eligibility (Gutkin & Conoley 1990; Short & Talley 1997). Reeder et al's (1997) review of the US literature in this context observes that the time required to provide such assessments as well as current funding mechanisms effectively preclude efforts to intervene in a broader fashion.

¹⁶ Casby (1997) also observed that there was no playground at all in Cherry Orchard

¹⁷ A large proportion of this group who did participate in an extracurricular activity were boys playing gaelic football. Morgan (1998) refers to McNeal's (1995) attempt to specify whether certain types of extracurricular activities were more influential than others in preventing dropping out. From a database of over 20,000 high-school students, it was found that participation in activities such as sports and fine arts significantly reduced the risk of dropping out, whereas participation in academic or vocational clubs seemed to have less effect.

- One psychologist per 5000 pupils nationally is the longterm aim for NEPS and they are gradually moving towards that nationally
- Currently there is one psychologist for 6000-7000 pupils at primary level with a higher ratio occurring at postprimary level.
- 200 NEPS psychologists nationally is the projected number with numbers expected to reach 130 by Christmas 2002.
- A system of 'weighting' so that schools most in need gain priority over other schools is being discussed but this is still being worked out by NEPS.

Formal assessment is one very important aspect of screening to identify children's problems. However, it is not the only possible level of screening. NEPS do hope to engage in developing the screening process for children with academic problems in particular; resource teachers or learning support teachers could be targeted for upskilling so as to engage in the screening process

The following points were made by different individuals during the course of the consultation:

- NEPS is 'a token service'
- NEPS only assess 2% of children. 10% of children need assessment as proved by private assessments for which the school spends £4,000 a year
- School received 5 resource teachers and 9 special needs assistants through the support of NEPS
- The school had 2 psychological assessments by NEPS 'all our others had to be paid for by ourselves'
- Assessments are 'a lot of money for what we already know'
- 'absolutely no use'
- 'just summarise what we already know'
- 'time consuming, costly'
- 'hard day for the child'
- sometimes get back what the teachers already wrote with no new recommendations, no recommendations of how to work with the child
- 'serve no purpose'
- NEPS needs to have more culturally appropriate methods of assessments for Travellers

It is important not to duplicate NEPS with another psychological service. This is a fundamental point not only of principle but also explicitly referred to in the terms of reference of this evaluation provided by URBAN. For these reasons, the psychological service outlined in this evaluation must be complementary to NEPS and not a duplication. It would be a duplication if it provided for educational assessments. Thus, this evaluation recognises the unmet needs regarding educational assessments and screening although this area is outside the ambit of the terms of the reference established by URBAN for its psychological service.

In Ballyfermot, at least, NEPS does not engage directly in family level work or with groups of parents because of time constraints. However it does wish to focus on the school as a system of mental health

See Appendix D for the status of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for children in Ballyfermot schools. It is evident that, in at least some of the schools, there is a need for much more parental involvement in these IEPs

• **Teacher-Pupil interaction**

Using primarily populations deemed to be 'at risk', research in the US has shown that the students' sense of belonging influences the acceptance of educational values, motivation and commitment to school (Goodenow & Grady 1992; Wehlage et al 1989). The perceptions of school as a personally supportive community is critical to school completion and satisfaction (Fine 1986; Kagan 1990). The importance of the relationship that the teacher establishes with pupils has recently been emphasised in the context of teacher-student partnership in special education (Hornby 2002). This view that *teachers need to develop their skills in promoting mental health in schools and in using a strengths based approach to intervention has importance* far beyond the context of special education. The need for supporting teachers with regard to issues such as:

- conflict resolution,
- behaviour management¹⁸
- self-awareness

emerged from many teachers and indirectly from a variety of student responses in the questionnaires and focus groups

Many students express a positive attitude to school¹⁹ and the large majority express a willingness to talk to the teacher about an *academic* problem they may have. Some responses to the question 'If you had the possibility not to go to school, would you?' were:

"I like the teachers" (4th class, F, Q)

"they [the teachers] are mainly cool" (6th class, F, Q)

"Because people in 3rd world countries have no choice to go to school or not and they have no education and in years to come if we go to school we will be the ones who will get the good jobs and maybe help the people in 3rd world countries" (6th class, F, Q)

"my teacher is so nice she does not shout" (5th class, M, Q)

"No I love school thanks to my teacher" (5th class, F, Q)

"it is a great school" (4th class, F, Q)

Nevertheless the following responses illustrate that a range of students experience much alienation in their interaction with teachers:

"I wouldn't talk to the teacher. She screams at you" (4th class, F, FG)

"I'd be scared to ask the teacher" (5th class, F, FG)

If you had the power, what would you change in your school ?

"the stricktness of teachers" (4th class, M, Q)

"stop teachers from shouting at the children unless they badly needed to" (4th class, M, Q)

"I would change the teachers from being narkey to nice" (6th class, F, Q)

"I hate the way teacher embarrasses you" (6th class, F, FG)

"I hate when the teacher makes a show of you" (6th class, F, FG)

"...the worst thing about teachers...'why can't you be like her?'" (6th class, F, FG)

"no punishments" (6th class, F, Q)

"I would change the teachers...I hate school" (6th class, F, Q)

"everything...I hate school" (6th class, M, Q)

"everything" (6th class, M, Q),

"everything...I hate it" (6th class, M, Q)

"unfairness" (6th class, M, Q)

"The teachers" (6th class, M, Q),

"teachers" (6th class, M, Q)

"you don't get many teachers that you get to talk to and have a bit of a laugh with" (4th class, F, FG)

¹⁸ One principal observed that teachers need more support regarding coping with children with problematic behaviour and regarding consistency

¹⁹ See also the strong commitment of students to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate which is indicative of a basically positive attitude to school

If you had the possibility not to go to school, would you ?

"Yes cos the teachers are moneybags and the homework we get is hard..." (6th class, F, Q)

"Yes because I hate it" (6th class, F, Q)

"If the teachers didn't shout at us" (5th class, M, Q)

• Problems of school attendance

The following points were made by different individuals during the course of the consultation:

- there is a need for free transport for children from Cherry Orchard to come to school²⁰
- bullying occurs on the bus from Cherry Orchard as there is little supervision of the children on this bus
- more than one group claim that at least some schools have an interest in downplaying their numbers of non attenders as they would lose part of their per capita grant
- there is scepticism over the implementation of the New Education Welfare Act, in particular regarding resources for monitoring attendance of children. For example, who is going to have the time to input the roll call data into computerized form ?
- there is a need for tougher sanctions for parents of non-attenders
- there is a big problem of non-attendance
- one primary school referred to the need for 'intensive work' to get regular non-attenders to attend school, saying that it is 'really tough' with about 5% of the pupils who are regular non-attenders
- there is a need for more understanding by teachers of the difficulties of children in reaching school on time, and that it is an achievement for them to be there at all
- there is a need for more understanding by teachers of children who do not have the money they are supposed to have for a particular object/trip
- Attendance officer has been 'out sick a lot' in the past 6 years in lower Ballyfermot
- There is no attendance officer for Cherry Orchard
- There are an estimated 30-50 children in Cherry Orchard between the ages 8-12 who are not attending school at any given time

The issue of directly monitoring attendance is sought to be dealt with through the implementation of the Act which will provide for new positions of Education Welfare Officers. As the terms of reference of this evaluation include avoidance of duplication with other services, monitoring of attendance is not a direct goal of the psychological service proposed in this report. However many aspects of the psychological interventions would seek to contribute to increased school attendance, both at primary and secondary level. The following response²¹ highlights, for example, the relevance of group work to face up to the problem of bullying in order to tackle issues of non-attendance:

What would make you want to go to school more often ?

"If nobody geered me" (6th class, M, Q)

A psychology service to improve the school environment regarding bullying, self-esteem, teacher-pupil interaction, as well as provide emotional and social support, will clearly impact in a beneficial way on school attendance if it is *both* broad based and targeted to specific individuals and families who are most at-risk. The needs targeted by this proposed service thoroughly resonate with the "key target" of the Combat Poverty Annual Report 2001:

to reduce the number of young people who leave the school system early, so that the percentage of those who complete upper second level or equivalent will reach 85% by 2003 and 90% by 2006" (p.28).

In 2001, the completion rate nationally was 81%

²⁰ As has already been stated in the Casby (1997) report

²¹ See also the earlier subsection on bullying for other quotes concerning the link between being bullied and not attending school

2.2 Protective factors at primary school level

- **Expressed willingness to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate²²**

Given the strong correlation between early school leaving and drug misuse (National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008; Morgan 2001), a key protective factor for students in the Ballyfermot area is the positive attitude of a large majority to the idea of staying on until the Leaving Certificate. Nevertheless there is little room for complacency because of:

- the frequent disjunction between attitudes and behaviour
- the time-scale over which such attitudes need to remain fairly stable
- the fact that this is a sample of those currently attending school rather than being regularly absent
- the risk period of transition between primary and secondary school
- the high proportion of secondary school students who regularly attend school with a hangover²³
- the higher proportion of boys at primary level who state that they do not intend to remain at school until Leaving Certificate

'Do you think you want to stay on at school to finish your Leaving Certificate ?'

Of those at primary school level asked this question by questionnaire the overall results were as follows:

Yes	295
No	35
Don't know	6
Probably	2
No answer	4

Girls in particular had a clear commitment to stay on until Leaving Certificate

Yes	162
No	11
Don't know	6
No answer	1

Boys had a clear commitment also but not to the same extent as girls

Yes	133
No	24
Probably	1
No answer	4

Even when boys did state that they wished to stay on until Leaving Certificate, they were much less likely than the girls to express a reason for staying on.

See Appendix E for examples of the reasons given for wanting to attend school and stay on at school until Leaving Certificate.

²² Compared to regional figures over twice as many adults in the Ballyfermot Area have no formal education or primary education only, "67.8% (compared to 31.7% regionally and 38.5% in the city) finished education at the age of 15 or younger. The percentage of the adult population with Lower Secondary education is similar to the regional...but this drops to nearly half the regional and city norms for the Leaving Certificate. The situation is more extreme at the higher end of educational attainment, with only 3.5% (compared to 25.4% regionally and 22.5% of the city) receiving Third Level education..." (p.18-19) (Ballyfermot Area Partnership 1998)

²³ See later section on needs of secondary school students

- **Ability to talk to at least one person if feeling sad**

The benefits for mental health in having even only one person to confide in is well recognised (Levitt 1991; Antonucci 1990) Responses to the question 'Do you have anyone to talk to if you feel sad ?' revealed quite a high level of social support, usually expressed as being from family or friends, though also occasionally from a teacher

Yes	305
No	30
Sometimes	3
No answer	4

The frequent reliance on friends to provide emotional support suggests that group level interventions to improve children's self-esteem and emotional awareness can strengthen resilience not only among those children attending such a group but also their friends that they provide with emotional support

2.3 Other issues

- **Change to the physical environment of the school to facilitate student ownership of their learning environment**

A frequently articulated need expressed by pupils, particularly girls, across all the primary schools, was to decorate the school building and yard (see appendix F). A smaller group of female students articulated the wish to have pets in the school. Facilitating pupil involvement in decorating the school environment and taking responsibility for pets in the school would be supported by constructivist theories of education²⁴ (Vygotsky 1978; Berk & Winsler 1995; Glasser 1969, 1986; von Glaserfeld 1995) emphasising the active role of the student in his/her own learning and the need to have control within his/her learning environment. A role for students to choose, for example, colours in the school would also contribute to a democratic environment within the school.

Some schools in Ballyfermot have:

- initiated murals in the yard (with the help of some art students locally)
- involved parents in painting the walls of some rooms of the school to help foster a child-centred atmosphere in the school.

There is scope for cooperation with Ballyfermot Youth Club and the Heritage/Participation Officers of URBAN, as well as between the schools, in developing projects both during the Summer and during term:

- to decorate the school building and yard
- to develop and implement a plan to involve pupils in taking responsibility for the care of animals in the school

The following words of a parent could also apply to the school environment itself: "Involve the children in enhancing their own streets with planting of shrubs and trees. Give them responsibility"

Priority needs at secondary level

- **More sex education and relationship education**
- **Emotional support**
- **Teacher-Student interaction**

²⁴ Central to the new revised primary school curriculum (1999)

- **Bullying**
- **Family support**
- **Substance abuse**

Protective factors

- **Expressed willingness to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate**
- **Ability to talk to at least one person about stresses**

2.4 Priority needs at secondary level

• **More sex education and relationship education**

Younger years in some secondary schools are more positive about sex education in the school, later years criticise its lack (2nd-6th year, F, FG). Both early and later years emphasise:

- its need to be ongoing
- for an outside person to come in to minimise embarrassment of the teacher
- for credibility

Some focus groups report high sexual activity among their peers (2nd year, F, FG), stating 'some girls just want that bump' (5th year, F, FG)

Responses to the question 'Do you think that guys and girls have the same attitude to sex?' which illustrate the need for more sex and relationship education, as well as emotional support, include:

"No – 90% of boys think that if they don't 'do it' it will be an embarrassment" (Age 16, F, Q)

"No most boys think that if they don't do it its an embarrassment" (Age 16, F, Q)

"HELL NO !!!" (Age 14, F, Q)

"Yes everyone loves sex" (Age 17, M, Q)

"Yeah fellas want it all the time and girls make ya wait !!! Fellas love sex and girls don't really want to. Some try that's why [they] do rapes and all...birds are more mature" (Age 16, M, Q)

"No. Guys see it as a chance to prove their 'manliness'. Girls are more sentimental about it" (Age 17, F, Q)

"No males are more sex-pros than females" (Age 16, M, Q)

"No boys just want to jump into bed. 'Some' girls take it slow...[the worst thing in a relationship] for you not to be able to say no if you don't want to have sex you don't have to" (Age 14, F, Q)

"No. Boys are horny bastards...[worst thing in a relationship] breakup over saying no to sex" (Age 12, F, Q)

"No. Girls could be nervous and maybe the boys aren't" (Age 13, F, Q)

"Yes but fellas are more open about it" (Age 16, F, Q)

"No. Fellas are more upfront" (Age 17, F, Q)

"No I do not think that girls and boys have the same attitude toward sex, boys are more immature and are just looking for their bit" (Age 16, F, Q)

"No boys can't wait and girls can...[worst thing in a relationship] If you do have sex with a boy when he is not the right one" (Age 14, F, Q)

"No. Boys just want sex off everybody and some girls have some respect" (Age 15, F, Q)

"Guys just think about sex, girls just think about making their boyfriend happier" (Age 14, F, Q)

"No, I think it's swapped around from what it used to be. Girls want to do it more than blokes do. They just want to lose their virginity as quickly as they can so they can tell their mates about it" (Age 17, M, FG)

The following response suggests a more complex picture than boys pressurising girls for the older age groups at secondary level:

"I think they do. I know there's this image of guys wanting to do it all the time and innocent little girls saying no to them, but I think over the years men have started to take the whole thing a bit more seriously, they're more emotional about it. And girls are getting more easy-going about it. They don't think it means marriage any more. Some girls are way more into it now than guys! They've kind of met in the middle as time goes by" (Age 16, F, FG)

See also Appendix G for some other responses

- **Emotional support**

- One representative of a local service stated that at risk teens in Cherry Orchard have to go to Clondalkin (Greenfert teen counselling) for counselling as it is not available in the area.
- It is important to emphasise that 'quiet' students may need emotional support not just troublesome ones. In the words of one female secondary school student (FG), being ignored "because [your] head is down" working is "like a slap in the face". Another individual (Age 14, F) refers to "being ignored by teachers" as the biggest problem her friends have

Numerous responses to the question regarding their friends biggest problems emphasised their loyalty to the confidentiality needs of their friends so the students explicitly stated that they would not answer this question. It was the only question where the recurrent theme of not wanting to answer the question emerged. This highlights:

- the extreme importance attached by the secondary students to the issue of confidentiality
- more indirectly, the realisation that their fellow students do have problematic issues requiring emotional support.

