EVALUATION OF HEADS TOGETHER PILOT PROJECT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an evaluation of the Heads Together project that has recently been piloted across Scotland.

INTRODUCTION

Heads Together is an online community offering headteachers opportunities to support and learn from each other, and engage in dialogue with policy advisers and decision-makers. The pilot study was introduced in Scotland in 2002 and is supported by facilitators, an administrator and a development officer. The pilot has the aims of

✓ Supporting the development of management skills of existing headteachers

✓ Supporting headteachers in their day to day role by providing them with a mechanism for mutual support, the potential solution of problems and the sharing and creation of new ideas

✓ Reducing the isolation of headteachers in small or remote schools

✓ Raising the ICT skills of participating headteachers

✓ Making participating headteachers aware of the potential role for ICT in administration, management, teaching and learning.

The Heads Together project is geared towards providing support for the managerial responsibilities of headteachers, developing leadership characteristics, enhancing ICT skills and increasing awareness of the important role of ICT within schools. Before introduction of Heads Together across the whole of Scotland, The Scottish Executive wished to evaluate the pilot phase of the Heads Together project in order to :

✓ Explore how ICT might be used to support the existing community of Scottish headteachers

✓ Examine how ICT can enhance the professionalism of headteachers by providing them with opportunities to network with other headteachers sharing the same interests and concerns.

The precise objectives of the evaluation were defined as

✓ To assess the use of the Heads Together pilot project in Scotland

✓ To identify criteria for effective use and barriers to use

✓ To identify the impact on users.

The **research methodology** comprised a number of key elements :

1. Qualitative research among facilitators, administrator and development officer. A total of 4 in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted.

2. Qualitative research among headteachers. A total of 16 in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted among headteachers across a range of different types of school and geographical locations.

3. Quantitative research among headteachers. A total of 200 semi-structured interviews were conducted in March 2003 and 308 in May 2003.

4. Ongoing contact with facilitators throughout the duration of the pilot.

CURRENT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Headteachers use a broad range of different channels of communication and there appears to be little antipathy to the use of ICT as a channel of communication.

However, depending on the advice or information being sought, there are some preferences for use of non-ICT channels of communication. Where interactive discussion is needed, there is a preference for personal contact, either on a face-to-face or telephone basis. Thus, even in the longer term, it is likely that ICT will be one of a number of different channels of communication, selected on the basis of application and functionality.

One important factor that has a capacity to impact upon the use of ICT as a channel of communication is a lack of consistency in hardware and software provision across different local authorities. Across Scotland as a whole, there is a need to ensure consistency and compatibility of ICT facilities available to schools and to provide training to headteachers and other educational practitioners. The Spark initiative currently underway should go a long way to removing some of the barriers to ICT use that have been identified in this programme of research.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS, AND USAGE OF, ICT

The data suggest that there is no deep-rooted antipathy to using ICT and a majority of headteachers are using ICT on a regular basis. However, there are signs that further training at a more sophisticated level would be appreciated.

Inconsistency in hardware and software packages provided and a lack of quick and efficient internet access (broadband would be preferable) serve to make internet access difficult for some respondents and can reduce propensity to use ICT as a means of communication and support.

ACCESS AND USAGE OF HEADS TOGETHER

Usage of the Heads Together website is relatively limited both in terms of the parts of the sites which are accessed and the frequency with which they are accessed. Greatest proportions of respondents log onto Heads Together outwith the traditional school day in their own time. Similarly, participation in activities is relatively low, with greater proportions of headteachers using the website to look or browse or to obtain information than pro-actively participate in activities. Those using Heads Together more frequently are most positive about the website.

Ease of access to the website does not appear to be an issue for most respondents, although a minority has experienced problems. There does not appear to be one overriding access issue, rather a range of different problems, albeit that many of these are related in some way to internet access.

The key barrier preventing use of the Heads Together site is lack of time. However, there are a number of other barriers identified by respondents and these include

➢ Problems with internet access (lack of broadband, lack of speed of access, limited / no internet access and so on)
➢ Lack of ICT skills (most respondents have a basic understanding of ICT but not all are confident users of ICT)
➢ Preferences to use a wide range of channels of communication
➢ Priority (or lack of) accorded to Heads Together as a means of offering support, advice and help
➢ Access / navigational issues in relation to Heads Together website
➢ Low awareness of what is available from the Heads Together website

THE IMPACT OF HEADS TOGETHER

Despite relatively low levels of access and usage, headteachers are broadly positive about Heads Together and supportive of the concept of an online community. However, there tends to be an assumption from individual headteachers that others are using the website more frequently than they are. In practice, the findings of this survey show this is not the case and that low usage levels are fairly consistent.

A number of potential benefits are acknowledged by headteachers and it will be important to communicate these positively and pro-actively to others to optimise usage. These benefits include :

➢ Support / advice not offered by other sources
➢ One stop shop offering advice, help and support and which can save time
➢ Contact with headteachers throughout Scotland (most contact at present is limited to local authorities)
➢ Provision of information on topical issues (many of which might not have been previously considered)

➢ Contact with other headteachers on a confidential basis
➢ Opportunities to exchange information / ideas
➢ Prevents feelings of isolation

Overall, the data from this programme of research shows that there is a need for Heads Together to be pro-actively and positively "sold" to its target audience and to emphasise how this differs from other sources of information and help.

FUTURE USAGE OF HEADS TOGETHER

Most respondents are positive about future usage of Heads Together, with over six in ten who are currently using the website claiming their usage will increase in the future. However, limited time was again identified as a potential barrier to increased usage.

The research has identified a number of factors that will help to increase usage of the Heads Together website and it will be important that these suggestions are taken on board. These include communication and pro-activity on the part of local authorities, facilitators and "champion" headteachers. This is particularly important given that the qualitative research shows that there is an assumption on the part of some headteachers that the Heads Together site remains static rather than continually evolving and growing.

There is also a need to continue to enhance and build the website, ensuring inclusion of topical issues. In some instances issues may be raised by headteachers themselves but in others it will be necessary for facilitators to anticipate and pre-empt new issues that are likely to be important to headteachers.

Adoption of these measures will help to increase awareness and thereby usage of the website in the longer term.

TRAINING, SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION

Headteachers are largely positive about the training received to date, although some would like more follow up training and ongoing support. Data relating to access and usage of Heads Together suggest that pro-activity on the part of facilitators may serve to prompt increased usage of the website.

There is a need for the benefits of Heads Together to be clearly communicated to headteachers in order to reiterate the usefulness of the online community and encourage greater use.

In terms of future usage of the website, we believe that communication is an important issue that needs to be addressed.

The following chapters provide a more comprehensive account of each of the topics covered within this chapter.

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

This report presents an evaluation of the Heads Together project that has recently been piloted across Scotland. This chapter provides a background to the Heads Together pilot.

1.1   Background to Heads Together

The Government is committed to the concept of lifelong learning and the creation of the connected learning society in which learning is accessible for all and adapted to individual needs. One element of this commitment is The National Grid for Learning (NGfL) which is an initiative to help learners and educators in the UK to benefit from information and communications technology (ICT). There are three elements to the NGfL strategy and these are :

- ✓ A programme for the delivery of ICT infrastructure (the hardware, networks and services that provide the NGfL framework)
- ✓ A structure of educationally valuable content on the Internet
- ✓ A programme of training to develop ICT good practice

In 1999, a UK government publication – "National College for School Leadership - A prospectus" (DfEE) stated that one of the fundamental reasons for establishing an on-line community was to provide school leaders with *"the chance to share their experience of what works"* and *"the opportunity to learn from the best in leadership."* Overall, the document acknowledged the isolation in which some headteachers operate and the recognition that a physical college alone would not meet the needs of school leaders. As such, an initiative – Talking Heads – which is an on-line community for school leaders was introduced in England. Its community approach seeks to transform the continuing professional development of school leaders. It seeks to be a virtual space where 24,000 headteachers in England are able to support, learn from each other and engage in dialogue with policy advisers and decision-makers. The thinking behind this is summarised by Dame Pat Collarbone

> *"Imagine a collection of individuals, working in close proximity, sharing a common purpose and passion – a desire to learn. Imagine this same collection of individuals, working closely together, sharing knowledge, aspiring to the same vision. Imagine that same collection of individuals, sharing each other's hopes and fears, empathising emotionally, unleashing the power of their collective intelligences. This is a learning community."[1]*

Access to Talking Heads is via a web-based URL and is password protected, with full access being given only to registered headteachers and facilitators. The software provides a range of on-line tools that allow for communication in a number of different ways.

Talking Heads has been running in England since January 2000 when 12.5 facilitators and a project manager were appointed. Since the success of this scheme, the number of facilitators has

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[1] "Talking Heads – Its Progress – Transfer to Wales and Scotland and Relevance to the Republic of Ireland" – Anthony Russell, Ultralab UK & Kevin Thompson, Ultralab UK

increased and the pilot study included in development of the new National College of School Leadership. Responses from headteachers have generally been positive in relation to the Talking Heads pilot and the following quotations emphasise some of the benefits of the project.

> *"I am now an active advocate of computer use-in fact the change has been unbelievable to those who know me. Rather than avoiding computers if at all possible, I seek uses and particularly value the online support and advice of colleagues."*

> *"The knowledge that if you have a query or a problem, there are colleagues out there who have experience to share and who will offer advice – it feels less lonely."*[2]

Following the success of Talking Heads in England, a similar initiative has been introduced in Scotland (NGfL Scotland), under the auspices of The Scottish Executive Education Department. This is managed by Learning and Teaching Scotland and there are resources for teachers, parents and communities on the web site. One element of this is The Heads Together Project that focuses on staff development and aims to create an on-line community of headteachers.

A pilot study is currently underway in Scotland, including over 600 headteachers, all of whom have been nominated by their Local Authority. Each of the 32 local authorities were offered 20 places to be allocated to headteachers from nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, with central support being provided from 2 facilitators, one administrator and one development officer. The pilot has the aims of:

✓ Supporting the development of management skills of existing headteachers

✓ Supporting headteachers in their day to day role by providing them with a mechanism for mutual support, the potential solution of problems and the sharing and creation of new ideas

✓ Reducing the isolation of headteachers in small or remote schools

✓ Raising the ICT skills of participating headteachers

✓ Making participating headteachers aware of the potential role for ICT in administration, management, teaching and learning.

1.2 Background to the Evaluation

The Heads Together project is geared towards providing support for the managerial responsibilities of headteachers, developing leadership characteristics, enhancing ICT skills and increasing awareness of the important role of ICT within schools. The Scottish Executive wishes to evaluate the pilot phase of the Heads Together project in order to :

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[2] op cit

✓ Explore how ICT might be used to support the existing community of Scottish headteachers

✓ Examine how ICT can enhance the professionalism of headteachers by providing them with opportunities to network with other headteachers sharing the same interests and concerns.

Evaluation of this pilot will determine the effectiveness of creating an on-line community for headteachers and the project findings will feed into further development of the Heads Together Scheme.

1.3   Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

The precise objectives of the evaluation were :

✓ To assess the use of the Heads Together project in Scotland

✓ To identify criteria for effective use and barriers to use

✓ To identify the impact on users.

The following chapter provides information on the approach adopted and the sampling frame used for the evaluation.

Chapter three examines current channels of communication and the ways in which these can impact on usage of Heads Together.

Chapter four explores attitudes towards, and usage of, ICT in general.

Chapter five examines and measures access and usage of Heads Together in terms of current access and usage, frequency of access and usage, ease of access to the site and reasons for non usage.

Chapter six examines the impact of Heads Together on both a personal basis and general basis.

Chapter seven explores future usage of the Heads Together site and likely participation in specific activities offered by Heads Together.

Chapter eight looks at training, support and communication and the ways in which these have impacted on use of Heads Together.

Chapter nine provides conclusions and recommendations; examines barriers to use of Heads Together and how to overcome these barriers; and looks at key messages which need to be put across to headteachers across Scotland in order to optimise usage of Heads Together.

CHAPTER TWO : METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

This chapter provides details of the sampling frame used for the Heads Together evaluation and the methodological approach adopted to meet the stated aims and objectives of the evaluation.

2.1 Methodological Approach

Given the wide-ranging aims to this evaluation and the audiences whose views were of importance, a staged approach was adopted. Each stage provided valuable information in its own right as well as feeding into subsequent phases of the evaluation.

2.1.i Qualitative Research among Facilitators, Administrator and Development Officer

In the first instance, an **initial phase of qualitative discussions was conducted among the facilitators, the administrator and the development officer** of the Heads Together pilot. This provided an initial assessment of the project, expectations of the pilot and how these were being met. It also highlighted specific issues (such as potential barriers to uptake and how to address these, and information on training and support that was available to headteachers) which needed to be addressed during the remainder of the programme. In addition, it provided a context in which to assess the effectiveness of the pilot.

A total of four in-depth face-to-face discussions were conducted among the facilitators, the administrator and the development officer in January 2003.

2.1.ii Qualitative Research among Headteachers

Given that there was no existing feedback from headteachers themselves who were involved in the pilot, an initial phase of **qualitative research was conducted among headteachers participating in the pilot**. This provided in-depth exploratory information in relation to attitudes to ICT and how these have potential to impact upon usage of Heads Together; hypothetical and realistic examples of usage; it provided an assessment of the effectiveness of the website in terms of ease of access, navigation and functionality. Additionally, findings from this stage of research were used in development of a questionnaire for the subsequent stage of quantitative research.

A total of sixteen face-to-face in-depth interviews were completed between 29 January and 20 February among headteachers participating in the pilot across a wide range of geographical locations and school sizes.

Interviews were conducted across a range of different types of school, including nursery, primary, secondary and special needs schools. Headteachers participating in this phase of the research were at different stages of involvement in the pilot. Some had been trained a few months previously and others had only recently undertaken their training; some had regularly used the Heads Together site, others were less frequent users of the site.

All interviews were conducted by senior members of the research team and were tape-recorded for subsequent transcription and analysis.

2.1.iii Quantitative Research among Headteachers

Following on from the qualitative stage, **quantitative research was conducted among headteachers** in March and May 2003. This measured awareness of the role of ICT and explored how ICT in general can be used to support headteachers; it ascertained benefits and drawbacks to the pilot and provided suggestions for any further modifications prior to full introduction. Additionally, it identified criteria for effective use and barriers to use, and provided suggestions for key messages that need to be disseminated to the broad audience of headteachers to encourage take-up on full introduction of the scheme.

A total of 200 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted in March 2003 and a further 308 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted in May. Over the two waves of telephone interviews, a large majority of headteachers who had received Heads Together training were interviewed. The following two charts provide details of the sample profile at each stage of telephone interviews. As can be seen, the profile at each stage of telephone interviews is broadly similar.

Table 2.1
Sample Profile – Telephone Interviews Conducted in March 2003

Type of School [3]	%	No		Age of Respondents	%	No
City	24	47		Under 25	-	-
Other urban (non city)	24	47		25 – 34	3	5
Small accessible town	11	22		35 – 44	14	27
Small remote town	5	9		45 – 54	67	134
Accessible rural	20	40		55 – 65	16	32
Remote rural	18	35		> 65 years	-	-
Size of School				**Type of School**		
< 100 pupils	30	59		Nursery	4	7
100 – 300 pupils	38	76		Primary	41	82
301 – 500 pupils	14	29		Secondary	14	28
501 – 700 pupils	5	9		Special Needs	4	8
701 – 1,000 pupils	9	17		Nursery / Primary	33	65
> 1,000 pupils	5	10		Primary / Secondary	-	-
				Nursery / Primary / Secondary	1	1
				Other	5	9
Respondent Gender						
Male	38	76				
Female	62	124				

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[3] The definitions for type of school were based on the database used by SEED to categorise schools throughout Scotland

These interviews were spread across the 26 Local Authorities where training had taken place prior to March 2003.

The following chart provides details of the sample profile for telephone interviews conducted in May 2003.

Table 2.2
Sample Profile – Telephone Interviews Conducted in May 2003

	%	No		%	No
Type of School			**Age of Respondents**		
City	27	83	Under 25	-	-
Other urban (non city)	22	69	25 – 34	1	3
Small accessible town	7	23	35 – 44	14	44
Small remote town	7	21	45 – 54	64	198
Accessible rural	17	53	55 – 65	19	60
Remote rural	19	59	> 65 years	-	-
Size of School			**Type of School**		
< 100 pupils	29	88	Nursery	3	8
100 – 300 pupils	32	98	Primary	46	142
301 – 500 pupils	21	64	Secondary	16	49
501 – 700 pupils	6	17	Special Needs	2	5
701 – 1,000 pupils	7	22	Nursery / Primary	26	79
> 1,000 pupils	6	19	Primary / Secondary	3	8
			Nursery / Primary / Secondary	*	1
			Other	5	16
Respondent Gender					
Male	32	100			
Female	68	208			

In May 2003, these interviews were spread across all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland.

2.1.iv Ongoing Contact with Facilitators

In addition to the three previous key elements of the evaluation, there was regular contact with facilitators during the evaluation in order to gather ongoing feedback on implementation of the pilot and its effectiveness, as well as highlighting issues that emerged during the course of implementation.

2.2 The Sampling Frame

Learning and Teaching Scotland is responsible for maintenance of a database incorporating the names of all headteachers who have been trained to use Heads Together. This database was provided to George Street Research Limited as the sampling frame for this evaluation.

2.3   The Report

Verbatim quotations have been used to illustrate key points and only where they reflect a broad consensus of headteachers' views. Copies of the topic guides used in in-depth interviews have been appended.

Copies of the telephone questionnaires used in March and May have been appended and a copy of the computer tabulations have been provided under separate cover. Where there are differences between sub-groups within the sample, these are reported.

The following chapters of this report examine research findings emerging from this evaluation.

CHAPTER THREE : CURRENT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Heads Together is an online community providing information, advice and support to headteachers. Before examining data specific to Heads Together, it is important to understand what channels of communication are currently utilised by headteachers and to understand preferences for different channels of communication. In this way, we can begin to examine the ways in which Heads Together fits with current channels of communication and to understand usage patterns.

The qualitative research showed that headteachers were utilising a wide range of channels of communication, both on a formal and informal basis. However, unlike Heads Together – which is designed to operate on a Scotland-wide basis – **most current communication was on a Local Authority basis only**. For example, headteachers were part of local "clusters" or "heads of establishment" groups and these reflected groupings of heads within specific local authorities rather than cutting across different authorities. On an informal basis, many headteachers claimed to have a small group of other headteachers they could call upon for advice or support.

> *"We have a monthly meeting. It is very much a casual grouping .… My experience of our directorate is that they're very close in terms of communication. I think we work very well together."*
>
> *(Secondary Headteacher)*

Many headteachers had a preference for telephone or face-to-face contact and this reflected the channels of communication that had been available to headteachers in the recent past.

> *"We have local support. I would phone another nursery if there was something particular that I had a problem with."*
>
> *(Nursery Headteacher)*

Across the headteachers participating in the qualitative research, **there was some adoption of ICT for communication, although this was not widespread and the frequency of usage of email or the internet as a means of communication was relatively limited**. Some heads had access to the internet at school but usage of this varied considerably, with some attributing limited usage to a lack of time and others attributing this to a lack of ICT experience and understanding. While almost all headteachers participating in this evaluation had received training on the Heads Together pilot, some had very limited ICT training over and above this.

Those heads who showed highest levels of confidence in ICT usage tended to have had ICT training prior to Heads Together such as that provided by NOF (New Opportunities Fund) and / or had access to computers and email / internet at home. Hence, they were used to using this means of communication to meet a variety of needs.

The provision of ICT by Local Authorities also had a capacity to impact on usage. Not all schools had access to the internet, so some respondents once trained, could only access Heads Together from their home. Additionally, there was no consistency in ICT provision across local authorities; most local authorities provided their own networks for access by schools, although

the hardware and software provided varied considerably across different local authorities; some local authorities have already provided broadband to schools, others had not.

> *"Well nowadays I use my email all the time. Obviously most of the information I get from the authority for a start is through email."*
>
> *(Primary Headteacher)*

Across Scotland as a whole, there is a need to provide consistency of ICT to schools and to provide training to enable headteachers and other educational practitioners to optimise understanding and usage of ICT. The Scottish Executive Spark Initiative has recently been introduced and this aims to provide Scottish schools and education authorities with a shared set of secure web-based services and applications. This should go a long way to managing some of the ICT problems identified as barriers to usage of the Heads Together community.

During the course of the quantitative stages of research, all respondents were asked to say the ways in which they currently obtained information on anything that impacted on their role as a headteacher. They were then read a number of other options that might be available to them and asked to say which of these they currently used to obtain information.

The following chart bears out the qualitative findings and shows that a wide range of information sources are currently utilised by headteachers. Greater proportions of respondents in wave 2 were using many of these channels of communication than in wave 1, although this is likely to reflect differing workloads at different times in the academic year.

In March 2003, the three most utilised sources of information were via national bodies such as Learning and Teaching Scotland, information and mailings via SEED and emails from local authorities (cited by 31%, 34% and 34% of the sample spontaneously). In May 2003, six sources were each cited by around one in three or more respondents. These were via a national body such as LTS (41%), emails from local authorities (38%), informal face-to-face discussions with other headteachers (37%), regular meetings with other headteachers (40%); telephone contact with the local authority (34%) and internal meetings with other members of staff (30%).

However, a range of other sources were also cited at each stage of telephone interviews and these included ICT based channels of communication as well as more traditional channels. **While the qualitative research showed differences in terms of levels of understanding of ICT, over three in four respondents participating in the quantitative research (76% in March and 77% in May 2003) made some reference to ICT channels of communication such as websites, emails or online information. This suggests that at least at a basic level, there is a propensity to make use of ICT as a means of communication**.

Respondents were not prompted with any channels of communication at this point of the interview and it is perhaps disappointing that Heads Together was mentioned spontaneously by low proportions of the sample (13% at wave 1 of the interviews and only 4% of the sample at wave 2). Similarly, Think.com (the company providing the software) was mentioned by only 4% of respondents participating in wave 1 and 3% at wave 2.

