Counselling in schools: A research study into services for children and young people

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COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS:
A RESEARCH STUDY INTO SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a Welsh Assembly Government funded research project which aimed to evaluate counselling in schools across the UK and to make recommendations for developing counselling services for children and young people in Wales.

The research process involved desk research, a survey of schools and educational agencies in Wales and consultation with a wide group of stakeholders including teachers, counsellors, parents and young people as well as professionals involved in the planning and delivery of mental health services for children and young people. Their engagement with the research helped shape the results, thus facilitating ownership of the project findings, which is important for future service development and delivery.

The research process enabled the team to identify standards of practice and the frameworks needed to deliver high quality and sustainable services. Data were synthesised to develop evidence based recommendations for schools in Wales.

The recommendations are that school counselling services should:

1. **Have sustainable funding**

2. **Employ professionally qualified counsellors who have experience of working with young people, who access appropriate clinical supervision with experienced supervisors, and who take part in regular, relevant continuing professional development**

3. **Deliver accessible counselling in an appropriately private but safe setting within the school vicinity**

4. **Be seen as non stigmatising by the school community and a normal part of school provision, which is integrated into the school community**

5. **Be monitored and evaluated by individuals or an agency (in or out of the school) with experience in this specialised area of work**

6. **Pay due regard to current legislation and guidance, and offer confidentiality within usual ethical and safeguarding limits**

7. **Respond flexibly to local needs in respect of diversity (e.g., language) and practicality (e.g., availability during holiday periods)**

8. **Work with and alongside other services and agencies in a collegial manner, whilst maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality**

9. **Employ counsellors who are members of a professional body and as such have an established ethical framework and complaints procedure**

10. **Employ counsellors whose personal qualities will mean that they are approachable, have good listening skills and a manner that encourages a climate for safe and trusting relationships**
1. INTRODUCTION

There is a growing interest in counselling in schools across the UK, driven by an increasing awareness of the role that schools can play in helping to promote emotional health for children and young people and by addressing mental health issues, including psychological and behavioural problems. This is particularly important in terms of the heavy pressure that other, valuable, children’s services are under and the long waiting lists often found in social services, educational psychology, special education and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (Tiers 2 & 3).

The Children’s Commissioner in the Clywch Inquiry recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government devises a national strategy for the provision of an independent counselling service for children and young people in education, along with training and support for teachers in their pastoral role (Clywch Report, 2004).

To date, counselling services across the UK have developed in an ad hoc manner and are often unevaluated. There is thus a limited evidence base for planning the delivery and funding of effective and integrated services. From April – October 2007 a team (Appendix 1) led by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and funded by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) undertook an evaluation of models of counselling services in operation across the UK and gathered information about the current provision of counselling in schools in Wales to inform the WAG’s planning and development of children’s services that will be put in place as part of developments under the Children Act 2004.

This report gives a detailed overview of the conduct of the research and the research findings, and ends with a series of evidence based recommendations for developing counselling services in Wales.

2. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF THE PROJECT

The research process involved a developmental and formative evaluation of counselling in Wales, including consultation with a wide group of stakeholders including teachers, counsellors, parents and young people as well as the project funders and other professionals involved in the planning and delivery of mental health services for children and young people. The emphasis on participation and consultation facilitates ownership of the project findings, which are important for future service development and delivery.

Ownership of the project and its findings were also facilitated through the development of good working relationships with the project commissioners. During the inception phase of the research, the lead investigators (SP and NR) met with Julie Owens (JO) and Graham Davies (GD) of the Welsh Assembly Government’s Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) to:

- Develop clarity on the focus and parameters of the contract
- Agree the methodology
- Set the context
- Gather background material
- Collate contact details
• Produce a detailed project plan
• Produce a report of the inception meeting and agree the timing of regular project updates

The research team maintained regular contact and good communication with the commissioners, to take account of local context and issues, including Welsh language sensitivities, and to ensure that the research met the commissioner’s timetable and objectives (Appendix 2).

All contacts with children and young people were undertaken by members of the team who all have Enhanced Disclosure Certificates from the Criminal Records Bureau, in line with the Protection of Children Act (1999). The research was conducted in accordance with BACP guidelines for the conduct of ethical research (2004).

2.1. Definitions and terminology

As stated in the ‘School-based Counselling Services in Wales - a Draft National Strategy’ (WAG, 2007) - the term counselling is used to describe a range of activities. Counselling is a generic term, therefore, it is useful at the outset of this report to describe the difference between ‘formal counselling’ and the use of ‘counselling skills’. The definition used by WAG (see p 6 of the above Strategy) is taken from BACP’s definition of counselling and counselling skills:

‘Formal counselling is undertaken by a professional counsellor acting in his or her specialist role and in accordance with a recognised code of ethics that requires confidentiality, accountability, supervision and continuing professional development’.

‘Counselling skills are used by many people who work with children and young people in a specific role such as teachers, school nurses, youth workers and social workers. These skills include listening in a non-judgemental way, being empathic and helping people to feel valued and understood. The role and responsibilities of the individual professional will determine the boundaries of their working practice’.

It will become evident that this research report describes models of existing ‘counselling’ service provision (for example, peer counselling, or counselling by professionals who may or may not be trained as counsellors) that do not fit the formal definition of professional counselling. These models are included because they reflect current provision in Wales. However, it is important to note that the WAG strategy is ‘primarily concerned with developing formal counselling’ in schools in Wales. Thus, when assessing the advantages and disadvantages of models and making recommendations for best practice, the research team utilise the definition of formal counselling and the standards required to deliver it.
3. RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. Research aims

The research aimed to evaluate counselling services in operation across the UK in order to assess whether current counselling models used in Wales and other parts of the UK are sufficiently robust and flexible enough to apply more widely throughout Wales and in particular whether they are adaptable enough to fit in with the new planning and joint working arrangements that will be put in place as part of developments under the Children Act 2004.

3.2. Research objectives

- Establish how counselling services currently operating in Wales are planned, managed and evaluated
- Review the different models that are in existence considering their advantages and disadvantages
- Compare the approaches offered in Wales with at least 10 models across the rest of the UK
- Develop proposals for a range of suitable counselling models that could operate across Wales
- Develop proposals for models that:
  - Are responsive to rural and urban issues
  - Take into account the varying needs of different parts of Wales
  - Offer the most appropriate links across health and education
- Develop a series of good practice guidelines for developing local services.

At the outset of the project, a further aim had been to develop proposals to pilot or extend the use of at least four models of counselling across Wales. However, as the research process evolved, and the team analysed the components and advantages and disadvantages of each model identified, it was evident that instead of selecting and proposing to pilot four models of best practice across Wales, the research team, with the agreement of GD, should utilize the identified components to develop quality indicators for best practice and good service delivery. This was thought to be a more useful approach for planning the delivery of counselling in schools in Wales.

4. THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODS

Three strands of research were undertaken; desk research, survey research and fieldwork. Both the desk research and the fieldwork included extended stakeholder consultations. The research process was iterative, with each part of the research informing other parts, so for example the qualitative data captured from face-to-face interviews in a small number of schools in Wales informed the largely quantitative data gathered from a wide postal survey of schools across the country.

One of the major objectives of the study was to develop good practice guidelines for suitable models of counselling for schools in Wales. The team sifted data gathered from
each strand of the research to develop recommendations for schools in Wales. In this report, each strand of the research is presented separately, before data synthesis and discussion and the presentation of evidence based recommendations for good practice.

5. DESK RESEARCH

5.1. An overview

The desk research involved identifying, collating, reviewing and analysing models of counselling that are in operation in schools in Wales and across the rest of the UK.

Findings from the desk research were to be used to:

- Develop proposals for a range of suitable counselling models that could operate across Wales and those that are responsive to rural and urban issues and offer the most appropriate links across health and education

- Develop a series of good practice guidelines for developing local services

In this section, we describe desk research methods and findings. As noted above, recommendations and good practice guidelines are informed by all aspects of the research project (including survey and fieldwork strands) and are thus presented in the concluding section of the current report.

5.2. Information gathering

The researchers involved in this strand of the research (SP, KC, KR, MC) have backgrounds in teaching, nursing, psychology and counselling and were thus able to identify much of the grey literature on counselling in schools as well collecting journal articles and research reports through searching academic databases.

The project commissioners (JO and GD) provided WAG policy documents in relation to children and young people, with particular reference to counselling in schools in Wales. A scoping exercise to look at current provision and the effectiveness of counselling services for school pupils, along with the views of local authorities and other parties on future provision (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006) and a report including the views of children and young people on counselling (Red Kite, 2005) also informed the desk research strand of the project. Thus a range of documents and local reports were sourced for the desk research stage of the project.

In addition, the team put out a call for information through BACP’s journal Therapy Today (Appendix 3) which is distributed to some 28,000 counsellors and psychotherapists. The article generated further relevant documentation and also led to detailed information being gathered as part of the stakeholder consultation strand of the research. This stage of the research involved the development of questionnaires that were emailed to the many individuals who contacted us to offer information about counselling in schools in Wales. Information was also identified through the team’s professional school counselling networks and through health and social care contacts.
5.3. Desk Research Findings

Synthesis of data from documents, email questionnaires (copies of all questionnaires are available on request from BACP) and information from professional networks enabled the team to identify 12 distinct models of service provision. This was on the basis of three key criteria:

- Staffing of the counselling service
- Management of the counselling service
- Forms of access to the counselling service by children and young people

Table 5.1 presents a list of models of school counselling provision identified in Wales and across the rest of the UK and a description of how each model works.

Table 5.1: Type of model and operational description

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Type of model</th>
<th>Description of how model operates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Counselling as part of a multi-agency team</td>
<td>Counselling is provided as part of a multi-agency team, which may be staffed by a range of professionals, this could include counsellors, education welfare officers, youth workers and social workers, often in the context of specific funded initiatives such as the Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BEST) and the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) which operate in England. The counselling that is provided may be formal (WAG, 2007) or may involve the use of a counselling approach by professionals without formal counselling qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School-based healthcare staff</td>
<td>A school nurse or other healthcare professional, with or without appropriate counselling qualifications, provides counselling in-house. This may be in the context of developing formal links with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
<td>Counselling is provided in-house by a member of the teaching staff with or without appropriate counselling qualifications, as part of a wider system of pastoral care provision within the school.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>In-house peer support</td>
<td>Emotional support is provided by peers, i.e. pupils trained in listening skills, often in the context of anti-bullying programmes and other systems of pastoral care operating within the school. This type of peer support is sometimes referred to as ‘peer counselling’.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Centralised peripatetic local authority provision</td>
<td>A counselling service that is based centrally within the LA but provides in-school counselling on a peripatetic or visiting sessional basis.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Centralised/In house local authority provision</td>
<td>The counselling service provides management and supervision of school-based counsellors who then work as an integral part of each school's staff team.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Singleton practitioner model</td>
<td>Counselling is provided by a counsellor, who is employed directly by the individual school or a group of schools.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>In-school provision by external agency</td>
<td>Counselling is provided in school by a recognised local or national external agency under commercial contract to the school or LA. This is a specific in-school provision, though some young people may be seen out of school at the agency’s premises on request, this may include out of term time provision.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Out of school provision by external agency</td>
<td>Counselling is provided predominantly externally by voluntary and independent agencies; access by young people is not dependent upon referral within the school though the school can refer into the service. Some agencies offer external provision for specifically referred young people and liaise directly with individual schools. The agency may also see a particular child in school on request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cluster model</td>
<td>The counsellor is based within a secondary school and services the feeder primaries on a needs basis and to support transitions. This type of cluster work may be carried out within other types of provision, for example, the singleton practitioner model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Management only model</td>
<td>Schools employ their own counsellor but this is supported by a management service that advises and provides consultative support. The management service (possibly based within the LA or another agency, but not the school) continues to provide specialist support including supervision, CPD, monitoring, etc. Individual schools may employ counsellors and the management service has a different employer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Vetted/Pool model</td>
<td>The LA creates a list of counsellors who meet a required professional standard. Schools recruit their own counsellor from the pool, the actual employment and management of this type of service remains the domain of the individual school.</td>
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</table>
5.4. Discussion of desk research

The above models of school counselling include both formal counselling and other support for children and young people and do not represent an exhaustive list: there may be other models of provision that have not been identified. The desk research indicates however, that it is likely that any additional models identified will probably be variations of the above.

It is worthy of note that counsellors in training are required to undertake supervised and carefully monitored counselling placements. It is possible that many of the models above could, and do, support a student on placement.

Models of school counselling are distinguished from each other by different components (quality indicators) that are included in their structure and in the way that individual services are operationalised, including the roles and job descriptions of counsellors. For example, one model may be structured around a school employing a single counsellor who is fully funded and managed by the school itself, the ‘singleton practitioner’ model. Some of the components of this service, such as accessibility and supervision, may be the same as or similar to an alternative model, such as the local authority funded and managed service. However, other components may differ, for example, funding and management of the service. The various fundamental components that are in evidence to a greater or lesser degree within each service may depend upon local circumstances.

**Table 5.2: Practice and service components**

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<td>2. Sustainability of funding</td>
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<td>3. Employer</td>
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<td>4. Cost effectiveness/value for money</td>
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<td>5. Setting – primary/secondary/cluster</td>
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<td>6. Integrated into school/peripatetic</td>
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<td>7. On school site/off site</td>
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<td>8. Policies and procedures</td>
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<td>9. Adherence to guidance and legislation</td>
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<td>10. Risk assessment</td>
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<td>11. Accountability</td>
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<td>12. Insurance</td>
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<td>13. Terms and conditions of employment</td>
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<td>14. Complaints procedure</td>
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<td>15. Professional membership</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Training and qualifications of counsellor</td>
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<td>17. Experience of counsellor</td>
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<td>18. Personal qualities</td>
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<td>19. Supervision</td>
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<td>20. CRB check</td>
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<td>21. Continuing professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Job description, other functions in school</td>
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</table>
23. Staff awareness of service
24. Parental awareness and permissions if necessary
25. Publicity and promotion of service
26. Non stigmatising
27. Full time/part time
28. Availability during school holidays
29. Designated and appropriate room
30. Theoretical orientation
31. Referral systems – referred with consent, self referral, open referral
32. Open ended/fixed number of sessions, and session length
33. Appropriate available resources
34. Individual/group/both
35. Confidentiality and appropriate information sharing
36. Safeguarding
37. Record keeping
38. Monitoring
39. Evaluation (qualitative and quantitative)
40. Reporting arrangements

In practice there was considerable overlap between the twelve models identified above (Table 5.1). In order to evaluate the twelve models fairly and comprehensively, the Practice and Service Components (Table 5.2), distilled from the desk research sources, guided our appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of each model. A theoretical and professional practice analysis/critique of the design and underlying rationale of each model was undertaken, including a critique of the advantages and disadvantages of each (see 5.5 below). These practice and service components also informed the development of evidence based good practice recommendations made later in this report.