Some themes which emerged from those who were willing to respond to this question²⁵ include:

- "wanting to kill themselves and thinking they're not loved" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "Relationship problems with boyfriends/parents/other friends. It helps when they can talk about their problems and try to solve them" (Age 16, F, Q)
- "Family difficulties, talking with them" (Age 16, F, Q)
- "Family problems. Ignoring their family" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "Their Mam and Dad are split up or are alcoholics" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "not liking themselves" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "looks and weight" (Age 14, F, Q)

Some responses to the question regarding staying on at school until Leaving Certificate highlight the need for emotional and academic support for those having difficulty in staying on at school:

- "I hope so but it's very stressful" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "Yes if I stop behaving the way I am" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "Yes sometimes I don't want to go back but deep in my heart I know I want to stay in school" (Age 15, F, Q)
- "I might leave the school next year because I really don't get along with anybody in the school" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "I'm unsure. I get fed up sometimes" (Age 17, F, Q)
- "No I'm sick of it" (Age 17, F, Q)

²⁵ The subsequent quotes are overwhelmingly from female students for two main reasons a) boys were less likely to respond to this question, b) there is a significantly lower sample of male secondary students due to the non-participation of St. John's College, the largest boys secondary school in Ballyfermot

Some student focus groups emphasised the transition from Junior Certificate to 5th year as being a time when students particularly need academic support as:

- the adjustment to the academic level of 5th year can be particularly difficult and the workload intensive if students have not done the transition year (4th year)
- mixing groups from previously different classes can create tensions between students that were previously absent

Another example of the need to provide effective emotional support is the following response to the question 'If you feel stressed or have a problem who would you talk to about it?':

"No one. Because I don't know anyone who could understand..." (Age 14, F, Q)

• **Teacher-Student interaction**

In the U.S context, Doll (1996) highlights the role of school psychologists in creating:

Emotionally healthy environments within which students can learn most effectively, including essential characteristics of the physical environment, peer social systems and adult-student relationships (p38)

US adolescents cite a sense of isolation and lack of personally meaningful relationships at school as equal contributors to academic failure and to their decisions to drop out of school (Institute for Education and Transformation 1992; Wehlage & Rutter 1986). Meier (1992) cites personalized, caring relationships with teachers as a prerequisite for high school-level reform.

The need for supporting teachers with regard to issues such as conflict resolution, behaviour management and self-awareness was a theme which emerged from teachers. It also emerged from some students:

- Directly: 'Have anger management courses for teachers' (Secondary, F, FG)
- Indirectly:
 - "The teachers shouting at you. That makes me really really down" (Age 13, F, Q)
 - "if the teachers didn't roar at you" (Age 13, F, Q)
 - "Have an equal teaching system and sack ignorant snobby teachers...very harsh teachers usually make me stay out of school" (Age 16, M, Q)
 - "I would change that you should not need a written note off your parents to go to the loo in school" (Age 17, F, Q)
 - "Course I wouldn't go, who would want to go to the torture chamber section of a national prison?" (Age 14, F, Q)
 - "I wouldn't go to school because I really hate the school" (Age 12, F, Q)

While it must be emphasised that these critical comments were largely atypical, Casby's (1997) interviews with early school leavers in Ballyfermot also noted that:

More attention must be paid to the process by which a young person comes to leave school early. *Early school leavers attribute most significance to factors related to school: relationships with teachers, suspensions and difficulties with curricula* (p.6) (my italics)

²⁶ As was done in the 'Teacher-Counsellor Service' which was subsequently modified into the 'support teachers service' (see also Morgan 1998a)

²⁷ The National Drugs Strategy recognises the need to link drug-specific interventions with mental health promotion strategies

It would be important also to emphasise that the purpose of such support work for teachers would not be to put the teacher in the role of a counsellor²⁶. The benefits and purpose of such work would be to improve teachers' skills with regard to:

- mental health promotion²⁷
- stress/risk prevention
- self-awareness
- classroom management, where requested

The levels of mental health promotion and stress/risk prevention are already recognised as important in the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum – and are distinct levels from a role of teachers as counsellors.

One parents group responded to the question 'if you had a magic wand what would you like to change most in the schools?' with the answer: 'More respect' from the teachers. Mental health promotion would also presuppose increased openness to the needs of the community, though this is obviously a two-way process.

• **Bullying**

Variation in levels of bullying ranged from none at all in many classes, particularly in one of the schools, to the following responses indicating the highest levels:

'How many in your class have been bullied?'

"About a quarter of them" (Age 14, F, Q)

9 (Age 15, F, Q)

"under 10" (Age 14, F, Q)

"About 7 me especially" (Age 14, M, Q)

"maybe half the class" (Age 14, M, Q)

"I say all of us at one stage have been victims" (Age 16, M, Q)

"15/16 A few years ago two fellas gave everybody a hard time!!" (Age 16, M, Q)

"quite a few I would say" (Age 14, F, Q)

"everybody" (Age 14, F, Q)

In contrast to the common perception of many primary school respondents that bullying is a major problem, it was rare for a secondary school student to raise the issue of bullying as a particular problem without being asked specifically about it. However some examples did occur such as the following:

- If you had the power, what would you change in your school ?
 - "nobody bullying each other" (Age 14, F, Q)
 - "I would stop people from bullying...more than half [are victims of bullying]" (Age 14, F, Q)
- What are the biggest problems your friends have ?
 - "Getting bullied. Work things out with the bullies" (Age 13, F, Q)
- If you have ever been absent from school without telling your family, what were the reasons for this ?
 - "Because I was getting bullied" (Age 13, F, Q)

Some focus groups at secondary level were of the view that mentoring from older students would work better with regard to bullying than with regard to substance abuse, as the danger was that older students would be involved in more 'advanced' levels of substance abuse.

²⁸ Boys were significantly underrepresented at secondary school level due to the non-participation of St. John's College in the research

- **Substance Abuse**

Responses to the question 'Have you ever had a hangover in school? If so, how often in the past two years?' were as follows from the sample of secondary students²⁸ ranging from age 12 to age 17:

YES	63
NO	95

15 students gave no response to this particular question

While a clear majority have never had a hangover in school, the following responses²⁹ highlight that a significant proportion of the student sample (approximately 10%) reveal a level of alcohol abuse that would regularly affect their academic performance in school, quite apart from other physical and mental health considerations:

"7 times" (Age 13, M, Q)

"Yes and I probably had a hangover 2 & 3 times a month for the past 2 years" (Age 14, F, Q)

"About 20 times" (Age 15, F, Q)

"10 times in the last two years" (Age 15, M, Q)

"Yes every two weeks in a month" (Age 17, M, Q)

"Yes I have countless times" (Age 17, M, Q)

"Yes about 10 times" (Age 16, F, Q)

"Yes about 20" (Age 17, F, Q)

"Yes once every month since the past two years" (Age 16, F, Q)

"Maybe once a month" (Age 17, F, Q)

"I have maybe twice a week (still continuing)" (Age 17, M, Q)

"yes lost count" (Age 14, F, Q)

"a few times. Just a good night with the girls" (Age 14, F, Q)

"About 4 but I went home after lunch I was caught once I said I had the flu" (Age 14, M, Q)

"too many times" (Age 14, F, Q)

"6" (Age 13, M, Q),

"6" (Age 14, M, Q)

"Yes 2" (Age 12, F, Q)

This suggests the need for more awareness about the consequences of *binge* drinking, as well as for more effective programmes to tackle the problem of alcohol abuse. However, given the exceptionally high figures for teenage binge drinking among both boys and girls nationally (Hibell et al 2000), it is clear that this problem is one which:

- needs to be tackled at the national level, as well as at the local level of Ballyfermot itself
- among other age groups apart from simply teenagers.

It is notable that alcohol abuse or other substance abuse was rarely raised as a problem by students in response to the question of the problems of their friends. The exceptions were:

"Drugs. Social services help out" (Age 17, F, Q)

"smoking and drinking you can't do anything" (Age 14, F, Q)

"fellas, drugs etc, I don't think they can [be helped]" (Age 15, F, Q)

"drinking, smoking, taking drugs...[specifically advises] don't take E" (Age 12, F, Q)

²⁸ See also appendix H for other examples of the range of student responses

²⁹ The rare references to drug use in the primary school questionnaire responses were the following responses: "My friend (13) is smoking weed and hash" (4th class, M, FG), "There's one boy in my class who's only 10 and he drinks, smokes and lights bonfires...I tried to tell his ma what he was doing but she wouldn't believe me" (4th class, M, FG)

More than one focus group however referred to developmental 'progression' in use of illicit drugs – starting with marijuana/hash in first and second year, ecstasy in third and fourth year, and 'harder' drugs in the final years

Advice not to take drugs did occur frequently in responses to the question concerning advice to your younger brother or sister³⁰ (see appendix I), which suggests that drugs awareness programmes as distinct from programmes against binge drinking are having at least some beneficial impact

A representative of a local organisation in Cherry Orchard has emphasised that 12 year old's drinking and smoking hash is a big problem in the area

While students were slow to mention illicit drugs (or alcohol) as a big problem of their friends this does not justify a conclusion that illicit drug use is not a big problem

because:

- those most at risk may not be regularly attending school and hence were absent when the questionnaires were administered in the school³¹
- those using, for example, hash may not be perceiving such use as problematic for them or their friends; while binge drinking is quite common it was rarely perceived as a problem of the students' peers

2.5 Protective Factors at Secondary School Level

- **Expressed willingness to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate**

Do you think you want to stay on at school to finish your Leaving Certificate ?

Yes	150
No	16
Don't Know	7

Female

Yes	102
No	10
Don't Know	2

Male

Yes	48
No	6
Don't Know	5

See appendix J for some comments in response to this question

³¹ This limitation to school-administered questionnaires on drug use has also been recognised by the European Schools Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (Hibell et al., 2000)

As with the encouraging figures at primary school level regarding attitudes to staying on at school until the Leaving Certificate, some caution needs to be observed given:

- the frequent disjunction between attitudes and behaviour,
- the timescale over which such attitudes need to remain fairly stable,
- the fact that this is a sample of those currently attending school rather than being regularly absent,
- the high proportion of secondary school students who regularly attend school with a hangover

The following focus group interview with a group of female students offers a further cautionary note regarding obstacles to staying on until the Leaving Certificate and clearly illustrates the need for support to provide encouragement and increased academic self-esteem:

- **Do you want to stay on at school until the Leaving Certificate? (Age 13-14, F, FG)**

R3: "We'd all probably want to stay on, wouldn't we?"

All agreed.

R3: "But I don't know if we all will. We already told you we're the 'slow' class and if we don't do well in the next few years, all our classes will be foundation, and maybe there's no point in doing the Leaving."

R1: "Yeah the whole point of doing the Leaving is to get a good job or go to college, but we probably won't get good enough results."

R5: "But its not all our fault. We do try, but nobody will help us. My sister is in primary school and she gets more homework than I do."

R1: "Yeah, we all want more homework."

Interviewer: 'You want more homework?'

All agreed that they would like more homework, and felt it would help them learn.

'If you had the power, what would you change in your school?' (Age 13-14, F, FG) All said they would like more homework, and they would like the teachers to listen to them more, and to try to help them with their schoolwork more.

"Just because we're 'slow' doesn't mean we're stupid" (Age 14, F, FG)³²

The potential for a high percentage of the cohort of students in Ballyfermot to stay on at school until the Leaving Certificate offers an extremely important resource for the future of Ballyfermot. The need arises for a strategy to ensure that the talents of young school leavers are channelled back into the community to a significant extent. The service to meet the psychological needs of children/youth in Ballyfermot that is being recommended in this report can only provide one small part of that overall strategy through seeking to develop peer support and mentoring programmes between local youth.