Chart 3.1
Current Information Sources (Spontaneous - Q1a)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)
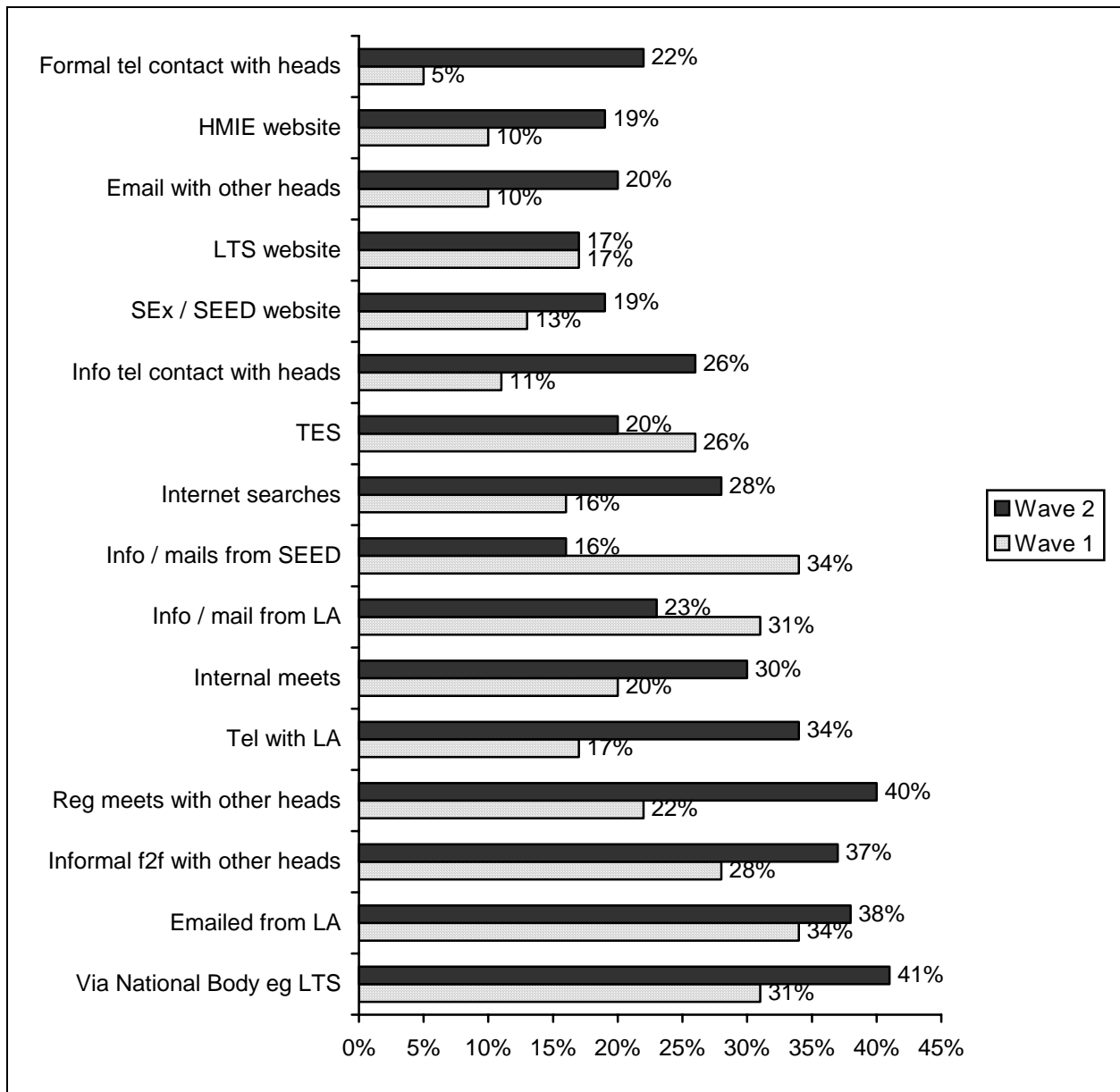
When we examine data for total usage (spontaneous and prompted) of communication channels, four in five or more respondents in May 2003 used each of the channels with which they were prompted. Slightly fewer respondents interviewed in March used each channel of communication, although patterns of responses were similar (see chart overleaf).

Across the sample as a whole, a combination of communication channels were utilised, including some more traditional channels such as telephone contact or face-to-face meetings, and modern ICT channels.

Chart 3.2
Current Information Sources (Total - Q1a/1b)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)
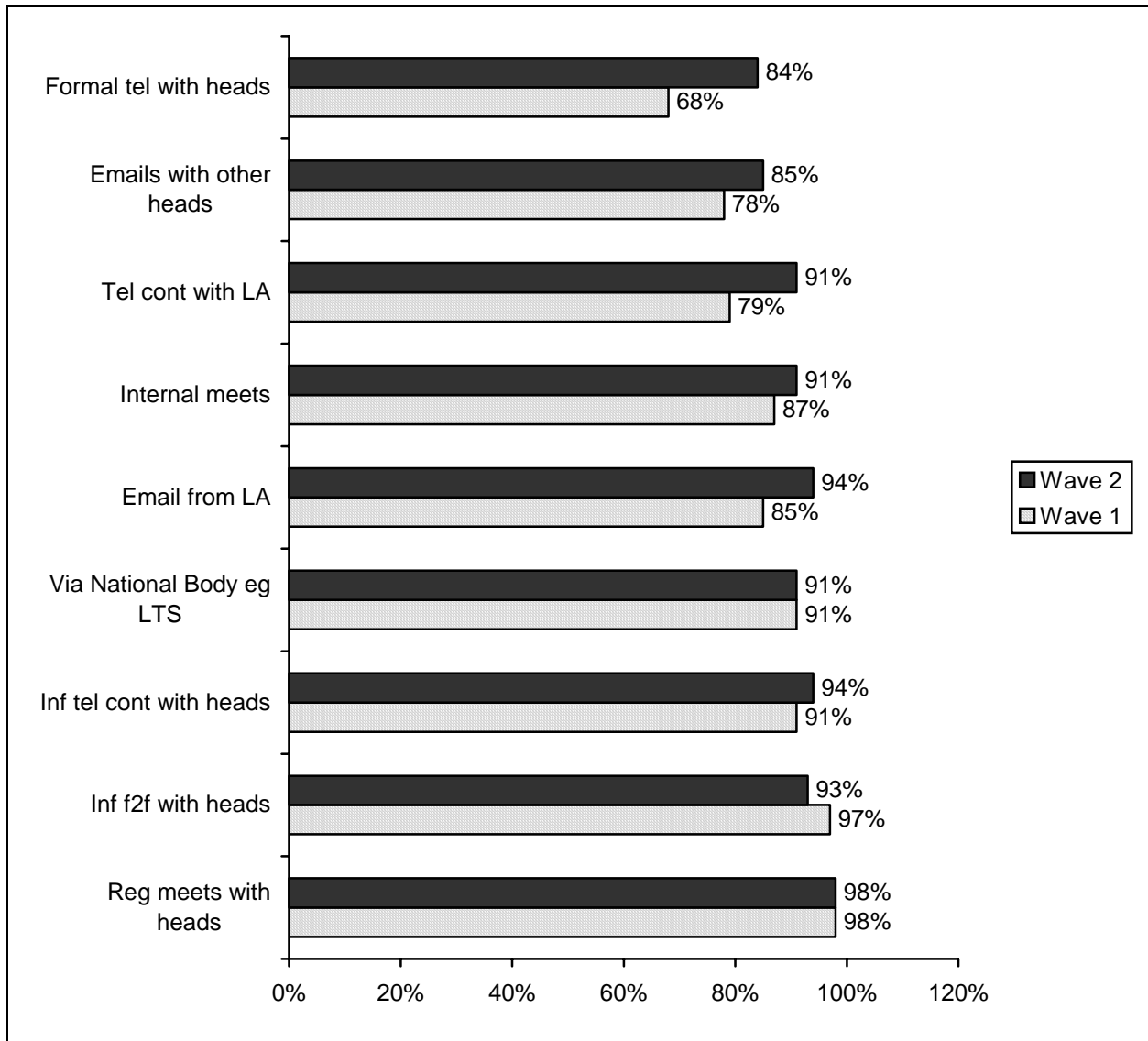
One important issue that emerged from the qualitative phase of research was that, even for those headteachers who are using ICT channels of communication, this is not always the preferred channel of communication. Preferences for specific channels of communication largely related to the type of information that is being given or sought. Where information was factual and / or relatively straightforward, ICT channels were perceived to be the most convenient (and often quickest) to use. Conversely, where there was a need for any form of discussion or in instances

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where information provided may result in further questions, most headteachers had a preference for face-to-face or telephone contact, both of which allowed for interactive discussion.

Overall, the research findings suggest that **ICT channels of communication will only be one means by which headteachers communicate with each other** and will not necessarily be deemed the most suitable. However, there appears to be little antipathy to the use of ICT. While it might be expected that greater familiarity with ICT (hardware and software) might increase usage, it is likely to remain one of a mix of communication alternatives.

In summary, a broad range of different channels of communication was utilised by headteachers and there was little antipathy to the use of ICT as a channel of communication.

However, depending on the advice or information being sought, there are some preferences for non-ICT channels of communication. Where interactive discussion is needed, there is a preference for face-to-face or telephone contact. Thus, even in the longer term, it is likely that ICT will be only one of a number of different channels of communication, selected on the basis of application and functionality.

One important factor that has a capacity to impact upon the use of ICT as a channel of communication is a lack of consistency in hardware and software provision across different local authorities. Across Scotland as a whole, there is a need to ensure consistency and compatibility of ICT facilities available to schools and to provide training to enable headteachers and other educational practitioners to optimise understanding and usage of ICT.

CHAPTER FOUR : ATTITUDES TOWARDS, AND USAGE OF, ICT

It might be hypothesised that understanding and usage of ICT in general would have an impact on a headteacher's propensity to use Heads Together. This chapter examines attitudes towards, and usage of, ICT in general and the following chapter then examines usage of Heads Together specifically.

During the qualitative stage of research it became apparent that usage of ICT by headteachers was highly variable and inconsistent. All headteachers had access to a computer and online access was largely available, although no nursery teachers participating in this stage of the research had internet access. However, the ways in which ICT was used tended to vary considerably and a number of factors were identified that impacted upon usage :

➢ **Different hardware and software** – there was little, or no, consistency in terms of the hardware and software provided to schools. Most had relatively new computers, but the packages being accessed and used varied. Furthermore, many of the respondents had received little formal ICT training. One or two headteachers acknowledged that they relied on their own children or children within their schools to help improve upon their ICT knowledge and understanding and many did not have time to spend on self learning within their working day.

➢ **No access to broadband** – none of the headteachers interviewed during the qualitative stage had access to broadband and many had connection problems when going online. Only one respondent claimed to go online first thing in the morning and stay online all day. Once online, most headteachers had lines automatically disconnected after a specific period of time. Thus, going online was an activity that was not an automatic element of their working day for most respondents.

➢ **Speed of access** – many headteachers were working with relatively slow computers and speed of access was an issue for most. Some noted during the qualitative interviews that they tended to choose to go offline if a specific site was not accessed in a relatively short space of time, particularly given time pressures and the wide range of different issues with which they had to deal in an average working day.

➢ **Logistical issues** – coupled with speed of access and a lack of broadband access, many respondents also suffered from a range of other logistical ICT problems such as forgotten passwords, software packages that lack functionality and so on.

➢ **Different levels of ability and understanding of ICT** – the qualitative discussions revealed very differing levels of understanding of ICT and some respondents also acknowledged a combined lack of ability. This data suggests that any ICT training provided to headteachers needs to allow for a range of different levels of ability and understanding.

"I have had some training but, put it this way, I need to be reminded to switch the computer on at the wall. They should not make assumptions that I even have that level of understanding."

(Primary Headteacher)

➢ **Personal attitudes towards ICT** – often combined with the last factor, there were varying degrees of propensity to use ICT. Most headteachers were keen to make use of ICT to an extent, particularly if it provided them with benefits in doing their job; a minority were less keen to use ICT and tended to assume that they did not have a natural ability in understanding ICT.

During the course of the quantitative research, respondents were asked to give their level of agreement with a number of statements in relation to using computers. These statements were :

➢ *I use computers regularly at school*
➢ *I have access to a computer at home*
➢ *I regularly use the internet at school*
➢ *I regularly use the internet at home*
➢ *I feel confident about using computers and related hardware and software*
➢ *I understand the basics but would like more training on how to use computers fully*
➢ *I do not feel confident using computers and prefer not to use them*

This specific question was designed to ascertain the extent to which there may be any antipathy to ICT usage and to see if there were any differentiating factors that distinguish different groups of headteachers in terms of their ICT usage.

As can be seen in the following table, almost all headteachers participating in telephone interviews in March and May 2003 agreed that they have access to a computer at home (96% at wave 1 and 95% at wave 2). Similar proportions also agreed that they use computers regularly at school. Around three in four or more respondents at each wave of research also agreed that they regularly used the internet at home or at school.

It had been hypothesised that there was likely to be a group of headteachers who may be relatively unconfident in ICT usage and that this would have a bearing on propensity to use an online community such as that offered by Heads Together. However, the quantitative data showed that over nine in ten respondents at each wave of telephone interviews agreed that *"I feel confident about using computers and related hardware and software"*. Only an extremely small minority claimed *"I do not feel confident using computers and prefer not to use them"* (3% of respondents at each wave of quantitative interviews agreed with this statement).

Thus, the quantitative data seems to contradict the qualitative data to an extent. However, when asked their level of agreement with the statement *"I understand the basics but would like more training on how to use computers fully"*, almost one in two at wave 1 and just over six in ten at wave 2 agreed with this statement. This suggests that while a majority of headteachers are using ICT on a regular basis, further training would be appreciated at a more sophisticated level.

Table 4.1
Computer Usage (Q1c)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)

	Agree Strongly %	Tend to Agree %	Tend to Disagree %	Disagree Strongly %	Average Score
I have access to a computer at home					
Wave 1	**90**	6	1	4	3.8
Wave 2	**87**	8	2	2	3.8
I use computers regularly at school					
Wave 1	**90**	7	2	2	3.9
Wave 2	**82**	14	3	1	3.8
I feel confident about using computers and related hardware and software					
Wave 1	**70**	**25**	4	1	3.6
Wave 2	**52**	**41**	5	2	3.4
I regularly use the internet at home					
Wave 1	**60**	**24**	6	12	3.3
Wave 2	**55**	**27**	9	9	3.3
I regularly use the internet at school					
Wave 1	**54**	**27**	12	9	3.3
Wave 2	**40**	**34**	18	8	3.1
I understand the basics but would like more training on how to use computers fully					
Wave 1	20	26	32	22	2.4
Wave 2	26	35	28	9	2.8
I do not feel confident using computers and prefer not to use them					
Wave 1	1	2	**11**	**87**	1.2
Wave 2	1	2	**15**	**81**	1.2

We have conducted some further statistical analysis on responses to this question and there are some statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level. However, these are inconsistent and there are few or no statistically significant differences in terms of type or size of school or date of training. The key differentiator is the frequency of accessing Heads Together – those accessing most frequently are most positive about ICT.

In summary, the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that there is little antipathy to using ICT. While a majority of headteachers is using ICT on a regular basis, there are signs that further training would be appreciated at a more sophisticated level.

Inconsistency in hardware and software packages provided and a lack of speedy access (broadband would be preferable) serve to make ICT access difficult for some respondents and can serve to reduce propensity to use ICT as a means of communication and support.

CHAPTER FIVE : ACCESS AND USAGE OF HEADS TOGETHER

The two previous chapters have examined channels of communication utilised by headteachers and their attitudes towards and usage of ICT in general. These have shown that while there does not appear to be an inherent dislike of ICT, that usage varies considerably and that non ICT based channels of communication are of importance to headteachers. This chapter will now examine access and usage of Heads Together specifically.

5.1   Usage and Access of Heads Together

During the course of the telephone interviews respondents were asked which parts of the Heads Together website they had used, which other parts of the website they were aware of and which parts of the website they had ever accessed.

As shown in table 5.1 overleaf, a majority of respondents had ever used or accessed at least one part of the website.

At a spontaneous level, in terms of usage of different parts of the website, the Cybrary had been used by greatest proportions of respondents (39%) at wave 2 and by just under one in three respondents (30%) at wave 1. The hotseat had highest levels of usage at wave 1 (35% of respondents had used this), although this figure had decreased to 10% in wave 2, reflecting a lack of a recent hotseat in the second wave of interviews.

Other parts of the site had been used by around one in five or less respondents. These levels of usage can in part be explained by personal interest and the qualitative research showed that usage of different parts of the site was likely to vary given the different interests of headteachers. For example, it would be expected that it would be mainly primary headteachers who will be accessing the Primary Forum part of the site. However, it is disappointing that some areas of the site that could be considered common to all headteachers receive relatively low levels of usage.

When prompted about which parts of the site had ever been accessed, these figures increased, although again it was disappointing that some parts of the site were used by relatively low proportions of respondents. For example, Technical Issues had only been used or accessed by a total of 9% of respondents at wave 2; Feedback had only been used or accessed by a total of 24% of respondents at wave 2.

As might be expected, prompted awareness levels of different parts of the site were generally higher than the figures for usage and access. At waves 1 and 2, the sites which had highest levels of awareness (over six in ten respondents) were Front Page, Management Issues, McCrone Issues, Primary Forum, Useful Links, Bulletin Board and Communities. However, it is disappointing that only just under four in ten at each wave were aware of the Cybrary (cited by 38% at wave 1 and 39% at wave 2).

Table 5.1
Usage and Awareness of Heads Together (Q5a-5c)
Base : All respondents Using Site (Wave 1 = 179; Wave 2 = 231)

	Wave 1			Wave 2		
	Used %	Aware of %	Ever accessed %	Used %	Aware of %	Ever Accessed %
Front page	3	82	43	16	71	51
Cybrary	30	38	18	39	39	25
Direct Publishing	3	59	25	4	49	19
Management Issues	11	82	61	10	81	60
McCrone Issues	8	82	56	12	80	59
Staff room	5	65	30	6	59	28
Nursery Forum	6	49	17	6	43	14
Primary Forum	21	63	41	12	69	45
Secondary Forum	7	56	14	4	58	18
SEN Forum	4	56	20	4	57	20
Technical Issues	1	41	9	1	38	8
Useful Links	2	75	36	2	62	30
Feedback	7	60	26	5	48	19
Bulletin Board	18	66	36	17	65	37
Communities	7	75	32	12	62	35
Hotseat	35	N/A	N/A	10	N/A	N/A
Discussion Forums / debate section / chat pages / Q&A	4	N/A	N/A	8	N/A	N/A
Open Forum	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	63	37
Index A-L	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	41	16
Index M-T	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	40	16
Anonymous Agony Aunt	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	38	12
None	8	1	8	11	-	10

The qualitative research findings help to understand these relatively low levels of usage and access. Respondents participating in the qualitative research demonstrated varying levels of usage of Heads Together and tended to use or visit those parts of the site considered to be of greatest relevance to themselves. Most respondents were using the website relatively infrequently and, without exception, all these respondents commented that a lack of time often prevented greater usage of Heads Together. This lack of time serves to prevent much by way of surfing the website to see what is available and most respondents focused on what they felt was of direct pertinence to themselves. Thus, most of these respondents were unaware of all parts of the site.

Some headteachers experiencing difficulties in accessing the website were put off trying to access Heads Together more frequently because of these access difficulties. One or two respondents who had infrequently accessed the website since training and who had forgotten the parts of the site relevant to themselves, felt confused in accessing or navigating the website and this served to reduce their likelihood of using the website more regularly.

Other research conducted by George Street Research into website design has also shown that respondents tend to access a website in exactly the same way each time they visit that site. Thus, **it is important to have navigational aids are in place which not only help to ease access but which also highlight any new additions or changes to the website**. Some respondents participating in the qualitative interviews acknowledged that they had not noticed changes to the Heads Together website, even in instances where they were accessing the website on a relatively frequent basis.

5.2   Frequency of Usage of the Heads Together Website

During the course of the telephone interviews all respondents were asked to say how frequently they had used the Heads Together website since training. As can be seen in the following chart, the average for those who have accessed the site at wave 2 is roughly twice a month and slightly higher than that for wave 1. However, one in four respondents at wave 2 (25%) and just over one in ten at wave 1 (11%) claim never to have logged onto the site since receiving their training. The issue of non usage will be dealt with in a later section of this chapter.

To calculate these average figures, answers were assigned to 1 of 6 pre-coded frequency ranges indicating how many times a respondent had accessed the website since training. A score was then assigned to each frequency range in order to calculate an overall average frequency of accessing the website since training. For example, answers of once a month were taken to equate to 12 times a year.