5.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the 12 models of counselling service provision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1. Counselling as part of a multi-agency team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling is provided as part of a multi-agency team, which may be staffed by a range of professionals, this could include counsellors, education welfare officers, youth workers and social workers, often in the context of specific funded initiatives such as the Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BEST) and the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) which operate in England. The counselling that is provided may be formal (WAG, 2007) or may involve the use of a counselling approach by professionals without formal counselling qualifications</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Specific advantages: in relation to direct work with the child the advantages of this model include wrap-around support for the child; the potential for the child to access support from another member of the team if the usual worker is unavailable; an enhanced knowledge of the child as case information is shared between colleagues (although this may also be a disadvantage in some cases) and ease of referral between members of the team.
**Specific disadvantages:** include problems that close collaboration with other colleagues may cause in terms of client anxiety about levels of confidentiality; limited student access given the priorities of the multi-disciplinary team (for example, severe mental health or social problems) and the counsellor may be expected by team members to disclose confidential information given by the child and there may be an ad hoc arrangement within a school with little formal evaluation; referral may be via a standard assessment process and therefore may not be immediate; the service may or may not be based within schools and the in-house supervision may not be specialised counselling supervision. The service may be offered by an extended pastoral team of other professionals within a school who are not professionally qualified counsellors and whilst this may be positive in many ways for the school, it should not be thought of nor referred to as a professional counselling service.

**Issues:** several issues were raised in relation to this model. It would appear that the model is dependent upon local and national political agendas and thus subject to fluctuating political agendas. For example, if counselling is attached to initiatives such as BEST and BIP the funding for counselling may be focused on the delivery of specific behaviour change; the service may not be sustained as policy initiatives change.

**Contextual issues:** such multi-agency teams may not exist in all areas in Wales, which may impact particularly on services for rural schools.

**Value for money/cost effectiveness:** multi-agency teams are likely to be complex to cost and expensive to operate, due to the varying professional salaries and management systems involved in this type of service delivery.

### Model 2. School-based healthcare staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 2. School-based healthcare staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A school nurse or other healthcare professional, with or without appropriate counselling qualifications, provides counselling in-house. This may be in the context of developing formal links with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Specific advantages:** include accessible professional support/information from colleagues within health services and potential ease of referral into other health services.

**Specific disadvantages: Issues:** this provision may have political and/or agency priorities other than mainstream counselling provision for all children: in particular, CAMHS provision may be focussed on relieving problems associated with mental illness.

**Contextual issues:** school-based healthcare services may be suitable for urban and rural schools.

**Value for money/cost effectiveness:** varying health professionals’ salaries and complex management structures may make this a difficult model to cost.
Model 3. Teaching staff

Counselling is provided in-house by a member of the teaching staff with or without appropriate counselling qualifications, as part of a wider system of pastoral care provision within the school.

Specific advantages: one advantage may be that school staff can be redeployed into this role.
Specific disadvantages: such staff may be perceived by children as part of the ‘establishment’ leading to discomfort when also seeing the same teacher in the classroom setting. Moreover, children may not trust the teacher to maintain confidentiality because there is generally a sharing of children’s information in schools that children and young people may assume extends to the counselling relationship. The model is fraught with boundary issues. There is also the disadvantage of conflicting agendas for the member of staff and senior management.
Issues: young people interviewed in the field work part of the research expressed major concerns about the dual role teacher/counsellor model.
Contextual issues: in terms of rural school provision and in Welsh medium schools this may be a useful strategy if other Welsh speaking counsellors are not available locally, although for reasons outlined above, the disadvantages far outweigh the advantages.
Value for money/cost-effectiveness: depending on the salary scale of the teacher this may be cheaper or more expensive than employing a counsellor.

Model 4. In-house peer support

Emotional support is provided by peers, i.e. pupils trained in listening skills, often in the context of anti-bullying programmes and other systems of pastoral care operating within the school. This type of peer support is sometimes referred to as ‘peer counselling’.

Specific advantages: this type of provision has advantages for children and young people in that it is accessible and young people are often comfortable talking with someone nearer their own age. As such it is a useful support strategy alongside a professional counselling service.
Specific disadvantages: peer counselling relies on training children to listen and support others and is not professional counselling as defined by the Welsh Assembly Government. Evaluation of the process is likely to be limited and at times, children’s presenting problems may be too difficult for peers to manage.
Contextual issues: this model is very useful in urban and rural, Welsh or English medium secondary schools, as a supportive strategy.
Value for money/cost-effectiveness: this strategy can be cost-effective in the longer term, though set-up and training costs are a consideration.
Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision

A counselling service that is based centrally within the LA but provides in-school counselling on a peripatetic or visiting sessional basis.

Specific advantages: a ‘bank’ of counsellors enhances appropriate referrals, for example, children with addiction problems may be referred to a specialist substance misuse worker; also matching may be possible with particular gender or ethnic need. The team learn from working with a number of schools and they may be able to offer counselling off site for those children who would rather not be seen in their own school.

Specific disadvantages: there is less likely to be a drop-in service, also, if subsidised by the local authority, sustained funding depends on both school budgets and LA resources.

Issues: this is a responsive Tier 2 model but not one that is integrated into school systems.

Contextual issues: this model may be used in both rural and urban areas, and is particularly suitable for small rural schools that may need minimum provision. In order to effectively service Welsh and English medium schools, the central service would need to have an adequate number of bilingual counsellors and some of the advantages of the model would be negated, specifically, matching counsellors to referred issues, gender and ethnicity.

Value for money/cost-effectiveness: this may be a more cost-effective model for smaller rural schools and schools requiring restricted counselling session hours. However, the ongoing costs of an externally managed service must be considered, along with the additional costs incurred when counselling requirements increase, perhaps temporarily as a result of school incidents such as death or accident. Extra costs would be incurred for school training days and work with teaching staff, group work etc.

Model 6. Centralised/In house local authority provision

The counselling service provides management and supervision of school-based counsellors who then work as an integral part of each school’s staff team.

Specific advantages: it can be tailored to individual schools in terms of referral systems, length of sessions and promotion of service.

Specific disadvantages: as it stands at the moment (before funding is made available through DELLS) sustainability of funding depends on both school budgets and LA financial resources.

Issues: this is an exemplar of good practice taking into account the supervision of peer support systems, staff training, and group work and drop-in session provision. Help with transition from primary to secondary school can be provided. This is a school-based service that was favoured by all young people interviewed in field research and along with the singleton practitioner model by most secondary based staff.

Contextual Issues: this model of provision can be used in rural and urban areas successfully, in English and Welsh medium schools.

Value for money/cost-effectiveness: the model offers ease of costing and assessing whether it will fit with the available budget as the counsellors will be paid a salary by the LA at a counsellor rate of pay, and the service will be managed by a co-ordinator/team.
leader at a set rate of pay. The overall responsibility and accountability in the service may be line-managed by an existing LA service (for example, Educational Psychology)

**Model 7. Singleton practitioner model**

| Counselling is provided by a counsellor, who is employed directly by the individual school or a group of schools. |

**Specific advantages:** there are advantages to using the single practitioner model of provision, the counsellor can respond flexibly to school requirements (e.g. exam time stress, or KS2/3 Transition). The funding commitment from the school budget is likely to be sustainable and counsellors can work term time only if chosen as a more cost-effective option for the individual school, whilst whole year contracts can allow service to be available for students over holiday periods; and give time for counsellors to undertake CPD, write reports, and plan for the forthcoming term. Lines of communication are likely to be simpler; local arrangements can be made with clusters of schools and job descriptions can be developed that are unique to match the needs of the school. This approach to school counselling provision gives the school control over counselling provision to suit their specific needs.

**Specific disadvantages:** it is unlikely that relevant CPD could be provided in-house; supervision may not be resourced financially or with time; it may be an isolating role when not part of a counselling team, though this can be addressed by buying into local group supervision (e.g. Independent practitioner buys into group supervision); no immediate access to specific professional advice from dedicated manager of service; conflict of interest can occur if the counsellor has another role in the school (such as being a teacher); schools may not have awareness of appropriate qualifications, monitoring and evaluations methods, CPD, and compromise accountability and ethical practice. This model is highly dependent upon the skills, experience, and knowledge of the individual practitioner and supervisor. If the service runs in term time only there may not be the capacity for planning and report writing and there will be no access for clients over holiday periods.

**Issues:** the counsellor may be professionally isolated and in spite of being part of the structure of the school they will need good professional counselling support systems and strict boundaries. School staff may need professional guidance regarding recruitment and professional standards.

**Contextual issues:** this model is suitable for all contexts including urban/rural and English/Welsh medium schools.

**Value for money/cost effectiveness:** the model gives ease of costing and good value for money and can provide a strong cost-effective service within the control and budget of the individual school.
### Model 8. In-school provision by external agency

Counselling is provided in school by a recognised local or national external agency under commercial contract to the school or LA. This is a specific in-school provision, though some young people may be seen out of school at the agency’s premises on request, this may include out of term time provision.

**Specific advantages:** there are no specific advantages.  
**Specific disadvantages:** counsellors may not be seen by students or staff as being part of the school. Counsellors may feel part of a professional counselling team, which is a distinct advantage, but not part of the school staff, a disadvantage. Other disadvantages include staff turnover, which can be a problem, with schools feeling they have little control over recruitment; it is likely that the implementation of the model means that it is less able to respond flexibly to school demands; schools in areas of high levels of deprivation may be resource intensive leaving other schools with no provision; the agency and school may have differing agendas; accountability may not necessarily be easily defined; workers may not be fully qualified as professional counsellors.  
**Issues:** schools do not have control over which counsellors are assigned to them.  
**Contextual issues:** this presents a workable model for urban schools with suitability for rural schools being dependent upon the presence of external agencies in the immediate locality.  
**Value for money/cost effectiveness:** this model can provide good value for money in some instances because a managed service provision can be easily costed and assessed against available budgets. However, the cost-effectiveness/value for money aspect is difficult to assess due to the disparate nature of this type of service, some agencies may charge more than others, and some may negotiate with schools.

### Model 9. Out of school provision by external agency

Counselling is provided predominantly externally by voluntary and independent agencies; access by young people is not dependent upon referral within the school though the school can refer into the service. Some agencies offer external provision for specifically referred young people and liaise directly with individual schools. The agency may also see a particular child in school on request.

**Specific advantages:** the advantages of this model of service provision are that young people can be seen off school site. For some young people, particularly adolescents, this may be an advantage but for others, principally younger children, access will be limited. There is the advantage that young people can self refer without anyone in school knowing; they can often be seen during school holiday periods either by their own counsellor or another worker in a drop-in centre; the model may be able to offer counsellors to individual schools on request for school based work if required and counsellors can draw upon their experience of working with a number of settings. The service may be able to match a counsellor’s experience to the referral issue, for example, specialist substance misuse worker; other support such as housing advice may be offered and the service may be available to young people up to age of 25 years, encompassing sixth form students.  
**Specific disadvantages:** funding sustainability can be very difficult because many external provisions are by charitable trusts on time limited project funding; staff turnover can be high as often trainee counsellors on placement are used to provide counselling;
young people can find access off school site problematic (e.g. not telling parents where they are going, transport problems) and there is likely to be little communication between agency, school based counsellor, (if there is one); the general school population and school staff. The quality of service provision and premises used for counselling may not be monitored and lines of accountability may be unclear, including child protection policies.

**Issues:** this is not a model favoured by WAG in their Draft Strategy Consultation Report. However, this is the only model that could support 16 – 18 year olds in communities where schools don’t have 6th Forms.

**Contextual issues:** the model is more suited to urban secondary schools where external agencies are more likely to be available though there is no reason why both English and Welsh medium schools can’t be provided for.

**Value for money/cost-effectiveness:** this type of external provision can be very cost-effective within the limitations outlined above. However, it needs to be acknowledged that external provision to young people is available in any case to any young person going through their doors. In this respect, it can provide an extra supportive provision for young people who already have in-school counselling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 10. Cluster model</th>
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<tr>
<td>The counsellor is based within a secondary school and services the feeder primaries on a needs basis and to support transitions. This type of cluster work may be carried out within other types of provision, for example, the singleton practitioner model.</td>
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**Specific advantages:** are the same as with any secondary school-based model (see discussion of previous models) with the added advantage of being able to provide counselling to feeder primary schools on a responsive to needs basis. A further advantage is the ability to carry out transition work with primary children moving up to the secondary school. The counsellor can also be available for consultation with primary school staff and help with referral routes. This model could form part of the broader agenda of schools working closely together in clusters.

**Specific disadvantages:** none.

**Issues:** training is an issue because counsellors need to be trained in working with younger children as well as those of secondary school age and supervision will need to be able to encompass both aspects of practice. The counsellor will need to have enough time built into their contract to service several schools.

**Contextual issues:** this model is suitable for both urban and rural, with a specific ability to meet the needs of urban populations. So long as the counsellor is bilingual, both Welsh and English speaking schools can benefit.

**Value for money/cost-effectiveness:** the model represents excellent value for money, particularly for small rural primary schools.
Model 11. Management only model

Schools employ their own counsellor but this is supported by a management service that advises and provides consultative support. The management service (possibly based within the LA or another agency, but not the school) continues to provide specialist support including supervision, CPD, monitoring, etc. Individual schools may employ counsellors and the management service has a different employer.

Specific advantages: the school may be more likely to feel that they have ownership of their counsellor and the service without the burden of management responsibilities.
Specific disadvantages: include schools being distanced from accountability and management processes.
Issues: there are no particular issues involved.
Contextual issues: the model is suitable for both urban and rural settings, Welsh and English medium schools, primary and secondary.
Value for money/cost-effectiveness: this model will be easily costed and its cost-effectiveness assessed in relation to the individual school budget.

Model 12. Vetted pool model

The LA creates a list of counsellors who meet a required professional standard. Schools recruit their own counsellor from the pool, the actual employment and management of this type of service remains the domain of the individual school.