- **Ability to talk to at least one person about stresses**

Responses to the question whether the student had anyone to talk to about his/her stresses revealed quite a high level of social support, usually expressed as being from family or friends

Yes	141
No	25
Maybe	3
Don't Know	2
Have no stresses	2

³²Other students complain that they cannot take honours maths for the leaving certificate in their school, nor can they take physics or chemistry. The following words of a parent suggests the need for schools to cooperate more in order to share their resources: "The local secondary schools are all within a _ of a mile from each other. If they were formed into a campus type arrangement, and worked together instead of competing for pupils, perhaps each school could be used for the subjects they are best suited for, and have the facilities to accommodate...Perhaps the variety would encourage children to stay on"

3.1 Psycho-Social Support Services for Children in Ballyfermot

- **Description**

(i) BOSS (Ballyfermot Out of Schools Service)

Age range of children and activities: Worked with 8-10 kids in a support group dealing with issues such as bullying and anger management, 12 in homework club on Tuesdays, targeting 4th-5th class children. Had also run a 9 week transfer programme for 6th class students.

Funding and Staff: Operated since 1995, now in danger of closing due to lack of funding and not currently functioning. Originally had a full-time coordinator liaising youth centre with gardai, schools and health services. Last year, Marti Byrne had been the only person employed as a part-time worker funded through the Young People's Facilities Fund of the Dept. of Education through the City of Dublin Youth Services Board.

(ii) Cherry Orchard Youth Services/Developing Youth Project

Age range of children: The age range is from 12 to 21 which is a recent change from it being 16 to 21

Funding and Staff: The 5 places on the team are to be amalgamated with the Cherry Orchard Equine Centre, from January 1st 2003

Activities: Weekly contact with 30-35 young people in both small groups and on one to one basis, with an extra 25 coming to the weekly drop-in every Wednesday when there is a half-day from school. A fairly even mix between young men and women. If the young men and women were a natural group before coming to the drop in then the small groups can be mixed. They start off with activities such as art, music and sport and then see what needs arise. They can then bring in people to do group work with them regarding drugs, self-esteem and sexuality, as well as support to keep them in school.

Family work: To involve the family they would be referred to the Cherry Orchard Family Centre.

(iii) Barnardos Cherry Orchard Family Support Project

Age range of children: Usually in the 7-10 age range, as well as younger children in a Breakfast club

Funding and staff: One of the Springboard projects funded by the Department of Health and Children. Of their six full-time staff, one is an administrator and five have childcare training

Activities including family work: It targets 25 at risk families for individual and group work. In the past it has run 10-12 week courses in drama, self-esteem and peer interaction for at risk children. They have also run Parenting skills programs.

Families are referred to them through the Home School Liaison Officer in primary schools and the team of social workers in Cherry Orchard. The Breakfast Club was located in the project between September 2000-May 2002 although it has now stopped

Other comments: The house in which they are located in Cherry Orchard would not have the space to accommodate a full-time counsellor as such without expanding the building

(iv) Barnardos, Labre Park

Target group and activities: 52 families from the Travelling Community, onsite. 21 children in afterschool project, hoping for 11 in preschool project

Funding and staff: 6 staff in total, including the Coordinator. 4 Preschool Support Workers (Childcare qualifications) funded by the Department of Education and Science, 1 AfterSchool Teacher (Youth Worker), funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Other funding from the Health Board.

(v) Child and Family Centre

Age range of children: 2 to 16, with the average age being from 8-10

Activities and family work: On average it takes 300 family referrals per year and calculates referrals on the basis of the family rather than the individual child (in contrast to, for example, St. John of God's). Has approximately 2000 attendances a year. Its work is 25% group work, with the large majority (75%) of its work being family work. Such family work would include meetings with the family together, subsequent meetings with the child separately, and then the family together again. Space is available in the centre for family/group work as there is a family work room. Unlike other clinics it is also involved in school visits, including advocacy with schools on behalf of the child/family. Fathers are involved in this family work in about 20% of cases. Referrals concerning travellers are from the schools but not as yet from Labre Park

Funding and staff: Funded by the Health Board, the team based approach includes staff with a background in psychiatry, social work, childcare, nursing, and speech and language. Up until recently it did not have a speech and language therapist, but one has recently been appointed (August 2002), while a childcare worker was also appointed this August after an 18 month wait. It has no clinical psychologist for the past 18 months and its family therapist has also recently left. Up until 1997 this was a hospital based clinic. Based in Ballyfermot, it also has satellite clinics in a number of offices in Lucan, and has a catchment area of Lucan, Palmerstown, Chapelizod and Clondalkin, as well as Ballyfermot. Only in the last year has Clondalkin been included in its catchment area as previously Clondalkin was part of St. James' Hospital clinic.

Key features: This particular centre takes self-referrals³³ and does not have (and never has had) a waiting list as such. Weekly team meetings develop plans for management of referrals. Referral sources include G.P's, Area Medical Officers, and Schools. In practice, they have not received referrals from groups such as Barnardos. The centre hope to develop more home visits in future, an aspect which had been more developed in practice prior to 1994.

Other comments: Most of the non-nationals who attend the clinic are from the Lucan and Palmerstown area rather than Ballyfermot. The schools speak very highly of the clinic stating that it is the place most available in Ballyfermot to take referrals, some stating that it is 'the best'. In contrast, some parents are critical of the high turnover of staff stating that there is not much continuity at the clinic. They state that the fact that the psychiatrist changes every six months means that after five (monthly) appointments they have to get used to meeting a new person whom they do not know. Some also state that they are not told much about their entitlements to allowances when they visit the clinic.

(vi) Cherry Orchard After School Project

Age range of children: 3 to 17, eleven of which are over 7 years of age, with seven being over age 12.

Funding and staff: The qualifications of the four full-time staff (one of which is a housekeeper) are - a special needs teacher, one staff member has a social care diploma and two have child care diplomas. Partially funded by the Department of Education, the Ballyfermot Jobs Initiative, and the City of Dublin Youth Services Board. The latter is currently reviewing their payments to services such as this one.

Activities: This project, located in Cherry Orchard since 1996, deals with 18 children from 9 families every day Monday to Friday, usually from 1.40pm to 6.45pm. The younger children leave the house at 5pm and the older ones arrive between 5pm and 6.45pm. 2 of the children attending are special needs children, one of which is a child with Down's Syndrome. There is a file on every child and every child is on daily report. A strong childcare element occurs in this project with the children's laundry being washed in the house as part of their preparation for school. Other activities include storytelling and outings, while an individual activity plan or 'personal programme' is drawn up for each child often in the areas of remedial tuition, hygiene, work on the computers in the house and a special diet. Some of the older children also help with the younger children, for example, when bringing the children on outings. An important goal of the project is to provide an environment of security for the children. Three small rooms are available in the house for

³³ One virtue of self-referral is that people are not expected to pay a G.P for a referral

group work, as well as one to one work inviting children to talk about their day

Family work: Parents of the participating children are required to sign a consent form that the project has the right to communicate with the school on behalf of the family. Parents of these children are frequently addicted to alcohol and/or illicit drugs, many are in abusive relationships, some also have low I.Q, according to the full-time project leader Marian Taggart. Those families who are in need of and wish for family therapy are referred to Cherry Orchard Family Care Centre.

Waiting list: At least 12 children. The project leader suggests that, with the assistance of the Home School Liaison teachers, they could fill the project 'ten times over'.

(vii) Ballyfermot Youth Services/Gurteen Youth Club

Age range: From 10 upwards (though with some flexibility)

Funding: The Dublin Youth Service Board, including the Local Drugs Task Force

Staff: 5 Full-time Staff (Backgrounds in Continuing Education, Youth Work and Community Health Services) plus an Administrator and an Information Officer

Activities: Group work usually with teenagers in school or community based (Decies Road or Gurteen Park) setting. Have run sex education groups for both young men and women, as well as self-esteem/personal development groups and drug prevention programmes. Have run a homework club targeting at risk children recommended by the school. Not involved in family support/family therapy as such

Key features: Genuinely community based, involved in peer education, flexible time-tabling of activities to include evenings

(viii) Cherry Orchard Equine Centre

Age range: Young people between 10 and 21 in particular, though also education and training for people up to 25 years of age

Funding and Activities: Several million pounds were secured from the Department of Agriculture to build the Equine Centre, with the idea that it would be a partnership between the community and Dublin Corporation, FAS, the VEC, Ballyfermot Partnership, URBAN Ballyfermot³⁴, and the Irish Government. It is planned to open the centre early in 2003. The annual staff and maintenance costs to open and run the centre is half a million euros. See the Cherry Orchard Equine Centre's Information Documents on its Stay in School Project and Early School Leaver Programme (funded by FAS). Also going to establish a creche with funding from Area Development Management Ltd.

(ix) Cherry Orchard Family Care Centre

Staff and Funding: Funded approximately 95% by the Health Board, the rest by the Daughters of Charity, it has a multidisciplinary team of ten, including those with backgrounds in psychology, social science, residential childcare, counselling as well as three family therapists. Formerly had six family therapists, over the past two years it has been reduced to three. As part of Health Board Area 5 its catchment area includes Rathcoole, Lucan, Neilstown, Ronanstown and Inchicore, as well as Ballyfermot

Activities including family work: Adopts a flexible approach to the needs of each family with an individual plan for each. Works with roughly 80-85 families per month. Families' evaluation of the service they received is also part of the programme. A notable feature of its client group is the slight predominance of men attending, 55% were male and 45% female in 2000, 51% male and 49% female in 2001. Frequently they are in the 16-20 age group and have needs as individuals, partners and co-parents. It does some work with members of the travelling community, with some attending from Labre Park, as well as some settled travellers living in Clondalkin. It takes referrals from GPs, Social Workers, Public Health Nurses, Probation Officers as well as schools. Cooperation with Barnardos occurs regarding referrals from one to the other.

³⁴ Funding is to be provided from URBAN's 'Civic Services Integration' Budget

Other comments: Identified gaps are the need for an outreach worker with regard to prevention, as well as outreach follow-up for families who have finished with the therapeutic intervention.

(x) Ballyfermot Youth Club

Age range of children: From very young up to 14

Staff and funding: Affiliated to the Catholic Youth Council (CYC), which pays its insurance, this club is run by local children's parents as volunteers, and with the aid of an annual grant from the City of Dublin Youth Services Board

Activities: Involves 250 children during the year with approximately 400 attending its Summer Project. The children are broken into groups of about 25 for activities such as bowling and swimming. Other activities include trips, hiking, visits to pantomimes.

Family work: A notable feature of this project is that parents of the children have to be involved and children are usually admitted only with the involvement of their parents

(xi) Fortune House

Age range: From age 15 upwards

Staff and funding: A multidisciplinary team including doctors, nurses, counsellors, family therapist, clinical psychologist and clinical psychiatrist. Funded by the Health Board

Activities: A range of types of therapy, including person-centred, cognitive-behavioural and Gestalt to support the detoxification of the older teenage group

(xii) Ballyfermot Star Project

Age range: Its educational work is not targeted primarily to those under 18. However, it does involve siblings of drug users and has a core of six children attending the family support work from age 12 upwards. It does not take referrals from schools.

Staff and funding: Registered with charitable status in 1999, funded by Dublin City Council and the National Drugs Strategy Team, it comprises of a Senior Project Worker, an education coordinator and a family support worker.

Family work: Engages in family support for 20-25 families each month

(xiii) St. Matthews Family Centre

Age range: Only works with adults and does not envisage working with children in the future.

Funding: Established since 1994, funded by the Department of Social and Family Affairs

Activities: Free counselling service,

(xiv) Oasis Counselling Service

Age range and activities: Its main work has been with adults (counselling of couples who are married or co-habiting, clients with issues of loss/bereavement and separation, referrals from G.P.'s of people with depression and anxiety, suicide and abuse). However, recently it has expanded to counselling adolescents and young people in difficulty. Its 'Teen Between' programme offers therapeutic work to young people age 12-18, particularly with regard to teenagers whose parents have separated or divorced

Funding: Marriage Counsellors are partly funded by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. The Training School 'Oasis Training Service' is funded by FAS. They have volunteer trainee counsellors who come on placement to Oasis. Clients are encouraged to support their counselling work by a system of voluntary contributions.

Other comments: See Downes (2002) for criticisms of Wigglesworth's (2001) evaluation of Oasis Counselling Service and for criticisms of insufficient clarity regarding its relation to the Elim Pentecostal Church and procedures for parental informed consent

(xv) Bungalow

Age range: This project does not work with children. The building is not geared for them and thus there are no plans to work with children in the future.

Funding: Funded by the Dept. of Social Welfare and Dept. of Community and Family Affairs, as well as the Ballyfermot Partnership

Activities: Women are the main focus and are provided with general counselling

(xvi) Aisling Project

Age range: Only those over 18 are eligible to attend its methadone maintenance programme

- **Gaps**

- 1) **The need for more availability of counselling services for children/youth**

- 2) **The need for more family therapists³⁵**

Many of the local services do not have the resource of counsellors or family therapists for example,

- Barnardos, Cherry Orchard,
- Cherry Orchard Youth Services,
- Cherry Orchard AfterSchool Project,
- Barnardos, Labre Park,
- Ballyfermot Youth Services³⁶/Gurteen Youth Club,
- Cherry Orchard Equine Centre,
- BOSS

The exceptions are Cherry Orchard Family Care Centre, who have lost three of their six family therapists in the last two years, and Fortune House. The latter is targeted to the age range of 15 years upwards who are part of a detoxification programme. The Child and Family Centre has recently lost its family therapist. Oasis Counselling Service does provide access to counsellors and a family therapist. However, a lack of transparency regarding its relation to the Elim Pentecostal Church and its procedures for informed parental consent *inter alia* make it presently unsuitable to take referrals from the local schools (Downes 2002). Other services which provide counselling in Ballyfermot such as Bungalow and St. Matthews Family Centre do not envisage providing counselling services for children of school-going age in the future.

- 3) **The need for counselling and therapeutic intervention for the 12-15 age range**

- 4) **The need for counselling and therapeutic intervention for pupils in the later primary school classes**

The Child and Family Centre and Barnardos, Cherry Orchard, work most successfully with children up to approximately age 12 (see also McKeown et al 2001). While the Cherry Orchard Family Care Centre provides individual counselling to people in the 16-20 age range, as well as children from as young as 6-7, it does not specifically target the 12-15 age range for therapeutic intervention. There is a currently unmet need for a resource offering counselling and therapeutic intervention for the 12-15 age group, in particular, as well as late primary.

