Evaluation of the Welsh School-based Counselling Strategy: Stage One Report

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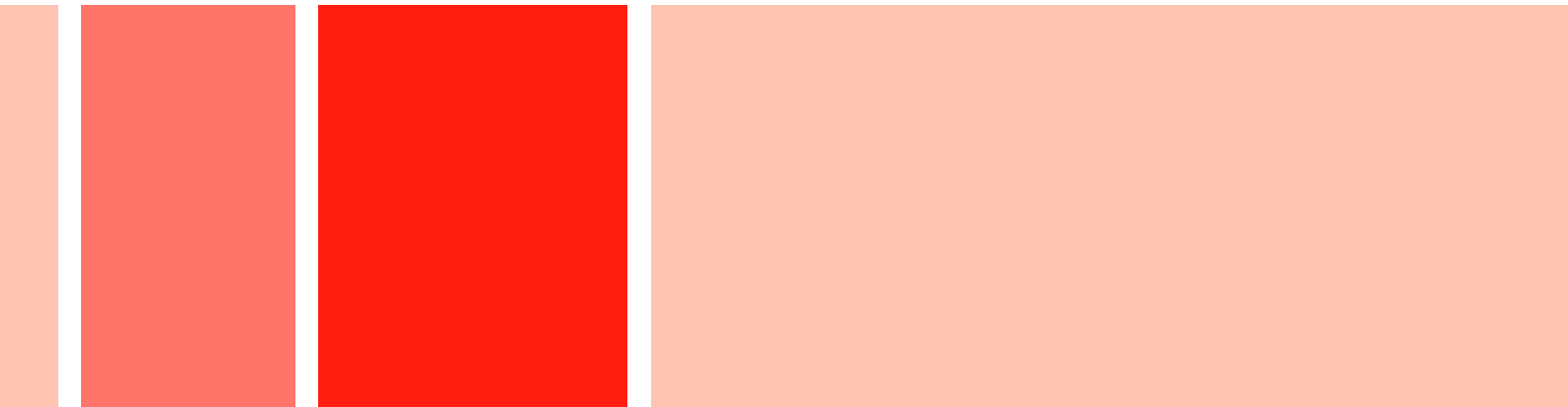
Evaluation of the Welsh School-based Counselling Strategy: Stage One Report
July 2011

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[1] Ipsos Mori collected data for the head/link teacher census and were not involved in report writing

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2010 the Welsh Government commissioned a research consortium led by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy to undertake an evaluation of its school-based counselling strategy which has been rolled out across Wales.

Aims and Objectives

The Welsh School-based Counselling Strategy is now two and a half years into its implementation. The evaluation of the Strategy is in two stages each reported on separately. This Stage One report aims to:

- Assess the impact and effectiveness of the Welsh School-based Counselling Strategy

- Evaluate the general success of the implementation of the Strategy nationally and locally

- Evaluate the longer-term effects of school-based counselling services on children and young people and the strategic place of counselling alongside other services

Stage one of the evaluation consists of five strands of data collection and analysis. Stage two (forthcoming) will report the findings of in depth interviews and focus groups, incorporating the opinions of service users, pupils, parents and teachers, along with a cost analysis and an evaluation of the primary school pilot sites.

Methods

During stage one of the evaluation, five strands of data collection and analysis were undertaken between September and November 2010 to incorporate a wide range of stakeholder perspectives.

Desk research

To identify key issues in the implementation of the Strategy, annual reports and minutes of meetings were analysed to identify any problems in its implementation along with examples of good practice.

Analysis of client data and outcomes collected prior to September 2010

A key feature of the Strategy has been the routine collection of audit and evaluation data using the Young Person's CORE (YP-CORE)[2] or the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)[3] forms in both the secondary and primary pilot schools. This data was analysed to assess the effectiveness of counselling on pupils' levels of the psychological distress. Similarly the widespread use of a standardised post-counselling evaluation questionnaire formed the basis of an analysis of pupils' perceptions of counselling services. An analysis of demographic information relating to clients who have used counselling services was undertaken, based on data provided by client record forms.

Census of school-based counsellors

A census survey of all school counsellors was conducted using a self-completed paper-based questionnaire (see annex 1) aimed at measuring perceptions of the implementation of school-based counselling.

Census of school heads/link teachers

To capture an overview of the Strategy implementation at a school level a census of senior school management was carried out. Link teachers in each school who hold responsibility for school-based counselling were contacted and asked to participate in a 10 minute telephone interview using a structured protocol (see annex 2).

Census of local authority leads/service managers

Local authority leads and counselling service managers were surveyed by a paper-based questionnaire eliciting opinions and perceptions of Strategy implementation and comparisons with the other groups surveyed (see annex 3).

Findings

The effectiveness of school-based counselling

Inconsistencies in the quality and completeness of outcome data across the local authorities means results should be interpreted with a degree of caution. However, data available from the first year of the Welsh School-based Counselling Strategy indicates that young people showed large improvements from beginning of counselling to the end of

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[2] The Young Person's CORE form (YP-CORE), a 10-item measure of psychological difficulties for young people aged 11-16 (Twigg, et al., 2009) http://www.coreims.co.uk/forms_mailer.php
[3] Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a well-established measure of psychological difficulties in children and young people (Goodman, 2001) http://www.sdqinfo.org/

counselling (average effect size = 1.1), outcomes comparing well with other UK school-based counselling services (average effect size = 0.81). The change from pre- to post counselling scores across Welsh local authorities (where robust data is available) is shown in the figure below (Figure 1, pg 37 of the main report), with a reduction in average score indicating improvement post-counselling compared to pre-counselling.

Change from pre- to post counselling score across Welsh Local Authorities returning robust data
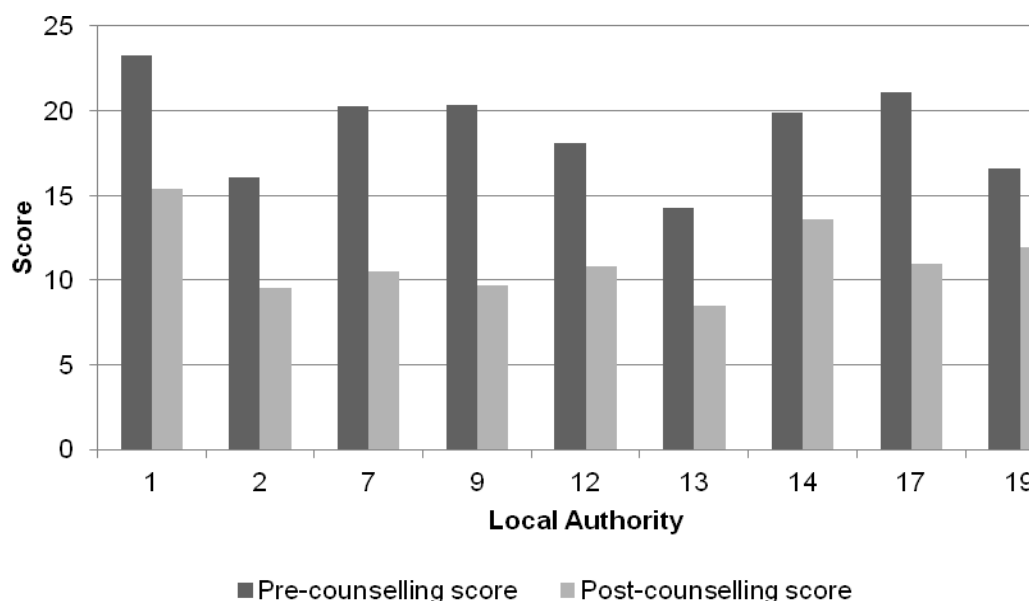
Source: YP-CORE and SDQ data provided by local authorities

Demographic and session details for young people using services are very complete, providing a clear picture of who uses services and in what ways. The profile of young people using the services and as shown in the table below, the issues they are presenting with are very similar to other UK school-based counselling provisions, with pupils presenting primarily with family related issues, followed by anger and behaviour related issues (Table 3, pg 36 of main report). Attendance rates are high, with young people attending, on average, about four sessions of counselling per episode.[4]

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[4] An episode of counselling is defined as a complete series of sessions undertaken by a service-user. A session of counselling is normally of approximately 1 hour's duration. These are normally held on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

Presenting issues

Presenting issue	Number	Percentage[5]	Welsh Sample Rank	UK Average Rank[6]
Family	2368	56.9%	1	1
Anger	1015	24.4%	2	2
Behaviour related	734	17.6%	3	4
Stress	611	14.7%	4	10
Bereavement	608	14.6%	5	8
Bullying	604	14.5%	6	9
Self-worth	525	12.6%	7	6 (self/self esteem)
Depression	465	11.2%	8	7
Relationships other than family or teachers	385	9.2%	9	5 (general)
Relationships with teachers	292	7%	10	5 (general)
Self-harm	287	6.9%	11	14
Abuse (including sexual)	235	5.6%	12	13
Academic	212	5.1%	13	3 (School)
Domestic abuse	130	3.1%	14	n/a
Eating disorders	118	2.8%	15	n/a
Substance misuse	96	2.3%	16	n/a
Suicidal thoughts	83	2%	17	n/a
Sexual (including orientation)	72	1.7%	18	n/a
Financial concerns / poverty	44	1%	19	n/a
Other	388	9.3%		n/a
Not known	49	1.2%		n/a

Source: Data provided from client record forms, summer 2008-09 to summer 2009-10, completed by school counsellors and supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government.

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[5] Note: as young people may have been recorded as presenting with up to three issues, the total percentage is greater than 100
[6] UK average rankings from Cooper (2009)

The school counselling workforce

Counsellors are predominantly female, white and British, the vast majority (86%) being members of a professional body, particularly BACP. The latter ensures counsellors are bound by an ethical framework and subject to a complaints procedure. The majority have prior experience of working with children and young people (93%). There is considerable variation in therapeutic approach used by counsellors and in level of qualification, although the majority (73.5%) have been trained to postgraduate level. Survey data indicated there was a perceived need for further training opportunities for both counsellors and school staff.

Counselling services

Services are generally flexible in terms of the number of sessions offered to pupils and location, with 53% of counsellors stating their counselling service operates both within and outside of school premises. Services are run on a regular, rather than an ad hoc basis, and the average waiting time is 1-2 weeks. Close working relationships with specialist services such as CAMHS are reported, with two thirds of counsellors having made or received referrals, and high levels of satisfaction were expressed in relation to the integration of services into school provision (over 80% agreement within each stakeholder group), the methods for monitoring and evaluating services (over 75% agreement within each stakeholder group), accessibility (at least 80% agreement within each stakeholder group) and the value placed on services by school staff, pupils and parents.

Over half of schools included in the survey had provided a counselling service prior to operating as part of the Strategy, and it is perceived these services have improved since its introduction. Survey data suggests that the establishment of services has had little impact on staff workload, but that the perceived attainment, attendance and behaviour of pupils who had received school counselling had improved (65%, 69% and 80% respectively, see figure below, Figure 12, pg 60 of the main report). There was significant net agreement (91%) among head/link teachers that the school's counselling service meets the needs of pupils.