Specific advantages: all schools in the authority can employ a counsellor who meets a desired professional standard. Expertise and resources need to be found within the local authority to compile the list and to make sure that all counsellors are expertly vetted against professional practice standards. The model has the advantage of allowing schools to benefit from having their own counsellor (Singleton Practitioner Model) and ensures the appropriate professional standards are met. This also facilitates the recruitment process for schools.
Specific disadvantages: the LA will need to have the expertise available to compile lists and keep such lists up to date, along with CRB checks.
Issues: there may be equal opportunity issues in advertising posts and allowing all counsellors to apply, and the relevant UK/EU employment legislation will need to be adhered to.
Contextual issues: this model is suitable for urban and rural contexts, however, the more isolated LAs may have difficulties in compiling suitably broad lists. It is not likely that all counsellors will be bilingual, though this could form part of the list requirements.
Value for money/cost-effectiveness: the model carries with it the extra costs of managing the vetting of counsellors and compilation/maintenance of the list, though these costs may be minimal.
5.6. Shared advantages/disadvantages

There are a range of advantages and disadvantages that are shared across several models:

5.6.1. Shared advantages:

a) **Counselling supervision provided by a central service.**
   Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision; Model 6. Centralised/In house local provision; Model 8. In-school provision by external agency; Model 9. Out of school provision by external agency; Model 11. Management only model.

b) **Combined CPD can be provided.**
   Model 1. Multi-agency teams; Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision; Model 6. Centralised/In house local authority provision; Model 8. In-school provision by external agency; Model 9. Out of school provision by external agency; Model 11. Management only model.

c) **A managed service can monitor and evaluate work of a number of schools and is accountable through its standardised reporting system to schools. It is likely to have protocols and policies in place.**
   Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision; Model 6. Centralised/In house local authority provision; possibly Model 8. In-school provision by external agency; Model 11. Management only model.

d) **Counsellors can feel part of a professional counselling team and can be well supported on clinical and practice issues by specialist management who are skilled in recruiting and retaining practitioners.**
   Model 1 Multi-agency teams; Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision; Model 6. Centralised/In house local authority provision; Model 8. In-school provision by external agency; Model 9. Out of school provision by external agency; Model 11. Management only model.

e) **A specialist management service can provide accountability and consistency of standards if working across a number of schools, leading to schools in the authority meeting desired professional standards.**
   Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision; Model 6. Centralised/In house local authority provision; Model 8. In-school provision by external agency; Model 11. Management only model.

f) **A ‘bank’ of counsellors has the potential to offer choice to service users and schools.**
   Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision; Model 8. In-school provision by external agency; Model 9. Out of school provision by external agency; Model 12. Vetted pool model.
g) On-site availability can facilitate communication with clients, staff, parents and others. Staff based in schools can also learn about the client’s school context, which helps holistic working practices.
Model 1. Multi-agency teams; Model 2. School-based healthcare staff; Model 3. Teaching staff; Model 4. In-house peer support; Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision; Model 6. Centralised/in house local authority provision; Model 7. Singleton practitioner model; Model 8. In-school provision by external agency; Model 10. Cluster Model 11. Management only model; Model 12. Vetted pool model.

h) Sessions can be purchased as and when needed, which may be more cost-effective for schools.
Model 5. Centralised peripatetic local authority provision; Model 7. Singleton practitioner model; Possibly Model 8. In-school provision by external agency; Possibly Model 9. Out of school provision by external agency; Possibly Model 12. Vetted pool model.

i) The counsellor is seen by students as being a member of school staff, and as such trust and rapport can be developed quickly.

5.6.2. Shared disadvantages:

a) Funding may be time limited and not sustainable.
Model 1. Multi-agency teams; Model 2. School-based healthcare staff; Model 9. Out of school provision by external agency.

b) The worker may not be trained as a professional counsellor and therefore not affiliated to a recognised counselling professional association with its codes of practice and ethics and complaint procedure.
Model 1. Multi-agency teams; Model 2. School-based healthcare staff; Model 3. Teaching staff.

c) The worker may be perceived as providing a professional counselling service but is actually providing a helping service using counselling skills.
Model 1. Multi-agency teams; Model 2. School-based healthcare staff; Model 3. Teaching staff; Model 4. In-house peer support.

d) The counsellor is seen by students as being a member of school staff, and as such students may have concerns about confidentiality being maintained.
5.7. Desk research summary

In summary, the desk research, using local and UK wide research reports and policy documents, and including information gathered from stakeholder questionnaires and professional practice networks, enabled the team to identify 12 distinct models of counselling provision and a range of components of counselling practice and service delivery. The models included formal counselling and other support activities and, as might be expected, there was overlap between some models with regard to some of the components. The practice and service delivery components have been used to inform the assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the models and as the basis for good practice recommendations later in the report.

6. THE SURVEY

6.1. An overview

The second strand of research involved a survey with the main objective:

To establish how counselling services currently operating in Wales are planned, managed and evaluated.

This section of the report gives an overview of the survey and its main findings. As mentioned above, the survey data were supplemented by fieldwork interviews including an extended stakeholder consultation, in order to gain a more detailed understanding of counselling provision. The concluding sections of the report pull the various strands of the research together.

6.2. Questionnaire design

The survey tool was a postal questionnaire sent to a sample of Welsh schools, including secondary and primary schools, special schools, pupil referral units and local authorities. The questionnaire method was selected because this can generate large amounts of high quality data, both quantitative and qualitative, in a relatively economical manner.

The questionnaire was based on a version successfully used by two of the project team members (FP and PJ) at the University of Manchester in 2003 - 2004, in a survey of counselling provision in secondary schools and LEAs (as they were called then) in England and Wales. Slight modifications were made to the questionnaire for use in the Welsh context and it was adapted for the current survey via:

- Amendments for use by LAs rather than schools, as appropriate
- Translation into Welsh for Welsh-speaking respondents
- Addition of a five-point satisfaction scale to questions
- Addition of three prompts to structure responses to qualitative questions
  (a, b, c)

Consideration was given to the use of an electronic version of the questionnaire to be sent to schools and LAs by e-mail, or to be hosted on a website. However, the early responses to interviews carried out by the team suggested that a paper version of the
questionnaire sent by post would be the method most likely to result in a good response rate.

The proposed questionnaire was agreed by the team and approved for use by GD and JO after Stephen Hughes (Training and Economic Statistics Unit, WAG), confirmed that the survey would not duplicate existing data. It was decided not to pilot the questionnaire, as the amendments to the original questionnaire were agreed to be minor, rather than major, in character, and the previous version had already been successfully piloted and used in the 2003–2004 University of Manchester survey.

6.3. Sampling issues

According to information provided by WAG, dated 2004 – 2005, the education system in Wales included:

- 227 secondary schools
- 1,572 primary schools
- 58 non-maintained schools (i.e. independent or private sector)
- 43 maintained special schools
- 31 pupil referral units
- 22 Local Authorities

In view of the perception of differing needs and experiences of the various parts of the education system, it was decided to adopt a number of different approaches to organising the survey. This was in order to make best use of limited resources, and to focus, in particular, on LAs and secondary schools. However, the experiences of primary schools, special schools and pupil referral units were included as far as possible.

It was therefore agreed to include within the survey:

- A population (i.e. full) sample of 227 secondary schools
- A stratified (10%) sample of 157 primary schools
- A random (25%) sample of 12 special schools
- A random (25%) sample of 15 pupil referral units (n = estimated 60 total for 2007)
- A population sample of 22 LAs

The original intention was to stratify the sample of primary schools to include as many variables as possible, i.e. schools which were variously maintained, voluntary aided, Welsh medium, rural, and those with higher concentrations of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Stratification and randomisation of the survey was organised by GD and other staff at WAG possessing detailed knowledge of educational provision in Wales. In sampling the same proportion of schools within each local authority we aimed to survey a fair representation of rural versus urban and Welsh medium versus English medium schools. Similarly, the sample is more likely to have contained a fair cross-section of voluntary aided schools.
6.4. Administration of the survey

The questionnaire was produced in Welsh and in English and was accompanied by an introductory letter (also in Welsh and English) setting out the purpose and context of the survey. A total of 445 questionnaires and covering letters were posted by BACP in June 2007, with a target date for return via post of 6th July. Returns were systematically tracked by the team and reminders sent, in order to increase the final response rate.

Completed questionnaires were collated, coded and analysed, using the SPSS for Windows software package. Qualitative responses were grouped into emergent themes (PJ and FP), using the constant comparative method of analysis, which had previously been applied on the University of Manchester survey. The survey data were further broken down into sub-groupings, i.e. secondary schools, primary schools, special schools, pupil referral units and LAs, for the purposes of reporting and analysis.

6.5. Data set

The questionnaire was sent to a total of 445 schools, including primary and secondary schools, as well as to special schools and pupil referral units. A total of 123 questionnaires were returned (28% of sample). More than three quarters of the questionnaires were completed by secondary schools (n = 89), followed by primary schools (n = 18), special schools (n = 4) and PRUs (n = 3). A further eight responses were received from LAs, with incomplete data.

The small size of some data sets, e.g. for pupil referral units, special schools, primary schools, and LAs, means that this data is illustrative rather than definitive for the purposes of this survey. The data for pupil referral units, special schools, primary schools and LAs are detailed separately within this report, but the major focus is on the combined data returned by all schools, with secondary schools providing by far the majority of these returns. The analysis of returns largely focuses on the sub-sample of 76 respondents indicating that a counselling service was being provided within their schools.

6.6. Structure of the questionnaire

a. The questionnaire initially asked for demographic data, i.e.:

- Type of school
- Welsh language medium
- Type of school governance
- Range and type of support services provided by the school
- School-based counselling provision

b. Further questions then focused on the nature of school-based counselling provision:

- Information on nature and type of provider of counselling service
- Numbers of counsellors working at the school
- Average number of sessions provided by the service per week
- Availability of a dedicated room for counselling sessions
• Minimum qualifications required of schools counsellors
• Level and type of prior experience required of school counsellors

c. Further questions related to the management of the counselling service:

• Source of funding for counselling service
• Nature of management of counselling service
• Nature of pupil access to the counselling service
• Nature of information disclosed to others by the counsellors
• Forms of evaluation of the counselling service
• Provision for referral of pupils to more specialised mental health services

For sections (a) and (b) above, there were additional questions relating to levels of satisfaction with that particular aspect of the provision and a request for views of how the service could be improved in that respect.

d. This section asked for the respondents’ views on the following qualitative aspects of counselling provision:

• Main benefits or advantages of providing a counselling service
• Main problems or disadvantages of providing a counselling service
• Preferences for future developments of counselling services

6.7. Summary of main survey findings

The majority of schools surveyed in the larger sample (i.e., including secondary, primary and special schools, pupil referral units and LAs) (n = 123) provided a range of support services for their pupils, e.g. peer counselling, anti-bullying programmes and mentoring services. Almost two-thirds of schools overall provided a (formal) counselling service. This provision was largely concentrated in secondary schools, three-quarters of which provided a counselling service for pupils.

Within this smaller sub-sample of secondary schools (n = 76), this counselling service was provided by four main sources: members of teaching staff, the LA, external counsellors or voluntary agencies. The majority of these schools provided up to 50 hours per week of counselling. Questionnaire categories were banded, and the majority of these schools indicated they had ‘up to five counsellors’. It was not verified whether all counsellors referred to by schools were fully qualified as counsellors and providing formal counselling (WAG 2006). However, the majority of these schools (n = 98) required a Diploma in Counselling or professional accreditation from their schools counsellors, with half of schools requiring prior experience of counselling in a school setting.

In terms of management of the service, half of the schools (n = 90) indicated that the counselling service was funded from the school budget, with a further quarter being funded by the LA. Over half of the schools’ counselling services were managed by a senior member of staff, with the LA managing a further fifth of such services.

Pupils had access to the service by a wide range of routes, including referral by staff or parent, and self-referral. Counselling services would disclose a range of information,
including child protection concerns, the name of the pupil receiving or requesting the service, and outline information on the type of presenting issue, or the number of sessions provided.

Two thirds of services were being evaluated, using a wide range of measures, including feedback from pupils, teachers, parents and counsellors, statistics on the take-up of the service, and, less frequently, outcome measures or external evaluation of the service.

Almost all schools indicated that referrals were made to specialist mental health services, such as CAMHS and to social services.

6.8. Levels of satisfaction with the service and scope for improvements

The responses to the survey (n = 123) suggest that over half of schools had high levels of satisfaction with support services being provided for pupils. Levels of satisfaction were high where a counselling service was being provided, with two-thirds of schools reporting that they were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the counselling services provided.

Subsequent analysis focuses on the responses of those schools which indicated they provided a counselling service in school (n = 76). The majority of these schools were either ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the counselling service, and with the counsellors actually providing the service. The majority of schools were also satisfied with the following:

- The availability of accommodation, i.e. a dedicated room for counselling
- Arrangements for pupil access to the counselling service
- The level of information being disclosed by the service
- Referral processes to more specialised mental health services.

One third of schools were satisfied with the number of counsellors. There were similar, roughly equal, levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, with arrangements for the evaluation of the service. However, over half of schools were dissatisfied with the amount of counselling which was available, i.e. the number of sessions provided. In addition, over half of schools expressed dissatisfaction with the funding of the service.

In terms of suggestions for improving the service, much of this qualitative data is subsumed or repeated under the comments contained in the latter half of the questionnaire. However, there was a clear strength of feeling concerning views on ways of improving the funding of the service, with over half of respondents expressing the view that extended funding was required, from the LA or WAG, or other sources.

6.9. Further analysis of satisfaction data

Further detailed analysis of the survey questionnaire data was undertaken, using Windows SPSS, in order to clarify the key factors underlying levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with certain aspects of counselling provision in schools. This analysis included factors such as numbers of counsellors providing services, whether there was a designated counselling room, access to the service, information disclosed, onward referrals, and of course, funding.
6.10. Qualitative data

6.10.1. Main benefits or advantages of providing a counselling service

Respondents indicated that the main benefits related to the individual children concerned. Other benefits related to the school as a caring community. The benefits were also seen as enhancing the educational purpose of the school. From a wider point of view, benefits related to early intervention for some pupils and closer liaison with other referral networks, such as CAMHS.