- 5) **The need for availability of counselling services during the summer months**

³⁵ An important aspect of drug prevention programmes in the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 is to "seek to strengthen resilience amongst young people in or out of school by fostering positive stable relationships with family or key community figures especially in the early years..." (p.98).

³⁶ Ballyfermot Youth Services have already identified the need for a counselling service for the 12-21 age range

Remedying the lack of availability of counselling services in the Ballyfermot area for school-going children involves the recognition that the need for emotional support is ongoing and frequently requires more than a 10 week course involving groups of students. Acknowledging this also points to the need for counselling and support services during the Summer months – a time when rapid changes and consequent stresses may arise in the student’s life

6) The need and opportunity for increased coordination between services within the limits of confidentiality

In the model recommended by this report to meet the psychological needs of children of Ballyfermot, it will be important to outline opportunities for cooperation with existing services. However, it is also important to recognise the limits of interagency cooperation due to confidentiality needs of clients.

7) The need to minimise turnover of staff through a strategy of appointing local people to work in the local organisations where possible

High staff turnover was a problem cited by many local organisations. The high level of students intending to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate invites the opportunity to develop a strategy to provide them with the chance to obtain the qualifications necessary to fill key posts in organisations based in the local community. Implementation of such a strategy would have the virtues of:

- minimising any culture gap between service provider and service user
- providing positive role models for local youth and children based on people from their own community
- minimising staff turnover and providing increased continuity within local services as local people may be less likely to leave the area in the long-term; the need for continuity is particularly evident for services such as counselling

3.2 Community-based versus school-based counselling

As there is a need for emotional support for at risk students and many existing community based services in Ballyfermot do not offer direct one to one counselling to children under 16, an important question arises as to whether counselling services a) on-site in the schools or b) based in the community, are best suited to the welfare of the child/youth. Several schools have requested on-site school counselling. However the question arises:

- if such counselling were available, to what extent will students/pupils be sufficiently at ease in the school environment to confide in a counsellor ?

A. Responses across the primary schools to the question ‘Would you talk to someone from the school about your problems if they promised not to tell anybody else ?’ were as follows:

YES	NO	MAYBE	DEPENDS	DON'T KNOW
142	176	6	8	5

There was significant variation across schools with regard to pupil responses with one school having a clear majority of ‘yes’ responses in each of its classes including one 6th class being overwhelmingly willing to talk: 16 (YES) and 4 (NO). Nevertheless the other schools had consistent majorities of ‘no’ responses to this question.

B. Responses across the three participating secondary schools to the question 'Would you talk to someone from the school about your problems if they promised not to tell anybody else ?' were as follows:

YES	NO	MAYBE	DON'T KNOW
48	100	8	5

Other responses:

- 7 answers such as 'it depends who it was' or some minor problems only
- 6 responses stated 'yes' but said they would talk to their best friend

It is possible that some of the other 'yes' responses interpreted the question as including their fellow students in school so that the ratio of those willing to talk to someone in the school setting may be even lower.

Three developmental trends were noticeable:

- primary school classes of girls in particular were more willing to talk to someone about their problems in a school context than secondary school classes
- primary school students were much more likely to emphasise the need for the person to be known to them already; some secondary school students stated that they would prefer to have someone to confide in whom they did not know and preferably someone outside the area (whom they would not meet walking down the street afterwards)
- the early secondary school years tended to contrast with the older ones (i.e. 5th year). In one of the 5th year groups 100% of the 16 responses replied 'no' that they would not talk to someone from the school. The only reason offered as explanation was the issue of confidentiality. The highest rate of willingness to talk to someone from the school about a problem was with female first and second year students. This reached 50% of the class in some schools.

At secondary level, gender difference was only noticeable in one group of younger students where 4 of the 5 girls said yes they would talk to someone, with the remaining girl stating 'maybe'. In contrast, the boys in this same group gave 12 'no' responses and 3 'yes'.

Based on these figures it is arguable that there is a role for a person on-site in the school in whom students would confide regarding their problems, but *usually only with late primary and the earlier years of secondary school students, especially girls. Yet even with this group at least half of the students state that they would not avail of such services on-site in the school. This suggests the need for availability of such emotional support services at other locations in the community in addition to the school.*

A US nationwide survey of school-based service models and school-linked models involving 90 programmes suggested that the two models are not that different from each other (Shaw et al 1996). In the words of Reeder et al (1997):

In general, the survey results suggest that the physical location of school health services is of minor importance with regard to the range of services provided and the types of health professionals affiliated with the program...Physical proximity of the clinic to educators does not guarantee that the more traditional educational functions of the school will be integrated with the enhanced health services offered by the clinic

Many questionnaires indicate a desire for help even if the help is not in the school itself i.e. the school could be a pathway for access to psychological help but not its site, while for others the site of the help could be in the school itself. *The debate between school-based or school-linked community services needs to move beyond simply either/or models to a both/and model accomodating the individual needs of the student.*

The central reason for the large number of students at both primary and secondary who state they would not confide in someone in the school context is confidentiality. The following is a sample of quotes (see also Appendix K) raising the issue of confidentiality in response to the question: 'Would you talk to someone from the school about your problems if they promised not to tell anybody else?':

"No ! Everything gets around in this school" (Age 14, F, Q)

"Yes but they always tell" (Age 13, F, Q)

"No. Because they would tell someone else because they always do" (Age 16, F, Q)

"No because they would tell. They have done before" (Age 17, F, Q)

"My cousin...She told the school principal...she rang her ma...told her all about it" (6th class, F, FG)

They "want to find out if you ma's on drugs. 'They're very noseey... 'Is your Ma on drugs ?'...they'd be asked a load of questions about their kids..." (6th class, F, FG)

"No because some people do tell even when they promise" (6th class, F, Q)

"No because they might just say that and then go off and tell someone" (6th class, F, Q)

"No because they probably would tell a few days later" (6th class, F, Q)

"No because I wouldn't be able to trust them" (6th class, F, Q)

"No because I still wouldn't feel safe" (4th class, F, Q)

Other themes emerged regarding confiding only about minor problems and for primary school students in particular only with someone well known to students:

"Yeah but only minor problems" (Age 15, F, Q)

"Yes but not my deepness and darkness" (Age 14, F, Q)

"I'd have to wait and make sure you could trust her" (6th class, F, FG)

"We'd get to know you first" (5th class, F, FG)

"If I knew them well" (6th class, F, Q)

"If it was someone I could trust" (4th class, F, Q)

"If I knew and felt comfortable I would" (6th class, F, Q)

"Yes...if I tell some one about my problems he have to be a good friend" (6th class, M, Age 13, Q)

"wouldn't like to know someone and then never see them again" (5th class, F, FG)

Need for outside counsellor, not from the area, for confidentiality (Secondary FG)

Only one student directly raised the issue of the gender of the person they would confide in:

"Yes but not a man teacher" (Age 12, F, Q)

A further obstacle arises regarding on-site counselling in the school, namely, when the need arises to involve the parents in the counselling (beyond basic consent). It must ultimately be the decision of the parents together with the student, whether they feel more comfortable participating in the counselling process in a school-based setting or a community-based setting. The latter arguably offers them more privacy.

4.1 Recommendations

- **Overall aims of the recommended model**
 - Targeting at risk children in early years of primary school for speech and language support
 - Targeting identified at risk children/youth for emotional and social support
 - Providing broader emotional and social support for other children/youth
 - Targeting specific families for therapeutic and practical support
 - Facilitating increased coordination between the network of local services
 - A key underlying goal of the project is to upgrade the skills of the community and those working in the community, whether at the levels of :
 - a) parental treatment skills for speech and language, ADD/ADHD, parental mediation in bullying,
 - b) learning support/resource/Home-School Liaison teachers skills in applying and facilitating interventions for speech and language, and for ADD/ADHD
 - c) teachers for conflict resolution,
 - d) peer support among the students and developing local youth as mentors

- **Guiding principles**
 - The debate between school-based versus school-linked or community based models is viewed not as either/or but both/and depending on the specific contextual needs of the child and parent. A complementary community and school based team is provided
 - The Head of the project team is community based
 - The project is child-centred recognising this view of the child in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the aspirations of the school curricula
 - Two secondary students from 5th year/transition year in local schools may be elected onto the management committee. The election will help raise awareness of the local services, promote dialogue among local young people regarding mental health issues, as well as contribute to the development of a student-centred service sensitive to the changing needs of young people in the area. As there are more than two participating local schools, the student positions can be rotated if necessary over the two years
 - The school and community based team are to work in a relation of partnership with the schools. Nevertheless issues of confidentiality would require that access to files on individual children and their families be kept separate from the schools³⁷
 - Strong cooperation is anticipated between project team members and Home-School Liaison teachers/Guidance counsellors and school care team in particular
 - The school is viewed as a mental health system
 - Increased coordination with services in the community such as Ballyfermot Youth Services, Barnardos, Labre Park & Cherry Orchard, Cherry Orchard After Schools Project, Child and Family Centre, and Cherry Orchard Family Care Centre, within the limits of client confidentiality
 - A complementary rather than duplicative role with NEPS: NEPS for example does not have time to focus on family level work
 - Developing the factors of resilience and strength within the community and local student body in order to improve the quality of life of children in Ballyfermot
 - Emotional and social support interventions are developmental and sustained rather than being once-off events

³⁷ Unless consent is provided by the parents to authorise specific individuals from the school to have access to the files

- **Outline of the recommended model**

A community base team and a school based team – Two subsections of an overall joint team*School-based team*

- A) **childcare worker (qualification in social care) onsite in primary schools**
[28,195-37,698 Euro]

- B) **childcare worker (preferably with experience of working with adolescents) or youth worker onsite in secondary schools³⁸**
[28,195-37,698 Euro]

- C) **onsite speech and language therapist**
[28,588- 38,085 Euro]

Soundfield amplification system (in six classes) :
[9,000 Euro]

Community based team

- D) **Senior Family Therapist (ideally systemically trained) (Overall Head of Team)**
[40,000 Euro approx.]

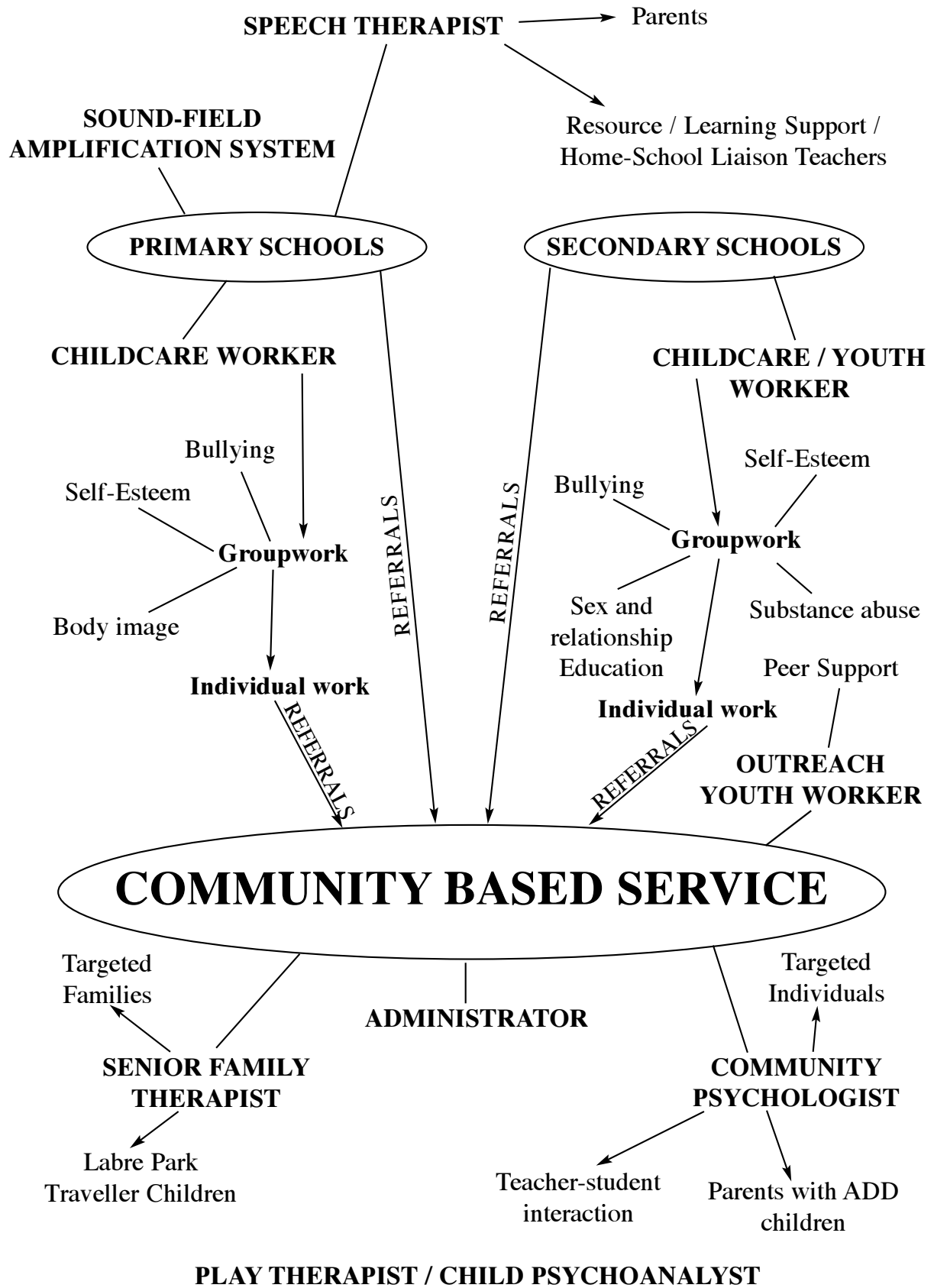
- E) **Community Psychologist (with either counselling or clinical psychology background, with experience at working at community level)**
[35,000-40,000 Euro approx.]