Perceptions of the impact of the school-based counselling service on attainment, attendance and behaviour of pupils
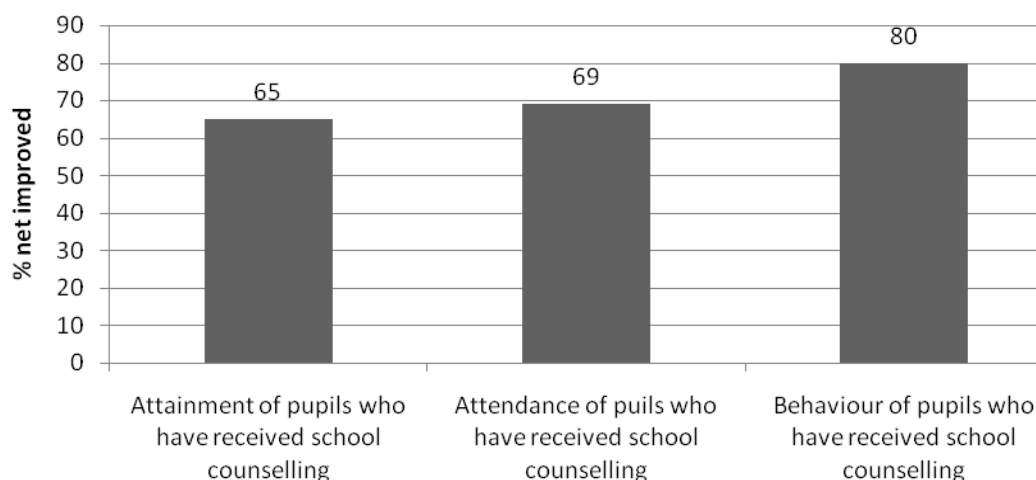
Source: Head/Link teacher telephone census

There is variation in perceptions across the different stakeholder groups as to how sensitive services are to the needs of Welsh speakers, with Local Authority leads/service managers having the highest level of satisfaction (56%) followed by school counsellors (47%) and then link/head teachers (28%).

Resources

A mixed picture emerges in terms of levels of satisfaction with resources. When asked to provide recommendations to improve the counselling service a significant proportion of stakeholder responses called for increased funding, increases in staffing levels and more counselling sessions to be made available to pupils.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The very high response rates to all of the surveys undertaken indicates that the high levels of agreement and satisfaction with the Strategy, discerned among the key stakeholder groups, are solid and reliable findings. Although the outcome data is less reliable, early indications are that counselling interventions are highly effective in reducing levels of distress among pupils.

Key recommendations are as follows:

- Local authorities and individual services should make every effort to collect more complete and uniform outcome data to ensure the effectiveness of school-based counselling can be measured

- Wider opportunities for ongoing continuing professional development of school counsellors and training of school staff in understanding school-based counselling should be provided by local authorities and schools

- Further investigation into how well school-based counselling services meet the needs of Welsh-speaking pupils should be conducted as part of the Stage Two evaluation

- Resourcing of the Strategy should be monitored to ensure that staffing levels are adequate and that services continue to meet demand.

1   Introduction

In 2010 the Welsh Government commissioned a research consortium led by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy to undertake an evaluation of its school-based counselling strategy which has been rolled out across Wales over the past two and a half years.

Aims and Objectives

1.1.   The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact and effectiveness of the Welsh School-based Counselling Strategy.

1.2.   Its objectives are to evaluate the general success of the implementation of the Strategy nationally and locally and to evaluate the longer-term effects of school-based counselling services on children and young people and their strategic place alongside other services.

1.3.   The evaluation is in 2 stages, each reported on separately. Stage One of the evaluation consists of five strands of data collection and analysis; desk research, analysis of client data and outcomes, census of counsellors, census of head/link teachers, census of local authority leads/service managers. Stage Two, which will be completed by September 2011, will report the findings of in-depth interviews and focus groups, incorporating the opinions of service users, pupils, parents and teachers, along with a cost analysis and an evaluation of the primary school pilot sites. The research consortium will be working with additional partners in order to undertake the second stage of the evaluation.

Background

1.4.   Over the last 10 years counselling in UK secondary schools has grown dramatically. Counselling, delivered by a professionally trained workforce, is being seen as an effective early intervention for young people who have emotional, behavioural or social problems. Counselling is seen as a way that young people can address their problems with a trusted adult, and as such can quite quickly get "back on track".

1.5.   Research on the nature and effectiveness of school-based counselling is rapidly emerging. In a review of 30 audit and evaluation studies drawing on data from over 10,000 young people, Cooper (2009, p.147) concluded that the 'typical' young person

coming to a school-based counselling service is "likely to be around 14 years old, experiencing psychological difficulties that have been present for six months or more and at a level close to those attending CAMHS units, and somewhat more likely to be female. Most often, they will be referred to the counsellor through their school's pastoral care system, and attend – on a fairly regular basis – for around four to seven sessions. If female, they are most likely to present with, and discuss, family and relationship issues; and, if male, family and/or anger issues. By the end of counselling, they are likely to be feeling significantly better, and are likely to attribute a large part of this improvement to counselling. Most often, they will indicate that this was because it gave them a chance to talk through their problems and get things off their chests. As a consequence of this improvement, they may also feel more able to engage with their learning." Although most of the evidence for effectiveness in Cooper's review came from studies of person-centred or humanistic counselling, there was no evidence that any one approach was more effective than another.

1.6. The history of counselling in schools in Wales began with a recommendation from the Children's Commissioner for Wales's Clywch Inquiry Report[7]. The Clywch Report suggested that all young people in schools should have a trusted adult to talk to about their concerns. This recommendation was accepted by the Welsh Government, and in 2007 the Welsh Government commissioned a research team led by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the University of Newcastle to evaluate counselling in schools across the UK (Pattison et al., 2007)[8]. The purpose of this report was to evaluate counselling in schools across the UK and to make recommendations for developing school-based counselling in Wales. In April 2008, the Welsh Government published the National Strategy for School-based Counselling Services[9] which was informed by the Pattison et al., (2007) report. The document set out the Welsh Government's commitment that all school pupils in Wales should be able to access counselling services. It is also one of the key actions set out in the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales.

1.7. Counselling is one of a range of services that help to support the health, emotional and social needs of pupils and leads to a healthy school culture. Counselling is a "talking" therapy usually provided on a one-to-one basis, in weekly sessions of

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[7] http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet//2004/060704JDclywch?lang=en
[8] Full report can be obtained at http://www.bacp.co.uk/research/School_Counselling.php
[9] http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/counsellingservicesstrategy/?lang=en

approximately an hour's duration. It is confidential (with limits to this where risk issues are presented), and non-directive in the sense that it encourages pupils to talk about whatever is troubling them, explore such issues and develop solutions in an atmosphere of collaboration between counsellor and pupil.[10]

1.8. The Strategy aims to ensure that counselling services are available in all Welsh secondary schools. It has also established pilot services in primary schools in four local authorities. One of the actions in the Welsh Government School-based Counselling Services in Wales was to develop standards and guidance for counsellors and counselling services. A "Toolkit"[11] was developed as an action of the school-based counselling strategy, giving guidance to schools and local authorities on how to set up and monitor counselling services. This document advised on the collection of routine service and client data using standardised questionnaires, to facilitate the evaluation of school-based counselling.

1.9. The Welsh Government made available initial funding of £1m in 2008-09, £2.5m in 2009-10 and £3m in 2010-11 to take forward the Strategy. An additional £1.5m has been agreed for 2010-2011 to expand services across all secondary schools, extend the Strategy into school year 6, special schools, pupil referral units and specifically to ensure inclusion of children and young people with Additional Learning Needs.

1.10. Currently all secondary schools in Wales have access to counselling. There has been a national programme of child protection training, and there is a further government commitment of funding of £14.25 million for the next three years. As implementation of the Strategy is well underway, and indeed ahead of schedule, it is timely for its impact and effectiveness to be evaluated and recommendations made for its future development. A research team including BACP, University of Strathclyde, Ipsos MORI and the University of Newcastle have collaborated in undertaking this evaluation which is in two stages. This report covers Stage One of the evaluation, detailing the findings of data collection and analysis conducted over the period September-November 2010.

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[10] Source: http://www.bacp.co.uk/information//whatiscounselling.php
[11] School-based Counselling Operating Toolkit: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/.pdf

2　Method

This section gives a brief description of the benchmarks used for the development of data collection tools, along with details of the five strands of data collection. The groups of participants are identified (e.g., school counsellors), methods of data collection described, together with types of data collected.

Overview of Methods

2.1.　The evaluation strategy was developed in close collaboration with the project Steering Group and sought to incorporate the views of a range of key stakeholders. These include school counsellors, senior managers (e.g. head teachers) responsible for running the services in schools and local authority leads responsible for implementing the School-based Counselling Strategy. The Pattison et al., (2007) report made 10 recommendations that school-based counselling services should:

1. Have sustainable funding.
2. Employ professionally qualified counsellors who have experience of working with young people; who access appropriate clinical supervision with experienced supervisors; who take part in regular, relevant continuing professional development (CPD).
3. Deliver accessible counselling in an appropriately private but safe setting within the school vicinity.
4. Be seen as non-stigmatising by the school community and a normal part of school provision, which is integrated into the school community.
5. Be monitored and evaluated by individuals or an agency (in or out of the school) with experience in this specialised area of work.
6. Pay due regard to current legislation and guidance, and offer confidentiality within usual ethical and safeguarding limits.
7. Respond flexibly to local needs in respect of diversity (e.g. language) and practicality (e.g. available during holiday periods).
8. Work with and alongside other services and agencies in a collegial manner, whilst maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.
9. Employ counsellors who are members of a professional body and as such have an established ethical framework and complaints procedure.
10. Employ counsellors whose personal qualities will mean that they are approachable, have good listening skills and a manner that encourages a

climate for safe and trusting relationships.

2.2   These recommendations were used as benchmarks for the assessment of the
Strategy implementation to ensure consistency between the evaluation currently
being reported on and the original (2007) report. Hence many of the items developed
for the various data collection tools were derived from these recommendations. This
allows comparisons to be made across the various stakeholder groups and links to be
made with the original (2007) evaluation. Based on this approach, five strands of data
collection and analysis were undertaken between September and November 2010
and are reported on here.

Desk research

2.3   To identify key issues in the implementation of the Strategy, annual reports from the
22 Local Authorities in Wales were analysed along with minutes of meetings from the
Steering Groups, Consortia Groups and the All Wales Group for school-based
counselling in Wales. Problems encountered in the implementation of the Strategy
were assessed and examples of good practice identified.

Analysis of client data and outcomes collected prior to September 2010

2.4   A key aim of this evaluation is to assess the outcomes for users of school-based
counselling. The routine collection of audit and evaluation data was a
recommendation of the 2007 report and has led to the monitoring of outcomes using
the Young Persons CORE (YP-CORE)[12] or the Strength and Difficulties
Questionnaire (SDQ)[13] forms in both the secondary and primary pilot schools.

2.5   The Young Person's CORE form (YP-CORE), is a 10-item measure of psychological
difficulties for young people aged 11-16 (Twigg, et al., 2009). It was adapted from the
CORE-OM ("Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation -- Outcome Measure", Barkham,
et al., 2001), and is the third revision of this measure (previous versions being a
14-item "Teen-CORE" and an 18-item "Young People's CORE v.1", Twigg et al.,
2009). The measure asks young people to rate how they have been feeling in
reference to specific items, over the past week on a five-point scale (0 = *Not at all*, 4 =
Most or all of the time). Examples of items on the measures are "I've felt edgy or

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[12] The Young Person's CORE form (YP-CORE), a 10-item measure of psychological difficulties for young
people aged 11-16 (Twigg, et al., 2009) http://www.coreims.co.uk/forms_mailer.php
[13] Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a well-established measure of psychological difficulties in
children and young people (Goodman, 2001) http://www.sdqinfo.org/

nervous" and "I've felt able to cope when things go wrong" (reversed item). Ratings are averaged and then multiplied by 10, to give an overall score from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher levels of psychological distress. For the purposes of the present study, YP-CORE forms were considered acceptable if eight or more items had been completed. The YP-CORE measure has been shown to be acceptable to young people; with good inter-item reliability (Cronbach's α = 0.85) -- consistent across gender and age groups (Twigg, et al., 2009). It is the most widely used measure in school-based counselling services within the UK (Cooper, 2009). Data from the present study indicated that the measure had acceptable levels of inter-item reliability, with a Cronbach's α of .78 at both baseline and endpoint.