6.10.2. Main problems or disadvantages of providing a counselling service

The main problems or disadvantages were seen largely in terms of the lack of resources, including staff. There were concerns about management, in terms of demand, accountability, negotiating with parents and cooperation with other agencies. Difficulties were also anticipated in relation to confidentiality (from both those currently providing and also those currently not providing services) and the communication of sensitive personal information. For a minority, counselling was seen as a diversion from schools’ educational roles.

6.10.3. Barriers preventing schools from developing or improving counselling service

The barriers were identified in resource terms such as financial costs, staffing, rooms, training and time. Some respondents were sceptical of the need to improve the counselling service in view of the small size of the school. Negative attitudes of some parents and some teachers towards counselling were perceived as a potential barrier to the further development of the service, given that schools may lack a fully developed ‘culture of counselling’.

6.10.4. Further comments about counselling services

These supported the value of having a funded counselling service, appropriately integrated into other services. Many supportive comments were made about the valuable contribution made by counselling to schools, e.g.

“Only to say that there is an increasing need for such a service. The social and emotional well-being of the next generation is at stake.”

“'They play a vital role in large primary/secondary schools.'

“It is doing an excellent job for our pupils.”

“It is fantastic and we need and want more counsellors/hours.”

“In the present climate of increasing pressures on young people this facility is invaluable to both pupils and staff working with them.”
6.11. Discussion of survey findings

There are a number of ways of developing a commentary and analysis of the results obtained by this survey. This includes a brief comparison with data returned from the earlier data produced by the University of Manchester survey of 2003 - 2004, which provided the basis for the questionnaire as a research instrument. Secondly, key findings of the survey can be highlighted as having potential significance for the development of policy with regard to counselling provision in schools in Wales.

6.11.1. Main findings of the earlier University of Manchester survey relating to secondary schools in Wales in 2003 - 2004

The 2003 - 2004 survey of counselling in secondary schools, carried out by the University of Manchester, was based on a postal questionnaire sent to a large random sample of schools and LEAs (as they were then called) in England and Wales. The data for secondary schools only in Wales and England are briefly compared below. Questionnaires were sent to 109 schools in Wales, with 22 returned (20% return rate), compared with 2041 schools in England, with 663 returned (32% return rate). A total of 409 (70%) English and 14 (64%) Welsh secondary schools reported that they provided a therapeutic individual counselling service.

Responses based on a total of 22 schools in Wales are clearly indicative rather than conclusive, but some differences did emerge between counselling provision in secondary schools in Wales and England. According to this data, schools in Wales were:

- More likely to have an anti-bullying service then English schools (64% compared with 49%)
- Less likely to have counselling provided by an external counsellor on a paid sessional basis (14% compared with 30%)
- Less likely to require professional counsellor accreditation by those providing counselling services (18% compared with 33%)
- Less likely to fund the counselling service from the school budget (18% compared with 54%), and therefore more likely to fund it by other means (32% compared with 12%)
- More likely to have unspecified ‘other arrangements’ for the management of the service (i.e. not the LEA, senior member of school staff, statutory agency or agency under contract) (29% compared with 5%)
- In terms of information divulged by the counsellor to other members of staff
  - Less likely to disclose the name of the child receiving counselling to school staff (27% compared with 50%)
  - More likely to disclose the counsellor record of counselling provided (23% compared with 9%)
  - Less likely to disclose child protection concerns (41% compare with 61%)
- Less likely to use counsellor perceptions of the outcomes of counselling as a means of evaluating the service than other means (feedback from pupils, teachers, parents, statistics on take-up of service, external evaluation) (14% compared with 36%)
In other respects, such as the provision of peer counselling, numbers of counsellors in school, and provision of a dedicated room, the provision of counselling in secondary schools in England and Wales appears to be broadly similar.

6.11.2. Comparison of main characteristics of 2003-2004 (England and Wales) and current 2007 (Wales) surveys

In terms of the survey, there are some useful comparisons to be drawn with the preceding University of Manchester data. While the survey of schools in Wales is much broader in scope, including primary schools, special schools and pupil referral units within its remit, the response rates for the return of questionnaires to schools (i.e. non-LA or ‘other’ destinations, e.g. senior educational psychologists) are the same; both the 2003-2004 and 2007 surveys have a response rate of 28% (Table 6.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution/ School Type</th>
<th>2003-2004 Survey(England &amp; Wales)</th>
<th>2007 Survey (Wales)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Popn</td>
<td>Sample size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRUs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>6,450</td>
<td>2,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (non other/LEA)</td>
<td>6,450</td>
<td>2,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,622</td>
<td>2,352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further interesting finding of both surveys is in terms of the proportion of secondary schools providing a counselling service. For the 2003 - 4 survey of secondary schools in England and Wales, 72% responded that they provided counselling (n = 423). The figure for Wales only was 64%. According to the 2007 survey, the proportion of secondary schools in Wales now providing a counselling service stands at 76% (n = 68), which tentatively indicates a degree of increase in school counselling in Wales.

6.11.3. Summary of data relating to levels of satisfaction

The majority of schools in this 2007 survey provided a range of support services for pupils, while three quarters of secondary schools provided a counselling service. In terms of satisfaction levels with different aspects of the service, levels of satisfaction were generally high with regard to the operational side of provision, but less so for the resourcing of the service. While the survey was not primarily intended as a satisfaction survey, it does provide some useful data on current levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction by schools regarding the counselling services on offer.
Satisfaction levels were generally high for most operational aspects of the counselling service in schools (see Table 6.2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied/Very satisfied responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling service provided</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellors providing service</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room provided</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of service</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student access to service</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of information disclosed</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral to specialised mental health services</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levels of dissatisfaction were higher for the actual resourcing of the counselling service. (see Table 6.3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of counselling sessions provided</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding of counselling service</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.11.4. Local authorities

The numbers of LAs responding in detail to the questionnaire were very limited, perhaps reflecting the fact that they had provided some of the information to the Welsh Assembly Government previously in December 2005. As a result, the data are largely only of illustrative value. The qualitative comments received from LAs in general tended to focus on broader policy and systemic issues, rather than those arising from immediate service delivery of the counselling service within a given school, no doubt reflecting their broader strategic role. The disadvantages of providing counselling services, as perceived by LAs, tended to focus on wider resource issues such as accountability, staffing and coordination of the service. Key benefits of schools counselling were seen as providing enhanced mental health, early intervention where required and speedy and appropriate referral to other services.
Policy and service development issues mentioned by LAs related to the need for appropriate access, bi-lingual provision, coordination with other services such as CAMHS (see Appendix 4), and quality assurance issues related to the appropriate staffing and maintenance of the service. Resource issues, and funding in particular, were seen as the main barrier to the further development of counselling provision in schools in Wales.

7. THE FIELDWORK

The third and final strand of the research included fieldwork with stakeholders in schools and an extended stakeholder consultation. In this section of the report we give an overview of the aims, methods and findings of the fieldwork and the wider stakeholder consultation.

7.1. Fieldwork aims

The aim was to conduct interviews with a range of stakeholders to further our understanding about counselling in schools in Wales and England and attitudes towards counselling provision. The intention was to capture data from the following groups:

- Children and young people
- Parents/carers
- Teachers
- Head teachers
- Pastoral heads
- Learning support workers
- Counsellors
- Other key stakeholders

The fieldwork was planned to enrich the information gathered from the desk and survey research and to help address the main project objectives, including establishing how counselling services in Wales are currently operating; reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of different models and developing proposals for suitable counselling models that could operate across Wales. In addition, contextualised data from the stakeholder consultations were intended to inform the development of good practice guidelines for local services across Wales.

7.2. Fieldwork methods

7.2.1. School interviews

The fieldwork team (KC, KR, SP) conducted face-to-face interviews in schools and agencies across North, Mid and South Wales. A Welsh medium school was included in the fieldwork visits. Schools were contacted following advice from the project commissioner (GD) and drawing on the feedback from the respondents to our call for information in BACP’s journal, *Therapy Today* (Appendix 3).
7.2.2. Wider stakeholder interviews

Other stakeholders including service managers, CAMHS workers and counsellors were interviewed either face-to-face, by telephone or via email. Once again these stakeholders included those who responded to our call for information in Therapy Today, along with those identified on advice from the project commissioner (GD) and through using the team’s professional networks.

In addition, at the outset of the project we developed an interview schedule for use with a group of young people (n = 20) from Funky Dragon -The Children and Young People’s Assembly for Wales (Appendix 5). The data from these stakeholders are included here. The team sought consent from all approached for interview (whether in school settings, by email or by phone) and anonymity was guaranteed; thus individuals are not identified in the report.

7.3. Sample and data collection methods

The following section describes sample and data collection methods for interviews with the following groups:

1) The school visits: adults and young people
2) Young people from Funky Dragon
3) Wider stakeholder consultation (e.g. other key professionals/agencies/organisations in the field).

7.3.1. The school visits: adults and young people

The fieldwork team visited primary schools (n = 2) and secondary schools/secondary school service providers (n = 10) in rural (n = 7) and urban (n = 5) areas across North, Mid and South Wales (Table 7.1.). While the main focus of the research project was on secondary education, interviews in primary schools were undertaken as the development of school counselling for primary schools in Wales is part of the longer term strategic agenda (WAG Draft Strategy, 2007).

Some of the schools visited provided counselling services. In two schools the counsellor was employed directly by the school, in a third school the counselling service was provided by a charity. A fourth school used to have counselling provided by a charity but lack of staffing/funding resources meant this service was currently unavailable. In the fifth school, counselling was provided by a community youth service. The remainder of the schools based their views on school counselling through their experiences of developing related pastoral support services in schools, such as peer-to-peer support systems, informal counselling from the school health nurse, community policeman, youth workers, drop in advice services and referrals to outside counselling agencies.

While aiming for an inclusive sample (urban/rural; range of occupations; range of year groups; boys and girls; children with special needs; parents; English and Welsh as first language; geographically widespread), the final sample selected was largely opportunistic, depending on which schools were able and willing to take part in the study, as well as who was available for interview during the fieldwork visit. For example, Year 11 pupils were unavailable for interview, as they were on exam leave. A Welsh
medium school was visited and a Welsh translator accompanied the research team so staff and young people had the choice of speaking in either Welsh or English.

Table 7.1: An overview of schools/services visited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>Type/ Location</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Counselling Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>• Head teacher</td>
<td>No counselling provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Wales Rural</td>
<td>• Pastoral head</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Young people: 3: x2 with special educational needs, x1 with behavioural difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>• School counsellor</td>
<td>Model 7: Singleton practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Wales Rural</td>
<td>• Head teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Pastoral head</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Young People: 16 x4 Year 7 x4 Year 8 x4 Year 9 x4 Year 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>• Head teacher</td>
<td>No counselling provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Wales Rural</td>
<td>• Deputy head teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 teachers in Emotional and Behavioural Unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>• Deputy head</td>
<td>Model 2 School-based healthcare staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Wales Urban</td>
<td>• Head of year</td>
<td>N.B. the nurse provided informal counselling using counselling skills, not formal professional counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• School health nurse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Young people: 8 x2 Year 7 x2 Year 8 x2 Year 9 x2 Year 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 5</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>• Teacher/school counsellor</td>
<td>This model had changed over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Wales Urban</td>
<td>• School counsellor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Head teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The first model in place was Model 3 - Teaching staff providing counselling. This had changed more recently to the current Model 7 - Singleton practitioner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Staffing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| School 6 | Secondary school | North Wales Urban | • Deputy head  
• Police liaison officer  
• Young people: 2  
  • Year 9  
  • Year 12 | Model 1 (counselling skills used within multi-disciplinary team, but not formal professional counselling) |  
Model 4  
In-house peer support |
| School 7 | Primary school | North Wales Rural | • Head teacher  
• Parent | No counselling available |  
| School 8 | Secondary school | North Wales Rural | • Deputy head  
• Pupil guidance Managers x2  
• Young people: 8  
  x2 Year 7  
  x2 Year 8  
  x2 Year 9  
  x2 Year 10 | Model 8  
In school provision by external agency  
N.B. This service was not currently operating because of staffing difficulties with the external agency |  
| School 9 | Secondary school | Mid Wales Rural | • Deputy head teacher | No counselling available |  
| School 10 | Secondary school | Mid Wales Urban | • Pastoral head  
• Deputy head  
• Young people: 15 members of school council  
• Charity counselling manager  
• Charity counselling trustee  
• Charity counselling senior staff member  
• Charity counselling school counsellors: x2 | Model 4  
In-house peer support  
Model 8  
In school provision by external agency  
and  
Model 9  
Out of school provision by external agency |  
| Service 11 | Youth service agency provision | South Wales Urban | • Youth service counselling manager | Model 6  
Centralised Local Authority provision |  
| School 12 | Secondary / Welsh medium school | North Wales Rural | • Teacher  
• Youth worker  
• Young people: 6  
  X2 Year 8  
  X2: Year 9  
  X2: Year 10 | No counselling available |  

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7.3.1a. Data collection method: interviews with adults

The team completed semi-structured interviews with 31 adults including head teachers, pastoral heads, heads of year, teachers, counsellors, a school nurse and parents. Interviews lasted between 20 and 60 minutes. A range of interview schedules was used depending on the occupation of the person interviewed (e.g., teacher or counsellor) and whether or not the school provided a counselling service.

7.3.1b. Data collection method: interviews with young people

The semi-structured interviews with young people sought information on how young people viewed counselling, and their ideas about the development of counselling services in schools. The questions focused on:

- What they thought about counselling
- Who should be a counsellor?
- Barriers to accessing counselling and ways to overcome barriers
- Important features of a counsellor and counselling service

Fifty four young people were interviewed in their school settings. In most schools pupils were interviewed across year groups 7, 8, 9, and 10. Young people were interviewed opportunistically either one-to-one, in pairs, or in groups of four or eight. At the beginning of the fieldwork all year groups were interviewed together. However, it became apparent that the younger year groups might feel intimidated by older year groups and perhaps unable to safely express their opinions. As a result, an attempt was made not to interview the youngest students with the oldest. Nonetheless, those young people who were interviewed with their peers may still have been inhibited from giving full responses to questions.

The aims of the research were explained to all the young people involved and those who chose to take part signed a participation consent form. The concept of anonymity was explained, along with what would happen with the information gathered in interviews. Interviews took between 20 and 50 minutes, depending on the circumstances under which the interviews took place and the demands of the school timetable.