- F) **Outreach youth worker**
[28,195-37,698 Euro]

- G) **A play therapist or child psychotherapist**
[28,588-38,085]

- H) **An administrator**
[20,000 Euro approx.]

³⁸ A suitably qualified childcare worker is preferable to a youth worker for this role, as the former has more training in individual work



- **Key points regarding the model**

- The group work from the childcare/youth workers would serve as a basis for referral of more problematic issues (with parental consent) to the community based team for therapeutic intervention
- Similarly, children/youth with persistent conduct problems would be referred by teachers/principals (with parental consent). However the child/youth could choose whether to have individual counselling on-site or outside the school setting. This element of choice for the child/youth is a vital aspect of the project rather than being an incidental one. The community psychologist (with background in either counselling or clinical psychology) would be engaged in this 1 to 1 counselling whether community or school based
- The flexibility of the complementary model between community and school based interventions takes into account that many of the student questionnaire responses indicated a strong opposition to receiving counselling in a school environment, whereas many other students indicated a willingness to trust within the school environment. This flexibility is intended to accommodate the needs of the individual students and his/her family
- A similar flexibility exists regarding therapeutic support for the child being predominantly an individual focused intervention or a family level intervention. The appropriateness of the level of intervention for a particular case would be a judgment made by the team
- The team's work with parents will obviously need to recognise that many parents are working so that the hours of availability of services would need to include weekends as much as weekdays, evenings as much as mornings (see also Dale 1996 on the contradiction between changing work patterns and the assumption that parents, particularly mothers, are available to meet professionals during working hours). Ballyfermot Youth Services flexibility of timetabling offers a useful model in this regard although targeting teenagers rather than adults
- As the team plans intervention at both primary and secondary level, this offers the opportunity of longterm support, and support with transition from primary to secondary school for identified at-risk students
- It is recommended that a competition to establish the name of the whole project be run among the first and second year students in the three participating secondary schools. This would raise awareness among students regarding the services as well as foster a more open attitude to discussion of mental health issues and development of a greater ownership of the service. As well as suggesting the name, the students would explain the rationale for the name they think would be appropriate for the service. A first, second and third prize of approximately 200, 100 and 50 Euro would enable someone from each of the three schools to win an award

- **Tasks of members of the project team**

School based team:

A) childcare worker (qualification in social care) onsite in primary schools

B) childcare worker (preferably with experience of working with adolescents) or youth worker onsite in secondary schools

Tasks:

- The role of the childcare and youthworkers will involve group work with some one to one work by the childcare workers
- Themes of the groupwork would include bullying, peer support, substance abuse, self-esteem, one focusing on primary school students, one focusing on these themes as well as sexuality, with secondary students
- The purposes of such work whether at group or individual level will not be counselling as such but health promotion and stress prevention, including emotional and social support to facilitate resilience in the child/youth
- These two parts of the team will serve as a key point for referral of children/youth for counselling/therapy to the

community based setting. As these are the people best known to the children/youth in the schools it would be important for them to accompany the child/youth referred to the community setting, for at least initial meetings³⁹.

- They would also work in close cooperation with the youth workers from Ballyfermot Youth Services to adopt a coordinated targeted plan for group work across the schools with a developmental feature built into the group work over the two years.
- They would also work with the Home-School-Liaison teachers and Guidance Counsellors at Secondary level to develop a plan to identify students who could contribute to supporting/mentoring pupils both in late primary and early secondary years. Such a plan would be a development of the peer mentoring projects already being initiated by Home-School liaison teachers in some secondary schools in Ballyfermot – and could also be part of an anti-bullying programme

C) onsite speech and language therapist

Tasks:

- Working with parents of children with speech and language difficulties to develop the treatment skills of parents. A central assumption of such model is the parent as co-therapist
- These parents would be of children in early start programmes and up to 1st-2nd class
- Being available to these parents on an ongoing basis to support their intervention with their child
- Working with resource teachers and learning support teachers in particular to upskill them regarding speech and language interventions for the children
- Supervising parents sharing of their speech and language treatment skills with other parents – language intervention skills are especially transferable
- Contributing to the evaluation of the sound-field amplification systems through assisting with monitoring the speech and language progress of the participating classes and control groups
- In exceptional, rare, cases, working directly with individual children.

PLUS

A Sound-field amplification system: Installed in at least one Junior Infant, Senior Infant and First class in a boys primary school and a girls primary school i.e. 6 classes minimum. This system equalizes the sound levels throughout the room. The goal of such a system in mainstream schools is to improve not only children's level of hearing the teacher (one in seven young children are estimated to have 'glue' ears) but also their levels of concentration and attention, and language development. Noisy environments are associated with less task attention and higher rates of negative verbalisations among hyperactive children (Whalen et al 1979). The soundfield amplification system minimises the distracting effects of background noise.

See appendix L for brief summary of international research on the benefits of sound-field amplification systems in mainstream schools - research which has potential relevance to improving problems of speech and language, attention deficits and disruptive behaviour, as well as improving academic performance

Community based team:

D) Senior Family Therapist (ideally systemically trained) (Overall Head of Team)

³⁹ The need to do so for older youths may not be so important

Tasks:

- Therapeutic intervention with a fixed number of targeted at risk families in the community based setting
- Developing a flexible model to minimise a backlog of clients, a model based on the 'brief consultation process' developed by Cherry Orchard Family Care Centre
- Working with children from the travelling community at Barnardos in Labre Park, as well as their families
- Working with teachers on teacher/student interaction and conflict resolution⁴⁰
- Working with parents in extreme cases where parental mediation may be necessary to resolve problems of bullying
- Coordinating the strategies and policies of the whole team

E) Community Psychologist (with either counselling or clinical psychology background, with experience at working at community level)**Tasks:**

- 1 to 1 work onsite both with children identified by the school and secondary students requesting help,
- 1 to 1 work in Cherry Orchard with identified children from Cherry Orchard After Schools Project
- capable of working with HSL teachers to establish ADD parent support and treatment (behaviour management) groups,
- there is clear scope for a cooperative project with the Child and Family Centre regarding a programme involving developing skills of parents of children with ADD/ADHD to be involved in the treatment of their children through behavioural management methods. Such cooperation could also involve Home-School Liaison, Learning Support and Resource teachers both in upskilling them with regard to support for children with ADD/ADHD and in their applying these skills with these children in the school context

F) Outreach youth worker**Tasks:**

- Developing activities in a community setting to complement the school based groups run in the schools by the childcare/youth workers on themes such as bullying, peer support, substance abuse, sexuality, self-esteem, anger management
- Developing peer support and mentoring programmes involving teenagers in the community

G) A play therapist or child psychotherapist**Tasks:**

- Working in the community based setting frequently on one to one work with younger children identified as in particular need. Employing more non-verbal methods of emotional expression
- Working with the family of the child

H) An administrator

⁴⁰ Such work would probably have to be initially with teachers who volunteer to participate outside school hours, although it has been suggested that Friday afternoon once a month might be a suitable time within school hours

- **Opportunity for coordination with existing services**

The opportunity arises for the model being proposed in this report to liaise in a relation of partnership with a number of existing services in Ballyfermot, as well as the schools and NEPS:

- a) It is strongly recommended that the community based team would engage in a strategy to minimise a backlog of people waiting for help while still providing them with some service – an approach termed a 'brief consultation process' by the team at Cherry Orchard Family Centre. This would involve staying in some regular contact with families waiting for more intense therapeutic intervention, focusing on maintaining and developing their strengths even if there is no room for intensive therapeutic work at a particular point in time. Margaret Joyce from the Cherry Orchard Family Centre has agreed to offer her support to the newly established team in developing this 'brief consultation process' approach which was itself developed at Cherry Orchard Family Centre through an adaptation of the solution focused 'brief therapy' approaches
- b) The Child and Family Clinic run ADHD groups for children and also for their parents. Since August 2002 a course has been run on anger management with 4 ADHD and 2 children without ADHD. There is clear scope for a cooperative project with the Child and Family Centre, also involving NEPS, regarding a programme involving developing skills of parents of children with ADD/ADHD to be involved in the treatment of their children through behavioural management methods. It is recommended that such cooperation would also involve Home-School Liaison, Learning Support and Resource teachers both in upskilling them with regard to support for children with ADD/ADHD and in their applying these skills with these children in the school context. Such a partnership could also extend to developing peer tutoring for children with ADD/ADHD (see DuPaul & Eckert 1997 on the positive effects of peer tutoring for ADHD in the U.S context)
- c) It is recommended that the Childcare and Youth Workers would work in close cooperation with the youth workers from Ballyfermot Youth Services to adopt a coordinated targeted plan for group work across the schools with a developmental feature built into the group work over the two years. The Youth Workers from Ballyfermot Youth Services have already been involved in group work with students in the schools regarding issues of self-esteem, drug prevention etc as well as sex education groups for teenagers in the community. Moreover, the common location for community based group work (Gurteen Park in particular, as well as Decies Road) strengthens the opportunity, as well as the need for a coordinated approach across the Ballyfermot schools. There is also clear scope for cooperation between the childcare and youth workers and Barnardos, Cherry Orchard who have developed groups for teenage girls in the past.
- d) Barnardos, Labre Park do not have access to a family therapist for their members of the Travelling Community. It is recommended that the family therapist would visit Labre Park at regular intervals and work with families on-site there. Space for family work is available in Labre Park
- e) Cherry Orchard AfterSchools Project does not have access to a qualified counsellor for one to one work with children. It is recommended that the community psychologist would visit its house in Cherry Orchard and provide individual counselling at regular intervals. However, suitable times for such interventions would only be weekdays before 1pm.

- f) Cooperation with schools:
- With Home-School Liaison Teachers regarding courses for parents regarding speech and language, and ADHD interventions⁴¹
 - With Learning Support, Resource and other Teachers for speech and language, and ADHD interventions
 - With principals and teachers for referrals with parental consent of identified children to the community based team
 - With principals and teachers for referrals of families to the community based team
 - For onsite group work in the schools by the childcare/youth workers
 - For individual support for children/youth from the childcare workers onsite in the school (active listening to provide guidance and support at the level of health promotion and stress prevention rather than therapy) with a view to identifying those children/youth most in need of referral to the community based team for therapy
 - For personal development opportunities for teachers to facilitate their skills in conflict resolution and stress prevention
 - For strengthening skills of Home-School-Liaison Teachers, Resource and Learning Support teachers regarding interventions for speech and language therapy and ADHD
- g) Other important cooperation with NEPS is regarding informing the team of IEPS for children, referrals from NEPS as well as the school (with parental consent) where it is thought that the child is particularly in need of emotional support. Boundaries of confidentiality between the recommended team and NEPS would need to be worked out, in discussion with the child's parents also
- h) With Health Board representatives and GPs for referrals
- **Management Committee:**

The Management Committee to supervise the implementation of the Project would consist of:

- A Member of the Local Drugs Task Force
- A Representative from the Mental Health and Addiction Service of the South-Western Area Health Board
- Two Representatives from Local Schools, One from Primary Level, One from Secondary Level
- Two elected student representatives from local schools
- A Representative from URBAN
- The Education Coordinator from Ballyfermot Partnership
- Staff Member: The Head of the Team (Senior Family Therapist)

As with the Ana Liffey Project, Staff Members i.e. The Head of the Team, would not be present during those aspects of management committee meetings dealing with staff issues but would be present as of right with regard to other issues.

In order to facilitate interagency cooperation and coordination, it is recommended that at least one of the two school representatives would also be a member of the Ballyfermot Partnership Education subcommittee and a member of the Early School Leavers Working Group.

⁴¹ There is no reason in principle to conceive of such courses for parents as being simply school specific. It is to be hoped that parents across different schools could attend the same course and in particular that those parents who develop into roles of co-facilitators of courses would be able to make their skills available as a resource for parents across several schools

- **Budget**

Assuming combined resources of URBAN, the Drugs Task Force Ballyfermot and Ballyfermot Partnership is approx. 250,000 Euro in total each year for two years

Staff costs:

- A) **childcare worker (qualification in social care) onsite in primary schools**
[28,195-37,698 Euro]

- B) **childcare worker (preferably with experience of working with adolescents) or youth worker onsite in secondary schools**
[28,195-37,698 Euro]

- C) **onsite speech and language therapist**
[28,588- 38,085 Euro]

Community based team

- D) **Senior Family Therapist (ideally systemically trained) (Overall Head of Team)**
[40,000 Euro approx.]

- E) **Community Psychologist (with either counselling or clinical psychology background, with experience at working at community level)**
[35,000-40,000 Euro approx.]

- F) **Outreach youth worker**
[28,195-37,698 Euro]

- G) **A play therapist or child psychotherapist**
[28,588-38,085] (To be funded by additional Health Board Sources)

- H) **An administrator**
[20,000 Euro approx.]

Soundfield amplification system (in six classes) :

To supply and install one sound-field amplification system costs 1500 Euro

Supplying them for 6 classrooms is 9,000 Euro

[9,000 Euro]

Advertising and Accountant to manage payroll (only estimates drawn from the Suaimhneas project of the Dublin Primary Schools Initiative 2002):

Advertising: 3,500 Euro

Accountant to manage payroll: 750 Euro

Insurance (estimates from Suaimhneas):

Professional Indemnity Insurance 418 Euro

Employers Liability Insurance 418 Euro

Public Liability Insurance 159 Euro

However, Allianz insurance give a much higher preliminary estimate of approx. 1800 Euro - including property insurance in this price but excluding Professional Indemnity Insurance (P.I.I). P.I.I would be expected to be significantly higher than Suaimhneas as their project team included only two people whereas this proposed team consists of 7-8 members.