2.6 The Self-Report Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a widely-used and well-validated brief behavioural screening instrument for children and young people (aged 11 to 16), that can also be used to evaluate the efficacy of specific interventions (Goodman, 2001). Young people are asked to rate 25 items according to how they had been feeling over the past six months (at assessment) and past month (at follow-up), as well as to complete an 'Impact Supplement' assessing overall distress and impairment in different life domains. For both measures a higher score indicates higher levels of psychological distress. Therefore a reduction in the score between pre- and post-therapy measures suggests the intervention has been effective in lowering distress in children and young people.

2.7 The current evaluation, based in a naturalistic setting, adopts a "cohort" design. This assesses change in young people attending counselling from pre-intervention to post-intervention. Compared with the 'gold standard' of evaluation research, the randomised controlled trial (RCT) -- where changes in a treatment group are compared to changes in a similar no-treatment group over the same timespan -- the present design gives a lower degree of certainty that the intervention has caused the improvement. This is because the use of a no-treatment group allows researchers to control for natural changes over time. However an RCT involves a high degree of experimental manipulation, is extremely costly, and would not be feasible in the present setting. Moreover, a cohort design allows for the collection of a much larger body of outcome data, from practices that are representative of routine practice, and allows benchmarks to be established against which services can evaluate their effectiveness. Such benchmarks are often expressed as effect-sizes (for more information see footnote 42, page 37) which indicate the average amount of

improvement a service could expect to achieve among its client population.

This and additional data was collected and analysed to identify:

1   Usage of school-based counselling services
2   Demographic profile of service-users
3   Presenting issues
4   Average improvement from pre- to post-counselling (short-term outcomes) and how this compares against national benchmarks
5   Extent to which outcome data is available across local authorities

Similarly the widespread use of a standardised post-counselling evaluation questionnaire allows data on users' perceptions of counselling services to be collated and analysed. Key issues here include:

1   Users' satisfaction with the counselling service
2   Self-reported outcomes (such as improved mental/emotional well-being, improved attitude to school, improved emotional intelligence)
3   Pupils own evaluation of the counselling service

2.8.   Client record forms which provide demographic information on the numbers of young people attending counselling and the specific problems they present with, alongside information on gender, race, sexuality, etc., have been completed for all young people attending counselling across all local authorities in Wales for summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive). These were provided to the Evaluation Team in the form of termly Excel spreadsheets. Client Record Forms are completed at termination of an episode[14] of counselling for each young person, such that each episode of counselling, per young person, is represented just once.

Data is available on:
●   Total numbers of young people attending counselling
●   Gender
●   Ethnicity
●   School year
●   Form of referral

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[14] An episode of counselling is defined as a complete series of sessions undertaken by a service-user. A session of counselling is normally of approximately 1 hour's duration. These are normally held on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

- Sexual orientation
- Looked after status
- SEN/disability status
- Preferred language
- Religion
- Number of episodes attended
- Number of sessions attended
- Numbers of missed sessions/young people missing sessions
- Presenting issue
- Predominant issue
- Onward referrals

2.9. For the 2010-11 academic year it is expected that complete data from all 22 local authorities in Wales will be available for all young people attending the school-based counselling services. An analysis of this data will be included in the Stage Two report.

Census of school-based counsellors

2.10. A census survey of all school counsellors was conducted using a self-completed paper-based questionnaire (see annex 1). This aimed to measure perceptions of the implementation of school-based counselling, including attitudes towards networking arrangements, coordination, training provision and CPD. The survey was conducted face-to-face at a meeting of all counsellors participating in the Welsh schools counselling strategy in September 2010. The instrument was piloted on members of staff working within BACP who were not connected with the evaluation but who had knowledge of counselling.

Census of school heads/link teachers

2.11. To capture a good overview of the strategy implementation at a school level a census of senior school management was carried out. Link teachers in each school who hold responsibility for school-based counselling were contacted and asked to participate in a 10 minute telephone interview using a structured protocol (see annex 2). In cases where link teachers were not available, head teachers were interviewed as an alternative. A telephone census was used for this group of stakeholders as the sample was small enough to survey the whole group. Experience indicates that school leaders are unlikely to respond to postal self-completion questionnaires personally

and tend to pass them on to other staff to complete on their behalf. In addition, response rates to self-completion surveys in schools can be rather low, leading to large non-response bias and limiting the scope for sub-group analysis. The telephone questionnaire was piloted on four link teachers, who were then not re-contacted to take part in the full survey.

Census of local authority leads/service managers

2.12. Local authority leads and service managers for the counselling service are an important stakeholder group whose opinions on the school counselling strategy have not been captured elsewhere in the evaluation. Therefore a paper-based questionnaire was devised to capture information on local authority leads /service managers' opinions and perceptions, to facilitate comparisons with the other groups surveyed (see annex 3). This questionnaire was administered face-to-face at a meeting of local authority leads and service managers in November 2010. Those who were not in attendance at the meeting were sent electronic versions of the questionnaire. This census was piloted on two local authority leads; the responses of which were included in the sample as no amendments were made to the questionnaire following piloting.

3 Findings

This section describes the results of the five strands of data collection, each in its own subsection. Key findings are highlighted in boxes at the beginning of each subsection to make this information easily accessible. There then follows a narrative discussion of the findings supported by relevant tables and figures. There is a brief summary at the end of each subsection.

Desk Research

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Desk Research: Key Findings

- In general, schools have been enthusiastic and cooperative in the implementation and set-up of services
- Some difficulties relating to the availability of Welsh-speaking counsellors have been noted, perhaps highlighting a training need.
- There are examples of good practice in providing out of hours and school holiday access and also transport where appropriate
- There is a lack of consistency across LAs in the approach to monitoring outcomes, meaning that uniform outcome data is not universally available
- Self-referral seems to be actively encouraged by most LAs
- It is an expectation that all counsellors are registered with a professional body such as BACP
- Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are actively promoted by all LAs
- There is some variability in service delivery models used across LAs although two particular models predominate: *Centralised/in house local authority provision model and Management-only model*

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3.1. A review and analysis of grant letters, annual reports, spending proposals and minutes of meetings in relation to the school-based counselling strategy across each of the 22 local authorities (LAs)[15] in Wales resulted in the following themes being identified[16].

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[15] All local authorities have been numerated for anonymity throughout the report.
[16] The Coordinator for School-Based Counselling (Sylvia Jones) provided the documents required. Documents were provided from the all 22 local authorities

1   Problems in the implementation of the strategy

2   Examples of good practice

3   Models of service delivery

3.2. Generally, the set-up and implementation of services has been smoother and achieved in a shorter period of time where services were already in existence in one form or another. Local authorities (LAs) setting up services from scratch, in some cases, experienced delays and difficulties in implementation due to commissioning and procurement processes. In general, schools have been enthusiastic and cooperative in the implementation and set-up of services, with very few problems reported. Some difficulties relating to the availability of Welsh-speaking counsellors have been noted, perhaps highlighting a training need, although currently 21 of the 128 school counsellors are Welsh-speaking. There have also been difficulties with inter-agency and collaborative working in some of the rural areas due to distances expected to travel, but these have mostly been resolved.

3.3. Developing services which are inclusive and sensitive to the needs of diverse groups has also presented challenges. Providing services to young people in pupil referral units, special schools, and those educated out of school has raised issues relating to access. Similarly, it has been important to provide services which are culturally-sensitive to young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, disabled and/or from ethnic minority groups. Examples of good practice can be identified. Local Authority 9 provides extended access to special schools, PRUs, those educated out of school, FE colleges, city-centre and community venues. Local Authority 21 provides counselling to mainstream and special schools, including young people with challenging behaviour and emotional difficulties. Access is available for vulnerable young people up to the age of 25 years and those leaving care. There are other examples of good practice in providing out of hours and school holiday access and also transport where appropriate.

3.4. The desk research indicated significant variations in the approach to monitoring outcomes across different LAs, meaning that uniform outcome data is not universally available. This is reported in more detail on pages 29-34. One LA has reported difficulties in identifying measurement tools which assess the effects of counselling on young people's ability to study and learn. However the measures YP-CORE and Goodman's SDQ have been quite widely used.

3.5. LAs have sought to strike a balance between self-referral and referral by another party. Self-referral seems to be actively encouraged by most LAs.

3.6. Some LAs have expressed concerns about pay structures and the retention of counsellors. It is clear that LAs have the expectation that all counsellors are registered with a professional body such as BACP, and are suitably qualified and experienced both in counselling and in working with young people. Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are actively promoted by all LAs and LAs 3 and 16, in partnership, fund BACP-accredited counselling diplomas in order to provide a suitably-qualified workforce. All LAs refer to ongoing supervision for counsellors, with some variation as to how this is implemented. Not all supervision is carried out by counselling supervisors; in some cases supervision is provided by educational psychologists, by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), or other forms of supervisory arrangements. Across the LAs a range of counselling provisions have been established such as individual therapy, group therapy and online counselling through organisations such as Kooth.com[17]. This seems to represent well-thought-out and flexible ways of working.

3.7. In addition to the school counselling service being available in secondary schools across Wales, it is a key aim of the Strategy to provide a counselling service in primary schools for those pupils who are in year 6 and in transition to secondary schools. Hence the Strategy supports four Primary school pilot projects, in LAs 14, 15, 20 and 21. Each of the pilots has approached service delivery differently, based on identified need and available resources, including staff:

- Pilot 1 has provided work with Primary school children through the national organisation Place2Be. This includes a self-referral system (Place2Talk); one-to-one counselling; therapeutic group work; parent partnership work and a consultation service for school staff (Place2Think).

- Pilot 2 has established interventions within the primary school context with several positive aspects. Firstly, training and support for school staff and parents have been implemented. Secondly, one-to-one and group work with children is ongoing and includes filial and play therapy approaches, child observation and assessment, and circle time with whole classes.

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[17] https://www.kooth.com/index.php

- In pilot 3, the primary pilot provides play therapy, art therapy, and storytelling both on a one-to-one basis and in group work for identified children. In line with good practice in counselling young children, work with parents and support for teachers is also provided. Self-referral is available for children to access counselling.

- In pilot 4 the counsellors working in primary schools meet with parents/carers and school staff in the first instance before commencing the therapeutic process with a child. This is to reassure and inform parents and teachers of the nature of the therapeutic process. It also provides an opportunity to meet the counsellor and discuss the nature of the referral, along with any relevant issues occurring at home or at school. Additionally, a therapeutic music approach for vulnerable young people in primary schools has been successfully piloted.

3.8. There is some variability in service delivery models used across LAs (see table 1) although two particular models predominate. In services using a *Centralised/in house local authority provision model,* the counselling service employs and provides management and supervision to school-based counsellors, who then work as an integral part of each school's staff team. By contrast, in a *Management-only model,* schools employ their own counsellor but this is supported by a management service that advises and provides consultative support. The management service (possibly based within the LA or another agency, but not the school) continues to provide specialist support including supervision, CPD, monitoring, etc. Individual schools may employ counsellors and the management service has a different employer.