Chart 5.1
Frequency with which Heads Together site has been used since training (Q3)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)

18
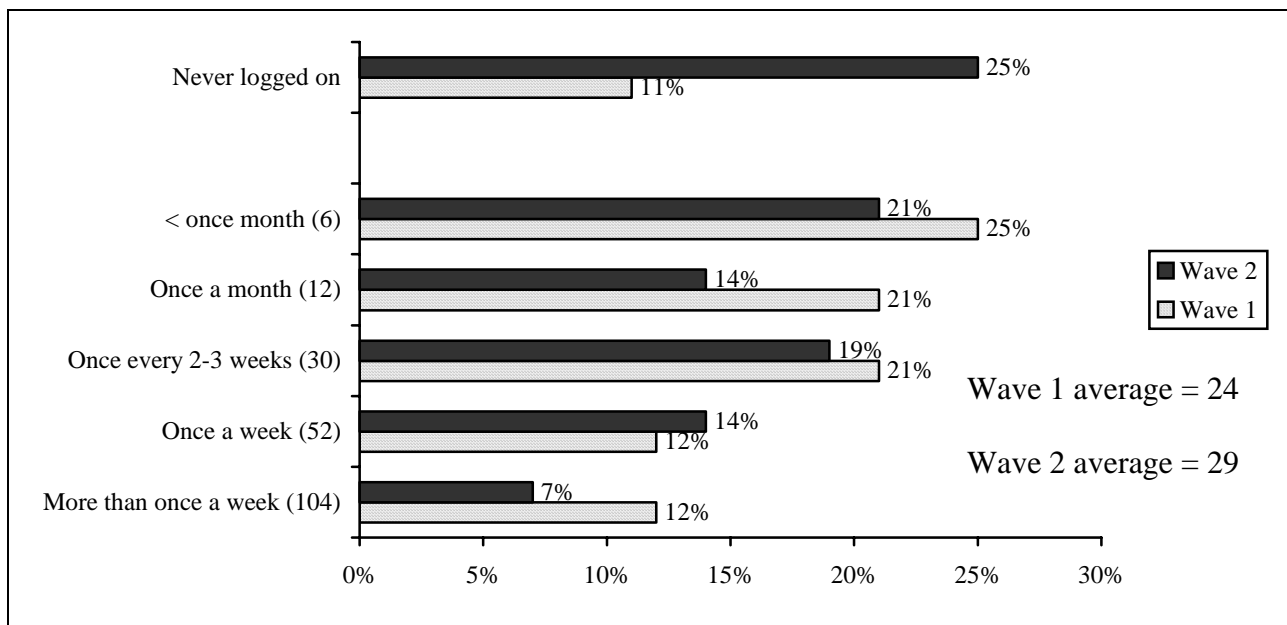
When asked to say spontaneously **which factors, if any, prevented headteachers from accessing the Heads Together site on a more regular basis, the time factor was the one single highest mention**. Over one in two (51%) respondents at wave 1 and almost three in four (72%) at wave 2 said that they do not have enough time. There were also some ICT barriers, with one in ten respondents at wave 1 referring to having limited or no access to the internet and 16% of respondents at wave 2 referring to hardware or connection difficulties. The qualitative findings suggest that continued access problems or other related ICT problems are likely to reduce propensity to use the Heads Together website.

We have noted that usage of some parts of the Heads Together website was relatively low for some respondents. In understanding usage patterns, it is also important to measure the frequency with which these parts of the website are accessed. During the course of the telephone interviews all respondents accessing each part of the Heads Together website were asked to say how often they had accessed each. A score was then attributed to each response in order to calculate an average across the sample.

The following table provides data in relation to the frequency of accessing the parts of the site used by greatest proportions of respondents (100+) at wave 2. These figures do not vary greatly from wave 1. Information relating to the frequency of accessing all parts of the website has been provided in the separate computer tabulations for each wave.

As can be seen, virtually no respondents are accessing any part of the website on a daily basis. Frequency of access is relatively widespread with the greatest proportions of respondents accessing each part of the website between once a week and less than once a month. An average score of 30 would show frequency of access of around 2-3 times a month. Primary Forum and the Cybrary are the two parts of the site most frequently accessed by headteachers.

Table 5.2
Frequency of Using Heads Together (Q5d)
Base : All respondents accessing each

	Front Page (155)	Cybrary (147)	Mngment Issues (160)	McCrone Issues (163)	Prim Forum (132)	Bulletin Board (125)	Comms (110)	Open Forum (128)
Daily (260)	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Few times week (156)	5	6	4	3	7	6	4	5
Once week (52)	**21**	**22**	**18**	**18**	**20**	**18**	**19**	**19**
2-3 times month (30)	**21**	**23**	**15**	**19**	**19**	**21**	**23**	**17**
Once month (12)	**28**	**21**	**29**	**27**	**20**	**19**	**25**	**24**
< once mth (6)	**21**	**21**	**28**	**26**	**27**	**30**	**22**	**30**
Once only (1)	3	4	4	4	5	2	5	3
Twice only (2)	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Three times only (3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average	31	**32**	27	27	**32**	30	27	28

In order to provide a comparison across both waves of telephone interviewing, the following chart provides details of the frequency of accessing each part of the website. There are likely to be differing degrees of topicality and personal interest associated with specific parts of the website which help to explain these figures. However, frequency of usage across all of these parts of the site is relatively low, regardless of the numbers of respondents accessing part of the site.

Chart 5.2
Average Frequency with which Parts of Site are Accessed (Q5d)
Base : All respondents accessing
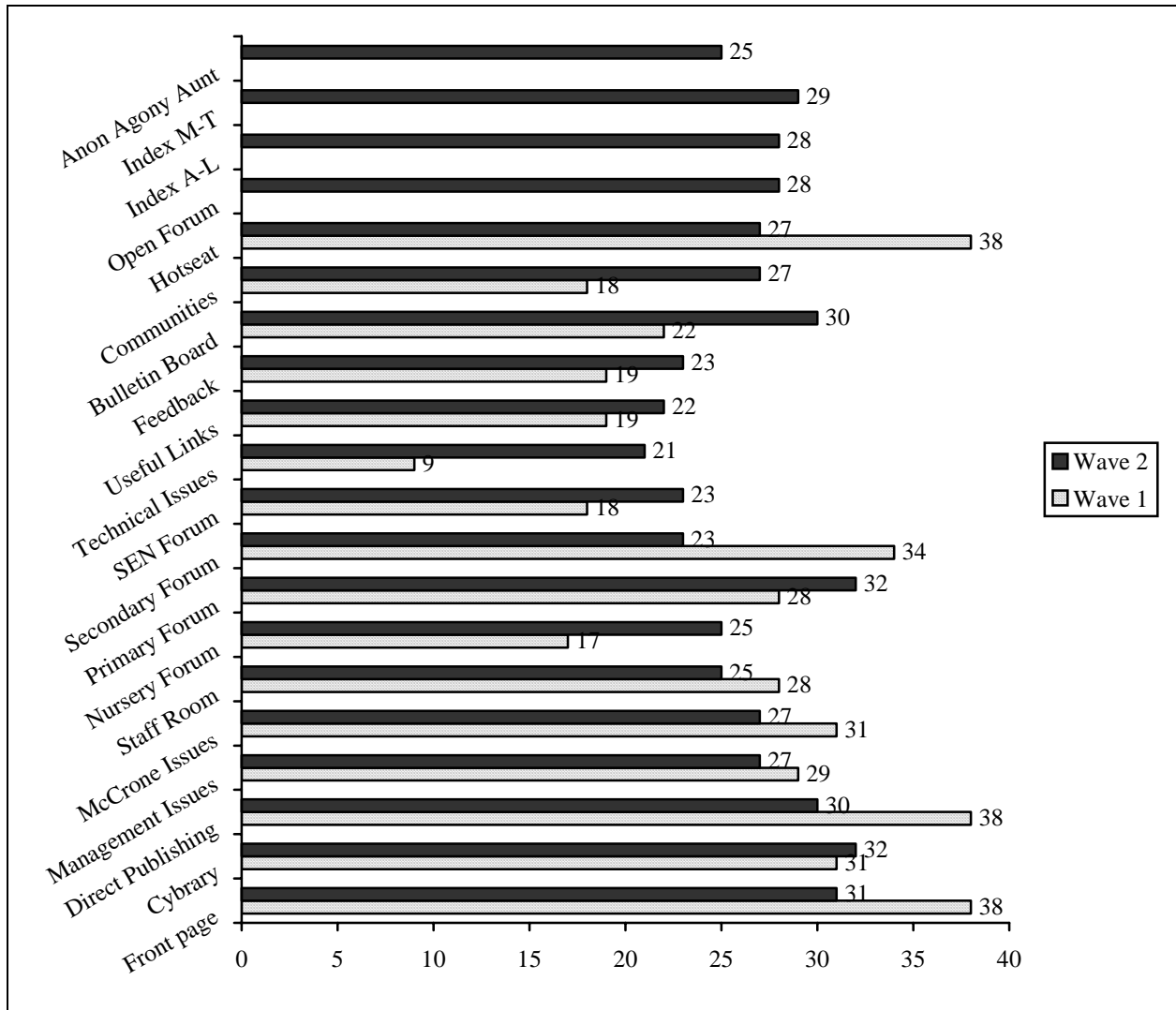
The qualitative research findings bear out the quantitative data, with respondents usage of different parts of the site varying. Once again, topicality and interest were most likely to prompt a visit, although some respondents acknowledged that they failed to notice changes to the

website which prevented them from accessing new parts - again pointing to the need for clear navigational aids and signposting.

Almost all respondents participating in the qualitative research liked the Hotseats as these were perceived to be a means by which topical issues can be addressed and well known figures can be put into the "hotseat" to answer questions. However, as with some other parts of the website, some issues were of more relevance to some respondents than others. Most headteachers had visited the Forum (nursery, primary, secondary, SEN) of direct relevance to their school.

Overall, no one part of the website was perceived to be irrelevant to headteachers, albeit that actual usage patterns showed that many headteachers were visiting a limited number of parts of the website. There was an assumption from most that each part would be relevant to other headteachers, even if not directly relevant to them personally. Respondents participating in the qualitative research perceived the key priority for Heads Together to be in highlighting and raising topical issues impacting upon headteachers.

5.3   Reasons for Access

In order to ensure growth of Heads Together as an online community rather than simply an information provider, it is important to understand headteachers' reasons for accessing the website and to ensure that they involve themselves in active participation rather than simply obtaining information or browsing the website. All respondents participating in the quantitative interviews were asked whether they accessed the website to obtain information, to participate in ongoing activities or to look or browse to see what was there.

As shown in the following chart, the greatest proportions of respondents at both waves 1 and 2 claim to have accessed the website in order to look or browse to see what was there (cited by 92% of respondents at wave 1 and 86% at wave 2). Over one in two respondents (55%) at wave 1 and around two in three respondents (67%) at wave 2 claimed to access the website to obtain information. **Participation in the website is low** with only around one in three (32%) respondents at each wave of interviewing claiming to have accessed the website to participate in ongoing activities. If we examine the frequency with which respondents access Heads Together, it is those respondents accessing the website most frequently who are most likely to participate in activities.

Chart 5.3
Reasons for accessing the website (Q6a)
Base : All respondents accessing Heads Together (wave 1 = 179; wave 2 = 231)
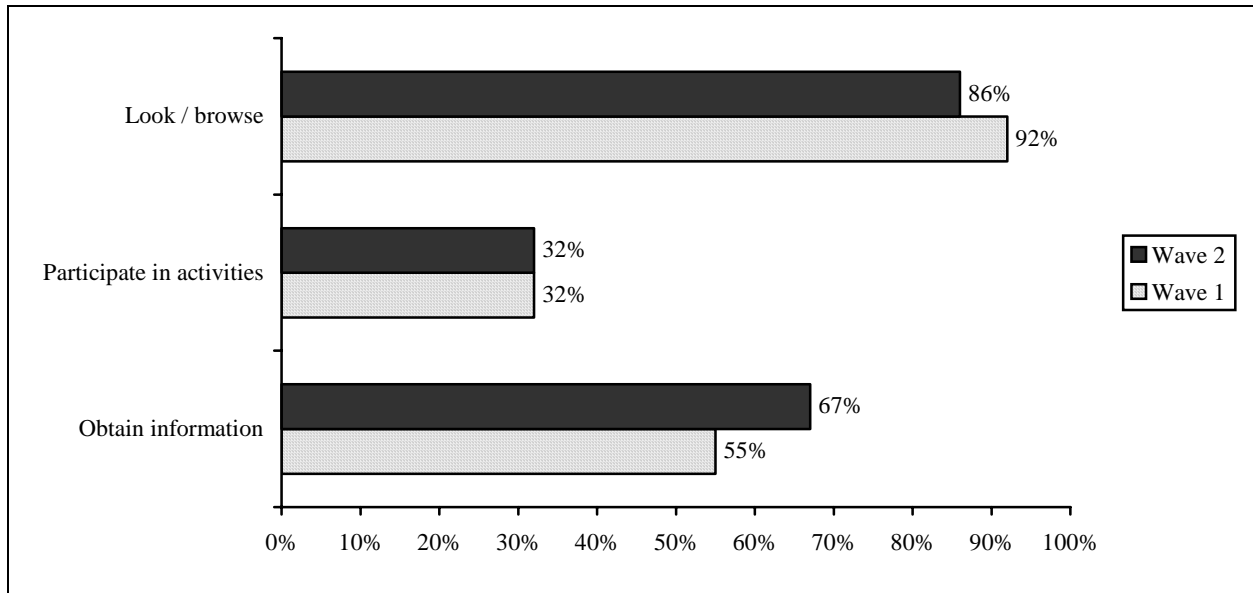
Respondents were then read a list of ways in which they could have participated in the Heads Together website and were asked to say whether or not they had participated. As can be seen in chart 5.4, highest proportions of respondents at both wave 1 and wave 2 claim to have sent a sticky or accessed a hotseat discussion.

Around one in two respondents at either wave of research had downloaded a policy or sent an email. Still smaller proportions of respondents had contributed a policy, although this figure increased from 17% at wave 1 to 32% at wave 2. However, this increase is likely to reflect the request for headteachers who received later training to take a policy to training with them.

Greater proportions of respondents at wave 1 had participated in a discussion thread (cited by 47% respondents at wave 1 and 26% at wave 2). Only around one in five or less had submitted a question to a Hotseat, although this is likely to reflect the relatively restricted number of questions that may be submitted to any hotseat discussion.

Chart 5.4
Participation in the Heads Together website (Q6b)
Base : All respondents accessing website (wave 1 - 179; wave 2 = 231)
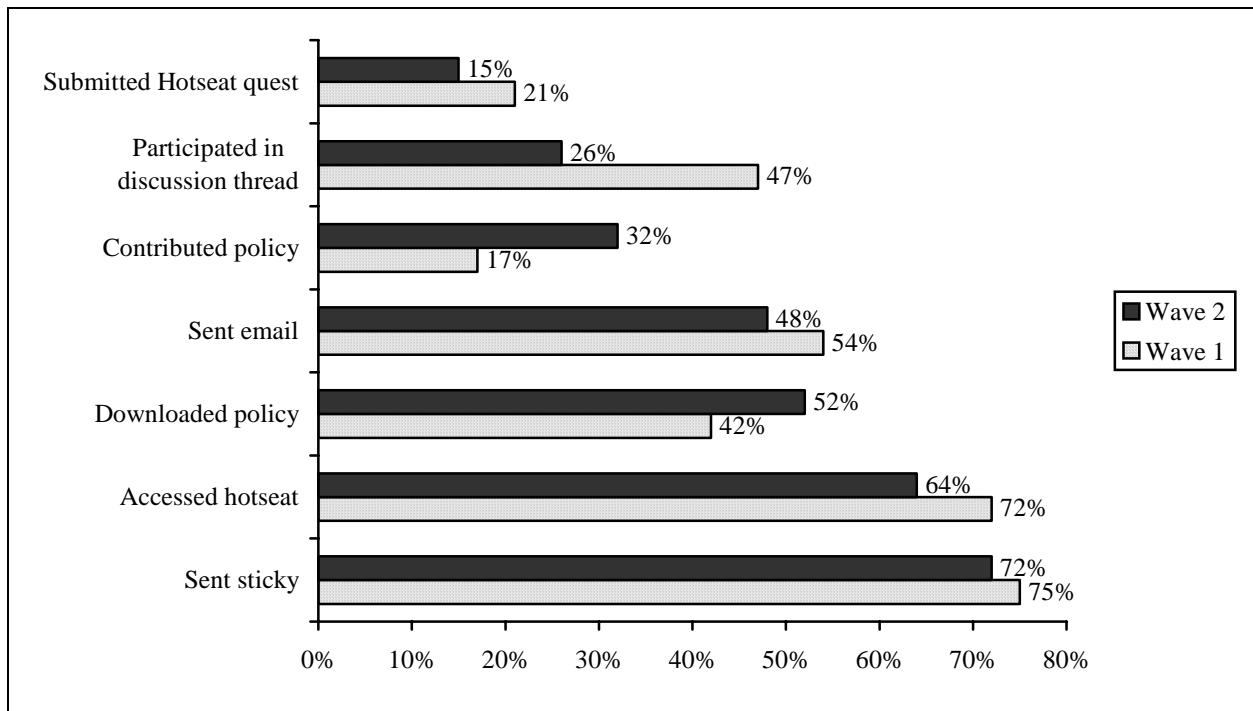
5.4   Ease of Access of the Heads Together Website

We noted in an earlier chapter that there were differing levels of understanding of ICT and during the course of the qualitative discussions it became apparent that, for a minority of respondents, ease of access to the Heads Together website impacted upon access and usage.

> *"It's like everything in life. If you don't use it, you begin to forget it."*
> *(Special Needs Headteacher)*

Some respondents had difficulties in remembering their passwords, or in remembering how to navigate the Heads Together site. Thus, having accessed the home page, not all were then sure how to access different parts of the site. For some respondents with time pressures or with a limited interest in the website, access difficulties tended to suppress usage.

> *"I think its usefulness is limited, unless you've got quick and easy access."*
> *(Secondary Headteacher)*

Another obstacle for some respondents was that although training manuals had been provided, they were not always used as an information source. Furthermore, some were kept at school, even in instances when the site was likely to be accessed at home, so some respondents did not have ready access to training manuals provided by the facilitators.

In order to quantify access issues, during the course of the telephone interviews, all respondents were asked to say how easy the Heads Together website was to access (*very easy, quite easy, not very easy or not at all easy*). Each response was then given a score from +4 for *"very easy"* to +1 for *"not at all easy"* and an average was calculated.

There was little by way of difference between the two waves of interviewing, with almost all respondents claiming that access was *"very easy"* or *"quite easy"*. Only a minority at each wave (19% at wave 1 and 10% at wave 2) claimed that access to the Heads Together website was *"not very easy"* or *"not at all easy"*.

Chart 5.5
Ease of access of Heads Together website (Q7a)
Base : All respondents accessing (wave 1 = 179; wave 2 = 231)
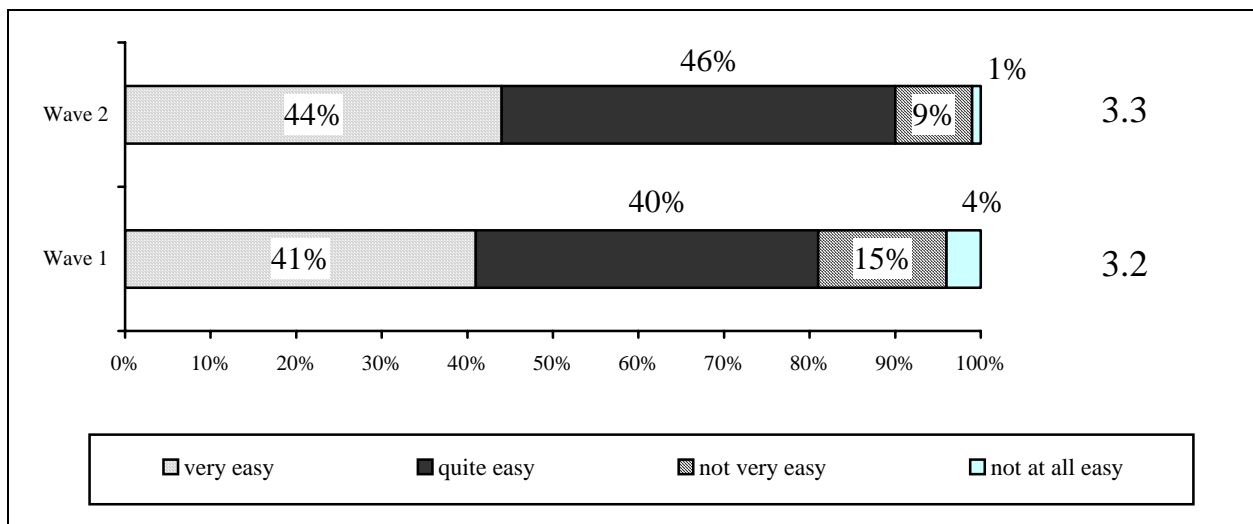
Having ascertained ease of access to the website, respondents were then asked to say whether or not they had experienced any problems accessing the website. While a majority of respondents had claimed that ease of access was *"very easy"* or *"quite easy"*, greater proportions admitted to having had access problems. As shown in the following chart, just over one in three at each wave claimed to have experienced any problems with accessing the website (39% at wave 1 and 35% at wave 2).

Chart 5.6
Experience of problems in accessing website (Q7b)
Base : All respondents accessed (wave 1 = 179; wave 2 = 231)
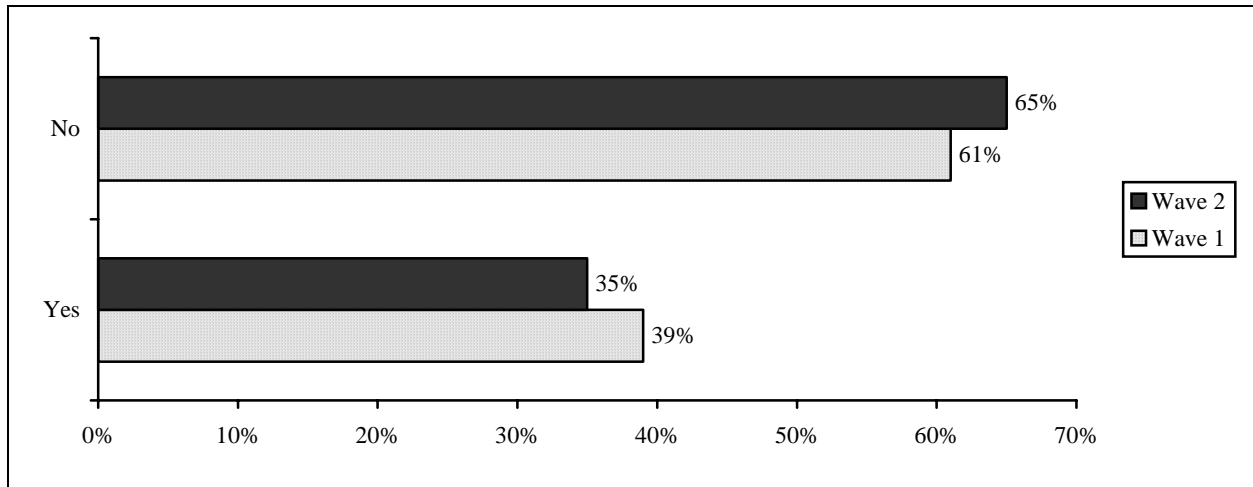
The minority of respondents who claimed they had ever experienced any problems accessing the Heads Together website were then asked to say what these problems were. There does not appear to be one specific problem common to respondents, rather a range of problems were cited. Similar problems emerged at both waves of the telephone interviews, although most were cited by greater proportions of respondents at wave 2 than at wave 1.