7.3.1c. Data collection method: young people from Funky Dragon (Children and Young People’s Assembly for Wales)

In addition, information was gathered from young people (n = 20) from Funky Dragon. The young people were primarily aged 14-19 and came from across Wales. Data were collected during an opportunistic residential weekend (i.e., the residential was not set up specifically for this research study). Information was gathered via group work activities. All responses were anonymised.
7.4. Wider stakeholder interviews

7.4.1. The sample

The wider stakeholder interviews were undertaken to ensure that a range of perspectives were obtained from service providers and those with a role or interest in school counselling provision in Wales. The project commissioners (JO and GD) identified key stakeholders for interview and many interested individuals responded to our call for information in Therapy Today, as noted previously in this report. A total of 16 stakeholder interviews were completed.

7.4.2. The method

Different methods of stakeholder interviews were used. Firstly, telephone interviews were undertaken with ten people who had been identified as key stakeholders by the project commissioners and the research team. The telephone interviews were undertaken by a member of the fieldwork team (KC). Four questions were asked:

- What are the main issues regarding the WAG strategy to provide accessible counselling for young people in Wales?
- What are the pros and cons of the strategy to make counselling accessible for young people?
- What suggestions do you have for services that could/should be offered?
- Is there anything you'd like to add?

Secondly, email interviews were undertaken with five stakeholders who had responded to the call for information in Therapy Today. These interviews provided detailed information about models of service provision across the UK, and these data were used to inform the desk research.

7.5. Data analysis and findings

The interview data from the three groups (schools; Funky Dragon and wider stakeholders) were collated and analysed thematically identifying key issues from each. The findings from the interviews are reported under the following three headings:

- Interviews with adults in schools/school counselling services
- Interviews with young people
- Interviews with stakeholders (e.g. other key professionals/agencies/organisations in the field)

7.6. Findings from interviews with adults in schools/school counselling services

As Table 7.2 shows, five main themes were identified in interviews with adults in schools/school counselling services, namely:

- Views on school counselling
- Funding
- School setting
- Ethical issues
- Service delivery
Table 7.2: Themes from adult interviews in schools/school counselling services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Issues identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views on School Counselling</td>
<td>• Need for a school counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presenting problems of young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>• Ring fencing funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sustainable funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Setting</td>
<td>• Impact and integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strategies for teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Barriers to school counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Issues</td>
<td>• Parental consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complaints procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to multi-agency resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Counsellor, staff and supervisor competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Delivery</td>
<td>• Resources and access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent support/family sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluation and monitoring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.6.1. Views on school counselling

7.6.1a. Need for a school counsellor

All the adults interviewed from secondary schools articulated the need for a school counsellor ideally on a full-time basis to accommodate the perceived demand for this service. The majority of those schools who did not already have a service indicated that they would prefer to employ a full-time counsellor themselves, or at most share a counsellor between two schools, in order to ensure the counsellor integrated well into the everyday running of the school and that the young people could have consistent access to a service.

In contrast, the consensus of those interviewed in primary schools was that a part-time service would adequately meet the needs of primary school children even though the problems that children may face in primary school are as significant as those of young people in secondary schools. Also, primary schools generally have far fewer children on their rolls than secondary schools, thus requiring fewer hours of counselling provision.

The most appropriate model of service provision identified for primary schools from the fieldwork was that of a counsellor working for a cluster of schools or where the feeder secondary school offered a limited service in the primary school. However, some concerns were raised about using secondary school counsellors for primary school work: interviewees underlined the need for such counsellors to be skilled and trained to work with both adolescents and young children. In addition, staff in one primary school suggested that they themselves would benefit from funding for more training around emotional well-being, along with basic counselling skills training: this would help develop the overall well-being of children and bridge the gap between the school and any part-time counselling provision.
Some school staff, including head teachers, said the counselling service was also needed for and should be available to, staff, although one school commented that in house counselling could make relationship boundaries difficult to manage and preferred their existing access to staff counselling as part of their LAs well-being strategy.

7.6.1b. Presenting problems of young people

Staff in schools identified and had had to deal with a range of issues that young people experience including eating disorders, drug abuse, self-harm, depression, anxiety, family break up, sexual abuse, rape, and bereavement. Bereavement was the most reported theme in both primary and secondary schools: schools would often use external bereavement counsellors when young people had suffered loss.

School staff and parents agreed that emotional and psychological issues and difficulties directly impact upon teaching and learning and many of those interviewed believed that counselling would have a positive impact on teaching and learning in schools including an improvement in pupil performance.

7.6.2. Funding

All schools raised similar issues about funding especially the need to ring fence funding for counselling services and to ensure funding was sustainable to develop and continue to deliver services.

The issue of the fair distribution of funding was also raised by some schools. While those schools in more socio-economically deprived areas highlighted the fact that children from these areas may suffer from an increased amount of mental health problems, other schools emphasized the need for all young people to have equal access to a counselling service, irrelevant of the location of the school they attend, or the socio-economic factors influencing development.

7.6.3. The school setting

7.6.3a. Impact and integration

All secondary schools mentioned different school initiatives that supported the emotional well being of pupils, such as peer-to-peer support, nurture groups, and ChildLine ‘Spies’. Primary school staff mentioned ‘circle time’ in their schools. Staff highlighted the need for any school counselling service to support these wider initiatives rather than replace them. All schools commented positively about how counselling supports pupils emotionally and academically (see section below on teaching and learning) but most schools noted that the counsellor needs to understand the school culture of teaching and learning and align with school values and priorities. The primary to secondary transition was raised as a way in which school counselling could directly support school strategy and given as an example of how schools would like the counsellor to support wider educational initiatives.

Some schools felt that counselling provided by external agencies might hinder this integration. Counsellors directly employed by the school also raised the issue of integration. One counsellor planned to have more regular staff consultations and make
greater links to the head teacher, as part of his longer term strategy for working in schools.

7.6.3b. Strategies for teaching and learning

Many school staff thought that counselling would provide emotional support thus creating a positive environment to facilitate strategies for both teaching and learning. As one head teacher commented:

‘Working with a young person and their family offers a huge advantage to children in school so effective learning can be enhanced’

Some staff felt that it would be helpful to have a counsellor available to consult with about managing distressed pupils in school. Others believed that in helping manage the pastoral and emotional needs of pupils, counsellors would help limit demands on staff in this role.

7.6.3c. Barriers to school counselling

Barriers to school counselling were identified including the term ‘counselling’: one pastoral head indicated that counselling is better understood if described along with the terms ‘information and advice’. Some interviewees said that staff and young people would need to be informed about the nature of counselling, perhaps through Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) lessons. (The lack of understanding of the term counselling was demonstrated more concretely on three occasions during the fieldwork, when young people confused counselling with the concept of the ‘school council’).

7.6.3d. School inspection

When asked if school counselling should be part of the school inspection process most staff said that if it was happening in schools, then it should be included. Some schools indicated that school counselling had been included in previous inspection of pastoral support and in one school with a school counselling service, inspectors had met with pupils’ parents who had made positive comments about the counselling provision (see Appendix 6).

7.6.4. Ethical issues

7.6.4a. Parental consent

Ethical issues were discussed with school staff. Most schools said that it would be inappropriate to ask for parental consent for secondary school pupils, given that most young people would be deemed competent to make their own decision about counselling. In contrast, in primary settings where there is a much closer relationship between school and families, referrals would always involve parents. One parent commented that she would want to know if her child in primary school was going to see a counsellor, but thought that there wouldn’t be as great a need in secondary school.
7.6.4b. Accessing young people’s views and complaints procedures

School staff stated that they could easily access young people’s views about school counselling via their School Councils. If teachers had concerns about the counselling service they felt they could discuss these issues either within the School Council forum or with appropriate teaching staff. In terms of young people being able to make a complaint about the counselling service most young people weren’t aware of any specific complaints system in schools that could facilitate this, but they did think that they could utilise their usual localised systems when they were unhappy with anything in school. School staff felt that students would either go to the School Council or complain to appropriate teachers if they needed to raise any concerns.

7.6.4c. Access to multi-agency resources

Concerns were raised by some school staff about access to multi-agency resources and support, and appropriate policy/practice guidelines. This was particularly highlighted by a school nurse who, as part of her role, had been offering emotional support for pupils in school. She described how she had access to a range of support and referral services outside the school setting and noted her concern that school counsellors working in isolation may not be able to access these important resources. The risk of counsellor isolation was raised by other staff interviewed and one school counsellor indicated that he planned to address such issues by building a wider network for himself.

The same school nurse and a head of pastoral care believed that referrals to CAMHS would be reduced and better diagnosis would be available for children and young people if pupils were able to access a school counselling service.

7.6.4d. Counsellor, staff and supervisor competence

Several school staff believed that a school counsellor should have experience of working with young people and as noted above, should also understand the teaching and learning context of schools, including the demands of teaching. In addition, respondents suggested that the counselling supervisor should be experienced in working with young people in a variety of relevant settings. A limited number of interviewees thought that staff would value training, and this training could include a) how to identify psychological problems, b) how to make appropriate referrals and c) how to maintain and respect appropriate boundaries with the school counsellor. Training primary school staff in counselling skills was also viewed by a primary head teacher as a beneficial addition to teaching skills. One healthcare professional in a school thought that she was being expected to work outside her competence by offering in - depth emotional support to young people.

7.6.5. Service delivery

7.6.5a. Resources and access

Several service delivery themes were identified including resource issues such as the availability of an appropriate room for counselling. Some staff noted that access to services for some young people were more likely to be overlooked, such as school non-attendees. In addition, they mentioned the need for appropriate referral information for school leavers. Once again, the question of staff access to the counselling service was
raised. It was also highlighted that young people in rural schools would have problems accessing services if they were offered as out of school hours provision or services in alternative premises away from the school.

7.6.5b. Parental support/family sessions

School counselling was seen as a support for parents and families by a range of interviewees. A school counsellor undertaking family work said that this type of work was going to become increasingly important. A parent stated that she would very much like a school counsellor to be available for support and guidance, and a primary head teacher believed that a school counsellor could provide useful initial support for parents and then offer appropriate referral and guidance for accessing external services.

7.6.5c. Evaluation and monitoring

The need for evaluation and monitoring was briefly mentioned by a small number of schools, though interviewees wanted guidance on how best to evaluate service delivery. Indeed, one of the school counsellors interviewed specifically asked for any available guidance on this.

7.7. Findings from interviews with young people from school visits and Funky Dragon (Children and Young People’s Assembly for Wales)

The young people were asked questions about their views on counselling, including:

- Views on counselling
- Who should be a counsellor?
- Barriers to accessing counselling and ways to overcome barriers
- Important features of a counsellor and counselling service
- Language provision

7.7.1. Views on counselling

Most young people agreed that there was a need for counselling in schools, and that counsellors in schools would be beneficial:

“Because a lot of people might have problems it could affect your school work and you can let everything out [with counselling].”

“(We) have a right to counselling – I see lots of people stressed all the while.”

“(Young people can) get depressed. Instead of talking to teacher it is easier to talk to someone you can trust. If you are upset they aren’t going to tell anyone.”

“Counselling would make lives better – the buddying system we used to have didn’t work.”

“Counselling may make people more confident. I didn’t want to see a buddy in Year 7 - I didn’t trust them. I would have liked to have seen an adult professional counsellor.”
Young peoples' reasons for seeing a counsellor included bullying, racism, depression, sexual abuse, sexual problems, exams, peer pressure, drugs, self-harm, loss of family, pregnancy, stress, smoking, mental problems, getting things off your chest, dealing with anger, friendship problems, and generally needing uplifting. Most young people believed that counsellors could help with a range of emotional and psychological issues. As one young person stated:

“The teenage years are a time of great change...some of the things going on in pupils’ heads (are hard to) fully understand. Talking to someone confidentially about what they are thinking may help them sort out the meaning of what they are thinking, like with cases of bullying and self-confidence issues, counselling would be a help.”

Young people were also asked whether they had a) seen a counsellor, b) thought of seeing a counsellor, or c) never thought of seeing a counsellor. Approximately a third of young people interviewed had actually seen a counsellor which suggests that these findings are informed in part by their experience of counselling. It is worth noting, however, that some young people may not have wanted to disclose that they had thought about seeing, or had seen a school counsellor, if their peers were present during the fieldwork.

7.7.2. Who should be a counsellor?

The majority of young people said that they would not want a teacher at their school to also be in the role of counsellor. The quotes below illustrate some of the reasons for this:

“They would know secrets, as counsellor you wouldn’t have to see them again.”

“You would feel awkward around them in a lesson.”

“Would be awkward in lesson and study, they would know your secrets.”

“They might think differently about me.”

For a few young people who thought that seeing a teacher for counselling would be okay, there were caveats such as 'yes I would see a teacher, as long as they wouldn’t tell' and 'it would depend on who the teacher was.'

7.7.3. Barriers to counselling and ways to overcome them

Barriers to counselling included not knowing about the service or where it was located, or, being seen going for counselling, and fears of being bullied (laughed at) for going. As one young person stated:

“When I wanted to go to counselling I felt that I couldn’t because I don’t want the attention from my friends. I just wanted an excuse to get away.”
Another young person highlighted how many young people are not aware of counselling services:

“My friend’s Dad died and it really helped him going to counselling outside school. But the problem is that most young people do not know that counselling is available.”

Other fears were that the counsellor would not be welcoming or would tell someone else. Most young people thought that counselling should be based in school:

“If your problem was about your parents you wouldn’t want to ask them to drive you somewhere to complain about them.”

“You don’t have to phone, just go to school.”

Some young people commented that strategies should be put in place to ensure that counselling is non-stigmatising. For example, ‘encouraging people not to be ashamed of going to counselling.’

7.7.4. Important features of a counsellor and a counselling service

In order to identify their views on the essentials of a school counselling service, young people were asked ‘If you could plan a counselling service for your school what would be the five most important features?’ and ‘If you were on the interview panel to employ a new counsellor, what would be the five most important things you would look for about that person?’

The location and accessibility of the service and the training of the counsellor were seen as the most important features for a counselling service (Table 7.3). Skills and experience were the key features in a counsellor, according to those interviewed (Table 7.4).