Table 1   Information on models of service delivery used across Wales[18]

Service delivery model	LA's following this model
Centralised peripatetic local authority provision	3, 16, 20
Centralised/In house local authority provision	2, 7, 8, 10, 11,15,19, 21, 22
In-school provision by external agency	3, 16
Cluster model	7, 11
Management only model	1, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17,18

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[18] An explanation of the different service models can be found in Pattison, S., Rowland, N., Cromarty, K., Richards, K., Jenkins, P., Cooper, M., Polat, F. (2007). Counselling in Schools: A research study into services for children and young people in Wales. 14, Welsh Assembly Government

Summary of Desk Research

3.9. Desk research indicates variability in how quickly services have become established, depending on whether or not the school had a pre-existing counselling service. Schools have generally responded positively and with enthusiasm to the counselling strategy. Although some local difficulties have been encountered, LAs have on the whole taken a proactive approach to resolving issues. There are widespread examples of good practice including innovative approaches to providing services to culturally-diverse and hard-to-reach groups of young people. Although most local authorities have developed systems for the monitoring of outcomes in school-based counselling services, there are inconsistencies in the collection of routine outcome data which prevent a large-scale and rigorous analysis of the effectiveness of school-based interventions. Clear benchmarks have been established for the employment of counsellors and ensuring their work is of a high standard. The provision of good quality training also supports the availability of a well-qualified workforce. The wide variety of interventions which are available indicates that good attention has been given to the provision of services which are age-sensitive ensuring that both primary and secondary pupils have access to appropriate therapy.

Evaluation of Client Data and Outcomes

Client Data and Outcomes: Key Findings

- 13 local authorities have collected routine outcome data using YP-CORE

- 3 local authorities have collected routine outcome data using SDQ

- Response rates (the key indicator of the reliability and validity of the evaluation) for 2009-10 have been reported as varying from around 15% to 100%.

- 12 local authorities indicated they have collected evaluation data using the Post Counselling Evaluation Form

- More than 6000 episodes of counselling were delivered across the four terms, with over 26,000 sessions of counselling attended.

- An average of 4 sessions of counselling were attended per episode compared with an average of 6 sessions per episode across the UK[19].

- Almost a quarter of referrals were self-referrals

- The five most frequently presented issues, in descending order, were family, anger, behaviour-related, stress and bereavement; with family presented more than twice as frequently as any other single issue. This indicates a very similar picture of presenting issues to other school-based counselling services across the UK[20].

- On average, young people for whom data was available, showed significant improvements from beginning of counselling to the end of counselling

- The average effect size across all nine local authorities was 1.1, suggesting that young people in the Welsh School-based Counselling Strategy experienced large improvements in their psychological wellbeing from pre- to post-counselling

- All interpretation of outcomes, however, must be treated with caution, due to the low response rate in several of the LAs

- Around 60% of the young people said that they would consider counselling again in the future after leaving school

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[19] Cooper, M. (2009) Counselling in UK secondary schools: A comprehensive review of audit and evaluation studies Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 9(3), 137-150.
[20] Cooper, M. (2009) Counselling in UK secondary schools: A comprehensive review of audit and evaluation studies Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 9(3), 137-150.

Extent to which outcome data is available across local authorities

3.10. Thirteen LAs indicated they have been collecting outcome data using the YP-CORE: LAs 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17. Three further local authorities indicated they have been collecting data using the SDQ: LAs 19, 20 and 21.

3.11. Local authorities 15 and 22 have indicated that they have not collected data for 2009-10 but are considering YP-CORE for 2010-11; LA 4 have not previously collected data but are considering either YP-CORE or SDQ for 2010-11; LA 8 previously used their own measure but are now considering use of YP-CORE. No information has been received from LAs 5 and 18.

3.12. Response rates (i.e., the percentage of clients using the service for whom pairs of pre- and post-counselling evaluation forms are available) is a key indicator of the validity of any outcome evaluation, and for 2009-10 have been reported as varying from around 15% to 100%. A response rate of 70% or greater can be considered necessary to make an evaluation analysis valid (see Clark et al., 2008)[21].

3.13. Usable YP-CORE outcome data for 2009-10 has been received from LAs 1, 2, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14 and 17; and usable SDQ outcome data was received from LA 19. SDQ data was provided by LA 21, but not in a form that could be appropriately analysed. Although hard copies of YP-CORE data have also been received from LAs 3 and 6, unfortunately there has not been time to enter this data for inclusion in the Stage 1 report. Similarly LA 10 provided usable YP-CORE data but this was not received in time for inclusion here. For 2010-11 data, all areas will be provided with an appropriately formatted Excel datasheet in which to enter all outcome and post-counselling evaluation data.

3.14. Twelve areas indicated they have been collecting data using the Toolkit Post-Counselling Evaluation Questionnaire for the four-term period summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10: LAs 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 21. A further three are using modified versions of this form (LAs 9, 19 and 20). No responses have been received from other areas. Response rates have been indicated to vary from 10% to 100%, with around half reporting 30% or less. Several areas have indicated that they will look at improving their response rates for 2009-10. Additional qualitative information has been received from LAs 3 and 16.

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[21] Clark, D. M., Fairbairn, C. G., & Wessely, S. (2008). Psychological treatment outcomes in routine NHS services: a commentary on Stiles et al. (2007). Psychological Medicine, 38, 629-634.

Client/Episode Data for summer 2008-09 to summer 2009-10

3.15. In total, more than 6000 episodes of counselling were delivered across the four terms, with over 26,000 sessions of counselling attended. This gives an average of 4 sessions of counselling attended per episode. This can be compared with an aggregated mean, taken from a survey of 30 audit and evaluation studies of school-based counselling from across the UK (Cooper, 2009)[22], of 6.35 sessions per episode.

3.16. Over 2000 sessions of counselling were missed (8% of all sessions offered), giving an attendance rate of 92%. This is considerably higher than the average attendance rate of 81%, taken from a survey of 30 audit and evaluation studies of school-based counselling from across the UK (Cooper, 2009).

3.17. In 86% of instances, young people were attending counselling for a first episode. Young people were attending for a second episode in 7% of instances, a third episode in 2% of instances, a fourth episode in 2% of instances, and a fifth or more episode of counselling in 3% instances.

3.18. Demographic details for each of the episodes of counselling are given in Tables 2a to 2i. Just over 60% of the episodes of counselling were delivered to females, with just under 40% delivered to males. This is a slightly higher proportion of females to males when compared against an aggregated average ratio of 56% females to 44% males, from 30 UK studies (Cooper, 2009). 97% of the counselling episodes were delivered to young people from a white ethnic background. A further 1% were from mixed-race backgrounds, with all other ethnicities represented just over 1%. No comparative data is available from school-based counselling services UK-wide, but this will be compared with Wales-wide ethnic demographics for the Stage Two report.

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[22] Cooper, M. (2009). Counselling in UK secondary schools: A comprehensive review of audit and evaluation studies Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 9(3), 137-150.

Table 2a Gender and Ethnicity for pupils attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

Gender	Percentage[23]	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[24]		
			Range	Min	Max
Male	38.6%	2356	20	446	466
Female	61.4%	3745	711	27	738
Ethnicity					
White	97.1%	5925	1125	57	1182
Mixed Race	1.2%	70	20	0	20
Asian or Asian British	0.4%	27	6	0	6
Black or Black British	0.4%	23	7	0	7
Chinese or Chinese British	0.1%	3	1	0	1
Any other ethnic background	0.5%	30	12	0	12
Not known	0.4%	23	10	0	10

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government.

3.19. As with previous evaluations (Cooper, 2009), the young people most frequently using the counselling service came from the middle school years (years 9, 10 and 11), with less representation from older and younger pupils.

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[23] Figures have been rounded to one decimal place and so will not always add up to 100
[24] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max

Table 2b Numbers of pupils per school year attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

School year	Percentage[25]	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[26]		
			Range	Min	Max
Year 7	12.7%	772	156	2	158
Year 8	18%	1099	207	3	210
Year 9	22%	1344	225	11	236
Year 10	21.1%	1288	240	10	250
Year 11	15.5%	946	207	2	209
Year 12	4.9%	298	52	0	52
Year 13	4.1%	247	77	0	77
Not known	3.2%	197	34	0	34

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government

3.20. Almost a quarter of referrals were self-referrals, which is somewhat higher than has previously been found (Cooper, 2009). As with previous evaluations, however, school staff were the most common source of referral (53% in the current evaluation), with only a small proportion referred by parents or carers (7.6%).

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[25] Figures have been rounded to one decimal place and so will not always add up to 100
[26] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max.

Table 2c. Form of referral for pupils attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

Form of referral	Percentage[27]	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[28]		
			Range	Min	Max
Self	24.9%	1520	258	3	261
Parents	7.6%	461	154	0	154
School staff / other education	53.3%	3252	656	24	680
Social Services	0.8%	48	29	0	29
Health – GP, hospital, school nurse etc.	2.9%	179	46	0	46
Other	2.6%	158	70	0	70
Not known	7.9%	483	384	0	384

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government

3.21. Information on sexual orientation was missing for 40% of episodes of counselling. For those with completed information just over half of the young people were identified as heterosexual and around 2.5% of the young people were identified as either bisexual or gay/lesbian.

Table 2d. Sexual orientation of pupils attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

Sexual Orientation	Percentage[29]	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[30]		
			Range	Min	Max
Bisexual	1.4%	87	24	0	24
Gay / lesbian	1.4%	88	24	0	24
Heterosexual / straight	55.4%	3379	837	9	846
Not known	41.8%	2547	364	1	365

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government

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[27] Figures have been rounded to one decimal place and so will not always add up to 100
[28] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max.
[29] Figures have been rounded to one decimal place and so will not always add up to 100
[30] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max.

3.22. Just under 5% of the episodes of therapy were delivered to young people who were looked after by an authority.

Table 2e Numbers of looked after pupils attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

Looked after by authority	Percentage	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[31]		
			Range	Min	Max
	4.9%	296	76	0	76

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government

3.23. The preferred language for over 90% of the young people was English, with 6.3% of the episodes delivered to young people who had a preference for Welsh.

Table 2f Preferred language of pupils attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

Preferred language	Percentage[32]	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[33]		
			Range	Min	Max
English	92.8%	5654	1127	54	1181
Welsh	6.3%	385	294	0	294
Other	0.2%	12	5	0	5
Not known	0.7%	40	15	0	15

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government

3.24. Information on religion or belief for almost half of the people was unknown. Of the remainder, over 30% were identified as having none, with another 20% identified as Christian.

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[31] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max.
[32] Figures have been rounded to one decimal place and so will not always add up to 100
[33] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max.

Table 2g Religion/belief of pupils attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

Religion/belief	Percentage[34]	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[35]		
			Range	Min	Max
None	33.8%	2060	538	0	538
Baha'i	0.1%	2	2	0	2
Buddhist	0.1%	6	2	0	2
Christian	20.3%	1236	420	1	421
Hindu	0.1%	1	1	0	1
Jain	0.1%	1	1	0	1
Jewish	0.1%	3	3	0	3
Muslim	0.3%	15	5	0	5
Sikh	0.0%	0	0	0	0
Other	2.6%	161	75	0	75
Not known	42.9%	2616	386	0	386

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government

3.25. In 91.7% of instances, young people were not referred on to other services, or it was unknown whether or not onward referral took place. 3% of young people were referred onwards to specialist CAMHS services, 2% to child protection services, and 3% were referred on to other services.