- **Location**

The Local Drugs Task Force is currently in the process of acquiring a central and community based premises with adequate facilities which will be made available for rental to the team. URBAN Ballyfermot is currently involved in the development stages of the building of a Dedicated Youth Centre in Ballyfermot that will service local youth and youth service providers. It is anticipated that when this centre is built, it will be an ideal long-term location for the provision of the recommended community based psychological support services

Other possible locations for the community based team are:

- A. Gurteen Youth Club
 - House available at negotiable times
- B. Cherry Orchard After Schools Service:
 - House available: weekends, after 7pm weekdays, before 1pm weekdays
- C. Cherry Orchard Community Centre
- D. Star Project
- E. Barnardos, Labre Park

Unsuitable locations:

- Barnardos, Cherry Orchard (no space)
- Child and Family Centre (no space, needs to be community based)
- Oasis Counselling Service (no space, insufficient clarity regarding its relation to the Elim Pentecostal Church and procedures for parental informed consent)
- Bungalow counselling (building not suitable for children)
- St. Matthews Family Centre (clients are not predominantly children)

Location suitable for group work but much less so for individual or family work:

- Equine Centre (only one suitable room in the whole building for counselling as walls between rooms not sufficiently soundproofed to guarantee privacy)

• Evaluation Criteria

Criteria for evaluation:

1 (a) *Intervention of speech therapist with parents in order to facilitate their treatment of their children*

- Number of families/children initially attending speech and/or language therapy groups for parents from each school (though not necessarily in each school)
- Number of families/children persistently attending ADD treatment groups for parents from each school (though not necessarily in each school)
- Satisfaction of parents with process of being assisted in developing their treatment [behavioural management] skills with their child
- Satisfaction of parents with the outcome of their intervention
- Teachers' evaluation of outcomes of the intervention for the child
- Speech therapists assessments of the speech and language levels of the child; this does not necessarily require the child to have been formally assessed by a speech therapist prior to parental treatment intervention as criteria for involving parents in treatment would basically be those parents who believe, usually in consultation with the child's teacher, that their child is in need of improved speech or language skills
- Degree to which increased skills of parents in the first year of support can be shared with other parents in the second year of support

1 (b) *Intervention of speech therapist with resource/learning support teachers, Home-School Liaison teachers and other teachers in order to facilitate their treatment role with the children*⁴²

- The number of teachers (usually resource/learning support/Home-School Liaison) across the Ballyfermot schools who attended training sessions from the speech therapist
- The number of hours given to upskilling such teachers in speech and language techniques
- Teacher satisfaction with the training sessions
- Teacher sense of self-efficacy regarding their increased competence to intervene using therapeutic skills, with a pupil regarding his/her speech and/or language skills. This would be assessed after each year and also prior to the intervention to provide a baseline for comparison

2. *Intervention of community psychologist with families of children with ADD/ADHD*

- Number of families/children initially attending ADD/ADHD treatment groups for parents from each school (though not necessarily attending the group *in* each school)
- Number of families/children persistently attending ADD/ADHD treatment groups for parents from each school (though not necessarily in each school)
- Satisfaction of parents with process of being assisted in developing their treatment [behavioural management] skills with their child
- Satisfaction of parents with the outcome of their intervention
- Teachers' evaluation of outcomes of the intervention child
- Degree to which increased skills of parents in the first year of support can be shared with other parents in the

⁴² The exceptional, rare cases where the speech therapist would work directly with individual children would not be part of the evaluation criteria relevant to future mainstreaming support and overlook the need of teachers for practical problem-solving suggestions. (Athanasίου et al 2002)

second year of support i.e. the number of parent co-facilitators and the number of parents they regularly support

3. Evaluation of outcomes regarding interventions for *emotional and social support* (from the Family Therapist, Childcare, Community Psychologist, Youth Workers) cannot be crudely quantitative in terms of numbers of children/families receiving intervention or the length of the intervention, given the disparate needs of different families and individuals. Such a bias towards the measurable would ignore the interactive systemic effects of numerous external factors. *It would also ignore the need for interventions regarding group work to be developmental and sustained* as has been emphasised earlier. Some recommendations for minimum levels of caseload are appropriate however:

Family therapy

- 10-12 families a week is the caseload recommended in the Cherry Orchard Family Care Centre, with a minimum of 9 families a week, though some caseloads are up to 13-15 families for a full-time family therapist.
- Evaluation of the service would necessarily include the families' satisfaction levels as is the current practice in the Cherry Orchard Family Care Centre

Involvement of Family Therapist in conflict resolution/self-awareness groups for teachers

- the numbers of teachers in each school participating in conflict resolution/self-awareness groups is a relevant factor in the success of this level of intervention
- teachers perceptions of the value of the groupwork concerning:
 - their increased understanding of children with emotional/behavioural difficulties
 - their increased awareness of teacher-student interaction as a factor in minimising and accentuating these difficulties
 - their increased level of self-awareness
 - their increased self-efficacy in working with such children through problem-solving suggestions provided by the groupwork⁴³

As intervention for mediation between parents regarding their children's bullying is only to be envisaged in extreme cases, it is not being recommended that interventions be evaluated according to numbers of interventions

4. Evaluation of the sound-field amplification system can take place at two levels:
 - the level of improvement within a class of children (regarding speech and language skills, attention etc) comparing pre and post-intervention performance
 - comparison of a class with equivalent classes in the same school over the two years where one class has the sound-field system and the other control groups (randomly selected classes) have not.

It was agreed at a meeting of the Ballyfermot Partnership Education Subcommittee (December 2002) that three of the primary schools could have the systems installed in two classrooms each URBAN Ballyfermot and the National Drugs Strategy Team will provide additional funding for evaluation of the impact of sound-field amplification systems in the schools over the two years. Representatives from the Department of Education and Science have emphasised the importance of having an evaluation plan set out before installation of the sound-field systems.

Appendices

Appendix A

Below is a sample of quotes from those giving high estimates of bullying:

- 'How many in your class have been bullied ?'
 - "all of them" (4th class, F, Q),
 - "loads" (4th class, F, Q)
 - "most of the class" (4th class, F, Q),
 - 15 (4th class, F, Q)
 - "Nearly everyone I think" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "nearly all of us" (4th class, F, Q)
 - "Probably half of them" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "half of them ?" (4th class, F, Q)
 - "about 13" (5th class, F, Q)
 - "10 girls it is terrible" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "bullying I hate it there should be none...around 5 [in class bullied]" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "I would change all the bullies because that is what the worst thing is...roughly about 5" (6th class, F, Q)
 - 9 (4th class, F, Q)
 - 22 (5th class, M, Q)
 - 19 (5th class, M, Q)
 - 14 (4th class, M, Q)
 - "Around 14" (5th class, M, Q)
 - "10...[I cry] when I get bullied" (5th class, M, Q)
 - "12 people were" (4th class, M, Q)
 - 11 (4th class, M, Q),
 - "all" (4th class, M, Q)
 - "About 8" in class bullied (6th class, M, Q)
 - "About 16" in class bullied (6th class, M, Q)
 - "especially fat people" (4th class, M, FG)
 - "Everybody in my class have been bullied" (5th class, M, Q)

Below is a sample of quotes from those giving low estimates of bullying:

- "nobody in my class was bullied" (6th class, F, Q)
- "around 2 but my teacher has stopped it" (5th class, F, Q)
- "1 but it wasn't by anyone in our class and it was last year" (6th class, F, Q)
- "none" (4th class, F, Q)
- "not much" of a problem (6th class, M, Q)
- "nobody gets bullied" (5th class, M, Q)

While these responses were in direct reply to the question 'How many in your class have been bullied?', the fact that bullying itself was a perceived problem of the students themselves emerges very clearly from the following responses to the questions

- a) 'If you had the power what would you change in your school ?' and
- b) 'What are the biggest problems your friends have ? How can they be helped ?':
- 'If you had the power what would you change in your school ?'
 - "stop the bullying" (6th class, M, Q)
 - "I would make all the school a bullyfree zone" (6th class, M, Q)
 - "Nobody would be allowed bully" (6th class, M, Q)
 - "I'd make it more safe" (6th class, M, Q)
 - "I'd throw all the people who tease out" (6th class, M, Q)
 - "aney bulles hit a boy they wued be espeled" (6th class, M, Q)
 - "to stop the bullying" (5th class, M, Q)
 - "STOP bullying" (4th class, M, Q)
 - "They are being bullyied" (4th class, M, Q)
 - "I would shut the school" (4th class, M, Q)
 - "I would not allow fighting" (4th class, M, Q)
 - "some of my friends get bullied and they should tell someone" (4th class, M, Q)
 - "I'd have guards to guard me to stop anyone starting on me" (4th class, M, FG)
 - "No-one will end up in school if they keep getting bullied" (6th class, M, FG)
 - "the hall and to stop bullying" (5th class, M, Q)
 - "The bullies" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "I would make all the school be friends...4 [in class] have been bullied" (4th class, F, Q)
 - "The people in my class" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "If I had the power I would change the bullys out of the school" (4th class, F, Q)
 - "I would change all the bullies in my school to geeks" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "I would change the way people fight, I make it so there wasn't any fights at all...[yet] I don't know if anyone was bullied" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "There would be severe punishment for people bullying other people...A lot [are bullied] especially myself and others who want to learn. They think just because we're not like them we're geeks but we're people to" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "I would like the prefab to be changed because I do be afraid when I go out to go to the toilets on my own...4 people have [been bullied] I was too...my teacher treats me fairly most of my friends don't" (4th class, F, Q)
 - 'What are the biggest problems your friends have ? How can they be helped ?'
 - "squabbling" (5th class, M, Q)
 - "6th class bully us...they are jealous of our play" (5th class, F, FG)
 - "one of my friends are allways getting slagged and hit and she doesn't do anything about it" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "One of my friend is being bullied. They can go to a teacher...If I didn't go to school it would probly be because someone was bullying me" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "None of my friends have problems only me...I'd go to a quiet school where I don't get bullied...If I didn't get bullied I'd love school" (6th class, M, Q)
 - "There's one guy gets dived on every time we play football. They just don't like him" (4th class, M, FG)
 - "He tells me about people calling him names about his weight" (5th class, M, Q)
 - "Being bullied, or sad because someone died belonging to them...need to be able to talk to someone who will listen and not judge" (4th class, F, FG) – listen and not judge is a theme echoed elsewhere also
 - "getting slagged" (6th class, F, Q)

- “being bullied” (6th class, F, Q)
- “bullying, you can talk to them” (6th class, F, Q)
- “If people was getting bullied you can talk to them and help them...4[in class]” (6th class, F, Q)
- “they were being bullied Yes if the bullies stop” (6th class, F, Q)
- “They can be bullied give some advice (6th class, F, Q)
- “my friend was getting bullied and she was helped by her mam” (5th class, F, Q)
- “There’s a fight in the yard every day” (5th class, M, FG)
- “If you get bullied and hit them back you get in trouble” (5th class, M, FG)
- “One of the biggest problems” in the school (5th class, M, FG) but “you don’t wanna be a rat” (5th class, M, FG)

Other questions where themes of bullying also arose include:

- ‘If you had a younger brother or sister what would be the 3 most important pieces of advice you would give to her?’
 - “Stay away from older boys, they might hit you” (4th class, M, FG)
 - Not to “box people around” (5th class, M, FG)
- Do you think many people your age around you are unhappy?
 - “Yes, they are being picked on, but are trying to pretend to be ok in case they just get picked on more” (4th class, M, FG)
- Do you think most people are pretending to be happy even if they are not?
 - “Someone probably hit them and they don’t want to say anything” (4th class, M, FG)

Appendix B

Pupil responses to the question regarding increased visitation of the school by their parents:

- “If I wasn’t doing good in school I would like the teacher to tell them” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes because I know I’m doing good in school” (6th class, F, Q)
- “They probably would but I don’t want them talking to my teacher more often” (6th class, F, Q)
- “My Mum and Dad are always busy and yes I would like them to talk to the teacher more” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes they would, no I wouldn’t” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes but they are full-time workers” (6th class, F, Q)
- “If I have a trouble in school my mam comes down anyway so I don’t think so” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No because I never get into trouble and I’m not bold” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No because my mam hates schools and I wouldn’t mind my mam talking to the teachers more” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes I would like them to but they might be at work” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes because it would let your parent to get to know your school and teacher better” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes because I would like to see how I’m getting on” (5th class, F, Q)
- “I wouldn’t and they’re both working so it’d be hard for them to fit it in” (6th class, F, Q)

- “Yes because they would find out more about me” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes because I would like to know what my teacher thinks about me” (4th class, F, Q)
- “Yes cause we get lots of things done so the parents could see ! (5th class, F, Q)
- “I think they would like to because they would find out what I am doing. They would like to talk to my teacher more” (5th class, M, Q)
- “No I would not” (4th class, M, Q)
- “I don’t mind if my parents want to come to my school that’s their business” (6th class, M, Q)
- “Yes they would like to talk to my teacher” (6th class, M, Q)

Appendix C

Other responses to the question regarding activities in the school outside school hours included:

- ‘Beyond 96’ club “talking to you about girls stuff” (4th class, F, FG)
 - “The community doesn’t put anything into the school” (6th class, F, FG)
 - “our principal has speech and drama Irish dancing and basketball I suppose this makes other people go to school more often” (4th class, F, Q)
 - “No but I’d like to” (6th class, F, Q)
 - “No there’s basketball but I hate it” (6th class, F, Q)
 - “I’d like more after-school activities” (6th class, F, Q)
 - “You can only play gaelic if you’re good – you have to be picked...they don’t do any other after-school activities” (5th class, M, FG)
- if you had the power what would you change in your school ?
 - “more activities” (4th class, F, Q)
 - “have classes after school like drama or dancing” (4th class, F, Q)
 - “get rid of Irish and put in tap dancing and more work and art” (4th class, F, Q)

Appendix D

School a) stated they were ‘working on’ involving resource teachers in Individual Education Plans (IEPs). This school has 47 children with IEPs although not so far involving parents in these plans (apart presumably from their basic consent to these plans).

School b) Involves the Home-School Liaison teacher, the (one) learning support teacher and the principal but states that it finds it ‘very difficult’ to involve the parent in such plans

School c) has ‘quite a lot’ of IEPs. They state that they have good contact between parents and teachers, including parents meetings and paired-shared reading, and parents meetings ‘continually with kids in special class’

School d) They have formally been set up for children with behavioural problems. Most of the teachers would have profiling

School e) did not respond to this particular question in their postal response

Appendix E

- If you had the possibility not to go to school, would you ?