The problems cited by highest proportions of respondents at wave 2 were that they could not log on (28%), it took too long to download (23%) or that they had navigational problems (20%). Just under one in five respondents at wave 2 referred to forgetting their password (18%) or that they could not access the required part of the site (18%). Just over one in ten respondents at wave 2 referred to (non specified) computer problems or that they had problems with their password (11%), other than simply forgetting it.

It is interesting to note that when a summary is run across all responses to this question, just over one in two (51%) respondents at wave 1 and just over three in four (77%) respondents at wave 2 refer to some form of IT problem.

Chart 5.7
Problems experienced in accessing website (Q7c)
Base : All accessed but experienced problems (wave 1 = 70; wave 2 = 82)
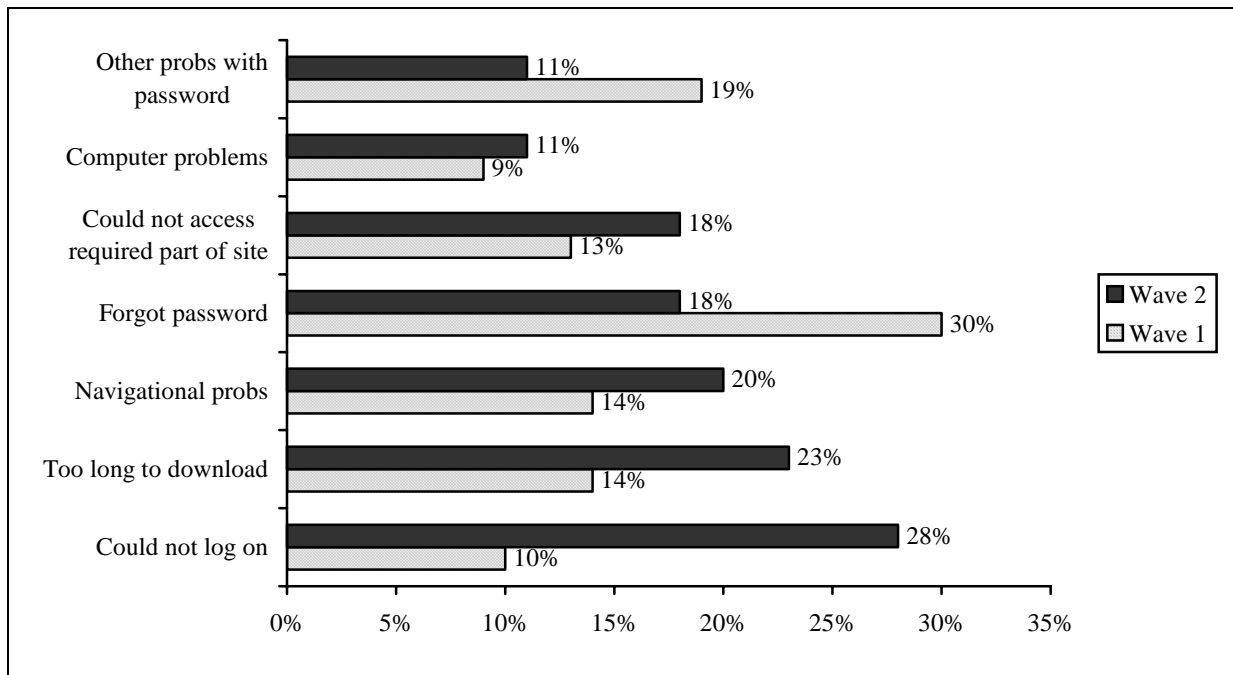
Finally, in this section of the report, it is worth noting when respondents log into Heads Together. We have already noted the importance of time as a factor in preventing greater usage and it is not surprising that the majority of respondents tend to access the website at home in the evenings or weekends or at school outwith the school day. Less than one in two respondents at either wave of telephone interviews claimed to access headstogther at school during the school day (cited by 44% respondents at wave 1 and 32% at wave 2). Smaller proportions also claimed to access this during holidays or in-service days.

Chart 5.8
Times When Log into Heads Together (Q4)
Base : All accessed site since training (wave 1 = 179; wave 2 = 231)
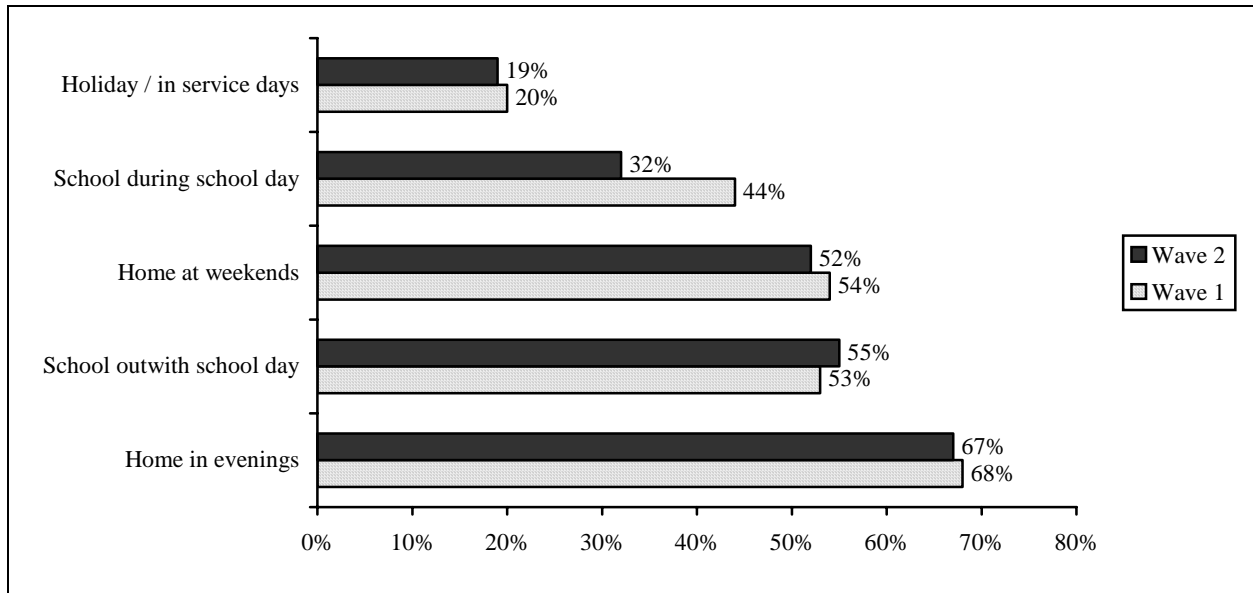
The quantitative data was borne out by the qualitative findings in that many headteachers claimed that they do not have time to access Heads Together during the typical school day and often do this at home instead. This is not a problem in itself in that a majority of respondents have access to a computer at home but time pressures for non teaching issues may mean that accessing Heads Together will not be a priority for some headteachers outwith school hours and may serve to suppress usage of the website.

> *"I never seem to have the time to go onto the computer at school other than to get my emails. What often happens is that I use my computer at home on say, Saturday afternoon, and I will log onto Heads Together then if I have time. What frequently happens though is that I run out of time."*
>
> *(Primary Headteacher)*

5.5   Non Usage of the Heads Together Website

We noted earlier in this chapter that one in four (25%) respondents at wave 2 and just over one in ten at wave 1 (11%) have never logged onto the website since receiving their training. While small proportions claim to have missed the training (10% at wave 2 and 5% at wave 1) or that they have no access to the internet (8% at wave 2 and 29% at wave 1), **the key reason cited by respondents was due to a lack of time** (61% at wave 2 and 33% at wave 1).

There was a lack of interest in Heads Together from a small proportions of respondents with around one in ten at both waves claiming that they had not felt the need to access Heads

Together or that it did not seem relevant to them. Just under one in ten (8%) respondents at wave 2 referred to poor or insufficient training.

Chart 5.9
Reasons for not logging onto site since training (Q8a)
Base : All respondents not logged on (wave 1 = 21; wave 2 = 77)
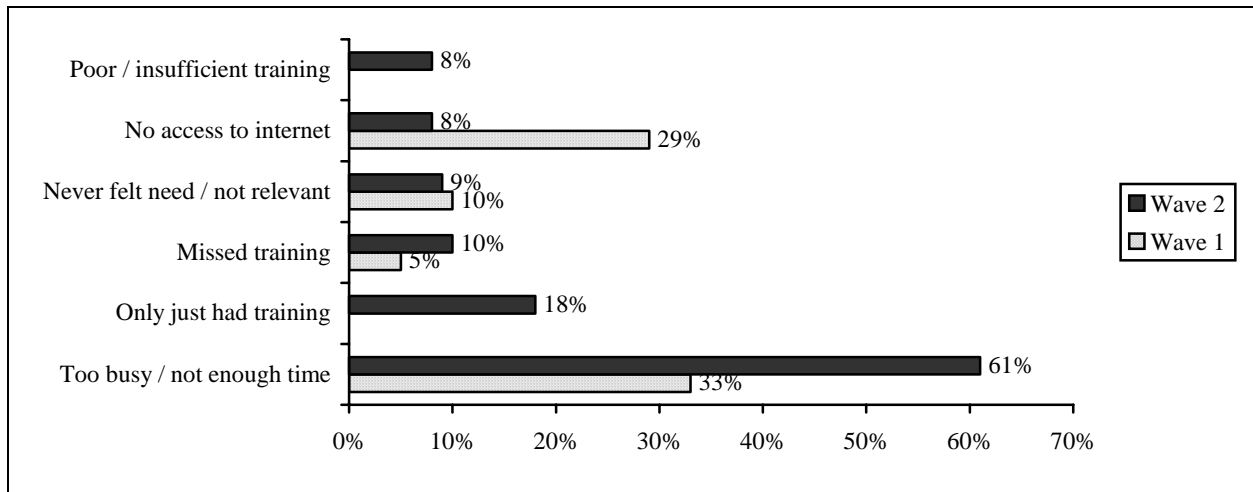
Lack of time to access and use Heads Together was referred to time and time again during the course of the qualitative discussions, where all respondents claimed that they did not have enough time to make effective use of the Heads Together site as regularly as they would like. As the following quotation illustrates, this lack of regular usage also tended to engender feelings of guilt in one or two respondents which then further deterred them from usage.

> *"I feel bad about not using this as I should be. My problem is that I have so much work on and I know that I should be contributing to Heads Together to make it work properly. Because I don't have time to contribute anything, I've felt really guilty and I haven't been using it at all. I don't feel that it is fair that I just access it for information and not contribute to it."*

> *(Primary Headteacher)*

In summary, usage of the Heads Together website is relatively limited both in terms of the parts of the sites which are accessed and the frequency with which they are accessed. Similarly, participation in activities is relatively low, with greater proportions of headteachers using the website to look or browse or to obtain information rather than pro-actively participate in various activities.

Ease of access to the website does not appear to be an issue for most respondents, although a minority have experienced problems in accessing the website. There does not appear to be one overiding access issue, rather a range of different problems, albeit that many of these are related in some way to ICT.

The key barrier preventing use of the Heads Together site is time. The following chapter of this report examines the impact of Heads Together and looks at ways to raise the importance attributed to Heads Together in order to counteract problems related to a lack of time.

CHAPTER SIX – THE IMPACT OF HEADS TOGETHER

In trying to understand barriers to usage of Heads Together and ways in which these can be overcome, it is necessary to examine the impact of Heads Together upon headteachers and to ascertain the importance that is attributed to Heads Together as an online community and source of advice, help and support. This chapter deals with the impact of the site from both a personal and impersonal viewpoint.

6.1   Short Term Impact of Heads Together

During the telephone interviews all headteachers were asked to say their level of agreement with a series of statements on the ways in which using the Heads Together website could impact on them as a headteacher in the short term. A score of between +4 (agree strongly) to +1 (disagree strongly) was attributed to each response and an average score calculated for each statement.

Views across both waves of telephone interviews are broadly similar and in the main headteachers were positive about the short term impact of Heads Together.

A large majority of respondents at both waves (93% at wave 1 and 86% at wave 2) agreed, to some extent, that Heads Together has *"allowed me to have access to headteachers outwith my local authority"* and around three in four agreed, to some extent, that Heads Together had *"developed an important channel of communication with other headteachers"* or that Heads Together had *"provided me with information on topical issues which I would not have previously considered".*

A majority of respondents also agreed that Heads Together had helped them to *"develop in their role as a headteacher by providing me with support / advice I would not otherwise have got"*, that it has helped them to *"have contact with other headteachers on a confidential basis"* or that it has helped them to *"discuss and / or clarify issues of importance with other headteachers".*

Around one in two or more at both waves of interviewing also agreed, to some extent, that Heads Together had allowed them to develop school policies or develop their ICT skills.

When we examine sub-groups of respondents, there are statistical differences in terms of levels of agreement with each of these statements. Those who respond more positively to each statement are also more frequent users of the website, and those who respond more negatively to these statements are less frequent users of the website. Thus, there appears to be a correlation between frequent use of the website and positive attitudes towards Heads Together. In the longer term, it will be important to encourage as much usage of the website as possible.

On the basis of this quantitative data, Heads Together has benefited headteachers in the short term across a number of dimensions.

Table 6.1
Short term impact of Heads Together (Q6d)
Base : All respondents accessing (wave 1 = 179; wave 2 = 231)

	Agree Strongly %	Tend to Agree %	Tend to Disagree %	Disagree Strongly %	Average Score
Allow me to have access to headteachers outwith my local authority					
Wave 1	**63**	**30**	2	4	3.5
Wave 2	**52**	**34**	8	4	3.4
Develop an important channel of communication with other headteachers					
Wave 1	**35**	**44**	14	6	3.1
Wave 2	**34**	**41**	16	6	3.1
Provide me with information on topical issues which I would not have previously considered					
Wave 1	**45**	**35**	12	7	3.2
Wave 2	**32**	**41**	19	6	3.0
Develop in role as a headteacher by providing me with support / advice I would not otherwise have got					
Wave 1	22	42	27	7	2.8
Wave 2	26	41	21	9	2.9
Have contact with other headteachers on a confidential basis					
Wave 1	26	33	26	14	2.7
Wave 2	26	30	31	11	2.7
Discuss and / or clarify issues of importance with other headteachers					
Wave 1	26	34	26	13	2.7
Wave 2	20	42	25	11	2.7
Develop school policies					
Wave 1	16	32	29	22	2.4
Wave 2	19	41	26	13	2.7
Develop my ICT skills					
Wave 1	20	32	34	13	2.6
Wave 2	19	40	20	19	2.6

Most respondents participating in the qualitative discussions were positive about the concept of Heads Together and agreed that it was a positive and useful tool for headteachers. However, time was identified as a major barrier to usage and many assumed that while they were not accessing the site regularly, that other headteachers were. Additionally, given the lack of available time, Heads Together needs to be unique in its product offering rather than simply duplicating information or advice offered elsewhere.

> *"I thought the idea was fantastic …. but I have to say, even if we had internet access here, which we are eventually planning, I don't know what time I'd have."*
> *(Nursery Headteacher)*

Two important benefits cited by respondents participating in the qualitative research were a capacity to discuss issues with other headteachers and obtain access to other headteachers outwith their local authority. We noted in an earlier chapter that much communication tends to be on a local authority basis and almost all headteachers noted the usefulness of accessing the views of those across Scotland.

> *"A means of communication with people that you don't normally have access to. With colleagues and peers that are normally not available to you."*
>
> *(Primary Headteacher)*

Some respondents participating in the qualitative research also referred to the importance of being able to access the views of other headteachers on a confidential basis and the capacity to obtain advice or support on an informal basis.

6.2   Longer Term Impact of Heads Together

All headteachers participating in the telephone interviews were also asked to say, spontaneously, what impact they thought the Heads Together website would have in the longer term for them **personally** and for **other headteachers**.

As shown in the following chart, a number of responses emerged and these correspond with the previous research findings. These two following charts provide data on the comments mentioned by greatest proportions of respondents and a full listing can be obtained from the computer tabulations.

Around one in five or more respondents at wave 2 claimed that this offered improved access with other headteachers or that it is a good source of general information (cited by 24% and 20% respectively at wave 2; 17% and 9% respectively at wave 1). The importance of accessing headteachers outwith the local authority area also emerges again, with 23% at wave 1 and 16% at wave 2 claiming that a longer term impact is a capacity for communication outwith their area or across Scotland. Other comments made by respondents also referred to Heads Together offering a facility for sharing and exchanging information, that it provides help with policies, that it prevents isolation or that it allows headteachers to obtain the opinions of others. Some references were also made to a capacity to raise or highlight issues or find solutions to problems.

A minority of respondents (10% at wave 1) made reference to the fact that they would use it if they had more time. A small proportion (9% at each wave of interviewing) claimed that Heads Together was of limited use to them personally.

Chart 6.1
Impact of Heads Together in the longer term on a personal basis (Q6e)
Base : All respondents accessed site (wave 1 = 179; wave 2 = 231)
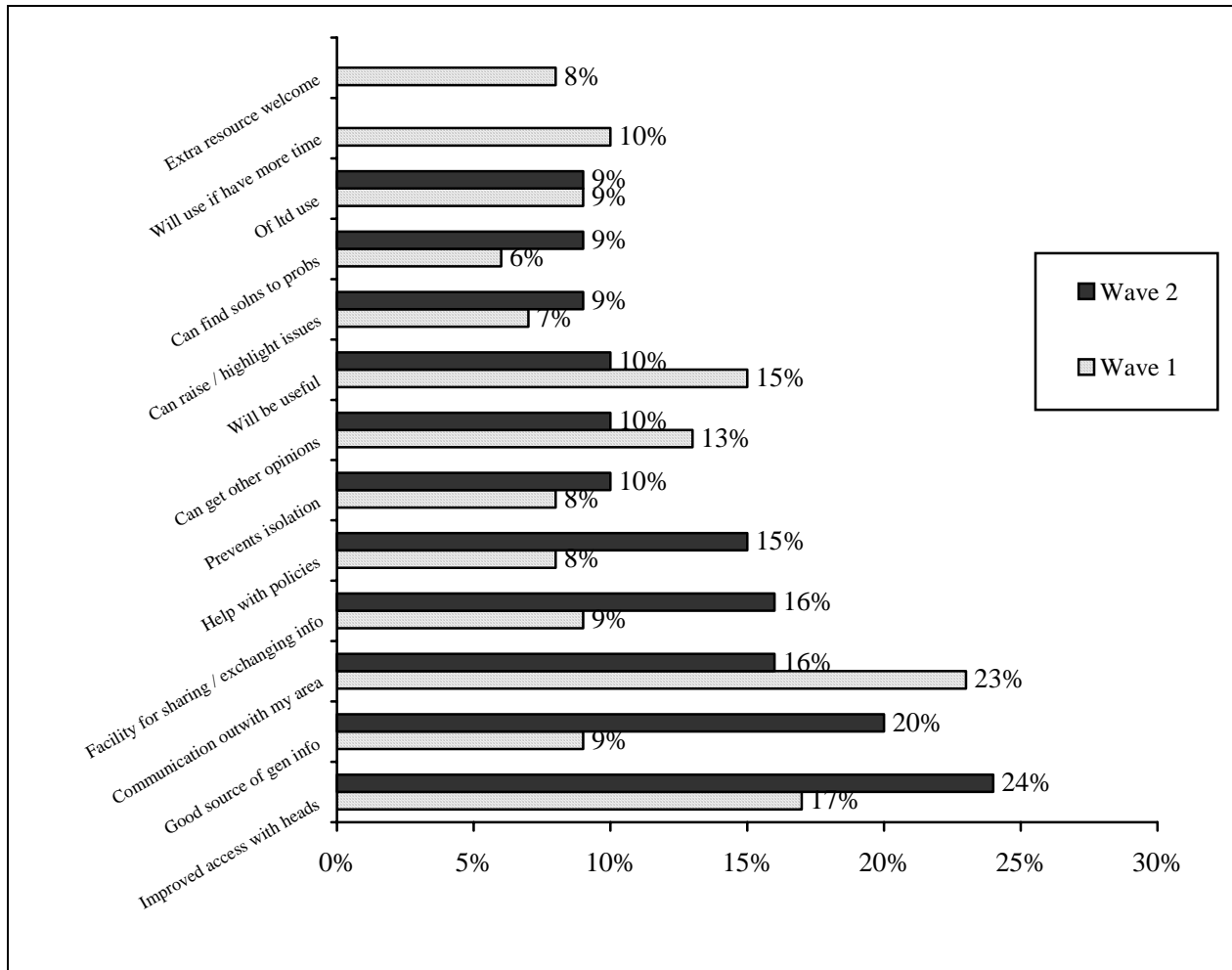
In terms of the impact of Heads Together for other headteachers in the longer term, responses were very similar. Comments focused on improved access to headteachers (23% at wave 2 and 17% at wave 1), that Heads Together is a good way of sharing problems and ideas (20% at wave 2 and 11% at wave 1), or exchanging information and opinions (16% at wave 2 and 10% at wave 1). Once again, headteachers referred to Heads Together allowing communication outwith their local area (cited by 20% respondents at wave 1 and 14% at wave 2).

Around one in seven respondents (15%) at both waves of research commented that Heads Together offers support to headteachers.