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[34] Figures have been rounded to one decimal place and so will not always add up to 100
[35] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max.

Table 2h Onward referral of pupils attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

Onward referral	Percentage[36]	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[37]		
			Range	Min	Max
Specialist CAMHS	3.1%	190	54	0	54
Child Protection	2.1%	129	25	0	25
Other	3.1%	184	43	0	43
None	53.9%	3289	1106	0	1106
Unknown	37.9%	2309	138	0	138

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government

3.26. Approximately 15% of pupils attending school counselling had Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a disability.

Table 2i   SEN/disability pupils attending school counselling from summer 2008-9 to summer 2009-10 (inclusive)

SEN/disability	Percentage[38]	Total	Variation across Local Authorities[39]		
			Range	Min	Max
Cognition and Learning	5.3%	324	95	0	95
Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development	5.5%	333	79	0	79
Communication and Interaction	1.6%	95	38	0	38
Sensory and / or Physical	1.1%	66	15	0	15
Not known	3.1%	189	141	0	141

Source: Data provided from client record forms supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government

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[36] Figures have been rounded to one decimal place and so will not always add up to 100. Percentage refers to the proportion of all clients with SEN/disability.

[37] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max.

[38] The percentage of clients attending school counselling with SEN/disability is presented as a proportion of the whole population of clients attending school counselling.

[39] Variation refers to the differences across local authorities in terms of the number of clients attending school counselling; min = the lowest number of clients within an individual authority, max = the highest number of clients, range = the difference between min and max.

Client Issues

3.27. As in previous research (Cooper, 2009), in the present sample, presenting issues (i.e. the issues that the young people referred for) were highly correlated with issues actually discussed (predominant issues). For this reason, only presenting issues were analysed at this stage. A full analysis, comparing presenting issue with predominant issue, will be presented in the Stage Two report.

3.28. Presenting issues are shown in descending order, in Table 3, with number and percentage of episodes of counselling in which that issue was presented. (Note: as young people may have been recorded as presenting with up to three issues, the total percentage is greater than 100). National average rankings from Cooper (2009) are also presented as a comparison.

3.29. The five most frequently presented issues, in descending order, were family, anger, behaviour-related, stress and bereavement; with family presented more than twice as frequently as any other single issue. This indicates a very similar picture of presenting issues to other school-based counselling services across the UK (Cooper, 2009), the one exception being that academic issues were presented considerably less frequently in the Welsh dataset. Presenting issues are indications of service users' key concerns and are distinct from clinical diagnoses of mental health problems.

Table 3   Presenting issues

Presenting issue	Number	Percentage[40]	Welsh Sample Rank	UK Average Rank[41]
Family	2368	56.9%	1	1
Anger	1015	24.4%	2	2
Behaviour related	734	17.6%	3	4
Stress	611	14.7%	4	10
Bereavement	608	14.6%	5	8
Bullying	604	14.5%	6	9
Self-worth	525	12.6%	7	6 (self/self esteem)
Depression	465	11.2%	8	7
Relationships other than family or teachers	385	9.2%	9	5 (general)
Relationships with teachers	292	7%	10	5 (general)
Self-harm	287	6.9%	11	14
Abuse (including sexual)	235	5.6%	12	13
Academic	212	5.1%	13	3 (School)
Domestic abuse	130	3.1%	14	n/a
Eating disorders	118	2.8%	15	n/a
Substance misuse	96	2.3%	16	n/a
Suicidal thoughts	83	2%	17	n/a
Sexual (including orientation)	72	1.7%	18	n/a
Financial concerns / poverty	44	1%	19	n/a
Other	388	9.3%		n/a
Not known	49	1.2%		n/a

Source: Data provided from client record forms, summer 2008-09 to summer 2009-10, completed by school counsellors and supplied to the evaluation team by the Welsh Government.

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[40] Note: as young people may have been recorded as presenting with up to three issues, the total percentage is greater than 100
[41] UK average rankings from Cooper (2009)

Outcome Data for 2009-10

3.30. Outcome data was available for nine LAs, eight with the YP-CORE and one using the SDQ. Response rates ranged from 14% to 91% of total participants seen from autumn 2009-10 to summer 2009-10, with an average of 48%.

3.31. On average, young people in all nine local authorities, for whom data was available, showed significant improvements from beginning of counselling to the end of counselling. Figure 1 displays the average pre- and post-counselling scores across Local Authorities.

Figure 1   Change from pre- to post counselling score across Welsh Local Authorities returning robust data
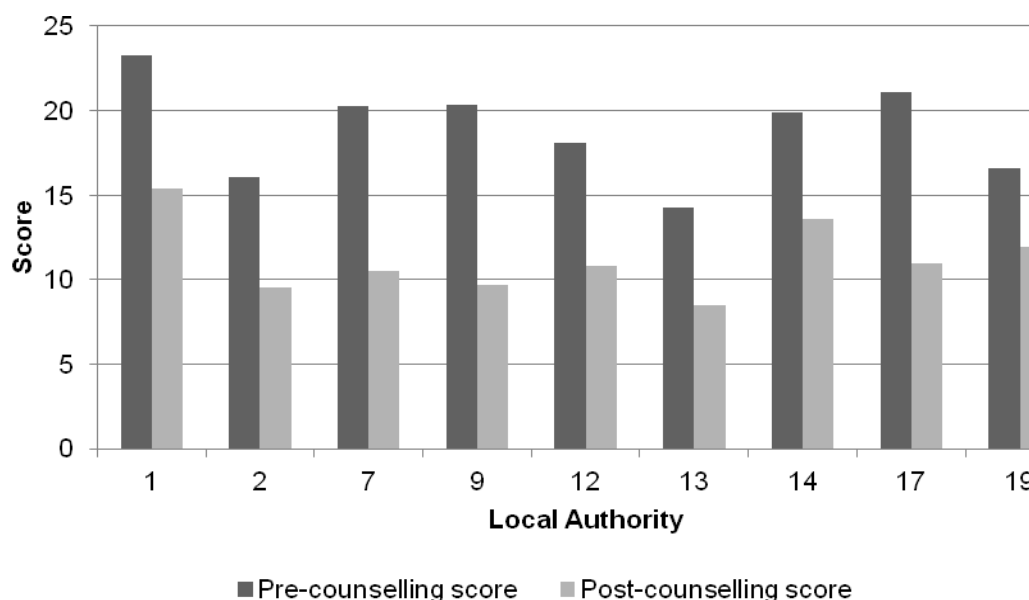
Source: YP-CORE and SDQ data provided by local authorities

3.32. The 'effect size' (d), is a measure of the magnitude of change with effect sizes of 0.2, 0.5 and 0.8 considered small, moderate and large changes respectively[42]. The average effect size (ES) across all nine local authorities was 1.1. The magnitude of improvement in the present sample can be compared against national norms. Cooper's (2009) review of school counselling found an average effect size of 0.81 across the UK. This suggests that young people in the Welsh School-based Counselling Strategy are demonstrating, on average, high levels of improvement.

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[42] Effect size is calculated by dividing the mean difference pre- and post- intervention on the YP-Core and SDQ by the pooled standard deviation (the spread of scores) across the sample.

Table 4   Effect size across local authorities using standardised outcome measures

Outcome measure	Local Authority	Total clients	Sample	Response rate %	Pre-counselling		Post-counselling		Effect size (d)[43]
					Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	
YP-Core	1	142	20	14.08%	23.3	6.33	15.4	4.45	1.42
	2	46	20	43.48%	16.1	6.50	9.55	7.55	0.91
	7	204	121	59.31%	20.3	6.81	10.54	7.03	1.41
	9	376	150	39.89%	20.33	6.58	9.71	6.84	1.58
	12	732	503	68.72%	18.06	7.30	10.82	7.64	0.97
	13	170	102	60.00%	14.29	7.76	8.52	7.80	0.74
	14	183	167	91.26%	19.91	8.00	13.6	9.73	0.71
	17	299	50	16.72%	21.08	7.77	10.94	7.00	1.36
SDQ	19	225	76	33.78%	16.59	5.1	11.96	5.85	0.84

Source: YP-CORE and SDQ data provided by local authorities

Note: Response rate gives the number of pairs of pre- and post-counselling outcome forms for each LA (sample) against the total number of clients attending counselling in that LA (Total clients). This figure is not adjusted for the fact that some of the Total clients will only have attended for one session, and therefore would not be expected to return post-counselling outcome data.

3.33. All interpretation of outcomes, however, must be treated with a degree of caution, due to the low response rate in several of the LAs. Where response rates are low, effects tend to be over-estimated (Cooper, 2009), because data from young people who have dropped out of counselling (and generally experienced less improvement) tend to be missing. Hence, to achieve the most reliable and valid estimate of improvements, it will be important to try and ensure, for 2010-11, that pre- and post-counselling data is available for all young people who attend counselling for two or more sessions.

Post-Counselling Evaluation Data

3.34. Post-counselling questionnaire data was available from five projects. However, in three datasets/reports, the questionnaires/analyses had been modified in such a way that the data could not be easily combined. Only data from LAs 7 and 14 therefore, is

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[43] Bias corrected for small sample sizes

presented in Table 5 below.

3.35. 109 young people responded to 11 of the 16 questions in the post-counselling evaluation form (the other 5 questions were asked in LA 14 only). This represents just 23% of the episodes of counselling for the summer 2008-9, and 2009-10, time period, suggesting that findings should be interpreted with caution.

3.36. Below are the net agreement percentages[44] for each questionnaire item, in descending order. As can be seen from this table, there was strong endorsement of several items indicating a positive evaluation of the counselling services, though net agreement on items indicating positive changes were somewhat less. Around 60% of the young people said that they would consider counselling again in the future after leaving school, but around 20% said that they would not, with the remaining 20% saying that they did not know.

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[44] Determined by calculating the total percentage of participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing to a statement and subtracting the total percentage of those who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement

Table 5   Net agreement percentages for post-counselling evaluation questionnaire

Item	Net agree	Total N
I think counselling is a good way to deal with problems	96.3%	109
I was able to talk about my thoughts and feelings with my counsellor	95.4%	109
The counsellor helped me to understand my situation and my feelings	94.5%	109
I understood that what I said to the counsellor would be confidential unless I was at risk	92.7%	109
I would ask to see the counsellor again if I needed to	90.8%	109
I feel more able to cope at school since having counselling	82.6%	109
I feel more positive since going for counselling	80.7%	109
I would recommend counselling to my friends	73.4%	109
It was easy to contact the counsellor	66.9%	109
I received enough counselling sessions	66.2%	65
My behaviour has improved since I went for counselling	65.1%	109
My relationships with my family have improved since going for counselling	64.6%	65
Since I had counselling I am more able to concentrate on tasks in and out of school	53.9%	65
My relationships with friends have improved since going for counselling	46.1%	65
My relationships with teachers have improved since going for counselling	41.5%	65
I would consider counselling in the future, even after I leave school	38.5%	109

Source: Post counselling evaluation data supplied from LA's 7 and 14

3.37. In addition, we received sets of qualitative feedback comments from young people using the counselling service in LAs 3, 16 and 20, the vast majority of which were very positive. Pupils indicated it was good to have someone to talk to who could understand their problems enabling them to become more confident in themselves. Examples of the comments made are shown below:

- *It helped me with my attitude, and returned me to the person I used to be*
- *It's been a great help to me and I found it really nice to talk to someone who won't shout at me for what I say. It's helped me sort out a lot of problems and make sense of things in my head*
- *The counselling service has made a positive difference to me as after having*

somebody to talk I find it easier to communicate with others knowing that my insecurities about myself are being sorted and I don't feel ashamed to admit that I need help because I now know that I'm not the only one that needs help and now I don't feel as low about myself.