Primary school:

- “No because my aunty left school and it was the worst thing she ever done” (6th class, F, Q)
- “I like the teachers” (4th class, F, Q)
- “I haven’t been absent without telling my family but if we were taught something new, I knew most of the things I was taught this year, I would like it better” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Because people in 3rd world countries have no choice to go to school or not and they have no education and in years to come if we go to school we will be the ones who will get the good jobs and maybe help the people in 3rd world countries” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No I love school thanks to my teacher” (5th class, F, Q)
- “No. Nobody likes school but I’m going to college as well” (6th class, M, Q)

Reasons given for wanting to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate include:

- “Yes. To get an education” (4th class, F, FG)
- “When you’re grown up in interviews they’ll probably hire you” (4th class, F, FG)
- “You learn more...go to college...a lot of experience” (4th class, F, FG)
- “More jobs instead of being a hairdresser or a shopkeeper. You get to work with a computer and stuff” (4th class, F, FG)
- “You have more money” (4th class, F, FG)
- “If you don’t you’re not very bright” (4th class, F, FG)
- “You’re learning a lot more” (4th class, F, FG)
- “If you don’t go to college you won’t get a proper job” (4th class, F, FG)
- “Yes so if I have kids I can help them” (5th class, F, Q)
- “Yes of course I would want to have good education to be an actor” (5th class, F, Q)
- “I want a good job...to get far in life” (6th class, F, FG)
- “I want to own my own business” (6th class, F, FG)
- “If you get high marks you get more decisions and choices” (6th class, F, FG)
- “I want to be a teacher” (6th class, F, FG)
- “I want to go to college” (6th class, F, FG)
- “I want to be something good” (6th class, F, FG)
- “I want to get a good job and have lots of money” (6th class, F, FG)
- “I want to be something dare devilish” (6th class, F, FG)
- “Your parents will be proud of you” (6th class, F, FG)
- “I want to be a playschool teacher” (6th class, F, FG)
- “You have a laugh at school” (6th class, F, FG)
- “We want to go to college” (6th class, F, FG)
- “It’d be easier to get a husband because they like rich, successful women” (6th class, F, FG)
- “Yes definitely” (6th class, F, Q)
- “YES !” (6th class, F, Q)
- “NO but I will” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes I do because you would get a much better job” (6th class, M, Q)

- "Yes because I want to learn more" (6th class, M, Age 13, Q)
- "I gonna go to College" (6th class, M, Q)
- "You'll know more things" (5th class, F, FG)
- "Get into a good college" (5th class, F, FG)
- "Your debs" (5th class, F, FG)
- "I will go to teachers collage after my leaving cert" (4th class, F, Q)
- "Yes I suppose it's for the best to get a good job" (4th class, F, Q)
- "Yes I always wanted to and get a good leaving cert to get a good job" (4th class, F, Q)
- "Yes I want to go on further too" (6th class, F, Q)
- "Yes because I want to get somewhere in life" (6th class, F, Q)
- "Yes I really want to stay till my Leaving Certificate" (4th class, F, Q)
- "If I do well in school" (6th class, M, Q)
- "Yes unless something bad happens and I really have to leave" (6th class, F, Q)

Some answers of those who do not want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate include:

- "No I want to be a hairdresser" (4th class, F, FG)
- "I'll be out of here in a flash...because I hate teachers...when I have to leave school I will" (5th class, M, Two out of the five in the focus group)
- "I'm afraid that something would happen" (5th class, F, FG)
- "No way will I stay in school that long" (6th class, M, Q)
- "No way" (6th class, M, Q)
- "I don't think I will because everybody gives me a hard time...I would change all the people because they all hate me" (6th class, F, Q)

Appendix F

- 'If you had the power what would you change in your school ?'
 - "Grass, better things...the school garden is in bits" (4th class, F, FG)
 - "I'd paint the school" (4th class, F, FG)
 - "The colour of the walls" (6th class, F, FG)
 - "Paint the classrooms like a cool colour like wild cherry" (6th class, F, FG)
 - "Change the way the school is decorated" (4th class, F, FG)
 - "Everyone can bring in pictures for the walls" (6th class, F, FG)
 - "We could decorate the school" (4th class, F, FG)
 - "the deck-a-ray-tions" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "I would change the school into a lovely place" (4th class, F, Q)
 - "I would put a nice colour into the school walls" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "colour" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "the colour of the class" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "the colour of the school" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "If the school was done up and the yard was too" (6th class, F, Q)
 - "I would change the walls they're very dull" (6th class, F, Q)

- “I would put lockers in the school and then change the whole lot” (6th class, F, Q)
- “The classrooms and the yards” (6th class, F, Q)
- “I’d change the desks” (6th class, M, Q)
- “classrooms” (4th class, F, Q)
- “The yard into a more exciting place” (6th class, M, Q)
- “the yard...fix it up” (6th class, M, Q)
- “I would change the yard, classrooms” (5th class, M, Q)
- “the yard and the field” (5th class, M, Q)
- “the yard” (4th class, F, Q)
- “I would change the yard” (6th class, F, Q)
- “To get a playground and a cafeteria” (6th class, F, Q)
- “...get some grass in the yard” (4th class, F, Q)
- “I would change the yard so it would have swings and more play things” (4th class, F, Q)
- “the yard” (4th class, F, Q)
- “the yard as swings” (5th class, F, Q)
- “the yard” (6th class, F, Q)
- “I’d have a pet day” (6th class, F, FG)
- “bring your pet to school day, every week a vet comes in” (6th class, F, Q)
- “I would have recycling bins instead of just garbage bins” (6th class, F, Q)

Appendix G

- Do you think that guys and girls have the same attitude to sex?
 - “I think girls are more willing to admit that it means something to them though, and there’s still different perceptions. If a girl has slept with loads of different men she’s considered a slut, but if a man sleeps with lots of girls he’s considered a stud, he’s praised for it, and considered a big man, and that’s not fair” (Age 17, F, FG)
 - “Yes. Girls just try to hide it” (Age 15, F, Q)
 - “No guys think they’re great and ready and could try and pressure you into it also girls can do the same” (Age 13, F, Q)
 - “No. Boys just talk about it because they think they’re mad. Girls would like a relationship” (Age 13, F, Q)
 - “you could be pressured into doing something you don’t want to do” (Age 13, F, Q)
 - “The worst thing is if you get forced into doing something you don’t want to do [in a relationship]” (Age 15, F, Q)
 - “Being forced into doing something you don’t want to to make someone else happy in a relationship” (Age 14, F, Q)
 - “Boys want it all the time” (Age 14, F, Q)
 - “no the boys are more into sex than girls, plus girls can be pregnant” (Age 13, F, Q)
- (Age 13-14, F, FG)
- R5: Definitely not. Young fellas just want to do it so they can tell their mates and look good.
 - R2: Yeah sure half of them probably lie about it anyway, and say they did when they didn’t.
 - R3: That happened a girl I know, that some bloke said he was with her and he wasn’t, and her mam heard the story.

- R2: I suppose some girls must want to though or else no-one would ever do it!

All in this focus group agreed that most girls of their age want to wait until they're older, but most boys of their age want to have sex as soon as possible, or would at least say that they do.

- The biggest problem your friends have:
 - "sexual" (Age 17, M, Q)
 - "yeah my friend is a slut. Kick it out of her" (Age 14, F, Q)
 - "They try to be sluts, they will grow out of it" (Age 14, F, Q)
- How do you think people who are very sensitive cope with life ?
 - "Stay away from boys" (Age 15, F, Q)
- What does love mean in your opinion ?
 - "love means if he really loves me and wants to have sex with me" (Age 12, F, Q)

Appendix H

Some examples from the middle range of estimates of bullying are as follows:

- "about 5 or 6" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "about 5" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "6 people" (Age 13, F, Q)
- "quite a few, not certain on the exact figures" (Age 15, F, Q)
- "roughly 5 or 6" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "a few (4-5)" (Age 16, F, Q)

Examples from the lower range of estimates:

- "None that I know of" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "I don't know of any" (Age 16, F, Q)

Appendix I

- 'Have you ever had a hangover in school ? If so, how often in the past two years ?'
 - "once, I would never again" (Age 14, M, Q)
 - "Yes twice and it will be the last" (Age 14, F, Q)
 - "Yes about 4 times" (Age 13, F, Q)
 - "Yes I have about 3 times in the past year" (Age 14, F, Q)
 - "No I don't drink on a school night" (Age 14, F, Q)
 - "No well once in second year" (Age 14, F, Q)
 - "No I have never drank before" (Age 14, F, Q)

- “No I only drink on a Saturday night when my ma goes out” (Age 13, F, Q)
 - “No only at home” (Age 14, F, Q)
 - “Nope I don’t drink (that’s actually the truth by the way)” (Age 14, F, Q)
 - “never and never will” (Age 13, F, Q)
 - “No !!!” (Age 12, F, Q)
 - “Yes once but never again (Age 14, F, Q)
 - “Yes just once something shouldn’t have done” (Age 14, F, Q)
 - “Yes only the odd time if I went out on a Thursday nite or Sunday” (Age 17, F, Q)
 - “Only an odd time” (Age 16, F, Q)
- If you had a younger sister or brother, what would be the 3 most important pieces of advice you would give to her/him ?
 - “don’t do drugs, don’t smoke or drink on the street” (Age 15, F, Q)
 - “don’t smoke don’t drink and if I ever catch ya taking any drugs I will kill ya me self” (Age 15, F, Q)
 - “don’t do anything to harm yourself, body or head/mind...[“never” had a hangover in school]” (Age 15, F, Q)
 - “don’t smoke/drugs” (Age 16, F, Q)
 - “don’t take drugs” (Age 17, F, Q)
 - “don’t ever touch drugs” (Age 15, F, Q)
 - “say no to drugs” (Age 16, F, Q)
 - “To stay away from drugs. The problem isn’t as bad as it used to be around here, there’s more jobs and people are making something of themselves, but I’d definitely advise any kid to keep away from them” (Age 16, F, FG)
 - “Stay off drugs (Age 13, M, FG)
 - Yeah definitely that. There’s loads of people around this area who are off their heads all the time and just do nothing with their lives. I wouldn’t want my brother to end up that way (Age 14, M, FG)
 - It’s easy to say that, but it’s not really that easy. I mean if all your mates were dealing and making loads of money, you’d get sick of being the only with no money all the time, and you’d want to do it too (Age 15, M, FG)
 - Yeah but that’s only money now, like you might think that 200 a week is loads of money now, when you’re got nothing really to spend it on except having a good time. But when you’re older and you’ve got kids and stuff that’s not going to last long (Age 13, F, FG)
 - They’d make more than 200 a week. I mean, I’d say they would, not that I’d know.” (Age 15, M, FG)

Appendix J

- Do you think you want to stay on at school to finish your Leaving Certificate ?
 - “Yes ‘cause I will be the first person in my house to do my leaving cert”(Age 17, F,Q)
 - “Yeah definitely” (Age 16, M, Q)
 - “No but I will” (Age 14, F, Q)
 - “I don’t want to but I am going to” (Age 14, M, Q)
 - “No I don’t really but I am going to do it for me ma” (Age 15, F, Q)
 - “Yes and college hopefully” (Age 14, F, Q)

- “Certainly” (Age 14, F, Q)
- “Yes I would go because I want a good life” (Age 14, F, Q)
- “I’d stay in school because you don’t get anything on the streets” (Age 17, M, Q)
- “don’t think so if I get a job I want” (Age 13, M, Q)

Appendix K

- ‘Would you talk to someone from the school about your problems if they promised not to tell anybody else?’

Most typical responses (primary):

- “No because they would tell people” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No because I told someone before and they told” (5th class, F, Q)

Typical responses:

- “No I prefer to talk to someone in my family like my mam or sister” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes my teacher” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Yes my teacher or my friends” (4th class, F, Q)
- “If she didn’t rat on me...” (6th class, F, FG)
- “If you wanted them to keep a secret they wouldn’t” (6th class, F, FG)
- “No because they will spread rumours” (4th class, F, FG)
- “No because if anyone else was around they would spread it around” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No because some people do tell even when they promise” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No because they might just say that and then go off and tell someone” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No because they probably would tell a few days later” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No because I wouldn’t be able to trust them” (6th class, F, Q)
- “No because I still wouldn’t feel safe” (4th class, F, Q)

Other responses:

- “Yes because they are mainly cool” (6th class, F, Q)
- “Well apart from friends maybe my teacher as she’s young and can understand” (6th class, F, Q)
- “I will not tell a friend but I would tell a teacher” (5th class, F, Q)
- “My cousin...She told the school principal...she rang her ma...told her all about it” (6th class, F, FG)
- Counsellors “want to find out if you ma’s on drugs. ‘They’re very nosely... ‘Is you Ma on drugs ?’...they’d be asked a load of questions about their kids...” (6th class, F, FG)
- “It would be good to talk to someone who would listen and not tell other people, maybe a teacher or principal” (4th class, F, FG)
- “Teacher would go back to the staff room” (6th class, F, FG)
- “open their big mouth, tell your ma” (5th class, F, FG)
- “I’d have to wait and make sure you could trust her” (6th class, F, FG)
- “We’d get to know you first” (5th class, F, FG)
- “Yeah it depends...if it was a new teacher I wouldn’t” (6th class, F, FG)
- “If I knew them well” (6th class, F, Q)
- “If it was someone I could trust” (4th class, F, Q)