Chart 6.2
Impact of Heads Together in the longer term - for other headteachers (Q6f)
Base : All respondents accessed site (wave 1 = 179; wave 2 = 231)
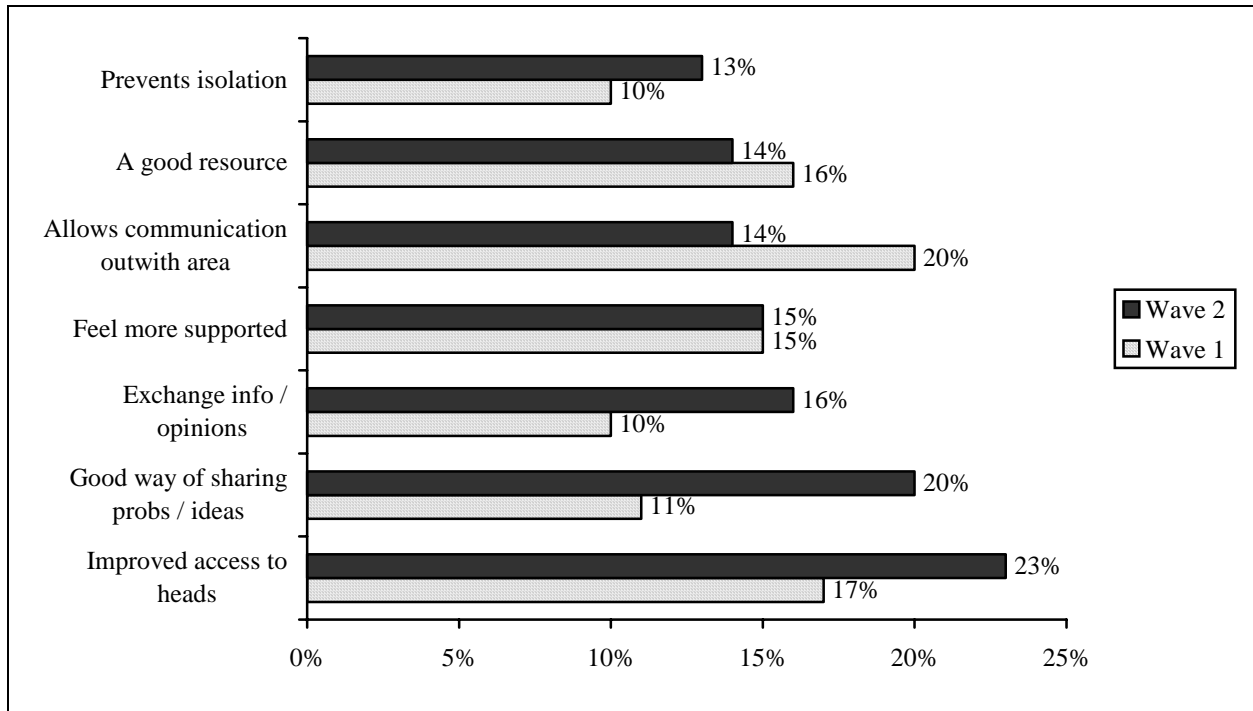
Having asked about the longer term impact of Heads Together on a personal basis and in relation to other headteachers, all respondents were read a series of statements about Heads Together and asked to give their level of agreement with each. A score of between +4 (agree strongly) to +1 (disagree strongly) was attributed to each response and an average score calculated for each statement.

Views across both waves of telephone interviews are broadly similar and in the main headteachers were positive about the benefits of Heads Together. However, the **quantitative data suggests that headteachers tend to be more positive about Heads Together in an abstract sense when considering the benefits to other headteachers, than when applying the benefits of Heads Together on a more personal basis**.

Over nine in ten respondents at both waves of research agreed, to some extent, that *"Heads Together is a useful way of bringing headteachers together across Scotland"* (cited by 93% at wave 1and 95% of respondents at wave 2) or that *"Heads Together is a valuable support and advice tool for headteachers"* (cited by 93% of respondents at both waves).

The uniqueness of Heads Together as a channel of communication was appreciated, with over eight in ten respondents (84% at wave 1 and 88% at wave 2) agreeing that *"Heads Together is a means of communication with other headteachers not offered by existing channels of communication"*. Around three in four respondents also agreed, to some extent, that *"Heads*

Together offers headteachers strategic opportunities for the longer term" (cited by 75% at wave 1 and 78% at wave 2).

When we examine more personal views of Heads Together, views are more polarised and the data emphasises that Heads Together is only one means of communication and that time is an issue in relation to usage. Views are almost equally split between those agreeing and disagreeing that *"headstogther is a good idea but I would consider using it only if I had any free time"* (50% disagree with this statement at wave 1and 45% agree with it; 46% disagree with this at wave 2 and 49% agree). However, it is also encouraging that only a minority (31% at wave 1 and 24% at wave 2) agreed, to any extent, that *"the Heads Together website is of limited value to me in my job."*

The conflict with other sources of advice and information is emphasised with slightly higher proportions of respondents at both wave 1 and 2 agreeing that *"I do not prioritise Heads Together as a source of information or support"* (54% at waves 1 and 2 agree with this statement in comparison to 43% and 42% respectively disagreeing). Similar proportions also agreed that *"I prefer to use other sources of advice"*(50% at wave 1 and 46% at wave 2 agreed with this statement in comparison to 46% at wave 1 and 42% at wave 2 who disagreed).

One of the key issues identified by facilitators was that of the need to offer confidentiality to headteachers using the Heads Together website. This does not appear to be an issue for a majority of respondents, with 69% at wave 1 and 62% at wave 2 disagreeing, to some extent, that *"I do not believe that the Heads Together website offers confidentiality to headteachers"*. This was also borne out by the qualitative research where most respondents were unconcerned about issues relating to confidentiality. Most of these simply accepted that confidentiality existed. However, one or two respondents did claim to have concerns over confidentiality of the site and that this had limited current usage or might limit future usage.

Finally, one of the initial concerns prior to this evaluation taking place was that an ICT method of communication might cause problems to some headteachers who might lack ICT skills. While previous data in this report has shown that there are some ICT barriers to usage, these often tend to relate to the hardware available, rather than an inability or reluctance on the part of headteachers to use ICT. Less than one in ten respondents (7% at wave 1 and 9% at wave 2) agreed, to any extent, that *"I do not like using an ICT based method of communication."*

Table 6.2
Views on Heads Together (Q9)
Base : All respondents (wave 1 = 200; wave 2 = 308)

	Agree Strongly %	Tend to Agree %	Tend to Disagree %	Disagree Strongly %	Average Score
Heads Together is a useful way of bringing headteachers together across Scotland					
Wave 1	56	37	4	-	3.5
Wave 2	57	38	2	1	3.6
Heads Together is a valuable support and advice tool for headteachers					
Wave 1	47	46	3	1	3.5
Wave 2	48	45	3	2	3.4
Heads Together is a means of communicating with other headteachers not offered by existing channels of communication					
Wave 1	49	35	10	5	3.3
Wave 2	47	41	7	3	3.3
Heads Together offers headteachers strategic opportunities for the long term					
Wave 1	24	51	13	3	3.1
Wave 2	27	51	8	4	3.1
Heads Together is a good idea but I would consider using it only if I had any free time					
Wave 1	17	28	37	13	2.5
Wave 2	23	26	33	13	2.6
I do not prioritise Heads Together as a source of information or support					
Wave 1	12	42	31	12	2.6
Wave 2	13	41	29	13	2.6
I prefer to use other sources of advice					
Wave 1	14	36	35	11	2.6
Wave 2	10	36	36	6	2.6
The Heads Together website is of limited value to me in my job					
Wave 1	7	24	41	25	2.1
Wave 2	5	19	43	26	2.0
I do not believe that the Heads Together website offers confidentiality to headteachers					
Wave 1	5	13	41	28	1.9
Wave 2	5	13	36	26	2.0
I do not like using an ICT based method of communication					
Wave 1	1	6	23	69	1.4
Wave 2	2	7	33	57	1.5

Respondents participating in the qualitative research also tended to be largely positive about the concept of Heads Together, although again, abstract views about others' usage tended to be more positive than views regarding personal usage. As such, most respondents assumed that although

their usage was limited and often infrequent, other headteachers would be using Heads Together on a much more frequent basis. This is obviously a barrier that needs to be addressed and recommendations on how to increase usage are provided in the final chapter.

Many respondents also tended to regard Heads Together as a luxury item in their repertoire of information sources, rather than an essential and necessary source. It will be necessary to overcome this barrier to use and convince headteachers that the website should be treated as a priority when looking for advice, help or support.

While there was recognition from all respondents that creation of an effective online community requires commitment from all headteachers, all respondents acknowledged that they were not currently providing enough commitment to the website. The following chapter examines likely future usage of Heads Together.

In summary, usage of Heads Together is relatively limited and usage levels are also relatively limited. While headteachers are broadly positive about Heads Together and supportive of this as a concept, there tends to be an assumption that other headteachers are using the website much more frequently. This is clearly not the case for a large majority of the headteachers participating in this survey.

A number of short term benefits are recognised by headteachers and it will be important to put these across to other headteachers in positive and pro-active "selling" of Heads Together to as broad an audience as possible in order to increase usage.

While this and previous chapters have focused on current usage and attitudes towards Heads Together, it is also important to understand likely future usage of the website and the following chapter will examine projected future usage of Heads Together.

CHAPTER SEVEN : FUTURE USAGE OF HEADS TOGETHER

An earlier chapter has noted that usage of Heads Together is relatively limited across the sample as a whole. It is important to understand the reasons for this and whether or not levels of usage are likely to increase in the future. This chapter examines projected future usage of the website.

7.1   Likely Future Usage of Heads Together

All respondents currently using or accessing the Heads Together site were asked to say whether their future use of Heads Together was likely to increase, decrease or remain the same. As shown in the following chart, **a majority of headteachers perceived that usage would increase** (62% at wave 1 and 69% at wave 2) rather than decrease (cited by around one in twenty at both waves). Around one in four (25% at wave 1 and 23% at wave 2) predict that usage levels will remain the same.

Chart 7.1
Predicted future use of Heads Together (Q5e)
Base : All respondents currently using / accessing (Wave 1 = 179; Wave 2 = 231)
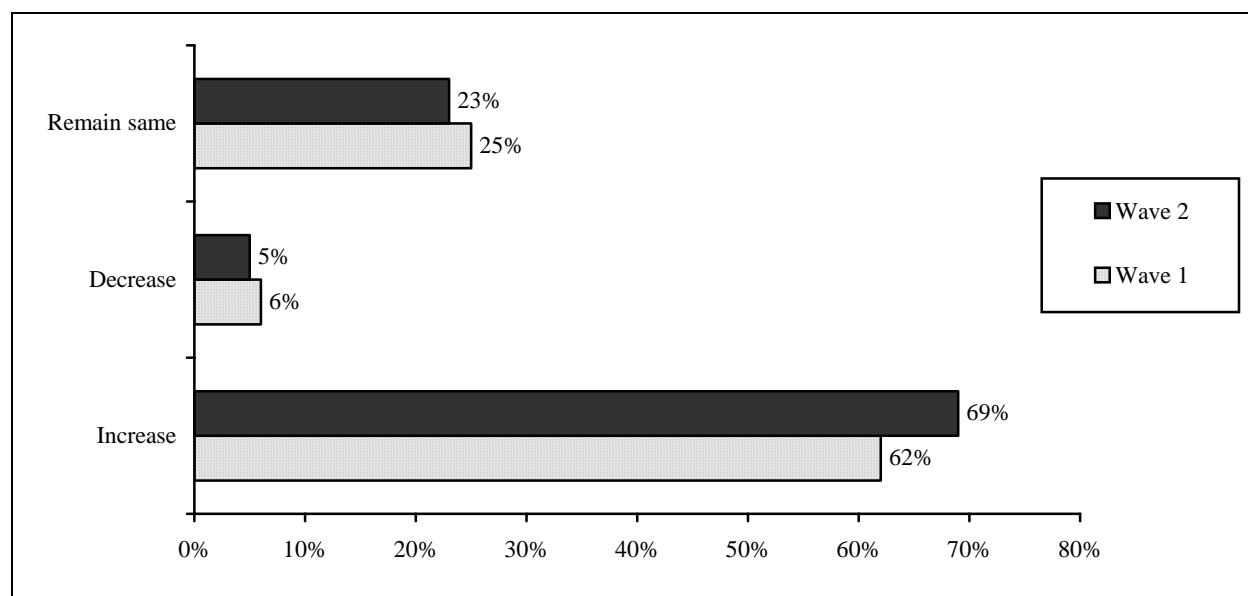
These respondents were then asked to say spontaneously their reasons for predicting an increase in usage of the Heads Together website. Responses tended to focus on Heads Together being a useful resource or providing contact with other teachers. Time was a barrier to usage highlighted in an earlier section of this report and it is encouraging that almost one in five (19%) respondents participating in wave 2 think they will have more time in the future, although just over one in ten (13%) claim that future usage will only increase **if** they can find more time. There were also some comments that increasing familiarisation with the website may encourage higher usage (cited by 17% of respondents at wave 2 and 6% at wave 1).

A minority of respondents (less than one in ten at either wave) also suggested that the greater the number of users, the more information will be available, or that the site is becoming more useful as it grows. It will be important to highlight these benefits to other headteachers.

Chart 7.2
Reasons for predicting increased future use of Heads Together (Q5f)
Base : All respondents predicting an increase in use (Wave 1 = 111; Wave 2 = 159)
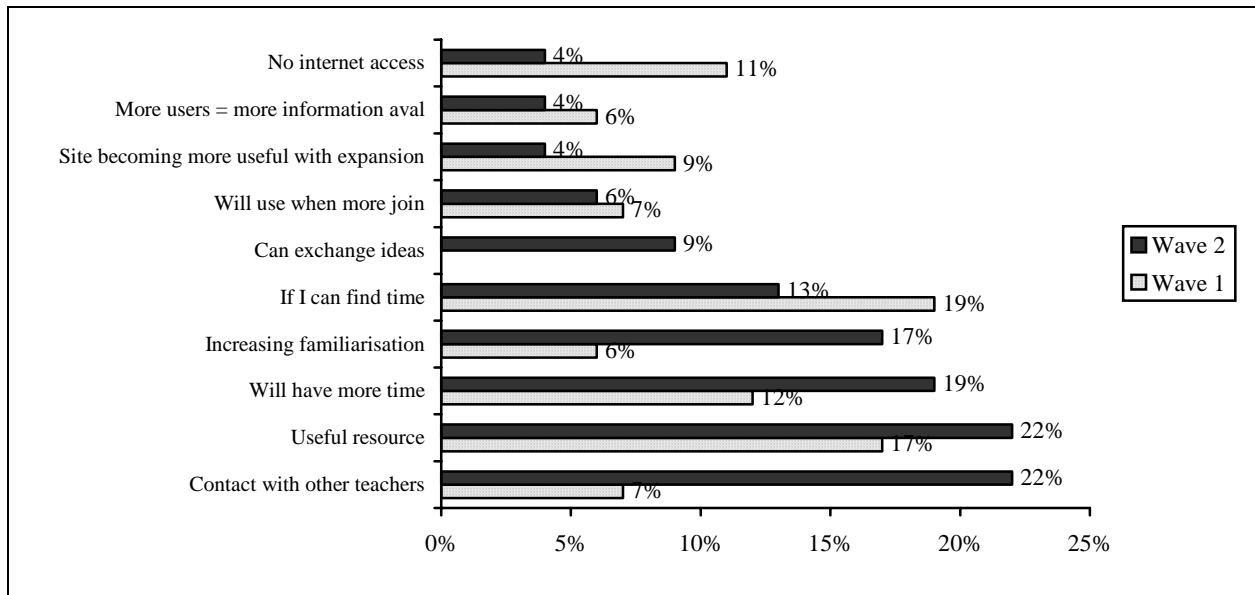
Only a small number of respondents (10 at wave 1 and 11 at wave 2) **predicted a decrease in their future usage of the Heads Together website** and reaasons for this related primarily to :

➤ A lack of time
➤ A preference for other means of communication
➤ That not enough new features are being added to the site
➤ Difficulty in accessing the site

Comments made by respondents participating in the qualitative research reflected the quantitative data, with assumptions from most that as the website grows, its usefulness as a source of advice, help and support will also grow. However, **the key challenge will be to ensure continued access of the website by headteachers in order to see how the website is evolving and growing and build upon levels of interest.**

While most respondents participating in the qualitative research also predicted an increase, rather than a decrease, in usage of the website, many qualified this prediction in line with needing to find more time. In reality, given the varied demands on headteachers, it is unlikely that most will suddenly find themselves with free time on their hands. As such, **it will be necessary to stress the importance and uniqueness of Heads Together as a resource for headteachers** in order

to encourage more regular usage. Suggestions for ways in which this can be done are provided in the final chapter of this report.

One problem for a small number of respondents that emerged from the qualitative research was an assumption that the Heads Together site remains static rather than continually evolving and growing. One or two respondents had accessed the website shortly after they had received their training, had made the decision that the site was of limited value and had not then accessed the site again. In these instances, they were unaware of any subsequent changes to the website and when prompted with new additions, became more positive about accessing the website again. Thus, it will be necessary to find a means of communication with headteachers, other than via Heads Together, which will prompt them to access the website. We have also earlier noted some navigational issues that may also serve to create a barrier to usage of Heads Together.

7.2   Future Participation in Activities

An earlier part of this report provided details on the ways in which headteachers have participated in the Heads Together website to date. These respondents were also asked how likely they would be to participate in any of these activities in the next year or so, in order to ascertain any potential for increased or decreased participation. Again, a score was attributed to each response and an average score calculated for each activity.

Across each activity with which they were prompted, around three in four or more respondents claim to be *"very"* or *"quite"* likely to participate in each. The two activities receiving highest proportions of respondents agreeing to future participation were downloading a school policy and accessing a hotseat discussion. This data suggests that even those respondents who are infrequent and irregular users of the Heads Together website, assume that they will become more involved in the future (see table overleaf).

Table 7.1
Likelihood of participation in selected activities (Q6c)
Base : All respondents accessing (Wave 1 = 179; Wave 2 = 231)

	Very Likely %	Quite Likely %	Not very Likely %	Not at all Likely %	Average Score
Download a school policy					
Wave 1	**49**	**38**	7	4	3.3
Wave 2	**52**	**38**	7	3	3.4
Send someone a sticky					
Wave 1	45	31	10	8	3.2
Wave 2	44	35	17	3	3.2
Access a hotseat discussion					
Wave 1	**48**	**41**	6	4	3.3
Wave 2	**37**	**47**	13	3	3.2
Contribute to a school policy					
Wave 1	30	47	15	6	3.0
Wave 2	38	40	17	4	3.1
Send someone an e:mail					
Wave 1	42	27	14	13	3.0
Wave 2	35	36	19	10	3.0
Take part in discussion thread					
Wave 1	33	46	11	7	3.1
Wave 2	20	51	24	4	2.9
Submit question to Hotseat discussion					
Wave 1	25	50	17	7	2.9
Wave 2	21	50	22	6	2.9

7.3   Non Usage

So far, this chapter relates to headteachers who have already accessed and used the site. However, it is also important to understand whether those who have not yet logged on are likely to do so. As shown in the following chart, when asked their intention of using Heads Together in the next 3-6 months, a large majority of headteachers intend to use the site in the next 3-6 months.

Chart 7.3
Intention of using Heads Together in next 3-6 months (Q8b)
Base : All not accessed since training (wave 1 = 21; wave 2 = 77)
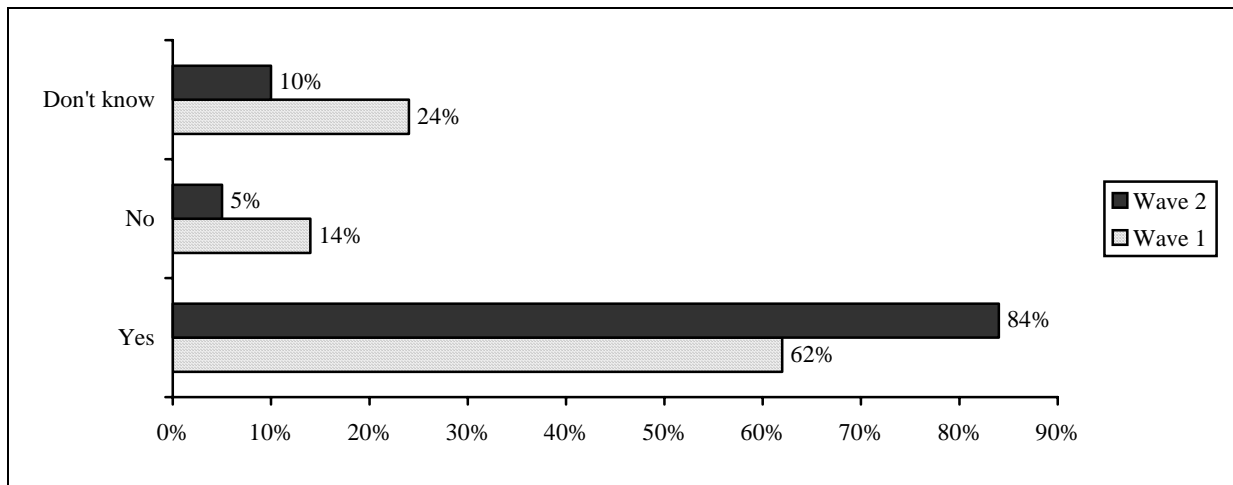
7.4 Future Participation in Activities

The qualitative findings provided a number of suggestions for factors that might increase usage of the Heads Together website. Respondents participating in the telephone interviews were prompted with these factors and asked the extent to which each one would be likely to increase their usage of the site.

As can be seen in the following table, the importance of providing information and updates on topical issues is a priority for headteachers, with over nine in ten respondents at each wave (92% at wave 1 and 91% at wave 2) saying they would be *"very likely"* or *"quite likely"* to increase their usage of the website. However, reiterating a lack of time to access the website, around three in four or more respondents at each wave of telephone interviewing would like more time during the school day to access the website.