Summary of outcome data findings

3.38. Data from the first year of the Welsh school-based counselling service, where available, indicates that outcomes are good and at a level that compares well with other school-based counselling services in the UK. The profile of young people using the services, and their use of the service, is very similar to other UK school-based counselling provisions: with a female to male ratio of about 60:40, middle school years predominating, and presenting issues primarily around family, anger, behaviour, stress and bereavement. Attendance rates for the counselling services are high, and young people are attending, on average, about four sessions of counselling per episode, with around 10% referred on to other services.

3.39. Demographic information about clients and how they have used the counselling services are almost entirely complete. Unfortunately, response rates for outcome data from services that have returned this information are generally low. Data from the Post-counselling Evaluation Questionnaire (published in the "Toolkit") appears even patchier, with low response rates even from those services that have returned data with this measure. Similarly, the fact that in some cases the questionnaire has been amended and individualised makes it difficult to aggregate data. However, all LAs will be collecting outcome data for the 2010/11 academic year using a standard format in which to enter the data. Results of this will be included in the Stage Two report.

Census of School Counsellors

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Census of School Counsellors: Key Findings

- 80% of school counsellors indicated they did not have to adhere to a maximum number of sessions
- Just over half of counsellors indicated the school counselling service was operated both within and outside of school premises
- More than half of counsellors reported they are employed by an external agency, as opposed to employed by the school or the local authority
- There was agreement that the service is recognised and valued by both parents and pupils
- Counsellors agreed they have appropriate opportunities for further training and suitable arrangements for clinical supervision.
- Counsellors feel supported in their role and feel clear about when a pupil ought to be referred to other agencies
- Less than half of school counsellors agree that staffing levels within the counselling service are adequate
- Strengths of the school counselling strategy were:
  - the collaboration with BACP and other agencies
  - the commitment from the Welsh Government
  - The ease with which children and young people could access the service was also deemed to be a strength of the strategy
  - The resources made available by Welsh Government are another strength indicated by school counsellors, particularly in terms of funding and the Toolkit
- Recommendations to improve the school counselling strategy emerged in line with the weaknesses and were in relation to the requirement of future funding provision

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Overview

3.40. At the time the survey was conducted there were 132 school counsellors in Wales, all were invited to attend an 'All Wales' conference at which the survey was to be distributed. A total of 106 school counsellors (80% response rate) completed a paper-based questionnaire, eliciting information on the service in which they work and their attitudes to the Strategy. Information regarding gender, age, ethnicity, nationality

and therapeutic orientation can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6   Demographic information collected from school counsellors in Wales

	Number	Percentage
Female	89	84.0
Male	15	14.1
Missing Data	2	1.9
Age		
18 – 29	10	9.4
30 – 39	30	28.3
40 – 49	45	42.5
50 – 59	15	14.1
60 – 69	4	3.8
Missing Data	2	1.9
White British	94	88.7
Is a member of a professional body	91	85.8
Is a member of BACP	82	77.4
Has prior experience of working with children and young people	99	93.4
Has relevant training in working with children and young people	84	79.2
Highest level of counselling qualification		
Doctorate	1	0.9
Masters	17	16.0
Post-graduate Diploma	60	56.6
Undergraduate diploma	15	14.2
Further education Diploma	6	5.7
Other (eg, undergraduate degree)	7	6.6

Therapeutic Orientation			
Integrative	*This is when several distinct models of counselling and psychotherapy are incorporated.*	62	58.5
Humanistic/Person-centred	*This approach encourages people to contact their feelings and reflect on their significance.*	27	25.5
CBT	*Clients are encouraged to change thoughts and challenge core beliefs. Behavioural techniques such as relaxation are often used.*	6	5.7
Psychodynamic	*This approach stresses the importance of the unconscious and past experience in shaping current behaviour.*	1	0.9
Other		9	8.5
Missing data		1	0.9

Source: School Counsellor Census. Missing data refers to items left blank on returned questionnaires

About the counselling service

3.41. Counsellors were asked if there was a maximum number of sessions they could offer pupils. 80% indicated they did not have to adhere to a maximum number of sessions. For those who indicated they did offer a maximum number of sessions, the average maximum was 6 sessions.

3.42. Information was collected on where the school counselling service is operated from, and who the counsellors are employed by. Just over half (53%) of counsellors indicated the school counselling service was operated both within and outside of school premises and similarly more than half (57%) of counsellors reported they are employed by an external agency, as opposed to employed by the school or the local authority. Percentages are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2   Where the school counselling service operates from
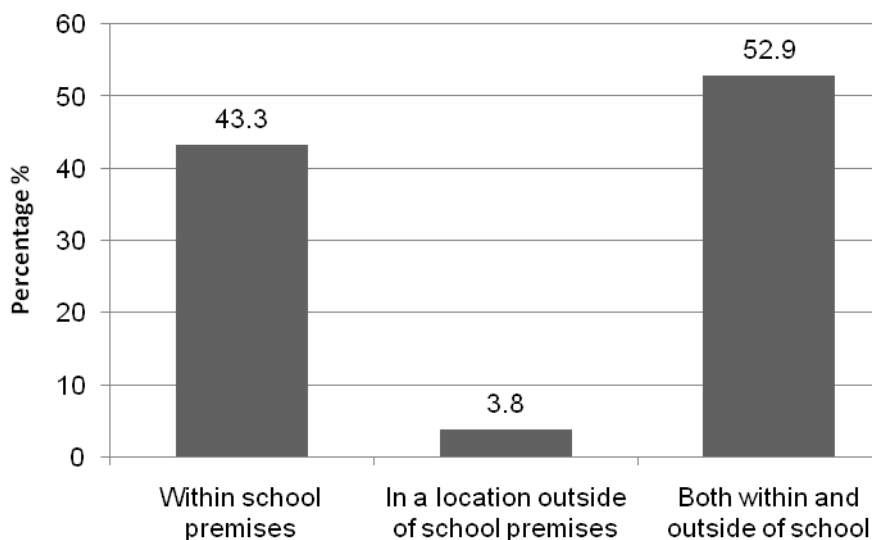
Source: School Counsellor Census

Figure 3   Who the counsellor (or counsellors) are employed by
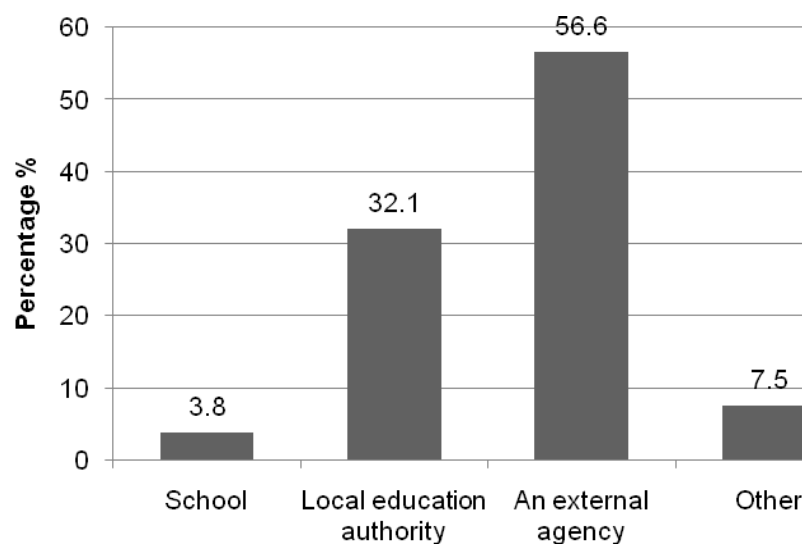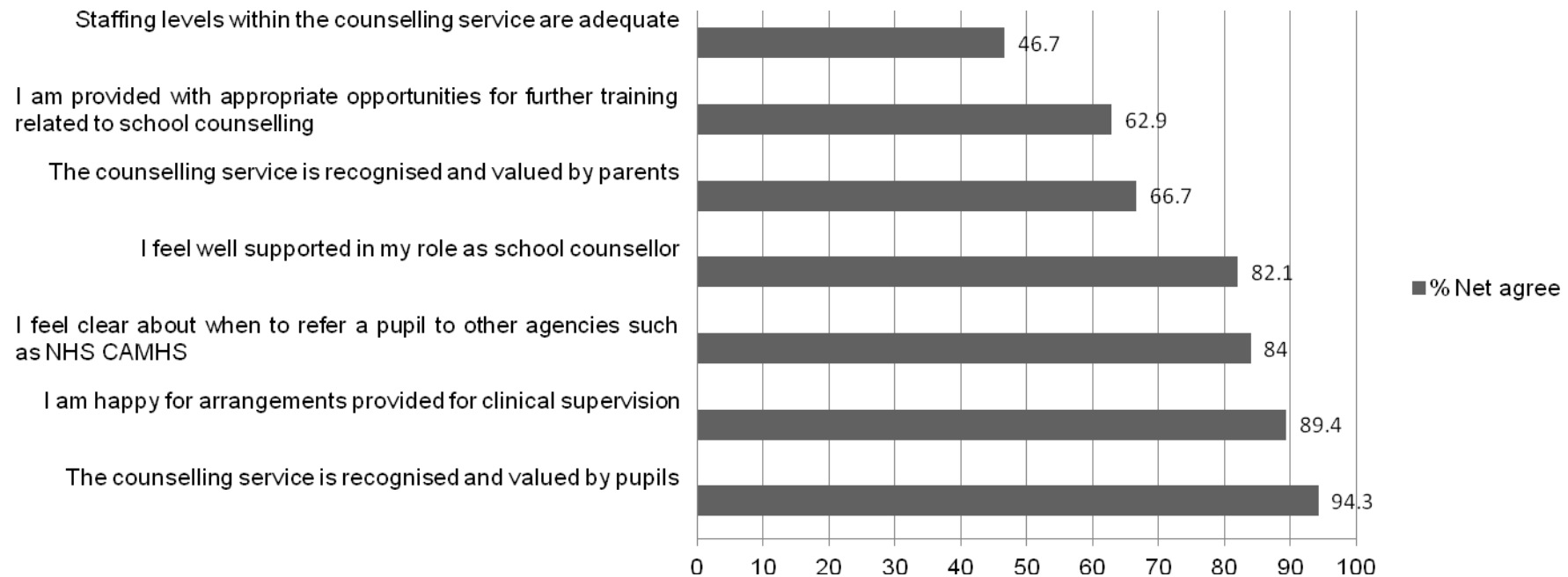

Source: School Counsellor Census

Attitudes and opinions of school counsellors

3.43. In addition, school counsellors were also asked their opinions of school-based counselling with reference to their own role. As shown in Figure 4, school counsellors in Wales appear to be in agreement that the service is recognised and valued by both parents and pupils, that they have appropriate opportunities for further training and

suitable arrangements for clinical supervision. In addition they are supported in their role and feel clear about when a pupil ought to be referred to other agencies (62% have made referrals to specialist services such as CAMHS and 63% have received referrals from specialist services such as CAMHS). However, less than half (47%) of school counsellors agree that staffing levels within the counselling service are adequate. Further details of school counsellors' responses to attitudinal statements can be found at Figure 16, where comparisons are made with the attitudes of link/ head teachers and local authority leads/service managers.