- "Yes if I could trust them" (6th class, F, Q)
- "If I knew and felt comfortable I would" (6th class, F, Q)
- "Yes...if I tell some one about my problems he have to be a good friend" (6th class, M, Age 13, Q)
- "wouldn't like to know someone and then never see them again" (5th class, F, FG)
- "all the personal stuff...because they would understand you and would really really promise you not to tell" (4th class, F, FG)
- The principal is "really nice. She kept a promise" (5th class, F, FG)
- "If it was a small thing I'd tell" (6th class, F, FG)
- "I would and then I wouldn't it depends on who it is" (6th class, F, Q)
- "depends on who they are ?" (6th class, F, Q)
- "I would not tell a friend but I would tell a teacher" (4th class, F, Q)
- "Only if I feel comfortable about the person I'm telling" (6th class, F, Q)
- "I still wouldn't. You can't trust anyone" (4th class, F, FG)
- "If you could trust them" (4th class, F, FG)
- "No I will not talk" (4th class, M, Q)
- "You can trust the teachers but I wouldn't tell them anything" (6th class, M, FG)
- "no I would not tell anybody because they are my problems" (4th class, F, Q)
- Quite unusual "The teacher doesn't give a shit. She doesn't listen to our problems. She'd tell other teachers" (4th class, F, FG)
- "We'd talk to you because you don't know anybody in the school" (5th class, F, FG)
- "No because I can talk to my friends and family" (6th class, F, Q)
- "Yes if I cannot tell my parents" (4th class, F, Q)
- "Yes because they are mainly cool" (6th class, F, Q)
- "Yes me and my friend have a problem teacher for our problems" (6th class, F, Q)
- "When you ask to see someone Teacher asks 'why ?' You try to say it's private" (4th class, F, FG)
- "Yes because they are mainly cool" (6th class, F, Q)
- "Yes me and my friend have a problem teacher for our problems" (6th class, F, Q)
- "You can trust the teachers but I wouldn't tell them anything" (6th class, M, FG)

Typical responses (secondary):

- "No ! Everything gets around in this school" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "Yes but they always tell" (Age 13, F, Q)
- "No. Because they would tell someone else because they always do" (Age 16, F, Q)
- "No because they would tell. They have done before" (Age 17, F, Q)
- "only if I knew them well" (Age 17, F, Q)
- "one person just" (Age 16, M, Q)
- "it would depend on who it was" (Age 17, F, Q)
- "No I only trust myself" (Age 16, M, Q)
- "I don't think I could I don't trust anybody" (Age 14, F, Q)
- "depends who it was" (Age 15, F, Q)
- "Yeah but only minor problems" (Age 15, F, Q)
- "Never because you can never trust anyone only your best mate" (Age 16, F, Q)
- "No I would not" (Age 14, M, Q)
- All said no, that they wouldn't feel comfortable speaking to anyone in school except friends. They wouldn't trust them not to tell others, and they wouldn't want them to know their business. (Age 13-15, M, FG)

Other responses:

- “Yes I trust most of the teachers” (Age 16, F, Q)
- “If a teacher maybe ! If a student no way ! (Age 13, M, Q)
- “No I don’t trust any teacher in the school never have and never will, only my friends” (Age 15, M, Q)
- “Yes but not a man teacher” (Age 12, F, Q)
- “Yes but not my deepness and darkness” (Age 14, F, Q)
- “Yes and if I was on my own” (Age 14, F, Q)

Appendix L

What is a soundfield system ?

It is in principle a low power classroom Public Address system. Speech is picked up by a microphone worn by the teacher and transmitted via a wireless radio link to a base station receiver. The signal is then fed to strategically placed loudspeakers ensuring that the teacher can be clearly heard at a comfortable level throughout the entire classroom

What are the objectives of a soundfield system ?

- to amplify the teacher’s voice sufficiently to improve the signal-to-noise ratio
- to provide a uniform level of the teacher voice throughout the classroom irrespective of the teacher and child’s position

Research on the benefits of sound-field amplification systems in mainstream schools – research which has potential relevance to improving problems of speech and language, attention deficit and disruptive behaviour, as well as improving academic performance

Research in Ohio (Flexer 1989, 1992; Osborn, VonderEmbse & Graves 1989) on lower elementary grade students compared classes with sound-amplification systems with control groups that did not have such systems. The classes with sound-amplification systems were found to have higher scores than the control group on listening and language (for kindergarten and first grade classes), vocabulary (first grade), maths concepts (second and third grade), maths computation (third grade). A general trend noted was that the younger the student, the greater the difference between the control and experimental group’s achievement test scores

A U.S study of randomly normal-hearing first and second grade students’ on task behaviour by Allen & Patton (1990) found that sound-amplified classes produced students who were more attentive, less distractible and required fewer repetitions by the teacher – with a 17% increase in on-task behaviour when the amplification was available

Crandell, Smaldino & Flexer (1995) cite a range of research among those with normal-hearing sensitivity, which demonstrates that younger listeners require better acoustical environments than adult listeners to achieve equivalent recognition scores:

Adult-like performance on recognition tasks in noise or reverberation is generally not reached until the child reaches approximately 13-15 years of age (p.55)

The importance of children learning to discriminate word-sound distinctions was observed by Elliott, Hammer & Scholl

(1989). They administered several tests to children who had normal hearing sensitivity and found that the ability to perform fine-grained auditory discrimination tasks (e.g., to hear 'pa' and 'ba' as distinctly different syllables) correctly classified nearly 80% of the primary-level children in their study either as progressing normally or having language and learning difficulties

Rosenberg & Blake-Rahter's (1995) review of research on sound-field amplification concludes:

Collectively, results of sound-field FM amplification research suggests significant benefits for students in the areas of academic achievement, speech recognition enhancement in quiet and in noise, and on-task behavior (p.119)

Elsewhere Rosenberg & Blake-Rahter (1995) cite a range of literature highlighting benefits of sound-field amplification systems for at risk children including those with:

articulation disorders, speech and language delays, developmental delays, central auditory processing (CAP) disorder, children for whom English is a second language (ESL) and normal hearing but need to develop listening and academic skills (p.168)

Lehman & Gratiot (1983) reported that reductions in classroom noise via acoustical modification had a significant effect of increasing concentration, attention and participatory behaviour in children. Crandell & Smaldino (1995) conclude from a review of the literature that:

Noise has been demonstrated to affect academic performance, reading and spelling skills, concentration, attention and student behavior adversely (p.36-7)

Such classroom noise which would be overcome by the sound-field amplification system includes the sources of noise highlighted by John & Thomas (1957):

- External noise sources: refers to noise generated from outside the school building, such as vehicle or air traffic, construction, and playground areas
- Internal noise sources: originate from within the school building but outside the classroom e.g., from the gym and/or busy corridors
- Classroom noise sources: generated within the classroom itself, including, children talking or laughing, sliding of chairs or tables, shuffling of hard-soled shoes on non-carpeted floors, and school heating systems

Flexer's (1995) words provide a further rationale for introducing sound-field amplification systems in mainstream schools:

Thirty-one restless six-year-old children are sitting at desks. Some of the children have fluid in their middle ears...some have weak attending skills, some have language and/or articulation problems, and some are just typical children. The single adult in the room is fatigued from trying to maintain order and attention. This is a typical classroom. Adults would not tolerate the above acoustic environment for very long. Yet we place millions of children in this situation for at least six hours a day, year in and year out. Then we are surprised when they do not learn at the pace or to the degree that is expected (p.3)

Appendix M

QUESTIONNAIRES TO PUPILS/STUDENTS, QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

- a) The answers you give are private. They do not go to the police, your school, your family or your friends.
- b) There is no right or wrong answer. We are not trying to judge you

Age: **Male/Female**

- 1) If you had a younger sister or brother, what would be the 3 most important pieces of advice/help you would give to her/him?
- 2) Do you think anybody understands you?
- 3) Do you have anyone you can talk to if you feel sad ?
- 4) Do you trust and talk well with your parents or brothers/sisters?
- 5) What do you like about yourself most ?
- 6) Do you wish or think you will have the same friends in 5 years?
- 7) Do you think you want to stay on at school until the Leaving Certificate ?
- 8) Do you do anything in your school after school hours ? If yes, what ?
- 10) Would you talk to someone from the school about your problems if they promised not to tell anybody else ?
- 11) Is there a room in your school where anyone can go if they just want some peace and quiet, some time to think? Do you think it would be a good idea if there was a room like this ?
- 12) If you had a problem with your schoolwork who would you talk to about it ?
- 13) Do you think your parent(s) would like to visit your school more often ? Would you like them to talk to your teachers more ?
- 14) If you had the power, what would you change in your school ?

- 15) What are the biggest problems your friends have ? How can they be helped ?
- 16) How many in your class have been bullied ?
- 17) Are you always treated fairly in school ?
- 18) Do you ever cry? Cry often?
- 19) In what areas of your life do you feel you are in control, that you have the power?
- 20) If you had the possibility not to go to school, would you? Why?
- 21) If you have ever been absent from school without telling your family, what were your reasons for this ? What would make you want to go to school more often ?

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

- a) The answers you give are private. They do not go to the police, your school, your family or your friends.
- b) There is no right or wrong answer. We are not trying to judge you

Age: Male/Female

- 1) If you had a younger sister or brother, what would be the 3 most important pieces of advice you would give to her/him?
- 2) Do you think anybody understands you?
- 3) Do you have anyone you can talk about your stresses to?
- 4) Do you trust and talk well with your parents or brothers/sisters?
- 5) Do you understand yourself?
- 6) Do you wish or think you will have the same friends in 5 years?
- 7) Do you think you want to stay on at school until the Leaving Certificate ?
- 8) Are you involved in any activity in the school outside school hours ? If yes, what ones ?

- 9) If you feel stressed or have a problem who would you talk to about it ?
- 10) Would you talk to someone from the school about your problems if they promised not to tell anybody else ?
- 11) Is there a room in your school where anyone can go if they just want some peace and quiet, some time to think?
Do you think it would be a good idea if there was a room like this ?
- 12) If you had a problem with your schoolwork who would you talk to about it ?
- 13) Do you think your parent(s) would like to be more involved in activities in your school ? Would you like them to be ?
- 14) If you had the power, what would you change in your school ?
- 15) Do you think most people are pretending to be happy even if they are not ?
- 16) What are the biggest problems your friends have ? How can they be helped ?
- 17) How many in your class have been victims of bullying ?
- 18) What are the advantages and disadvantages of blocking your feelings?
- 19) What does love mean in your opinion? Do you think that true love exists?
- 20) Do you think that guys and girls have the same attitude to sex?
- 21) Are there many differences in the ways guys and girls think, feel and act? What is the worst thing that can happen in a relationship?
- 22) How do you think people who are very sensitive cope with life?
- 23) Do you mostly rely on yourself or on others? Which do you think is the best approach?
- 24) Do you ever cry? Cry often?
- 25) In what areas of your life do you feel you are in control, that you have the power?
- 26) If you had the possibility not to go to school, would you? Why?

- 27) If you have ever been absent from school without telling your family, what were your reasons for this ? What would make you want to go to school more often ?
- 28) Have you ever had a hangover in school ? If so, how often in the past two years ?

PRIMARY SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE (FOR PRINCIPAL/HOME-SCHOOL LIAISON TEACHER)

NAME OF SCHOOL:

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

NUMBER OF TEACHERS:

- Please rank (in descending order) the 5 most important services you would like to see established in your particular school
- What extracurricular activities are available in your school ?
- What years can avail of art and drama ? How many students participate ?
- How many children in your school are seen by a speech therapist each month ? How many do you think need to be seen by one each month ?
- How many children in your school are seen by an occupational therapist each month ? How many do you think need to be seen by one each month ?
- Is there already a 'quiet room' in your school which could potentially be used by future services ? What steps have been taken in the past to encourage students to utilise this room ?
- Does your school have any links, formal or informal, with counselling services in the community ?
- What level of Resource Teachers and Learning Support Teachers are available to the school ?
- How many teachers are there in your school ? How many are substitute teachers ?
- Do you have a difficulty in recruiting staff ?
- What is the student teacher/ratio in the earlier and later years ?
- How at present do you monitor persistent non-attenders ?
- Do you have procedures for community and parent input into school policies and procedures ? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this
- Are any I.E.P's currently taking place in your school ? What are the current plans to implement them ?
- How many psychological assessments from N.E.P.S have taken place in your school this school year ?
- How common is suspension or expulsion from your school ?
- What is your policy on bullying ?
- To what extent has the emotional development aspects to S.P.H.E been implemented in your school ?

Casby Report: Primary level

- Have paired reading programmes been set up in your school ? If so, how many parents/students are involved ? If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this
- Is there now a personal development project where students are taken out of schools for a few hours each week? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this
- Is there a proactive parents' association in your school ? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this and adults ?
- Are there supervised homework clubs specifically for students in your school ?

SECONDARY SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE (FOR PRINCIPAL/HOME-SCHOOL LIAISON TEACHER)

NAME OF SCHOOL:

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

NUMBER OF TEACHERS:

- Please rank (in descending order) the 5 most important services you would like to see established in your particular school
- What extracurricular activities are available in your school ?
- What years can avail of art and drama ? How many students participate ?
- How many children in your school are seen by a speech therapist each month ? How many do you think need to be seen by one each month ?
- How many children in your school are seen by an occupational therapist each month ? How many do you think need to be seen by one each month ?
- Is there already a 'quiet room' in your school which could potentially be used by future services ? What steps have been taken in the past to encourage students to utilise this room ?
- Does your school have any links, formal or informal, with counselling services in the community ?
- How many teachers are there in your school ? How many are substitute teachers ?
- Do you have a difficulty in recruiting staff ?
- What is the student teacher/ratio in the earlier and later years ?
- Do you have procedures for community and parent input into school policies and procedures ? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this
- How at present do you monitor persistent non-attenders ?
- Are any I.E.P's currently taking place in your school ? What are the current plans to implement them ?
- How many psychological assessments from N.E.P.S have taken place in your school this school year ?
- How common is suspension or expulsion from your school ?
- What is your policy on bullying ?

Casby Report: Secondary level

- Has there been any attempt to harmonise suspension and expulsion practices between schools ? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this
- Has a Dóchas style project where targeted children receive a breakfast and engage in extracurricular activities aimed at improving their confidence and self-esteem, been implemented in your school ? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this
- Have student councils in and between the schools been established ? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this
- Assuming your school has regular informal parent/teacher meetings, how successful has been parental attendance ?
- Has extra tuition been provided for students with literacy difficulties ? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this
- Have the recommended Mentoring and Tutorial Programmes aimed at raising self-esteem and bettering relationships with adults been implemented ? If so, please give details. If not, please explain how your school could be supported in implementing this

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