The importance of endorsement by other headteachers is important, with around three in four or more respondents wanting to see more headteachers participating in the website.

There is a role that can be adopted by external organisations or individuals, with local authorities giving Heads Together more of a priority status. We are aware that attendance at training sessions has been best in instances where local authorities have had a more pro-active involvement in Heads Together. Almost three in four (73%) respondents at wave 1 and 66% at wave 2 claim local authorities giving Heads Together a priority status would increase their likelihood of using the website. Given that many existing channels of communication are based within a local authority region, pro-active endorsement of Heads Together by the local authority may help to increase usage.

Similarly, facilitators are perceived to have a role in providing follow up training sessions to clarify any queries (cited by 73% at wave 1 and 78% at wave 2). Additionally, having a local contact who is a headteacher to ring with any queries on Heads Together would provide encouragement to over six in ten respondents at each wave of telephone interviews.

Table 7.2
Factors which might increase usage of Heads Together (Q10a)
Base : All respondents accessing (Wave 1 = 179; Wave 2 = 231)

	Very Likely %	Quite Likely %	Not very Likely %	Not at all Likely %	Average Score
Regular updating of topical issues which impact on your role as a headteacher					
Wave 1	56	36	4	2	3.5
Wave 2	60	31	4	2	3.5
More time during the school day to access the website					
Wave 1	64	13	11	8	3.4
Wave 2	61	14	9	12	3.3
More teachers participating in the website					
Wave 1	44	36	14	3	3.3
Wave 2	42	33	14	6	3.2
Follow up training sessions to clarify any queries in relation to Heads Together					
Wave 1	37	36	19	8	3.0
Wave 2	37	41	12	10	3.1
Local authorities giving Heads Together more of a priority status					
Wave 1	39	34	18	6	3.1
Wave 2	33	33	16	10	3.0
Having a local contact who is a headteacher to ring with any queries on Heads Together					
Wave 1	35	31	21	13	2.9
Wave 2	32	31	18	16	2.8
Reiteration of the confidential nature of the website					
Wave 1	26	30	27	14	2.7
Wave 2	26	31	18	21	2.7
Regular telephone contact from a facilitator to check you have the necessary information to use the site					
Wave 1	21	26	34	18	2.5
Wave 2	22	32	26	19	2.6
Creating sub-communities offering access to other groups of teachers such as dep heads or SMT					
Wave 1	19	30	23	19	2.5
Wave 2	18	32	21	26	2.4
Accreditation to CPD					
Wave 1	19	37	18	25	2.5
Wave 2	18	29	23	28	2.4

When we examine sub-group data, headteachers within secondary schools are often less likely to use Heads Together more frequently with the introduction of any of these factors; however, where there are differences, these are not always statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Having been prompted with this specific list of factors that might encourage increased usage of Heads Together, respondents were asked, spontaneously, if there were any other factors that might encourage more frequent use of the site in the future. While a broad range of differing responses was given, the one single highest mention was more time (cited by 33% of respondents at wave 1 and 44% of respondents at wave 2). It would appear that some respondents are largely happy with Heads Together as it is, with one in five respondents at each wave claiming that there were no other factors that would encourage increased use in the future (Q10b).

Some respondents participating in the qualitative research suggested that Heads Together should be opened up to greater numbers of educational practitioners. This was on the basis that (particularly in larger schools) many of the topical issues covered by Heads Together are of relevance to heads of departments, senior management teams and so on. While headteachers recognised the importance of maintaining confidentiality, there were suggestions that sub-communities could be set up within Heads Together, thereby increasing access to larger numbers of users.

Some closed communities, largely based on locality, have already been set up within Heads Together and most headteachers participating in the qualitative research felt that these tended to duplicate local authority networks. While it may be useful to highlight a capacity to set up sub-communities of headteachers and the related benefits of this, there needs to be an acceptance that many headteachers may be unlikely to utilise this resource.

One question asked of respondents participating in the telephone interviews was whether Nursery Heads of Establishments who are not GTC registered should be allowed access to the site. Just under one in two respondents (47%) at wave 1 and just over one in two (55%) at wave 2 were happy for access to be allowed and just over one in three (38% at wave 1 and 36% at wave 2) did not want access to be allowed (Q10d).

Finally, respondents were asked for any further changes or modifications that they thought needed to be made to the website in order to encourage regular use of this once Heads Together was rolled out across Scotland. The largest single response was that respondents were happy with the site as it is (cited by 34% at wave 1 and 35% at wave 2). Smaller numbers of respondents made references to :

➢ Simplification of the website (8% at wave 1 and 7% at wave 2)
➢ Improved navigation (10% at wave 1 and 5% at wave 2)
➢ Additional / longer training (11% at wave 1 and 6% at wave 2)
➢ More publicity (4% at wave 1 and 5% at wave 2)

A full listing of responses can be obtained from the computer tabulations.

In summary, there are a number of factors identified that will help to increase usage of the Heads Together website and it will be important that these suggestions are taken on board. These include pro-activity on the part of local authorities, facilitators and "champion" headteachers.

There is also a need to continue to enhance and build the website, ensuring inclusion of topical issues. In some instances issues may be raised by headteachers themselves but in others it will be necessary for facilitators to raise new issues impacting on headteachers.

There is clearly a need to increase awareness and usage of the website. One element not yet examined in this report is provision of training, support and communication. The following chapter examines these issues in greater detail and the final chapter provides recommendations for communication with headteachers in the future.

CHAPTER EIGHT : TRAINING, SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION

An important element of the Heads Together pilot is the training and support provided to headteachers. This chapter provides an assessment of training provided and examines any ways in which training could change in the future.

8.1   Training

As shown in the following chart, training has been delivered to headteachers participating in the Heads Together pilot over a period of months from June 2002 to the present time.

Chart 8.1
When Training Received (Q2a)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)
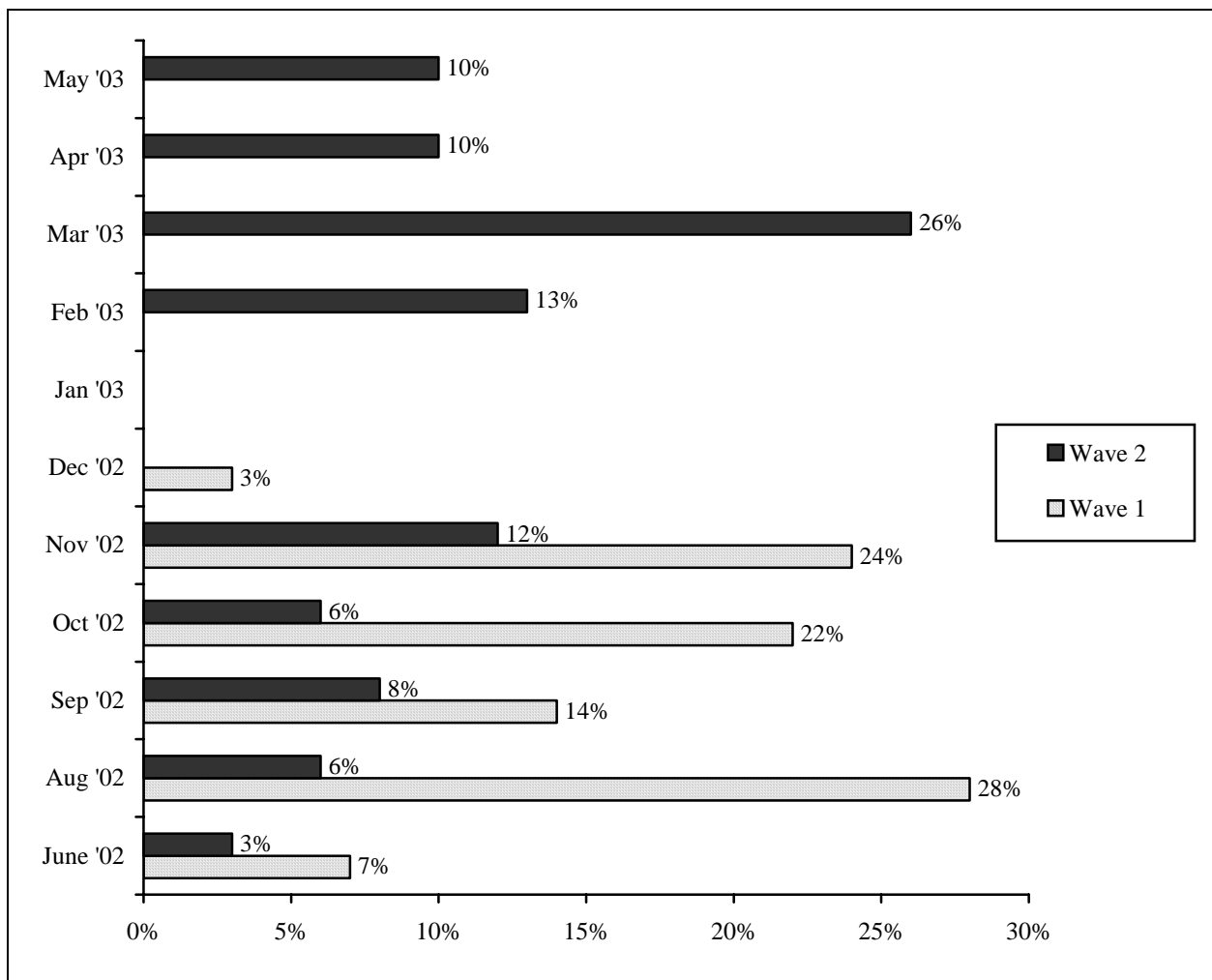
As can be seen in the following chart, only a small proportion of respondents accessed the Heads Together site prior to their training day. The qualitative findings suggest that this reflects a lack of available time, rather than a disinclination on the part of respondents.

Chart 8.2
Whether Accessed Heads Together Site Prior to Training Day (Q2d)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)
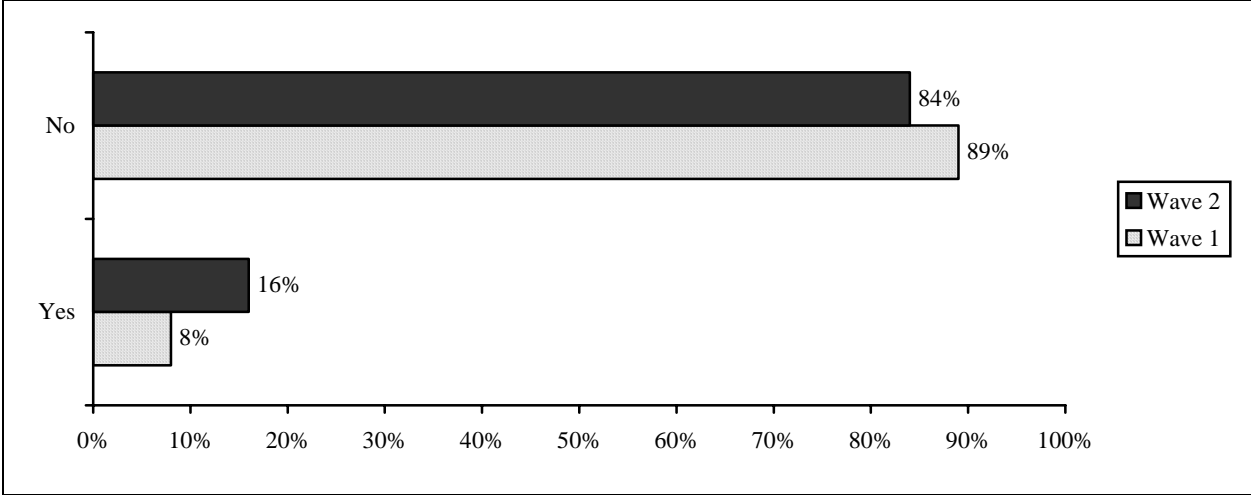
Equally, there does not appear to be a need for many headteachers to familiarise themselves with the Heads Together website prior to their training, although the qualitative findings suggest that, again, this is likely to reflect a lack of time to do so. Some respondents participating in the qualitative discussions felt that it would be useful for headteachers to access the website prior to training in order to familiarise themselves with it and to start to give consideration to any queries they might have in relation to navigation or access and so on.

Chart 8.3
Whether would have liked opportunity to familiarise Heads Together site prior to training
(Q2e)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)
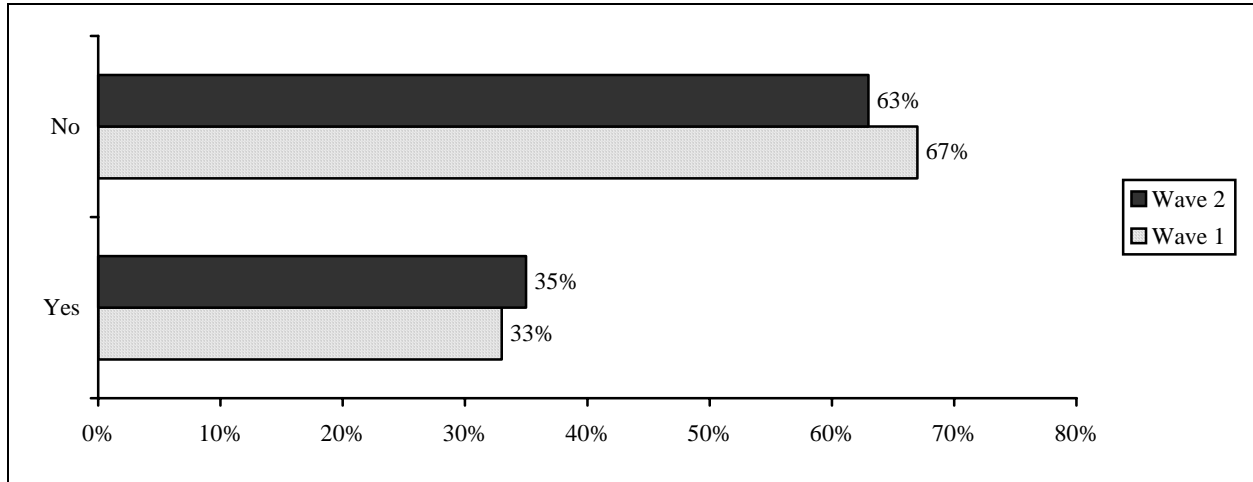
Most respondents participating in the qualitative discussions were largely positive about the facilitators and the training they had received.

> *"The training I went to, I thought that was great."*
>
> *(Nursery Headteacher)*

> *"The training was very good. It was one day. It was …. it was very fast paced – very fast paced. You know? You really did sit up and listen! The two guys, particularly one of them, was very dynamic – and that was good, coz that, you know, that was quite stimulating."*
>
> *(Special Needs Headteacher)*

That said, one or two respondents referred to a need to provide training at a very basis level of ICT, given their lack of ICT skills. Conversely, one or two respondents felt that the training provided was too basic. It would be worthwhile gearing training to different levels according to individual ICT abilities and understanding.

> *"I think the training needs to be a bit more mixed so that, rather than just taking everybody through bit by bit …. it really should have been different people at different paces. 'Let's start from where you are' and move on with it – because the training day did not highlight a fraction of the potential that's there."*
>
> *(Secondary Headteacher)*

For the small number of headteachers lacking in either ability or confidence, a greater focus on one to one training would be welcomed.

Not all respondents participating in the qualitative research had used the training manuals provided, although those who had commented on their usefulness.

8.2   Ongoing Training and Support

Some respondents participating in the qualitative research noted that it would have been useful to be provided with follow up training. As the following quotation illustrates, one respondent left the training with what they believed to be a clear understanding of the website, how to navigate it and so on. However, practical application was harder when no facilitator was available.

> *"I left the training thinking I had a pretty clear understanding of the site. But then when I tried to access the site a couple of days later, I realised that I had forgotten a lot of what I had been told. I think it would be useful to have some further training or a telephone call from one of the facilitators or something to follow through with these queries perhaps a couple of weeks after the training."*
>
> *(Primary Headteacher)*

As shown in the following chart, this requirement for further training is echoed by some of the quantitative data, with just over one in two (54%) at each wave of interviewing agreeing that they would have liked some form of follow up training. When we examine sub-groups within the sample, higher proportions of females participating in wave 1 would like follow up training than their male counterparts (70% females would like follow up training in comparison to 31% male). However, there are no gender differences in wave 2 data.

Chart 8.4
Whether would have liked follow up Training (Q2c)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)
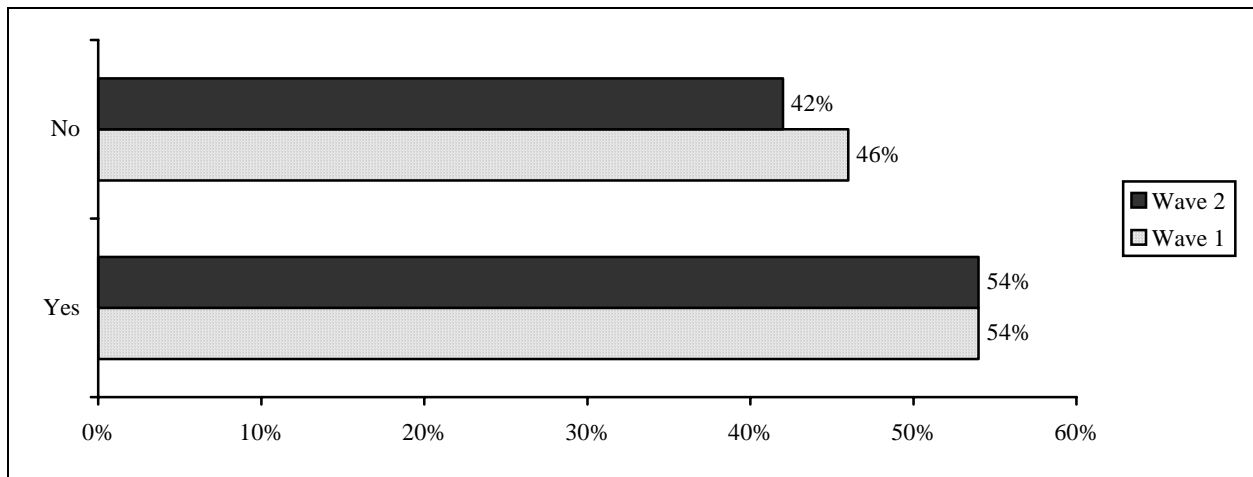
While follow up training would be welcomed, the qualitative findings suggest that this could take a variety of different forms. Some headteachers did not require follow up training to be along the same lines as the initial training they had undertaken (formal, outwith the school). Rather, there was a requirement for follow up telephone calls to check how successful headteachers were in accessing the website and to help with any subsequent queries that may have arisen. As such, when some respondents refer to follow up training, their requirement is more for a courtesy call rather than a formal training session.

Some of the quantitative data already presented in this report points to the importance of the facilitators and there are suggestions that the facilitators need to be pro-active in terms of communication of the benefits of Heads Together and helping to optimise usage of the website. All respondents participating in the telephone interviews were asked if they had had any follow up contact with facilitators since their initial training and, if so, what method of contact had been adopted.

As can be seen in the following chart, almost one in two (49%) respondents at wave 2 had had no follow up contact with a facilitator and just over two in five (43%) had been contacted by a facilitator. Just under one in five (18%) had contacted a facilitator themselves. While there were higher levels of contact by facilitators at wave 1, this reflects training patterns and availability of time for facilitators to follow through.

Chart 8.5
Contact with Facilitators (Q2b)
Base : All respondents (Wave 1 = 200; Wave 2 = 308)
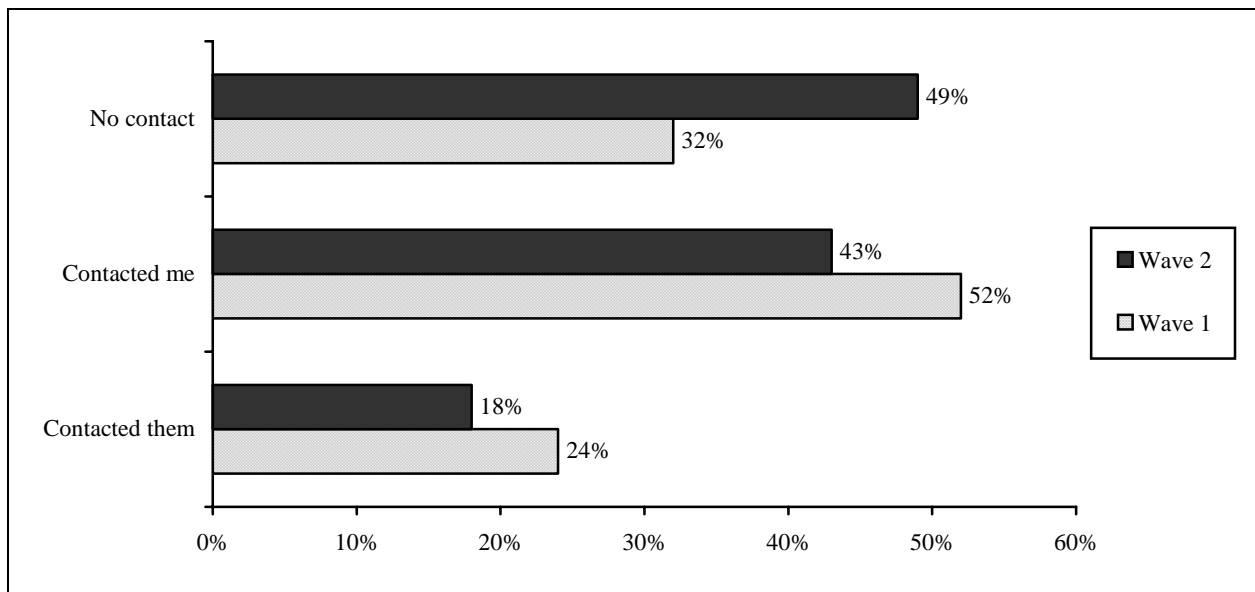
The key method of contact to or from facilitators was e:mail, although higher proportions of headteachers used the telephone to contact facilitators, than did facilitators to contact

respondents. We would endorse the need to contact headteachers using both options (e:mail and telephone) in order to ensure that any headteachers not accessing the website will have an opportunity to discuss any queries with a facilitator. Once it can be ascertained that a headteacher is regularly using the website, ongoing contact could be e:mail based.