Figure 4   Counsellor's attitudes towards the school counselling service

Source: School Counsellor Census

Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommendations

3.44. School counsellors were also asked open-ended questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the school-based counselling strategy in Wales and to provide any recommendations they may have that could improve the service. This qualitative data was analysed thematically. The main themes emerging for strengths, weaknesses and recommendations are shown in Tables 7a-c and discussed below.

3.45. School counsellors indicated a strength of the school counselling strategy was the collaboration with BACP and other agencies: '*Strong links with BACP*', '*Working collaboratively to ensure multi-agency working to have a whole school approach*' and also the commitment from the Welsh Government: '*Sense of value coming from WAG's commitment*'. The ease with which children and young people could access the service was also deemed to be a strength of the strategy: '*Allows children and young people access to a service in an environment they are familiar with and without too much disruption to their education*'; '*No postcode lottery*'; '*Providing opportunities for all young people to access counselling*'. The resources made available by Welsh Government are another strength indicated by school counsellors, particularly in terms of funding and the Toolkit; '*Provision of the service across Wales*'; '*Sustainable funding*'; '*The Toolkit*'. It was seen to be a strength of the strategy that it has been widely publicised and raised awareness of school counselling; '*The fact it exists and its promotion to all concerned*'; '*That it is strongly promoted*'; '*Raising awareness of emotional wellbeing within educational settings, sharing of practice and theory*'. And finally it was felt that it was a strength of the strategy that it was able to provide counselling in an independent way that was still integrated into the school environment; '*Provision of counselling independently of schools but embedded within*'; '*That it is a separate service not part of the school but within the school*'; '*Separate service within the school*'.

Table 7a Themes emerging for strengths of the school counselling strategy

Theme	Number of supporting statements
Collaboration, commitment and support	30
Accessibility	17
Resources	17
Awareness and Publicity	8
Independent and Integrated	6

Source: School Counsellor Census

3.46. When asked to indicate any weaknesses of the strategy, two key themes emerged around 'funding and resources' and 'awareness and training', as shown in Table 7b, alongside a number of other themes. Feedback indicated the main issue around funding and resources was a concern about the security of future funding: *'Insecurity due to the funding or the lack of feedback on sustainable funding' 'Lack of full funding to implement a stronger base in schools', 'Non-sustainable funding'.* It was also felt that other school staff required training on school counselling, particularly around the role of the school counsellor: '*A lot more training for teachers specifying the role and working relationship with counsellors'; 'Educating school staff of the role and importance of school counsellors'; 'Poor awareness of role and benefits of counselling among school staff'.*

3.47. The other themes emerging in relation to weaknesses, with not as many supporting statements as those above, were around areas such as the consistency of approach across local authorities: '*An assurance that every local authority uses the same method of working'.* The lack of school counselling in primary schools; accessibility for those from rural areas, collaboration with other service providers such as child protection; and the need for teachers to be made aware of the importance of confidentiality in the counselling service.

Table 7b Themes emerging for weaknesses of the school counselling strategy

Theme	Number of supporting statements
Funding and Resources	33
Awareness and Training	15
Consistency	4
Primary Schools	4
Accessibility	4
Collaboration	3
Confidentiality	3

Source: School Counsellor Census

3.48. Recommendations to improve the school counselling strategy emerged in line with the weaknesses described above in relation to the requirement of future funding provision: '*Funding to continue; each school directly employing their own counsellors'; 'Ensure that schools use their allocated funding correctly';* and improved resources: '*Provision of suitable rooms and equipment that is required to offer a full and valued counselling service'; 'Improved conditions in schools to house counselling'; 'A real commitment to better quality rooms which are more quiet and safer therapeutically'.*

3.49. The second recommendation emerging from school counsellors' responses was around the theme of 'Training and raising awareness'. As indicated in the response to 'weaknesses' school counsellors recommended the need for training school staff on the school counselling process: '*Training days for staff to build awareness of what the counselling service can offer and its boundaries of confidentiality'; 'Teacher training to involve some aspect of issues that children face today'.*

Table 7c Themes emerging for Recommendations to improve the school counselling strategy

Theme	Number of supporting statements
Funding and Resources	38
Training and Raising Awareness	13

Source: School Counsellor Census

Summary of school counsellor census

3.50. This strand of the evaluation has determined the majority of school counsellors in Wales are female and White British and are also members of a professional body (particularly BACP). Membership of a professional body ensures counsellors are bound by an ethical framework and subject to a complaints procedure. Over 90% of school counsellors have had prior experience with working with children and young people.

3.51. The level of counselling qualification held by school counsellors varies from an undergraduate diploma to a Doctorate, with the majority holding a Postgraduate diploma in counselling and school counsellors were found to vary considerably in terms of the therapeutic orientation they adhere to.

3.52. Services were found to be generally flexible in terms of session numbers and location, with counselling services operating both within and outside of school premises in more than half of cases. Services work closely with specialist services such as CAMHS, with approximately 62% of counsellors having made and/or received referrals from CAMHS. The fact that just 3.1% of service-users were referred to CAMHS (see Table 2h) indicates that the vast majority of service-users were treated within the school-based counselling services and the implementation of the Strategy has not led to a surge of new referrals to CAMHS.

3.53 Key issues raised by school counsellors are that there is less than 50% net agreement that services are sensitive to the needs of Welsh speakers and similarly less than 50% net agreement that staffing levels are adequate. There was just over 50% net agreement among school counsellors that accommodation for school counselling is adequate and a similar figure for the service being adequately resourced. There were strong levels of agreement that services were integral parts of school provision; that methods for monitoring and evaluating were satisfactory; that services were accessible and services were recognised and valued by school staff, pupils and parents.

3.54. The key recommendations made by school counsellors to improve the service was for more funding provision and security of future funding and more training opportunities for school counsellors with opportunities also being made available to educate school staff on the school counselling service.

Census of School Head / Link Teachers

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Census of School Head / Link Teacher: Key Findings

- Two thirds of school head / link teachers contacted took part in this survey, which is significantly higher than expected

- Over half of schools indicated they had provided a school counselling service prior to operating as part of the national strategy.

- The majority (78%) of those schools which had a counselling service prior to the national strategy indicated the counselling service had got better since the introduction of the school-based counselling strategy

- In the majority of cases (93%) it was reported that counsellors working within schools run sessions on a regular basis

- The average waiting time for a first appointment was 1-2 weeks

- There was significant net agreement (91%) among head/link teachers that the school's counselling service meets the needs of pupils

- There was 60% net agreement that the school-based counselling service had resulted in improvements in attainment and attendance.

- There was 80% net agreement that behaviour had improved

- It was generally agreed that staff workload had neither increased nor decreased since implementation of the strategy

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Overview

3.55. All school link teachers (or head teacher where link teacher was not available) in secondary schools and special schools across Wales were contacted to take part in a ten-minute telephone census using a standardized questionnaire (see annex 2). Appropriate questions for the census were derived from the counsellor questionnaire described above, to enable comparisons between the different stakeholder groups.

3.56. Approximately 240 head/link teachers were identified to take part in this census and a total of 158 (66%) head/link teachers responded. This is a particularly high response rate for a survey of this kind. The distribution of participants by level of seniority is displayed in Table 8.

Table 8   Participant by level of seniority

Role in School	Number	Percentage (%)
Head teacher/principal	19	12.0
Deputy or assistant head teacher	83	52.5
Other senior management or leadership team	42	26.6
Classroom or subject teacher/lecturer	1	0.6
Pastoral manager/care/support	3	1.9
Other	10	6.4
Total	158	100

Source: Head/link teacher telephone census

About the school counselling service

3.57. As the Strategy was rolled out across Wales at different time points, information was collected on when each individual school came on stream. The distribution of schools referenced to the date they came on stream can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9   Date the school came on stream with the school-based counselling strategy

Date school came on stream	Number of schools on stream	Percentage (%)
Pre-2007	14	8.9
2007	15	9.5
2008	16	10.1
2009	73	46.2
2010	23	14.6
Don't know	17	10.7
Total	158	100

Source: Head/link teacher telephone census

3.58. As shown in Figure 5 over half (55%) of schools indicated they had provided a school counselling service prior to operating as part of the national strategy.

Figure 5   Schools indicating they had provided a school counselling service prior to operating as part of the national strategy.
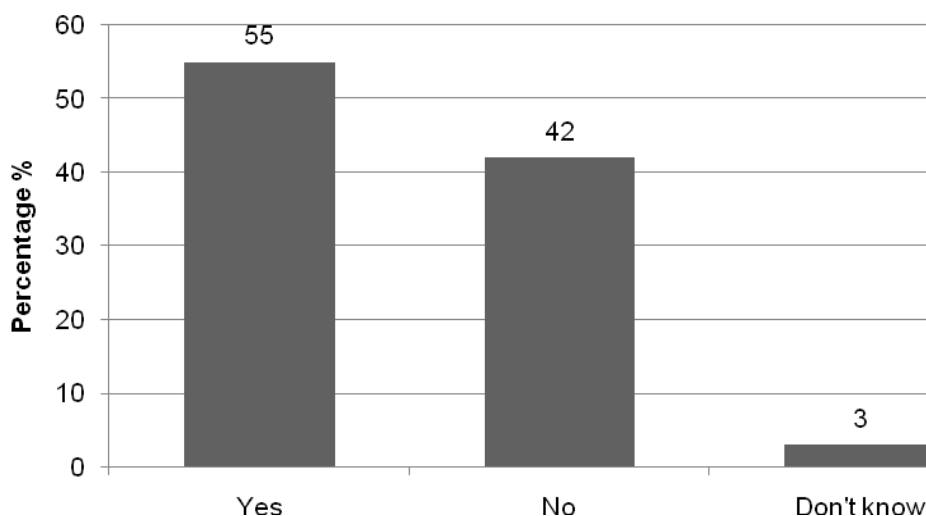
3.59. The majority (78%) of those schools which had a counselling service prior to the national strategy indicated the counselling service had improved since the introduction of the school-based counselling strategy. When asked why they felt the service had improved since implementation of the strategy, responses varied, with the two most common responses referring to provision being available more regularly and counsellors being of a better quality. Other responses can be seen in Figure 6.
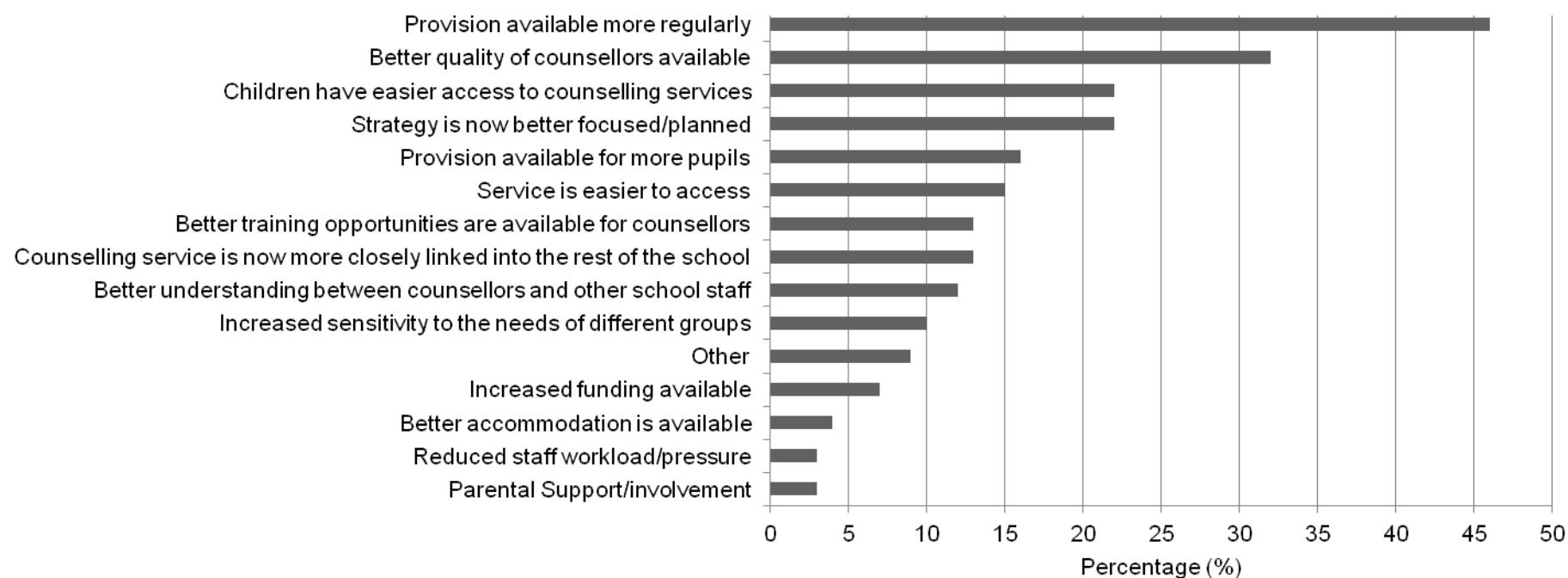
3.60. As with school counsellors, head/link teachers were also asked whether the school counselling service was operated within school premises, at a location outside of school premises or both. Interestingly whereas school counsellors indicated the counselling services operated largely both within and outside of school premises (53%), the majority of head/link teachers indicated that counselling services were operated exclusively within school premises (87%) (Figure 7). There is a clear difference in perceptions here.