7.7.5. Language provision

Young people were also asked about the language of the service. In the one Welsh medium school visited, staff and young people wanted counselling to be available in Welsh and English. In the English medium schools there wasn’t a consistent view about whether schools should have both English and Welsh speaking counsellors. Some young people said it should be both English and Welsh and some young people said that some pupils might not understand Welsh, so it was important for the service to be in English. A small number of young people raised issues of other languages and that other languages might be needed if there was a pupil with a specific language need.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Examples of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>• Concealed entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sound proof room and down corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nicely furnished room, comfortable chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More private and confidential, and a new location inside school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wouldn’t want everyone knowing you are going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>• Easily drop in a lunch time, could be seen quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Want some in holidays – in school or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Need knowledge of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Those children who skip school are able to visit too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advertising (the service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drop in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speak the language of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visibility of the counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have group discussions (in school) about counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meet the counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• (Counsellor) shown around school more and pupils introduced to the counsellor more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>• They (the counsellor) need proper training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experienced, trained counsellor – with degrees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• An understanding person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Would like advice, not just listening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Don’t want advice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.4: Young people’s views of counsellor qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Examples of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Skills       | • Friendly  
               • Approachable  
               • Patient  
               • Unbiased  
               • Good listener  
               • Listen honestly  
               • Confident  
               • Need to be good at it  
               • Face you know  
               • Treat us equally  
               • Like children  
               • Punctual  
               • Have personality  
               • Polite, kind, helpful  
               • Counsellors should introduce themselves (to young people) |
| Experience   | • Life experience  
               • Qualified  
               • Previous experience of working with young people  
               • Different from a teacher  
               • Specialist knowledge – drugs, violence  
               • Experience of badly behaved students - don’t judge them on their behaviour. |

7.8. Wider stakeholder consultations

7.8.1. Telephone and stakeholder Interviews: an overview

As noted previously, four lead questions were asked:

1) What are the main issues re the WAG strategy to provide accessible counselling for young people in Wales?
2) What are the pros and cons of the strategy to make counselling accessible for young people?
3) What suggestions do you have for services that could/should be offered?
4) Is there anything you’d like to add?

7.8.2. Overview of findings

The responses highlight a range of issues concerning infra-structure, service provision and service delivery. Stakeholders have concerns about how services will be managed to best meet the needs of children and young people and also whether counselling
services will be integrated with other services and will thus contribute to multi-agency working. One stakeholder suggested that university counselling services, well versed in working in educational settings, could provide outreach work in schools, and thus understand some of the tensions that can occur for counsellors in such settings. Another stakeholder raised the issue of the ad hoc nature of service delivery, commenting that:

“We welcome the national strategy because there are pockets of good practice in the country, but it’s just not consistent. The message of what counselling can and can’t do needs to be a message that is consistent internationally.”

Concerns were raised by stakeholders as to how to pilot, equip and manage a counselling workforce to work in schools across Wales. For example, what type of training, standards, supervision and CPD will be expected of counsellors? Concern was also raised about support for counsellors in schools.

One stakeholder commented:

“Poor old counsellors in schools won’t be seen as education or CAMHS, or social services by school staff, they may be seen to be a jack of all trades and that will be a lonely position – they’ll need a lot of support.”

There was also a recommendation that a higher tier of management should be in place, in addition to and separate from the school management. This would enable a range of professional and ethical issues to be addressed appropriately and would also ensure that school counsellors do not become isolated and that appropriate referral systems are in place.

One stakeholder commented:

“There needs to be baseline quality of standards. If there is an independent counsellor in a school, I still think there should be a higher tier of management separate to the school. This layer of management can speak with authority to school staff if boundaries become questioned or problems about roles arise, as they often can when school staff don’t quite understand the counselling role.”

Another stakeholder stated:

“We think that child protection advice and discussion should be with an agency or management outside of the school to protect as far as possible confidentiality.”

There was a consensus that counselling in secondary schools was beneficial, although it was noted that counselling in schools might lead teaching staff to absolve themselves of responsibility for the emotional well-being of children and young people, and that there is a risk that those children experiencing emotional problems become pathologised and are automatically seen as needing professional help. Concerns about what would happen to hose young people not attending school and what would happen to services during the holidays were also highlighted.

There was overall agreement that ‘one model would not fit all’, and that strategic development needed to build upon what was already being delivered in schools. In
addition, respondents believed that current initiatives to support emotional health should complement rather than be a substitute for counselling, and that a range of services are of use to and valued by young people.

7.8.3. Summary of stakeholder findings

These wide ranging findings raise important issues for the development and delivery of school counselling services in Wales, and draw attention to quality standards around ethics and training, service availability, management and benefits. These comments have been used to inform the recommendations for best practice (see section 11).

8. DISCUSSION

In this section of the report, we discuss the limitations of the research before synthesizing the three strands of the research and assessing their implications for practice.

8.1. Project limitations

The research project commenced later than anticipated by the project team and the WAG leads, due to delays in the commissioning process. This meant that all three strands of the research, desk, survey and fieldwork, were conducted in the summer term. As a result, the themes identified in the research strands were synthesized at the end of the project, rather than each strand informing the other in chronological order. Under normal circumstances, issues identified through the secondary analysis of satisfaction-with-funding data, for example, would have informed the design of the fieldwork interviews, with further exploration of issues raised at an earlier stage of the research. The research project may have been improved if it had evolved more slowly over a longer period of time.

The fieldwork interviews were largely opportunistic, and had to be fitted into the busy summer term, often at short notice for the schools concerned. While the team aimed to interview a representative sample of adults and children in all areas of Wales, there are gaps in the data. For example, interview data were not captured from children undertaking summer exams, or from those who had left at the end of their exams. It was not always possible to interview children on a one-to-one basis, and thus their answers to questions may have been influenced by the presence of other children.

The research team did not specifically ask young people about counselling being provided in other community settings, but focused on counselling being available via school. The results of the study, therefore, do not comment on other community counselling services that young people can access outside the school setting, such as free drop-in community based counselling or one-stop shop counselling services.

8.2. Data synthesis and implications for practice

Despite the lack of time, the desk research, survey, fieldwork and stakeholder interviews enabled the team to gather rich and detailed information about current provision of counselling in schools in Wales, and attitudes towards it. Importantly, the research
process enabled the team to identify standards of practice and the frameworks needed to deliver high quality and sustainable services.

The desk research identified 12 models operating across the UK, the majority of which also were operational in Wales. The survey showed that counselling provision has increased in Wales over the last three years. Data analysis of desk and survey research led to the identification of a range of practice and service delivery components; their presence or absence depending to a large extent on the model of counselling used and the local context in which counselling was delivered.

As part of the project brief the team analysed the advantages and disadvantages of each model but instead of identifying four models of best practice, and developing proposals to pilot or extend the use of these models across Wales (as outlined in the original project brief), the research team used these components to develop quality indicators for best practice and good service delivery. This was thought to be a more useful approach for planning the delivery of counselling in schools in Wales.

Thus the recommendations for good practice, presented below, have evolved through an iterative research process. Having merged the practice and service delivery components into ten recommendations for good practice, the research findings were then reviewed, to identify data which substantiated or which contradicted these quality indicators. Having reviewed all three strands of research in relation to the recommendations originally gleaned from desk research, and supported by subsequent research, we can assert that these recommendations are evidence based. Importantly, their development has been informed by existing good practice guidelines shaped by the local context.

9. RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOOD PRACTICE

BACP has already developed and disseminated Good Practice Guidance for counselling in schools and, in consultation with the late Peter Clarke, Children’s Commissioner for Wales, published the document in the Welsh language (BACP, 2006). Nonetheless, there is good evidence to suggest that adapting national guidance to fit local circumstances is important for its take up and implementation (Grimshaw et al, 1995).

The recommendations for good practice drafted for this project are evidenced by UK wide documentation and local information. We have used BACP’s Good Practice Guidance and other policy documents as a basis for the development of local good practice recommendations which were further refined by the findings from empirical research, and informed by the expertise of the Steering Group. In addition, and as promised, these recommendations for good practice have been developed through consultation with key stakeholders in Wales, to ensure the relevance of the recommendations for local settings and to facilitate ownership of the end product.

The recommendations below are supported by findings from each of the three research strands: where there is no supporting evidence, this is noted.
Recommendation 1: School counselling services should have sustainable funding

**Rationale:** Schools today exist in a culture that is increasingly reliant upon temporary funding. Over recent years many initiatives have been resourced in schools by short term funding and have not been sustainable. When counselling services are developed in schools an expectation arises amongst students, staff, parents and other stakeholders that they will be continued. Closing down services because of loss of funding can be clinically damaging to young people who have become reliant on the service.

**Supporting evidence:**

**Desk research:** The legal framework of the Children Act (2004) strongly points to sustainability of funding for services as an important aspect of addressing the needs of children and young people (Jenkins and Polat, 2004). This is indicative of children and young people’s needs being on-going rather than transient. School counselling involves good relationship building with young people, school staff and parents, where appropriate. Counselling in itself is a process of relationship building and trust between counsellor and client. UNICEF’s Innocenti Report Card 7 on ‘Child Poverty in Perspective: Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Nations’ (2007) clearly states the importance of relationships in young people’s lives and contemporary literature on attachment (Gross, 2007) shows how young people can work on regulating their emotions through stability with attachment to a therapist. The English ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda refers to the importance of a stable adult in the child’s life as a central resilience factor. Funding that is not sustainable can threaten attachments and the beneficial nature of ongoing work with emotionally distressed young people (Pattison and Corr, in press).

**Survey research:** Survey data indicated that almost half of schools funded their counselling service from within the school budget, with a further third having LEA funding. There were high levels of dissatisfaction with these funding arrangements, with six out of ten schools reporting that they were ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with funding arrangements. Suggestions for improving this situation varied, but included a range of preferences, in particular, for LA funding and for direct funding by WAG, both ring-fenced for this purpose.

“Schools recognise the priority need for counselling, but funding is not easily accessible or forthcoming.”

“There must surely be provision in LEA (through WAG) to help school to provide integral support service.”

“WAG to fund centrally.”

**Fieldwork:** All senior staff in schools raised the issue of sustainable funding as a concern for counselling provision in schools. Concerns were also raised about who would have overall control of any budgets provided and staff strongly recommended that funding for counselling should be ring-fenced, rather than diverted to other funding streams. One senior staff member commented:
“If a school can’t fund paper, it certainly won’t fund counselling.”

A head teacher commented:

“It would be difficult to persuade a lot of heads to give up the cash for a counsellor. The problem is there are lots of good ideas but not enough money to do it properly. If (we are) going to do it, (we) need to fund it well.”

Other stakeholder comments included:

“In the first instance these concerns are workforce issues. This could be extremely expensive because of the number of people needing to be employed. It’s not a small undertaking. The figures need to be worked out realistically and WAG really needs to see if they can afford it.”

“If counselling is not funded centrally the service is always under threat of closure, which is unsettling for the counsellor, school staff and children.”

“Uncertain funding means that I am continually working under pressure of perhaps having to find a new job each year. This has an effect upon my relationships with school staff and involvement in development work. How can I be expected to develop policies and work on future strategies when my job is continually under threat?”

Recommendation 2: Employ professionally qualified counsellors who have experience of working with young people, who access appropriate clinical supervision with experienced supervisors, and who take part in regular, relevant continuing professional development

Rationale: Given the vulnerability of the client group within schools, it is imperative that counsellors are qualified in theoretical principles and are able to demonstrate a high level of practice skills (employers usually seek counsellors who are trained to BACP’s level of accreditation or equivalent). Counselling young people is different from counselling adults and as such it is important that counsellors have training to support their work with this client group. Clinical supervision ought to be provided by colleagues who have experience of working therapeutically with young people. Any trainee counsellor on placement ought to be well supported by experienced counselling colleagues and the trainee’s work closely monitored. Young people often have complex needs and present with various complicated issues. External consultative support in the form of clinical supervision is necessary to sustain professional counselling standards. When developing terms and conditions of employment for counsellors consideration should be given to the number of contact hours a counsellor has with young people, the provision of supervision and continuing professional development, and professional indemnity insurance.

Supporting evidence:

Desk research: BACP’s Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools (2006) provides the evidence for this recommendation:
‘Training in “stringent theoretical principles” and a “high level of practice skills” are advocated, along with a diploma or degree course in counselling and an adequate number of training hours. With regard to specifically working with children and young people, counsellors should have “additional specialised training in, and/or experience in working with, this age-group...training in play therapy or art therapy is recommended for those working with younger children.” (BACP, 2006: 11)

In addition:

‘The counsellor should have some knowledge of development issues of the client group and experience of working with children and young people.’

Counsellor supervision is recommended as a:

‘Formal arrangement for counsellors to discuss their work regularly with someone who is experienced in counselling and supervision’. (BACP, 2006: 11)

CPD is a requirement of professional counselling practice and monitoring, evaluation and measuring effectiveness are necessary to good practice, as is a formal client complaints procedure.

This recommendation is also supported by a range of documents including: ‘Initial Scoping Exercise on Counselling Services for School Pupils in Wales’ (WAG, 2007); ‘Evaluation report on Counselling in Schools’ (Mick Cooper 2006); ‘Consultations with Young People on Handling Complaints in Health, Social Care and Schools and other Educational Settings’ (Red Kite, 2005); Development and evaluation of a full-time secondary school and community based youth counselling service in Scotland’ (East Renfrewshire Local Authority, 2005); ‘Counselling in Secondary Schools Evaluation’ (Darlington LEA, 2003); ‘Evaluation of the counselling service: client’s views’ (Dudley LEA, 2000); and, ‘School Counselling in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: A Review’ (NSPCC, 2004).

Survey research: Survey data indicated that a third of schools require a Diploma in Counselling as the minimum level of qualification, but with a further quarter of schools indicating some uncertainty about necessary qualifications. However, almost half the schools indicated that counsellors should have prior experience of counselling in a school, with a further fifth indicating a preference for prior experience of actually teaching in a school. Clinical supervision was not addressed directly by the survey, but was picked up by one respondent as an issue to be noted, i.e.

“Ensuring appropriate supervision of staff and line management.”

Fieldwork: Both young people, school staff and stakeholders identified the need for qualified counsellors and for counsellors to be trained in working with young people and children. As one young person commented:

“They need experience of badly behaved students – don’t judge them on their behaviour.”
Some young people also said that counsellors needed degrees, experience and relevant training. In terms of counselling in primary schools some senior staff raised concerns that even if counsellors had experience of working with adolescents this wouldn’t necessarily mean that they could work competently with younger primary aged children. They noted how approaches to counselling might need to differ to accommodate different developmental needs. Concerns were raised by some stakeholders as to where all these well trained counsellors will be found.