Table 8.1
Method of Contact (Q2b)
Base : All respondents having had some form of contact

	Contacted Facilitator		Contacted **by** Facilitator	
	Wave 1 (47) %	Wave 2 (103) %	Wave 1 (104) %	Wave 2 (236) %
E:mail	**64**	**64**	66	76
Telephone	**30**	**34**	15	15
Letters / mailings / flyers	9	4	36	14
Other online eg Stickies	9	4	5	2

When asked the reasons for contact by a facilitator, the key reasons cited referred to pro-active contact rather than a specific needs and this fits with the qualitative finding that ongoing training and contact should be largely informal. Over one in ten respondents claimed they had been contacted by facilitators in order to offer help if needed, as a courtesy call, to check on site usage, to offer information or to provide feedback on training.

Chart 8.6
Reason for Contact by Facilitator (wave 2 only - Q2bii)
Base : All respondents contacted by facilitator (130)
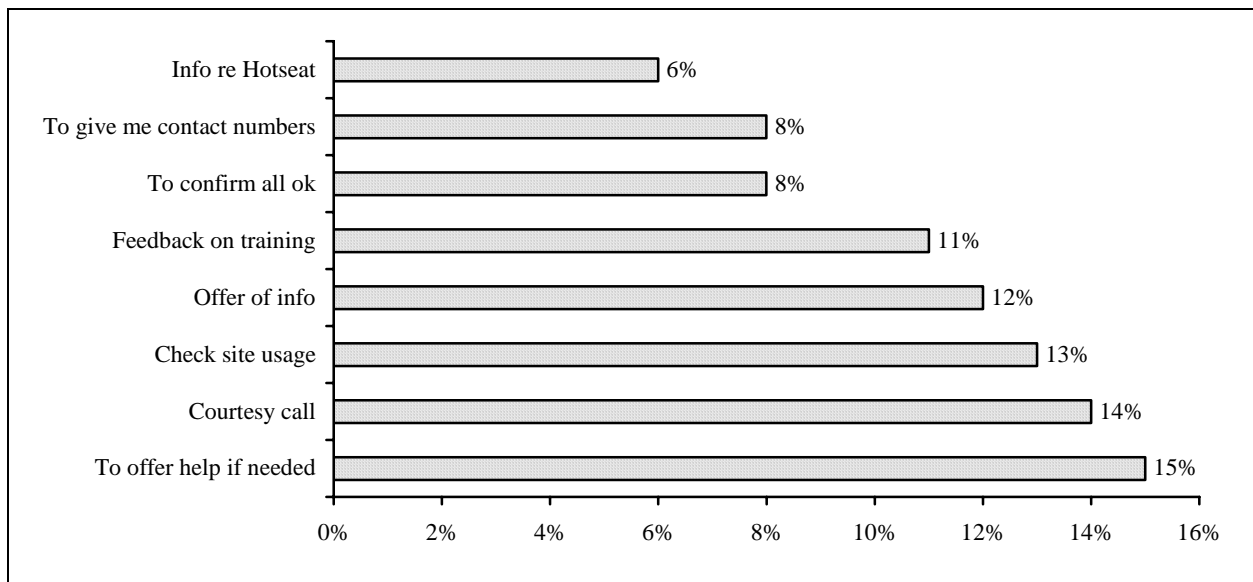
The qualitative research also suggested that the frequency of ongoing contact and communication with headteachers needs to vary according to individual needs and requirements. Again, **initial contact with a head should identify how regularly they would like to be contacted by a facilitator and the channel of communication for which they have a preference**. Most headteachers would have liked initial contact shortly after attending the first training session and defined this as within one month. Thereafter, contact could be less frequent – some wanted quarterly contact, others less regularly than that.

8.3 Communication

Most respondents participating in the qualitative research identified a need for some form of ongoing contact from facilitators and this appears to be of particular importance given the relatively limited and infrequent usage of the website by many respondents. As such, **pro-active contact by facilitators is likely to prompt increased usage on the part of headteachers**. As noted earlier, preferences for the channel of communication to be used can be recorded at initial contact and utilised thereafter.

We have noted that a key barrier to usage of Heads Together is a lack of time. As such, messages need to be put across to headteachers that will increase the importance of Heads Together as a source of advice, information and support. Benefits of the website need to be communicated and key benefits are :

- ✓ Contact with heads outwith the local authority
- ✓ Improved access to other headteachers
- ✓ Offering a strategic viewpoint
- ✓ Provision of information (that might not be covered elsewhere) on topical issues impacting on headteachers
- ✓ Offering speedy and immediate answers to questions
- ✓ A platform for sharing and exchanging information
- ✓ Provision of support and advice not offered elsewhere
- ✓ Opportunities to clarify issues of importance with other headteachers
- ✓ Capacity to download school policies
- ✓ Reduces isolation felt by some headteachers
- ✓ Contact on a confidential basis

The qualitative discussions also suggested that third party endorsement of Heads Together is an important factor in encouraging usage. It is expected that facilitators will be positive about the benefits of Heads Together. However, endorsement by the local authority or by other headteachers will be more convincing and offers credibility. It may be worthwhile putting quotations on the website from headteachers that emphasise the benefits of Heads Together.

In summary, headteachers are largely positive about the training received to date, although some would like more follow up training and ongoing support. Data for access and usage suggest that pro-activity on the part of facilitators may serve to prompt increased usage of the website.

There is a need for the benefits of Heads Together to be clearly communicated to headteachers in order to reiterate the usefulness of the online community and encourage greater use.

In terms of future usage of the website, we believe that communication is an important issue that needs to be addressed.

CHAPTER NINE : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapters have examined various issues that impact upon usage of Heads Together. This chapter summarises the key points emerging from this programme of research and identifies barriers to usage of Heads Together and provides suggestions as to how to overcome these barriers.

A broad range of different channels of communication is utilised by headteachers and there is little antipathy to the use of ICT as one channel of communication. However, **channels of communication are selected on the basis of specific requirements and headteachers cite instances where there are preferences for using other channels of communication**. For example, where interactive discussion or advice are required, there is a preference for personal contact.

One barrier to the effective introduction of Heads Together is inconsistency in hardware and software packages provided, and ICT training across local authorities. The Spark Initiative currently underway should help to counteract barriers created by ICT in terms of speed of access, limited / lack of internet access. The qualitative data suggest that at present, some headteachers (generally those with less ICT experience and / or confidence) can be put off using Heads Together because of problems in accessing the site, a lack of internet access, or navigational problems once they have accessed the site.

Until such time as all schools have internet access via broadband, problems related to access are likely to remain. However, **there is a need to ensure that the Heads Together website is as user friendly as possible and that navigation of the website is easy** with clear signposting and labelling. There is an **ongoing need to ensure that pro-active communication is in place to reiterate to headteachers the ease with which they can access Heads Together and surf the website**.

Access and usage of Heads Together is relatively limited and only a minority of respondents is accessing the website either on a daily basis or as regularly as a few times a week. Some respondents participating in the qualitative research made the assumption that the website is a static entity rather than evolving on a continuous basis. This, combined with a lack of usage of the website can mean **that headteachers are unaware of changes or enhancements to Heads Together. There is a need for communication to headteachers which will inform them of changes and enhancements to the website and thereby help to raise awareness and increase usage**.

This, in turn, would help to increase the priority status accorded to Heads Together.

At present, there is an assumption from some headteachers that Heads Together duplicates information. In order to maintain and build upon current levels of usage, **it will be important to demonstrate the uniqueness of Heads Together and its value as a source of advice, help and support not offered to headteachers elsewhere**. Headteachers identify the importance of coverage of topical issues, and the Hotseats to date have been well attended. We would recommend that the website also provides copies of new and relevant reports and educational

materials, along with brief synopses of these. A brief synopsis outlining key points such as 'what this says, what you need to know, how it effects you' can save a headteacher valuable time. It will also be important that **any changes to legislation (such as Child Protection) or the curriculum (eg. National Priorities) are communicated via Heads Together, along with details as to ways in which these changes will impact on headteachers and other educational staff**.

Given the relatively low levels of usage, **we recommend that facilitators adopt a very pro-active role in communicating the benefits of Heads Together**. There should be some form of follow up contact after initial training. Even just a courtesy call is likely to prompt a visit to the website. While e:mail is a means of communication widely adopted by headteachers, other channels also need to be considered. For example, of those headteachers contacting facilitators, around one in three used the telephone rather than e:mail.

Key messages to be communicated to headteachers, and which will emphasise the benefits of Heads Together are :

- ✓ Offering access to the views of headteachers across Scotland, not just restricted to a local authority
- ✓ A platform for sharing and exchanging information / ideas / problems with other headteachers
- ✓ Keeps headteachers up to date on topical issues and provides information in relation to legislative and educational changes
- ✓ A unique offering, not available elsewhere
- ✓ Improved access to other headteachers across the whole of Scotland
- ✓ Prevents isolation
- ✓ Offering a strategic viewpoint
- ✓ Provision of information (that is not covered elsewhere) on topical issues impacting on headteachers
- ✓ Offering speedy and immediate answers to questions
- ✓ Provision of support and advice not offered elsewhere
- ✓ Opportunities to clarify issues of importance with other headteachers
- ✓ Capacity to download school policies and help to reduce workloads
- ✓ Contact on a confidential basis

As well as facilitators adopting a pro-active approach to headteachers, there are signs that **other third parties can help to encourage usage of Heads Together**. **The quantitative data shows that a majority of respondents agree that local authorities giving Heads Together more of a priority status is one factor that would encourage usage, as would having a local headteacher contact to ring with any queries. Some respondents participating in the qualitative research pointed to the benefits of having local "champions" for Heads Together**. One example cited was of a local champion who would be attending Heads of Establishment meetings and outlining the benefits of Heads Together.

If there is a high number of hits to the website, it may encourage usage by publishing figures and illustrate the numbers of headteachers accessing the website.

Additionally, we would recommend using quotations from headteachers who are positive about Heads Together. Third party endorsement from other headteachers is likely to be seen as more independent, objective and credible than offered by facilitators, LTS or SEED.

In the longer term we believe there are opportunities to extend usage of Heads Together by opening up the website to other types of teacher and extending the number of closed communities. While the qualitative findings showed a degree of resistance to the setting up of more closed communities for headteachers specifically, many of those participating would like to see senior management teams, deputy heads and so on able to access information on topical issues and suggested that closed communities for these other teachers would increase usage of Heads Together.

APPENDIX

Headstogether
Final Telephone Questionnaire – March 2003

Respondent's Name . . . .

Job Title . . . .

School Name . . . .

Address . . . .

. . . .

Postcode . . . . Telephone Number . . . .

Interviewer Name . . . . Interviewer Number . . . .

Date of Interview . . . . Respondent ID Number . . . .

CLASSIFICATION

Sex (one code only)
Male	1
Female	2

Local Authority (write in)
……………………………………

Type of School (database)
City	1
Other urban (non city)	2
Small accessible town	3
Small remote town	4
Accessible rural	5
Remote rural	6

Size of school
< 100 pupils	1
100 – 300 pupils	2
301 – 500 pupils	3
501 – 700 pupils	4
701 – 1,000 pupils	5
> 1,000 pupils	6

Age
Write in exact age in years …………

Age (one code only)
Under 25	1
25 – 34	2
35 – 44	3
45 – 54	4
55 – 65	5
Over 65 years	6

Type of School
Nursery	1
Primary	2
Secondary	3
Special needs	4
Nursery/primary	5
Primary/secondary	6
Nursery/primary/secondary	7

Job No : 3205

Declaration
I declare that this interview was conducted by me with the above named respondent in accordance with survey instructions and the MRS code of conduct.
Signed …………………………………………………
Date ………………………………………………………

Notes to Interviewers (see copy of letter sent out to potential respondents)

Everyone you are calling has volunteered to take part in a pilot project called 'Headstogether'. Headstogether is a virtual community of head teachers in Scotland which is accessed on-line. This evaluation is part of the pilot, although headteachers may not realise it. **Stress the importance of evaluation in any pilot project if you have any difficulties. It does not matter if the respondent has not had time to login to the community or not**. We are interested in hearing this and finding out why they haven't used it.

You may wish to remind respondents about the letter sent out to them.

REMEMBER TO REASSURE RESPONDENTS OF MRS CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE RESEARCH

Introduction for secretary/person who answers the phone

Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is ……….….. and I am an interviewer calling from George Street Research. We are carrying out an independent evaluation of the Headstogether pilot project on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). The discussion is likely to take 10-15 minutes. Please could I speak to …………………….. (NAME OF HEADTEACHER)

When connected to the headteacher …

Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is ……….….. and I am an interviewer calling from George Street Research. We are carrying out an independent evaluation of the Headstogether pilot project on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). It is important that we talk to a cross-section of headteachers, regardless of how frequently they have used headstogether. The discussion is likely to take 10-15 minutes.

1a   Please could you tell me the ways in which you currently obtain information on anything which impact on your role as a headteacher?

1b   And which of these other methods which I am going to read out do you currently use to obtain information on anything which impact on your role as a headteacher?   READ OUT ANY NOT MENTIONED

	1a	1b
Informal face-to-face discussions with other headteachers	1	1
Internal meetings with other members of staff such as senior management teach / principal teachers etc	2	2
Regular meetings with other headteachers (such as Heads of Establishment meetings)	3	3
Informal telephone contact with other headteachers	4	4
Formal telephone contact with other headteachers	5	5
Emails to and from other headteachers	6	6
Emailed information from the local authority	7	7
Telephone contact with the local authority	8	8
Via a national body such as Learning & Teaching Scotland (LTS)	9	9
Internet searches (WRITE IN websites used) ……………………………………………………………. …………………………………………………………….	10	10
Other (WRITE IN) …………………………………………………………….	11	11

1c   I would like to read out a number of statements which other headteachers have made about using computers and I would like you to tell me the extent to which you agree with each one, that is, agree strongly, tend to agree, tend to disagree or disagree strongly? I would like to reassure you that there are no right or wrong answers, it is simply your opinion that we are interested in.

	Ag str	Tend ag	Tend dis	Dis Str	DK
I use computers regularly at school	1	2	3	4	5
I have access to a computer at home	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly use the internet at school	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly use the internet at home	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident about using computers and related hardware and software	1	2	3	4	5
I understand the basics but would like more training on how to use computers fully	1	2	3	4	5
I do not feel confident using computers and prefer not to use them	1	2	3	4	5

2a   And now thinking specifically about headstogether, please can you tell me when you first received your training on the headstogether pilot? CODE ONE ONLY

June 2002	1
July 2002	2
August 2002	3
September 2002	4
October 2002	5
November 2002	6
December 2002	7
January 2003	8
February 2003	9
March 2003	10
April 2003 (N/A in wave 1)	11
May 2003 (N/A in wave 1)	12

2b   And have you had any follow up contact with facilitators since then?

Yes, I contacted them   1 – GO TO Q2d How? _____
Yes, they contacted me   2 – GO TO Q2d How? _____
No, no contact   3 – ASK Q2c

2c   Would you have liked any follow up training to remind you of any aspects of the headstogether website?

Yes   1
No   2

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

2d   Did you access the headstogether site prior to your training day?

Yes   1 – GO TO Q3
No   2 – ASK Q2e

2e   Would you have liked an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the headstogether website prior to training?

Yes   1
No   2

3   And how frequently, on average, have you used the headstogether site since you were trained? Would you say more than once a week, once a week, once every two – three weeks, once a month or less than once a month?

More than once a week   1 – ASK Q4
Once a week   2 – ASK Q4
Once every 2-3 weeks   3 – ASK Q4
Once a month   4 – ASK Q4
Less than once a month   5 – ASK Q4
Have never logged on   6 – GO TO Q**8a**

4   And do you ever log in to headstogether at school during the school day, at school once the school day is over, at home in the evenings or at home at weekends, during holidays or in service days or at some other time?   CODE ALL THAT APPLY

School during school day	1
School outwith school day	2
Home in evenings	3
Home at weekends	4
Holiday / In service days	5
Other (write in)	6

………………………………………….

5a   Which parts of the headstogether site have you used? DO NOT PROMPT RECORD ANSWER AT GRID UNDER Q5c

5b   And which of these other parts of the headstogether site, which I am going to read out to you, are you aware of? READ OUT AND CODE BELOW

5c   And which of these other parts of the headstogether site, which I have just read out, have you accessed at any time? READ OUT AND CODE BELOW

	5a	5b	5c
Front page	1	1	1
Cybrary	2	2	2
Direct publishing	3	3	3
Management issues	4	4	4
McCrone issues	5	5	5
Staff room	6	6	6
Nursery forum	7	7	7
Primary forum	8	8	8
Secondary forum	9	9	9
SEN forum	10	10	10
Technical issues	11	11	11
Useful links	12	12	12
Feedback	13	13	13
Bulletin board	14	14	14
Communities	15	15	15
Other (write in)	16	16	16

……………………………………………

5d   And how often would you say you have accessed …………… part of the headstogether site? Would you say daily, a few times a week, once a week, 2–3 times a month, once a month or less than once a month?

	Daily	Few times wk	Once wk	2-3 x mth	Once mth	< once mth	Other (spec-ify)
Front page	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Cybrary	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Direct publishing	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Management issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
McCrone issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Staff room	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Nursery forum	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Primary forum	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Secondary forum	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
SEN forum	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Technical issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Useful links	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Feedback	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Bulletin board	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Communities	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Other (write in)	1	2	3	4	5	6	………

…………………………….

5e   And do you think that your future use of headstogether is likely to increase, decrease or remain the same?

Increase   1 – ASK Q5f
Decrease   2 – ASK Q5f
Remain the same   3 – GO TO Q6a
Don't know   4 – GO TO Q6a

5f   And why do you think your use will decrease / increase (delete as appropriate)? PROBE FULLY

6a　　When you access the headstogether website, do you access this to obtain information, to participate in ongoing activities or to look / browse to see what is there?

> Obtain information　　　　　　　　　1
> Participate in activities　　　　　　　2
> Look / browse to see what is there　　3

6b　　I would like to read out a number of ways in which you could have participated in the headstogether website. For each one I mention, please can you tell me whether or not you have participated?

6c　　Now could you tell me how likely you are to participate in any of these activities in the next year or so? That is, very likely, quite likely, not very likely or not at all likely?

	6b	6c			
		Very like	Quite like	Not v like	Not at all like
Submitted a question to a hotseat discussion	1	1	2	3	4
Accessed a hotseat discussion	2	1	2	3	4
Downloaded a school policy	3	1	2	3	4
Contributed a school policy	4	1	2	3	4
Taken part in a discussion thread	5	1	2	3	4
Sent someone a sticky	6	1	2	3	4
Sent someone an e:mail	7	1	2	3	4

6d　　I would like to read out some ways in which using the headstogether site might impact on you as a headteacher in the short term. Please could you tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each, that is, agree strongly, tend to agree, tend to disagree or disagree strongly?

Using headstogether has helped me to ….	Ag str	Tend ag	Tend dis	Dis Str
Develop school policy(ies)	1	2	3	4
Discuss and / or clarify issues of importance with other headteachers	1	2	3	4
Have contact with other headteachers on a confidential basis	1	2	3	4
Provide me with information on topical issues which I would not have previously considered	1	2	3	4
Allow me to have access to headteachers outwith my local authority	1	2	3	4
Helped me develop in my role as a headteacher by providing me with support and advice I would not otherwise have got	1	2	3	4
Develop an important channel of communication with other headteachers	1	2	3	4
Develop my ICT skills	1	2	3	4

6e   And what impact do you think the headstogether website will have in the longer term for **you personally**? PROBE FULLY

6f   And what impact do you think the headstogether website will have in the longer term for **other headteachers**? PROBE FULLY

7a   Please can you tell me overall how easy the headstogether website is to access? Would you say very easy, quite easy, not very easy or not at all easy?

Very easy	1
Quite easy	2
Not very easy	3
Not at all easy	4
Don't know	5
Never accessed	6 – GO TO Q8a

7b   Have you ever experienced any problems accessing the headstogether website?

Yes	1 – ASK Q7c
No	2 – GO TO Q9

ASK ALL CODED 1 AT Q7b

7c   Please could you tell me what these problems were? CODE BELOW

Forgot user name	1
Forgot password	2
Could not log on	3
Took too long to download to computer	4
Could not access part of site required	5
Could not remember part of site required	6
Difficulty in navigation around website	7
Other (write in)	8

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

7d   And please could you tell me which factors, if any, prevent you from accessing the headstogether site on a more regular basis? PROBE FULLY
ASK ALL RESPONDENTS CODED 6 AT Q3. ALL OTHERS GO TO Q9

8a   Please can you tell me why you have not logged onto the headstogether website since you were trained? PROBE FULLY

8b   Do you intend to use the headstogether website in the next 3-6 months?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

9   I would now like to read out a number of statements which other headteachers have made about the headstogether website and I would like you to tell me the extent to which you agree with each one, that is, agree strongly, tend to agree, tend to disagree or disagree strongly? Again I would like to reassure you that there are no right or wrong answers, it is simply your opinion that we are interested in.

	Ag str	Tend ag	Tend dis	Dis Str	DK
Headstogether is a good idea but I would consider using it only if I had any free time	1	2	3	4	5
Headstogether is a means of communicating with other headteachers that is not offered by existing channels of communication	1	2	3	4	5
Headstogether is a useful way of bringing headteachers together across Scotland	1	2	3	4	5
Headstogether is a valuable support and advice tool for headteachers	1	2	3	4	5
Headstogether offers headteachers strategic opportunities for the long term	1	2	3	4	5
I do not believe that the website offers confidentiality to headteachers	1	2	3	4	5
I do not like using an ICT based method of communication	1	2	3	4	5
I do not prioritise headstogether as a source of information or support	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer to use other sources of advice	1	2	3	4	5
The headstogether website is of limited value to me in my job	1	2	3	4	5

10a   I would like to read out a number of factors which might help to increase usage of the headstogether website. For each factor, I would like you to tell me if it would be likely to increase your use of the site, that is, very likely, quite likely, not very likely or not at all likely?