Other concerns raised by stakeholders focused on how the infrastructure for training competent school counsellors would be developed and maintained, and how supervision would be funded and provided. A stakeholder stated:

“For best practice, well thought out professional counselling provision with clear training standards, supervision and CPD is required.”

Professional development was identified as a need for both counsellors and staff. Ongoing training in a range of areas was seen as essential by some staff as was access to supervisors with experience of working with children and young people.

**Recommendation 3: Deliver accessible counselling in an appropriately private but safe setting within the school vicinity**

**Rationale:** Counselling is essentially a private activity and meetings between counsellor and client ought to take place in a dedicated, comfortable, soundproof room which can be accessed discreetly by young people. Consideration must be taken however, to ensure counsellor safety when they are working with young people, and safety planning for the worker is important.

**Supporting evidence:**

**Desk research:** BACP Good Practice Guidance (BACP, 2006: 16) states:

‘The counsellor should hold the counselling sessions in a dedicated soundproof room where children and young people can feel safe and comfortable, away from the general flow of traffic. Ideally, the room should be furnished in a way that distinguishes it from a classroom or teacher’s office. A secure place to keep case records, and access to a confidential telephone line are also required. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the safety and security of both counsellor and client’.

**Survey research:** Three quarters of schools reported providing a dedicated room for counselling. Levels of satisfaction with these arrangements for provision of a dedicated room for counselling were reported as being high (60%).

**Fieldwork:** When asked about important features of a counselling service young people often made reference to components of a private and safe setting. These responses included the need for a concealed entrance, a more private and confidential location.
inside school, a sound proof room ‘down the corridor’, and a nicely furnished room, with a comfortable chair.

Some young people noted that they wouldn’t want everyone knowing that they were going to see a counsellor and thus the location of the counselling room needs to avoid being in easy public view. Another stakeholder raised the issue of access and visibility:

“There needs to more consideration about the room. Young people say the room should be used for other things like Connexions, etc. An open access room that has a reason for young people to be there (i.e. so other young people don’t immediately assume that a pupil is seeing the school counsellor). Also, this should be in the school, rather than out of the school.”

**Recommendation 4: Be seen as non stigmatising by the school community and a normal part of school provision, which is integrated into the school community**

**Rationale:** If counselling services are to be effective in schools young service users need to see them as approachable, trustworthy and effective. Information about services must be readily available and informative, and referral systems must be developed that ensure the service is easily accessible to potential clients and their referrers. A school ethos in which counselling is understood as a professional activity and which regards counselling as an important part of its student support services is essential. A counsellor who has another role in the school (such as being a teacher) may have difficulties in gaining the trust of young people in their counselling role and may have conflicting interests. As such, these dual roles ought to be avoided if possible.

**Supporting evidence:**

**Desk research:** The following sources of information were identified from the desk research in support of recommendation 4: Darlington LA (2007), Place 2Be (2007) case study exemplar DoH; provides useful information. Hampshire County Council Social Policy Review Committee Report (2004); Peer Support NSPCC (Baginsky, 2004); ‘Making Best Practice Stick - Rural youth projects: Emotional support for 11-25 year olds in Congleton Borough’ (Commission for Rural Communities, 2006); ‘Children and Young People’s Mental Health: A Framework for Promotion, Prevention and Care, Consultation Draft’ (Scottish Executive, 2004); ‘Annual Review of Services’ (Cannock CAMHS, 2006); and, ‘Brief Counselling in Schools (Dennis Lines, 2001).

**Survey research:** Survey data indicated a wide range of routes of access to counselling within school, including referral by staff, parent or pupil, with the vast majority (88%) of respondents expressing satisfaction with these arrangements. In terms of qualitative responses from the survey, there was a wide range of opinions expressed as to the role of counselling within the school, ranging from its value as an extension of its acknowledged pastoral role, to concerns that counselling deflects school priorities away from its central educational task.

“Helping school to provide environment conducive to learning and allowing pupils to reach potential.”

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Fieldwork: Senior staff wanted to ensure the counsellor integrated well into the school community. Staff commented on the need for counsellors to understand the values and priorities of the school and indicated that teachers would benefit from related training to help support counselling in schools (for example, identifying psychological problems, managing referrals and maintaining appropriate boundaries with the counsellor). Staff also commented that any counselling provision would need to complement rather than replace other psychological well-being initiatives in place in schools and work alongside them. Additionally, staff believed that such emotional health initiatives should not replace counselling.

“There is good work that can occur in schools re: emotional health e.g. circle time, emotional literacy etc., but these cannot take the place of 1:1 counselling support. Our research shows that it is this confidential 1:1 opportunity that young people value.”

Young people said that they would need to know and meet any counsellors, and that counselling should be discussed in school lessons (such as PHSE) so they can understand and learn more about what counselling is.

**Recommendation 5: The service is monitored and evaluated by individuals or an agency (in or out of the school) with experience in this specialised area of work**

Rationale: Counselling, like many other services in schools, is a specialised area of work with specific training and qualifications. It is important that counsellors are managed by colleagues who fully understand the role of the counsellor, and can support and monitor the work. As well as case records, counselling services will keep data regarding, for example, the age of clients, the predominant issues discussed in counselling and the number of sessions attended. This data, when compiled into reports, can be very useful in establishing trends within the school community and planning the development of the counselling service. Formal evaluation of counselling using appropriate evaluation tools is a necessary part of the work and will be carried out by a range of individuals including counsellors themselves, their clients, their service managers, and on occasion, by independent agencies. Evaluations can be used to measure the effectiveness of the counselling intervention, and also to gauge client satisfaction of the service.

Supporting evidence:

**Desk research:** Appropriate record keeping is evidenced in BACP guidance, 2006, p.25. In addition, this recommendation is also supported by a range of documents including: ‘Initial Scoping Exercise on Counselling Services for School Pupils in Wales’ (WAG, 2007); Catholic Children’s Society, 2007; ‘Counselling in Schools Project: Evaluation Report’ (Cooper 2006); ‘Consultations with Young People on Handling Complaints in Health, Social Care and Schools and other Educational Settings’ (Red Kite, 2005); Development and evaluation of a full-time secondary school and community based youth counselling service in Scotland’ (East Renfrewshire Local Authority, 2005); ‘School Counselling in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: A Review’ (NSPCC, 2004):
Annual evaluation of school counselling’ (Darlington LA, 2004); and ‘Client views on the counselling service’ (Dudley LA, 2000).

Survey research: Survey data indicated that almost two thirds of schools confirmed that the counselling service was being evaluated, largely including ‘soft’ measures such as feedback from pupils, teachers, parents and counsellors, and, more rarely, ‘hard’ measures such as statistics of take-up of the service and outcome measures. Satisfaction levels with these arrangements were mixed and somewhat inconclusive.

“Time prevents formal evaluation – however, qualitatively we believe the current mechanisms to be very valuable.”

“We need to develop our self-evaluation of the service – which will include all service users.”

Fieldwork: Monitoring and evaluation was undertaken by some counselling services. However, it was clear that counsellors and managers of services need guidance on how to evaluate services. One school counsellor employed by schools asked for any useful documents in this area. One young person noted the importance of services being monitored:

“Yes [counselling is needed], but only if it was implemented right, the system was monitored and not abused and only if it was completely confidential, and not just another tokenistic system that is there to look good.”

Recommendation 6: Pay due regard to current legislation and guidance, and offer confidentiality within usual ethical and safeguarding limits

Rationale: The demands of legislation upon school counsellors can be complex and demanding. It is essential that school counselling services are fully familiar with the law and how it affects them and their clients. Unlimited confidentiality is not possible with this client group, therefore counselling services must regularly communicate their policy on breaking confidentiality to protect individuals. An understanding of roles and clear communication needs to exist between the counsellor and the member of staff responsible for child protection issues.

Supporting evidence:

Desk research: This is evidenced in the Good Practice Guidelines (BACP, 2006: 18-25) and ‘The Children Act 2004’ and ‘Implications for Counselling in Schools in England and Wales’ (Jenkins and Polat, 2006). This recommendation is also evidenced in documents such as: Annual report (Eye to Eye Youth Counselling Service, 2007); Initial Scoping Exercise on Counselling Services for School Pupils in Wales’ (WAG, 2007); Catholic Children’s Society, 2007; ‘Counselling in Schools Project: Evaluation Report’ (Cooper 2006); ‘Consultations with Young People on Handling Complaints in Health, Social Care and Schools and other Educational Settings’ (Red Kite, 2005); Development and evaluation of a full-time secondary school and community based youth counselling service in Scotland’ (East Renfrewshire Local Authority, 2005); and ‘School Counselling in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: A Review’ (NSPCC, 2004).
**Survey research:** Survey data indicated that a range of personal information was
disclosed to others by counsellors, including, variously, child protection concerns, the
name of the pupil requesting or receiving counselling (the data does not provide
information on whether this is with or without the child’s consent) and much more rarely
the number of sessions received or outcomes of the counselling itself. There were high
levels of satisfaction expressed (86%) with these arrangements. Examples of
information disclosed included the following:

“Mutually discussed relevant information that will improve life in the school.”

“Indication of level of concern.”

**Fieldwork:** All schools said that any counselling service would work within the child
protection guidelines. Schools reported that they would expect counsellors to work
alongside their designated child protection teachers, but also some hoped that
counsellors would have access to more specialist advice from outside of the school.
Staff seemed to have a good understanding of confidentiality (and its limits) with regard
to counselling.

All students interviewed thought that confidentiality was crucial if they were to be able to
trust their counsellor, but equally some pupils interviewed wanted the counsellor to share
information with relevant parties (parents, staff, etc) if they thought someone was in
danger or at risk of significant harm.

Other stakeholder comments included:

“... the counsellor needs to know exactly what to do when a child protection issue
arises. We think that child protection advice and discussion should be with an
agency or management outside of the school to protect as far as possible
confidentiality. We welcome the national strategy because there are pockets of
good practice in the country, but it’s just not consistent.”

“We always liaise with staff in schools where we are seeing pupils – formally
before and after individual referrals and regularly when working sessionally in
schools. We do not pass on specific information (except if there is a child
protection issue) about pupils problems unless a pupil asks us to AND we agree
to. We do give general feedback, for example “I think pupil X is getting a lot out of
counselling”. Pupils regularly express their trust in us and how important that is to
them. Confidentiality is a great strength in our service. We usually liaise with
referring members of staff before and sometimes after seeing pupils. We do
make suggestions to schools as to how to support pupils, for example, "Is there
someone they can talk to if they have a problem and need to talk?"” (Stakeholder
email questionnaire)
Recommendation 7: Respond flexibly to local needs in respect of diversity (e.g., language) and practicality (e.g., availability during holiday periods)

**Rationale:** All schools and young people have individual needs and priorities, and counselling services need to be able to respond as far as possible to these. Counselling services ought to operate to maximise accessibility for young people, whilst at the same time respecting the core educative nature of the school.

**Supporting evidence:**

**Desk research:** Recommendation 7 is supported by information located within the following documents: ‘Initial Scoping Exercise on Counselling Services for School Pupils in Wales’ (WAG, 2007); ‘Consultations with Young People on Handling Complaints in Health, Social Care and Schools and other Educational Settings’ (Red Kite, 2005); and, ‘Draft Strategy Consultation on Counselling in Schools in Wales’ (WAG, 2007)

**Survey research:** The issues of flexibility and availability were not addressed directly by the survey, but a number of qualitative responses indicated the relevance of responding to the diverse needs of the school population, including specific areas of need, such as substance misuse or bereavement. Comments included concerns about issues such as:

“Finding appropriate people who are Welsh speakers.”

“Working with pupils from other countries is a problem.”

**Fieldwork:** Young people, school staff and stakeholders highlighted the need for service provision during holidays.

As a stakeholder stated:

“It needs to be offered in summer holidays as well, in some form. It can’t just be cut off at the end of term.”

And a young person commented:

“Should extend outside of school hours, should be number/contact details to ring them on.”

The need for a service for those out of school was also raised, along with the needs of young people aged 16-18.

All young people were asked about language issues. Approximately half of the young people said that the service should be in the main language of school, but it should also consider offering services in Welsh. Some of the young people said it should be a bilingual service in English and Welsh. However, there wasn’t a strong indication that all schools should offer counselling in English and Welsh, but instead that Welsh and other languages should be made available when appropriate/required.
Recommendation 8: Work with and alongside other services and agencies in a collegial manner, whilst maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality

Rationale: Although a guarantee of absolute confidentiality cannot be offered to young people, it is accepted that a relationship of trust and confidence underpins a successful counselling intervention. Within the Welsh Assembly Government’s Rights to Action agenda there is an expectation for professionals to share information to improve outcomes for children. Counsellors need to be familiar with guidance which can help them decide when it is necessary to share information to safeguard a child. Referral pathways to and from CAMHS and other services and agencies need to be well established and communicated appropriately.

Supporting evidence:

Desk research: This is evidenced in the Good Practice Guidelines (BACP, 2006: 22 - 23) and Jenkins and Polat (2006); also in ‘Information sharing: Practitioners guide. Integrated working to improve outcomes for children and young people’. (HM Government, 2006); ‘Initial Scoping Exercise on Counselling Services for School Pupils in Wales’ (WAG, 2007); ‘Consultations with Young People on Handling Complaints in Health, Social Care and Schools and other Educational Settings’ (Red Kite, 2005); and, ‘Draft Strategy Consultation on Counselling in Schools in Wales’ (WAG, 2007).

Survey research: Survey data indicated that almost all school counselling services made provision for referral to more specialised mental health services, such as CAMHS or Social Services Departments, and that three quarters of schools were satisfied with these arrangements. Some problems were experienced, however, in terms of the lack of feedback after a referral had been made, and the professional ‘gatekeeping’ for referral procedures.

“Mainly dissatisfied because when a referral is made no progress is given about referral.”

“(There should be) direct referrals to child and family clinic. Referrals can only be made at present by Educational Psychologist/GP.”

Fieldwork: Schools described ways in which they had access to other services and agencies and how they worked alongside these. Concerns were raised, however, about how school counsellors would have access to other relevant services and resources in supporting the work they will do in schools (e.g. CAMHS) if they were employed directly by the school.