	V like	Q like	NV like	NAA like	DK
Follow up training sessions to clarify any queries in relation to headstogether	1	2	3	4	5
Regular telephone contact (perhaps every 3 months) from a facilitator to check that you have the necessary information to use the website	1	2	3	4	5
Accreditation towards Continued Professional Development (CPD)	1	2	3	4	5
More headteachers participating in the website	1	2	3	4	5
Regular updating of topical issues which impact on your role as a headteacher	1	2	3	4	5
More time during the school day to access the website	1	2	3	4	5
Local Authorities giving headstogether more of a priority status	1	2	3	4	5
Reiteration of the confidential nature of the website	1	2	3	4	5
Having a local contact who is a headteacher to ring with any queries on headstogether	1	2	3	4	5
Creating sub communities offering access to other groups of teachers such as deputy heads or senior management	1	2	3	4	5

10b   What other factors, if any, would encourage you to use the headstogether website more frequently in the future? PROBE FULLY

10c   As you may be aware, headstogether is due to be rolled out across Scotland in the near future. What changes or modifications, if any, do you think need to be made to the website in order to encourage regular use of this? PROBE FULLY

10d   Finally, "do you think that Nursery Heads of Establishment who are not GTC registered teachers should be allowed access to headstogether?"

    Yes   1
    No   2

CHECK CLASSIFICATION AND ADDRESS
THANK AND CLOSE

Headstogether
Final Telephone Questionnaire – May 2003

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

This questionnaire is the property of George Street Research Limited, 24 Broughton Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3RH. Telephone 0131 478 7520.

Respondent's Name . . . .

Job Title . . . .

School Name . . . .

Address . . . .

. . . .

Postcode . . . . Telephone Number . . . .

Interviewer Name . . . . Interviewer Number . . . .

Date of Interview . . . . Respondent ID Number . . . .

CLASSIFICATION

Sex (one code only)

Male	1
Female	2

Local Authority (write in)

…………………………………………

Type of School (database)

City	1
Other urban (non city)	2
Small accessible town	3
Small remote town	4
Accessible rural	5
Remote rural	6

Size of school

< 100 pupils	1
100 – 300 pupils	2
301 – 500 pupils	3
501 – 700 pupils	4
701 – 1,000 pupils	5
> 1,000 pupils	6

Age

Write in exact age in years …………

Age (one code only)

Under 25	1
25 – 34	2
35 – 44	3
45 – 54	4
55 – 65	5
Over 65 years	6

Type of School

Nursery	1
Primary	2
Secondary	3
Special needs	4
Nursery/primary	5
Primary/secondary	6
Nursery/primary/secondary	7

Job No : 3205

Declaration

I declare that this interview was conducted by me with the above named respondent in accordance with survey instructions and the MRS code of conduct.

Signed ……………………………………………………

Date ……………………………………………………………

Notes to Interviewers (see copy of letter sent out to potential respondents)

Everyone you are calling has volunteered to take part in a pilot project called 'Headstogether'. Headstogether is a virtual community of head teachers in Scotland which is accessed on-line. This evaluation is part of the pilot, although headteachers may not realise it. **Stress the importance of evaluation in any pilot project if you have any difficulties. It does not matter if the respondent has not had time to login to the community or not**. We are interested in hearing this and finding out why they haven't used it.

You may wish to remind respondents about the letter sent out to them.

REMEMBER TO REASSURE RESPONDENTS OF MRS CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE RESEARCH. NO HEADTEACHER / SCHOOL WILL BE IDENTIFIED BY NAME IN THE FINAL REPORT

Introduction for secretary/person who answers the phone

Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is ………..….. and I am an interviewer calling from George Street Research. We are carrying out an independent evaluation of the Headstogether pilot project on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). The discussion is likely to take 10-15 minutes. Please could I speak to …………………….. (NAME OF HEADTEACHER)

When connected to the headteacher …

Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is ………..….. and I am an interviewer calling from George Street Research. We are carrying out an independent evaluation of the Headstogether pilot project on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). It is important that we talk to a cross-section of headteachers, regardless of how frequently they have used headstogether. The discussion is likely to take 10-15 minutes.

1a   Please could you tell me the ways in which you currently obtain information on anything which impact on your role as a headteacher?

1b   And which of these other methods which I am going to read out do you currently use to obtain information on anything which impact on your role as a headteacher?   READ OUT ANY NOT MENTIONED

	1a	1b
Informal face-to-face discussions with other headteachers	1	1
Internal meetings with other members of staff such as senior management teach / principal teachers etc	2	2
Regular meetings with other headteachers (such as Heads of Establishment meetings)	3	3
Informal telephone contact with other headteachers	4	4
Formal telephone contact with other headteachers	5	5
Emails to and from other headteachers	6	6
Emailed information from the local authority	7	7
Telephone contact with the local authority	8	8
Via a national body such as Learning & Teaching Scotland (LTS)	9	9
Internet searches (WRITE IN websites used) ……………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………….	10	10
Other (WRITE IN) …………………………………………………………….	11	11

1c   I would like to read out a number of statements which other headteachers have made about using computers and I would like you to tell me the extent to which you agree with each one, that is, agree strongly, tend to agree, tend to disagree or disagree strongly? I would like to reassure you that there are no right or wrong answers, it is simply your opinion that we are interested in.

	Ag str	Tend ag	Tend dis	Dis Str	DK
I use computers regularly at school	1	2	3	4	5
I have access to a computer at home	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly use the internet at school	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly use the internet at home	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident about using computers and related hardware and software	1	2	3	4	5
I understand the basics but would like more training on how to use computers fully	1	2	3	4	5
I do not feel confident using computers and prefer not to use them	1	2	3	4	5

2a   And now thinking specifically about headstogether, please can you tell me when you first received your training on the headstogether pilot? CODE ONE ONLY

                        June 2002   1
                        July 2002   2
                        August 2002   3
                        September 2002   4
                        October 2002   5
                        November 2002   6
                        December 2002   7
                        January 2003   8
                        February 2003   9
                        March 2003   10
                        April 2003   11
                        May 2003   12

2b   And have you had any follow up contact with facilitators since then?

                        Yes, I contacted them   1 – GO TO Q2d How? _____
                        Yes, they contacted me   2 – GO TO Q2bii How? _____
                        No, no contact   3 – ASK Q2c

        ASK Q2bii FOR ALL CODED 2 AT Q2b

2bii   And what was this contact for? PROBE FULLY

        ASK ALL RESPONDENTS
2c   Would you have liked any follow up training to remind you of any aspects of the headstogether website?

                        Yes   1
                        No   2

        ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

2d   Did you access the headstogether site prior to your training day?

                        Yes   1 – GO TO Q3
                        No   2 – ASK Q2e

2e   Would you have liked an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the headstogether website prior to training?

                        Yes   1
                        No   2

3   And how frequently, on average, have you used the headstogether site since you were trained? Would you say more than once a week, once a week, once every two – three weeks, once a month or less than once a month?

More than once a week	1 – ASK Q4
Once a week	2 – ASK Q4
Once every 2-3 weeks	3 – ASK Q4
Once a month	4 – ASK Q4
Less than once a month	5 – ASK Q4
Have never logged on	6 – GO TO Q**8a**

ASK ALL CODED 1 – 5 AT Q3

4   And do you ever log in to headstogether at school during the school day, at school once the school day is over, at home in the evenings or at home at weekends, during holidays or in service days or at some other time?   CODE ALL THAT APPLY

School during school day	1
School outwith school day	2
Home in evenings	3
Home at weekends	4
Holiday / In service days	5
Other (write in)	6

………………………………………….

5a Which parts of the headstogether site have you used? DO NOT PROMPT RECORD ANSWER AT GRID UNDER Q5a

5b And which of these other parts of the headstogether site, which I am going to read out to you, are you aware of? READ OUT AND CODE BELOW

5c And which of these other parts of the headstogether site, which I have just read out, have you accessed at any time? READ OUT AND CODE BELOW

<u>ASK Q5d FOR EACH PART OF SITE ACCESSED AT EITHER 5a/5c</u>

5d And how often would you say you have accessed …………… part of the headstogether site? Would you say daily, a few times a week, once a week, 2–3 times a month, once a month or less than once a month?

	5a	5b	5c	5d Daily	Few times wk	Once wk	2-3 x mth	Once mth	< once a mth	Other (spec-ify)
Front page	1	1	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Cybrary	2	2	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Direct publishing	3	3	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Management issues	4	4	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
McCrone issues	5	5	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Staff room	6	6	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Nursery forum	7	7	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Primary forum	8	8	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Secondary forum	9	9	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
SEN forum	10	10	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Technical issues	11	11	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Useful links	12	12	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Feedback	13	13	13	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Bulletin board	14	14	14	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Communities	15	15	15	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Open Forum	50	50	50	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Index A-L	51	51	51	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Index M-T	52	52	52	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Anonymous Agony Aunt	53	53	53	1	2	3	4	5	6	………
Other (write in)	16	16	16	1	2	3	4	5	6	………

………………………………………………

5e   And do you think that your future use of headstogether is likely to increase, decrease or remain the same?

Increase	1 – ASK Q5f
Decrease	2 – ASK Q5f
Remain the same	3 – GO TO Q6a
Don't know	4 – GO TO Q6a

5f   And why do you think your use will decrease / increase (delete as appropriate)? PROBE FULLY

6a   When you access the headstogether website, do you access this to obtain information, to participate in ongoing activities or to look / browse to see what is there?

Obtain information	1
Participate in activities	2
Look / browse to see what is there	3

6b   I would like to read out a number of ways in which you could have participated in the headstogether website. For each one I mention, please can you tell me whether or not you have participated?

6c   Now could you tell me how likely you are to participate in any of these activities in the next year or so? That is, very likely, quite likely, not very likely or not at all likely?

	6b	6c			
		Very like	Quite like	Not v like	Not at all like
Submitted a question to a hotseat discussion	1	1	2	3	4
Accessed a hotseat discussion	2	1	2	3	4
Downloaded a school policy	3	1	2	3	4
Contributed a school policy	4	1	2	3	4
Taken part in a discussion thread	5	1	2	3	4
Sent someone a sticky	6	1	2	3	4
Sent someone an e:mail	7	1	2	3	4

6d   I would like to read out some ways in which using the headstogether site might impact on you as a headteacher in the short term. Please could you tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each, that is, agree strongly, tend to agree, tend to disagree or disagree strongly?

Using headstogether has helped me to ….	Ag str	Tend ag	Tend dis	Dis Str
Develop school policy(ies)	1	2	3	4
Discuss and / or clarify issues of importance with other headteachers	1	2	3	4
Have contact with other headteachers on a confidential basis	1	2	3	4
Provide me with information on topical issues which I would not have previously considered	1	2	3	4
Allow me to have access to headteachers outwith my local authority	1	2	3	4
Helped me develop in my role as a headteacher by providing me with support and advice I would not otherwise have got	1	2	3	4
Develop an important channel of communication with other headteachers	1	2	3	4
Develop my ICT skills	1	2	3	4

6e   And what impact do you think the headstogether website will have in the longer term for **you personally**? PROBE FULLY

6f   And what impact do you think the headstogether website will have in the longer term for **other headteachers**? PROBE FULLY

7a   Please can you tell me overall how easy the headstogether website is to access? Would you say very easy, quite easy, not very easy or not at all easy?

Very easy	1
Quite easy	2
Not very easy	3
Not at all easy	4
Don't know	5
Never accessed	6 – GO TO Q8a

7b   Have you ever experienced any problems accessing the headstogether website?

Yes	1 – ASK Q7c
No	2 – GO TO Q9

<u>ASK ALL CODED 1 AT Q7b</u>

7c   Please could you tell me what these problems were? CODE BELOW

Forgot user name	1
Forgot password	2
Could not log on	3
Took too long to download to computer	4
Could not access part of site required	5
Could not remember part of site required	6
Difficulty in navigation around website	7
Other (write in)	8

…………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………

7d   And please could you tell me which factors, if any, prevent you from accessing the headstogether site on a more regular basis? PROBE FULLY

<u>ASK ALL RESPONDENTS CODED 6 AT Q3. ALL OTHERS GO TO Q9</u>

8a   Please can you tell me why you have not logged onto the headstogether website since you were trained? PROBE FULLY

8b   Do you intend to use the headstogether website in the next 3-6 months?

Yes   1
No   2
Don't know   3

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

9   I would now like to read out a number of statements which other headteachers have made about the headstogether website and I would like you to tell me the extent to which you agree with each one, that is, agree strongly, tend to agree, tend to disagree or disagree strongly? Again I would like to reassure you that there are no right or wrong answers, it is simply your opinion that we are interested in.

	Ag str	Tend ag	Tend dis	Dis Str	DK
Headstogether is a valuable support and advice tool for headteachers	1	2	3	4	5
I do not prioritise headstogether as a source of information or support	1	2	3	4	5
Headstogether is a useful way of bringing headteachers together across Scotland	1	2	3	4	5
The headstogether website is of limited value to me in my job	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer to use other sources of advice	1	2	3	4	5
I do not like using an ICT based method of communication	1	2	3	4	5
Headstogether is a means of communicating with other headteachers that is not offered by existing channels of communication	1	2	3	4	5
Headstogether is a good idea but I would consider using it only if I had any free time	1	2	3	4	5
I do not believe that the website offers confidentiality to headteachers	1	2	3	4	5
Headstogether offers headteachers strategic opportunities for the long term	1	2	3	4	5

10a I would like to read out a number of factors which might help to increase usage of the headstogether website. For each factor, I would like you to tell me if it would be likely to increase your use of the site, that is, very likely, quite likely, not very likely or not at all likely?

	V like	Q like	NV like	NAA like	DK
Follow up training sessions to clarify any queries in relation to headstogether	1	2	3	4	5
Regular telephone contact (perhaps every 3 months) from a facilitator to check that you have the necessary information to use the website	1	2	3	4	5
Accreditation towards Continued Professional Development (CPD)	1	2	3	4	5
More headteachers participating in the website	1	2	3	4	5
Regular updating of topical issues which impact on your role as a headteacher	1	2	3	4	5
More time during the school day to access the website	1	2	3	4	5
Local Authorities giving headstogether more of a priority status	1	2	3	4	5
Reiteration of the confidential nature of the website	1	2	3	4	5
Having a local contact who is a headteacher to ring with any queries on headstogether	1	2	3	4	5
Creating sub communities offering access to other groups of teachers such as deputy heads or senior management	1	2	3	4	5

10b What other factors, if any, would encourage you to use the headstogether website more frequently in the future? PROBE FULLY

10c As you may be aware, headstogether is due to be rolled out across Scotland in the near future. What changes or modifications, if any, do you think need to be made to the website in order to encourage regular use of this? PROBE FULLY

10d   Finally, "do you think that Nursery Heads of Establishment who are not GTC registered teachers should be allowed access to headstogether?"

        Yes   1
        No   2

CHECK CLASSIFICATION AND ADDRESS
THANK AND CLOSE

HEADS TOGETHER

Final Topic Guide – Facilitators / Development Officer

The following question areas have been developed to provide a framework for discussion. All topic areas of relevance should be covered at some point in the discussion but should be addressed in an order that facilitates easy and relaxed conversation. Be sure to allow opportunities for respondents to raise new or different issues that they consider significant to the core subjects

(IF PERMISSIBLE) ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE GUIDED TOUR OF HEADS TOGETHER WEBSITE AND INTRODUCE ALL ASPECTS OF THE WEBSITE OR TALK THROUGH WHAT THEY ARE DOING / ACCESSING

Where appropriate, remember to check on differences in perceptions, usage, skill levels etc between the different sectors (including Nursery Heads of Establishment who are not teachers)

Background / Warm-Up

- Details of role and responsibilities in relation to Heads Together; what are respondent expectations for Heads Together (both pilot and full introduction)

- Details of any involvement in / research from Talking Heads pilot in England & Wales; details of any ways in which (with hindsight) changes or modifications would be made to Talking Heads scheme, together with reasons (REFER TO REPORTS / OTHER INFORMATION MADE AVAILABLE)

- Details of any differences in implementation between England and Scotland and reasons for this

Progress to Date

- Update on progress of pilot to date – numbers of headteachers trained / signed up to pilot and profile of those signing up (type of school / geographic location / size of school / ICT awareness & usage in general eg. confident users, unconfident users etc)

- Details of any (unexpected) factors that have impacted to date on pilot implementation and how these have been dealt with eg. changes to Think.com

- What feedback and information have respondents had from headteachers to date and how has this been dealt with; what format has feedback taken (use of helpline etc)

- What is the extent of headteacher usage of online community to date (information only / participation in dialogue); for those using the site for information only, how would respondents go about encouraging participation in dialogue; do respondents have any statistics so far as to usage;

- How effective has facilitation been to date and how has this compared with facilitation offered for Talking Heads in England & Wales; what changes have been made in Scotland prior to / during pilot, together with reasons; what further changes / modifications should / could be made and why

- What training and support has been provided to headteachers thus far; what feedback has come from headteachers on training and support specifically

- What changes / modifications to training and support are required in order to maximise implementation of Heads Together; are there any further changes / modifications which respondents think should be made and, if so, what are these and why should they be introduced

- What feedback have respondents had from headteachers (actual and anecdotal)

- What feedback has been received on hotseats held to date; what figures are there on usage of hotseats; what is the purpose of hotseats and how useful have they been; what changes would be made to hotseats in the future and why

- What problems / barriers for usage of Heads Together have been identified thus far and how are a) respondents and b) headteachers themselves dealing with these

- How have initial expectations of Heads Together lived up to actual implementation so far, together with reasons

- To what extent, do respondents believe that Heads Together has offered support by providing a mechanism for mutual support, problem resolution, reducing the isolation of teachers / improving upon ICT skills / increasing potential for usage of ICT in administration, management, teaching & learning / sharing of new ideas, together with reasons

- In what ways could / should Heads Together be further modified to increase / improve upon the development of management skills of headteachers / offered support by providing a mechanism for mutual support, problem resolution, reducing the isolation of teachers / improving upon ICT skills / increasing potential for usage of ICT in administration, management, teaching & learning / sharing of new ideas, together with reasons

- Check respondents willingness to be contacted about once a month through the duration of the pilot in order to gather further comment relating to the Heads Together pilot (this contact would take the form of in-depth telephone interviews)

- Any additional comments.

HEADS TOGETHER
Final Topic Guide – Headteachers

The following question areas have been developed to provide a framework for discussion. All topic areas of relevance should be covered at some point in the discussion but should be addressed in an order that facilitates easy and relaxed conversation. Be sure to allow opportunities for respondents to raise new or different issues that they consider significant to the core subjects

(IF PERMISSIBLE) ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE GUIDED TOUR OF HEADS TOGETHER WEBSITE AND INTRODUCE ALL ASPECTS OF THE WEBSITE OR TALK THROUGH WHAT THEY ARE DOING / ACCESSING

Where appropriate, remember to check on differences in perceptions, usage, skill levels etc between the different sectors (including Nursery Heads of Establishment who are not teachers)

Background / Warm-Up

- Details of length of time in position as headteacher (role and responsibilities); what does respondent perceive to be the key issues facing headteachers today; how is ICT currently used in school (what for, length of time, degree of confidence felt by users etc)

- What means / channels of communication are currently used with other headteachers (conferences / meetings / telephone / e:mail etc); what sources of information are referred to / accessed when resolving issues; what sources of information would be priorities and why

- How does Heads Together compare to existing channels of communication; what channels are preferred and why

- How did respondent become involved in Heads Together (probe on initial contact from local authorities) and what were initial reactions to the project and what were respondent expectations

Training / Support

- Details of training provided; how effective was the training provided; in what ways, if any, would respondent like training change for the future, together with reasons

- Details of any support (eg. Telephone help available from facilitators/Learning and teaching Scotland) subsequently used by headteacher; have they accessed any support; if so, in what form; how does support provided match up to needs; what changes would be made to support and why

- Perceptions of role of facilitators; Usefulness of facilitation – examples.

Usage of Heads Together

- What is the extent of usage of online community to date (information only / participation in dialogue);

- What problems / barriers for usage of Heads Together have been identified by respondents thus far and how are / would respondent deal with these. Any problems accessing the site eg speed; If problems with access, how major a barrier is this?

- How have initial expectations of Heads Together lived up to actual implementation so far, together with reasons

- *for those using the site for information only*, do they think future usage will change and, in what ways; what could be done to encourage headteachers to participate in dialogue; *for those participating in dialogue,* what prompted this participation; will they continue to participate and if not, why not; what would encourage more participation in dialogue

- Have any queries/questions been posted? If so – what level of response was received? Was it useful? Would it be used again and why / why not

- Awareness of different elements of website – hotseats, brainstorm, cybrary etc; have these different elements been accessed and why / why not

- To what extent, do respondents believe that Heads Together has offered support by providing a mechanism for mutual support, sharing of experience/knowledge and expertise, problem resolution, reducing the isolation of teachers / improving upon ICT skills / increasing potential for usage of ICT in administration, management, teaching & learning / sharing of new ideas, together with reasons

- How would respondents describe Heads Together to other headteachers (probing on community / chat room); to what extent do respondents perceive Heads Together to be a community (this concept / understanding / level of participation is 'central' to the project and its continuing success)

The Future for Heads Together
- In what ways could / should Heads Together be further modified to increase / improve upon the development of management skills of headteachers / offered support by providing a mechanism for mutual support, sharing of experience /knowledge and expertise, problem resolution, reducing the isolation of teachers / improving upon ICT skills / increasing potential for usage of ICT in administration, management, teaching & learning / sharing of new ideas, together with reasons; What additions to the site would respondents like to see, together with reasons

- Should the Heads Together community be replicated to create a series of parallel / closed communities, each meeting the needs of that distinct group of teachers

- Any additional comments