One stakeholder commented:

“Poor old counsellors in schools won’t be seen as education, or CAMHS, or social services by school staff, they may be seen to be a jack of all trades and that will be a lonely position – they’ll need a lot of support.”
Recommendation 9: Counsellors should be members of a professional body and as such have an established ethical framework and complaints procedure

Rationale: Therapeutic work with young people can be complex, and as such a colleague who belongs to a professional body will have expert support, advice and guidance when required. An ethical framework can provide a coherent structure for discussion, promote consistency, and provide a means for explaining reasons behind any decisions or actions taken. An easily understood and transparent complaints procedure needs to be readily available to any person who has cause to criticise any aspect of the counselling service.

Supporting evidence:

Desk research: The following documents contain information in support of recommendation 9: Complaints procedures - Good Practice Guidance (BACP, 2006: 18) and Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy, (BACP, 2007); ‘Initial Scoping Exercise on Counselling Services for School Pupils in Wales’ (WAG, 2007); ‘Consultations with Young People on Handling Complaints in Health, Social Care and Schools and other Educational Settings’ (Red Kite, 2005); and, ‘Draft Strategy Consultation on Counselling in Schools in Wales’ (WAG, 2007).

Survey research: This issue was not directly addressed by the survey, although a quarter of schools indicated that professional accreditation was seen as a minimum qualification requirement for working in a school counselling service.

Fieldwork: All schools which had a counselling service used BACP’s ethical framework and made reference to BACP’s Guidance for Good Practice in Schools.

It was evident though that young people did not have access to a formal complaints procedure – they only had access to teachers and the school council and some teachers were unsure if a formal complaints procedure would be appropriate for a school setting.

Recommendation 10: Employ counsellors whose personal qualities will mean that they are approachable, have good listening skills and a manner that encourages a climate for safe and trusting relationships

Rationale: It is commonly accepted that the key component of successful counselling is the relationship between client and counsellor. Given the potential for power indifference between young people and adults it is essential that counsellors are employed who are able to effectively engage with young people.
Supporting evidence:

**Desk research:** BACP’s Good Practice Guidance for Counselling in Schools (2006) provides the evidence for this recommendation. It highlights the importance of the personal qualities of the counsellor:

“A school counsellor needs to be aware of, and sensitive to, the different needs and demands that a school community imposes on clients and those who have responsibility for them. The counsellor should have some knowledge of the development issues of the client group and experience of working with children and young people. He/she will be approachable and have good listening skills with a manner that encourages a climate for safe and trusting relationships.” (BACP, 2006: 11)

**Survey research:** Not evidenced

**Fieldwork:** When young people were asked about the five most important things they would look for in a counsellor they listed a range of skills that related to personal qualities, for example approachable, friendly, a good listener, polite, kind, and have personality. One young person stated that a counsellor needs to be:

“Easy going, fun to talk to, to cheer you up, but serious when they need to be.”

10. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

10.1. General conclusions

The research gives an overview of school counselling in Wales and attitudes towards it. Recommendations for good practice are supported by desk, survey and fieldwork research. Components for practice and service delivery were identified and while it is beyond the scope of the current research, the team recommends that existing models will need to be evaluated by those who deliver and use them, such as counsellors, teachers, parents/carers and young people in schools and youth forums; and colleagues in health and social care agencies, as well as service commissioners. (Implications for commissioners are indicated below).

The team also recommends that where new services are to be developed, a consistent evaluation process be planned from the outset. It may be that the steering group wish to consider a consistent reporting and evaluation process that could be adopted by all existing and newly developed services in order for national comparisons to be made.

There are many issues for consideration by the WAG steering group. The complaints procedures for children and young people should be more transparent and robust. Young people and their families where appropriate, need to be able to raise queries and concerns about services to a recognised authority and have them listened to and acted upon if necessary. A further issue, beyond the scope of this research, is that of the framework and cost of training and the development of a staff cohort to deliver interventions. It will be an issue to be considered by those who take the work forward.
It is worthy of note that, throughout this research, there existed some confusion about the term ‘counselling’. Often school staff and students were unclear and confused about the definition of the term and the difference between formal professional counselling and other types of support. The team recommends that information should be made available to all schools about what counselling actually is and what it is not, as part of the rollout of services across the country.

As part of this research we raised the question about counselling and school inspections. As a separate but relevant and concurrent piece of work, one of the team (KC) liaised with the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) highlighting the anxieties that can be raised during inspections for schools, counsellors and clients. Ofsted has subsequently and helpfully issued a statement to their inspectors which offers guidance in this area (Appendix 6). It is the hoped that BACP can liaise with the office of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) to gain similar guidance for Welsh inspections of schools with counselling services.

It is important to note that although the WAG strategy focuses on schools, during this research team members were aware of other valuable counselling services for young people that were operating within communities. This provision is especially useful for young people who are not attending school for various reasons, and for those whom school counselling is not desirable. These services often have better accessibility for young people during school holidays than school-based services. The research suggests that such ‘out of school’ provision is a valuable resource for young people, and that such services usefully complement school counselling services.

10.2. Planning and commissioning services: using the report

‘Joint planning and commissioning is a tool for children’s trusts – to build services around the needs of children and young people – and to deliver their outcomes most efficiently and effectively.’

(Joint planning and commissioning framework for children, young people and maternity services, HM Government, HMSO March 2006)

This report contains much of the information required by those planning and commissioning children’s services in Wales and may be used as a resource to inform decision-making processes, perhaps in conjunction with the Children’s Commissioning Support Resource (WAG, 2005). This report does not provide empirical outcome data for the effectiveness of counselling for children and young people, this is available elsewhere; see Harris and Pattison (2004), for example. However, this report does contain information that addresses the following stages of the joint planning and commissioning process:

✓ Looks at particular groups of children
  ○ Secondary
  ○ Primary
  ○ English-speaking
  ○ Welsh-speaking
  ○ Special educational needs
  ○ Urban and rural populations
- Presents young people's and staffs views on counselling in schools and the need for counselling

- Identifies existing resources in terms of the 12 models on offer and provides information on school counselling services in the results of the desk research, survey and interviews. Planners and commissioners of services may want to use this information, along with the recommendations, to inform the setting of priorities.

- The survey results provide a mapping of the provision and pattern of existing services, which will be useful in the planning process.

- Planners and commissioners are expected to commission services efficiently, this report provides information that can facilitate this.

- In relation to joint planning and commissioning policies, it is expected that some resources may be pooled from children's services providers. This report provides information on a variety of models of service provision that can help planners and commissioners to make informed decisions about this, along with information regarding school counselling and links with CAMHS (see Appendix 4).

- Planning for workforce development is part of the joint planning and commissioning process. The results of the survey, desk research and interviews can inform this process, along with the practice components and information about the 12 models.

- Commissioners have a responsibility for monitoring and review processes under the joint commissioning guidelines. This report provides information about monitoring and evaluation processes that may be helpful to commissioners.

The research evidence presented in this report was obtained from the three main strands of desk research, the survey and interviews/consultations. The chart outlining the 12 models of counselling provision currently in operation across Wales and the rest of the UK includes comments about cost-effectiveness and value for money. These are judgements based on the desk research and professional networks and not economic analyses. The 'practice components' chart may be used in relation to this information and the recommendations for good practice to provide a range of information of use to planners and commissioners.
11. REFERENCES


WAG (2006). Initial scoping exercise on counselling services for school pupils in Wales. DELLS.


12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The research team

Sue Pattison – Lead Researcher
University of Newcastle, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Director Integrated PhD Education and Communication, BACP Accredited Counsellor

Nancy Rowland – Lead Researcher
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, Head of Research

Karen Cromarty
County Durham LA - Director of Student Services, Ferryhill Business and Enterprise College; BACP, Lead Advisor for Children and Young People

Kaye Richards
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, Research Facilitator

Peter Jenkins
University of Salford, School of Community, Health Sciences and Social Care, Senior Lecturer in Counselling, Researcher, Social Worker

Mick Cooper
University of Strathclyde, Chair of the Counselling Unit’s Management Group, Co-Director of the Tayside Counselling Clinic, UKCP-registered psychotherapist

Filiz Polat
University of Bristol, Lecturer and Pathway Co-ordinator for Special and Inclusive Education Pathway

Angela Couchman
BACP, Research Office Manager, Project Contact and Administrator
Appendix 2: Project timetable

Months 1 – 2: April/May

Planning, meeting and administration.
16 – 27 April
Desk research begins on identifying and critiquing models
Questionnaire development and piloting
Purchase of materials for project
Meeting with Steering Group
Transfer of information about context, contacts, etc. to identify sample/contacts for
questionnaire
Production of Inception report
Admin tasks include printing questionnaire; collating email addresses and phone
numbers for survey

Fieldwork and desk research
23 – 27 April
Email and post questionnaires
23 April – 18 May
Desk research on existing counselling models, pros and cons
14 - 18 May
Reminders to non respondents; re-send/email questionnaires

Months 2 – 3: May/June

Complete and analyse survey data; complete desk research
21 May to 18 June
Phone interviews and final emails to complete sample
21 May to 15 June
Quantitative and qualitative analysis of survey data
21 May to 15 June
Completion of desk research

Months 3 – 4: June/July

Undertake and complete work on best models
18 June – 20 July
Production and presentation of Interim report, including four models and case studies,
and incorporating local survey data

Months 4 – 5: July/August

Recommendations on best practice guidelines
23 July – 17 August
Production of draft recommendations to inform best practice guidelines, collation of best
practice guidance materials
Months 5 – 6: August/September

Writing up
20 August – 14 September
Production of proposal for pilot evaluation of four models across Wales
Submission of draft final report for peer review

Months 7/8: October/November

Dissemination

Two presentations to Steering Group and WAG, after groups have had time to digest findings from reports
Delivery of final report Nov 16
Project dissemination in academic publications, BACP journals and press releases, in agreement with Steering Group
Appendix 3: Therapy Today announcement

School counselling in Wales: BACP wins a research tender from the Welsh Assembly Government

After competing in a tendering exercise, BACP, in primary partnership with the University of Newcastle, has won a research tender to undertake work for the Welsh Assembly Government to complete a study into the counselling services available to children and young people in Wales. This study will be led by Nancy Rowland (BACP Head of Research) and Dr Sue Pattison (University of Newcastle), along with an accompanying research team from the University of Bristol, University of Salford, University of Strathclyde, County Durham LEA and BACP.

The aims and objectives of the research are those of the Welsh Assembly Government. This aim is,

‘to undertake an evaluation of the counselling services in operation across the UK in order to assess whether current counselling models used in Wales and other parts of the UK are sufficiently robust and flexible enough to apply widely throughout Wales’.

The study will carry out the following activities:

1) An analysis of how counselling services currently operating in Wales are planned, managed and evaluated
2) A review of the different models that are in existence considering their advantages and disadvantages
3) A comparison of the approaches offered in Wales with at least 10 models across the rest of the UK
4) The development of proposals for a range of suitable counselling models that could operate across Wales.

A key aim of the study is to look at different models of counselling provision in schools across the UK, so if people managing/working in counselling services in schools anywhere in the UK would be prepared to discuss their model of service provision with the research team we would welcome contact from you.

Please contact either Sue Pattison at susan.pattison@newcastle.ac.uk / 0191 227368 or Angela Couchman at research@bacp.co.uk /0870 443 5237. The research will be undertaken during this year and the results will be published later this year by the Welsh Assembly Government. The study will support raising the profile of counselling in schools and will have relevance beyond the initial Welsh context of the research. So everybody who works with children and young people, watch this space!
Appendix 4: Links between school counselling services and CAMHS

The survey research reported high levels of satisfaction with existing links and referral routes to more specialised mental health services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS). This is significant, given the possible tensions which can arise between a more narrowly child-focused counselling service in schools, and the need for effective multi-disciplinary liaison and referral for children with more complex mental health or behaviour issues (Jenkins and Polat, 2006). The key piece of research in this respect is by Pettit (2003), who similarly found evidence across the UK of effective working relationships between schools and CAMHS, despite an increase in referral numbers. This increase was premised on the increased funding and greater degree of availability of such specialised mental health services for children and young people.

The methods that the workers found for resolving this were good communication with the school staff at all levels in terms of what they could offer, clear referral routes and criteria for the service. This was also assisted where there was a range of support for children, not just the mental health worker, for example, with learning mentors and learning support units within the school, and where support was well co-ordinated across the LEA and health service, and alternative ways of assisting the child or school could be established (Pettit, 2003: 54).

The survey research suggests that good communication exists, in the main, between schools and CAMHS, while improvements could continue to be made. However, the evidence again supports the earlier research by Pettit, in that referrals are generally appropriate and well-targeted.

The implications of the greater accessibility of CAMH service is of increased referrals, and indeed in some case study areas (and some responses from the questionnaires) referral rates had increased, especially from schools. However, the main finding from the case studies is that more appropriate referrals were coming to CAMHS (Pettit, 2003: 75).
Appendix 5: Funky Dragon mission statement

Funky Dragon - the Children and Young People’s Assembly for Wales - is a peer-led organisation. Our aim is to give 0 - 25 year olds the opportunity to get their voices heard on issues that affect them. The opportunity to participate and be listened to is a fundamental right under the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child. Funky Dragon will try to represent as wide a range as possible and work with decision-makers to achieve change.

Funky Dragon's main tasks are to make sure that the views of children and young people are heard, particularly by the Welsh Assembly Government, and to support participation in decision-making at national level.
Appendix 6: Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) - school counselling statement

INSPECTION MATTERS

AN INFORMATION SERVICE FOR INSPECTORS AND INSPECTION SERVICE PROVIDERS

Issue 16 – September 2007

B6 School counsellors

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) currently supports young people in school settings who would benefit from counselling, including refugee and asylum seekers. The counsellors are independent to the school but in some instances may have been commissioned by the school or local authority. It is possible that some inspectors may hear about this during an inspection, especially when judging the care, guidance and support offered to pupils and the quality of any links with outside agencies. Recently government ministers have called for an extension of this service in schools.

It is not anticipated that inspectors would often need to meet with counsellors. It would only occur if the inspector judged it to be significant issue in any school or provider. However if this is required inspectors are expected to respect the confidentiality of the relationship between counsellor and pupil. The judgement is concerned with the extent and success (or otherwise) of the support and not individual case studies. No reference to any pupil should be made in the report and it must not be inferred. It would not be appropriate for inspectors to join any counselling sessions for example. If (in an exceptional circumstance) the inspector required a meeting with the counselling service to ascertain the extent of the support on offer this should be set up as sensitively as possible in the way other school based meetings are arranged.

BACP is the lead professional body for this work in the UK. The website is available on http://www.bACP.co.uk/