3.61. Again, as with school counsellors, head/link teachers were also asked who the counsellors working within their schools are employed by and responses were comparable to those of the school counsellor census (see Figure 8).

3.62. Further information was asked of school head/link teachers regarding the manner in which the counselling service is run; for example, whether sessions are held regularly or run on an ad-hoc basis. School head/links were also asked to provide estimates of

waiting times for pupils wishing to access counselling. In the majority of cases (93%) it was reported that counsellors working within schools run sessions on a regular basis (Figure 9) and the average waiting time for a first appointment varied considerably, ranging from being seen the same day to a wait of more than four weeks, with an average waiting time of 1 - 2 weeks (Figure 10).
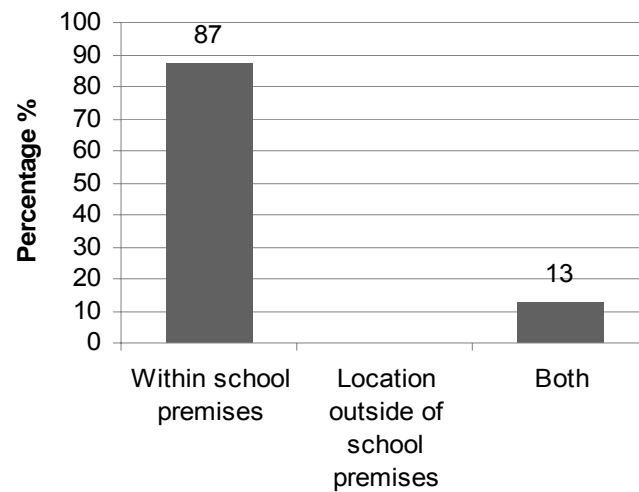
Figure 6   Reasons provided for why the service has improved since implementation of the school counselling strategy

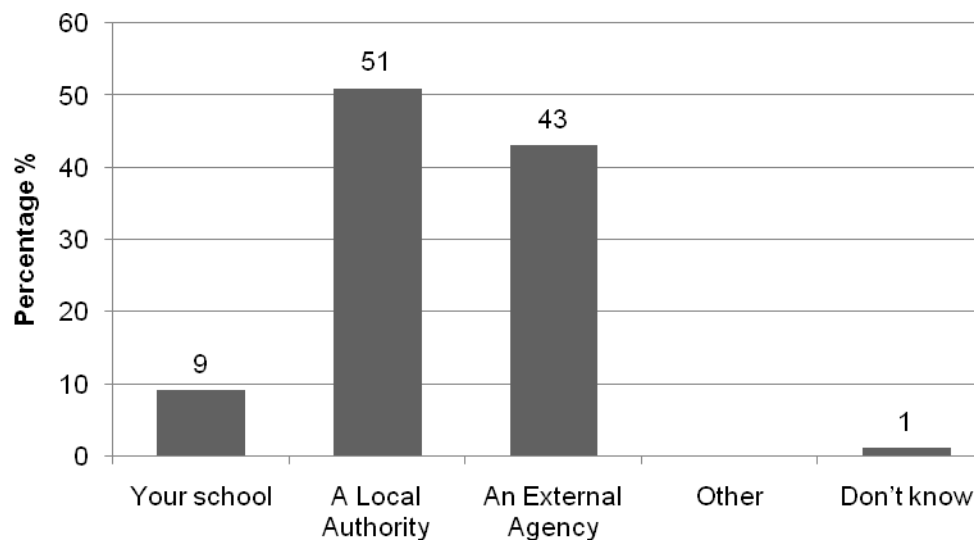Source: Head/link teacher telephone census

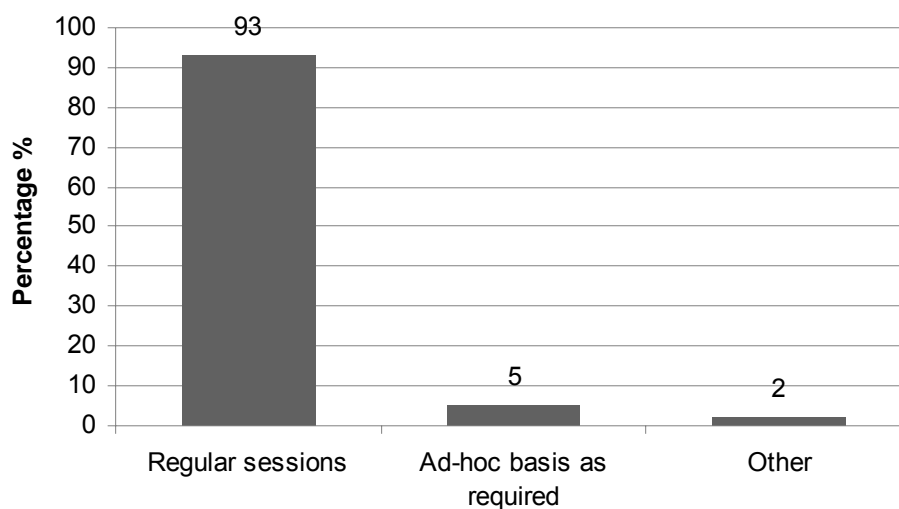**Figure 7   Where the school counselling service is operated from**

Source: Head/Link teacher telephone census

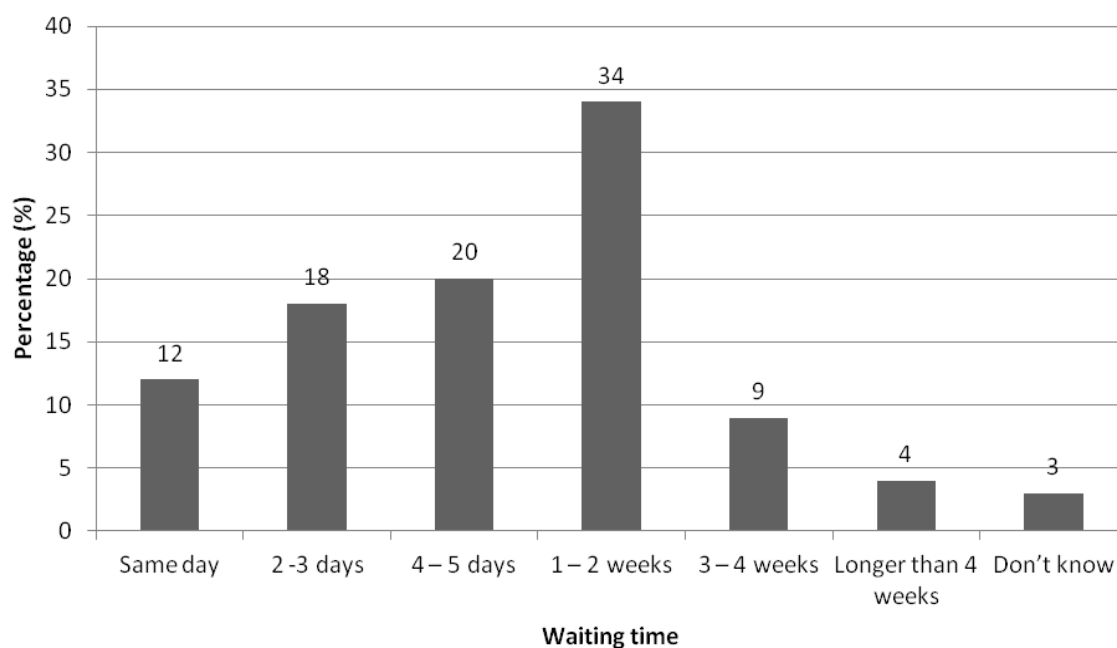**Figure 8   Who the counsellor (or counsellors) are employed by**

Source: Head/link teacher telephone census

Figure 9   Percentage of counsellors running regular sessions within school

Figure 10 The average waiting time for a first appointment once a pupil has been identified as needing to see a school counsellor

3.63. Concurring with results from the school counsellor survey, 75% of head/link teachers indicated there was no maximum number of sessions for an episode of counselling. For those who indicated there was a maximum number of sessions, Figure 11 depicts the range of maximum session numbers offered. The average maximum number of

sessions offered was 6, supporting findings from school counsellors reported in section 5.

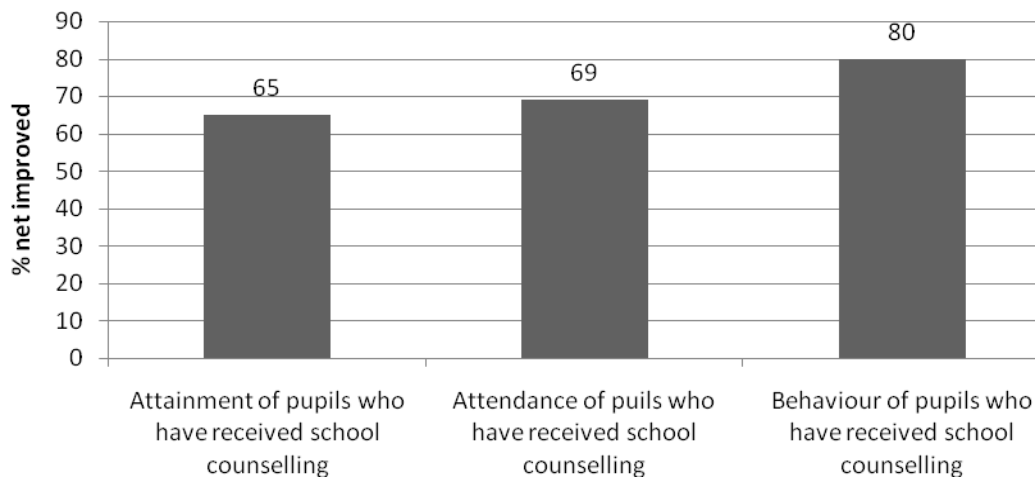**Figure 11 The maximum number of sessions offered to each pupil**
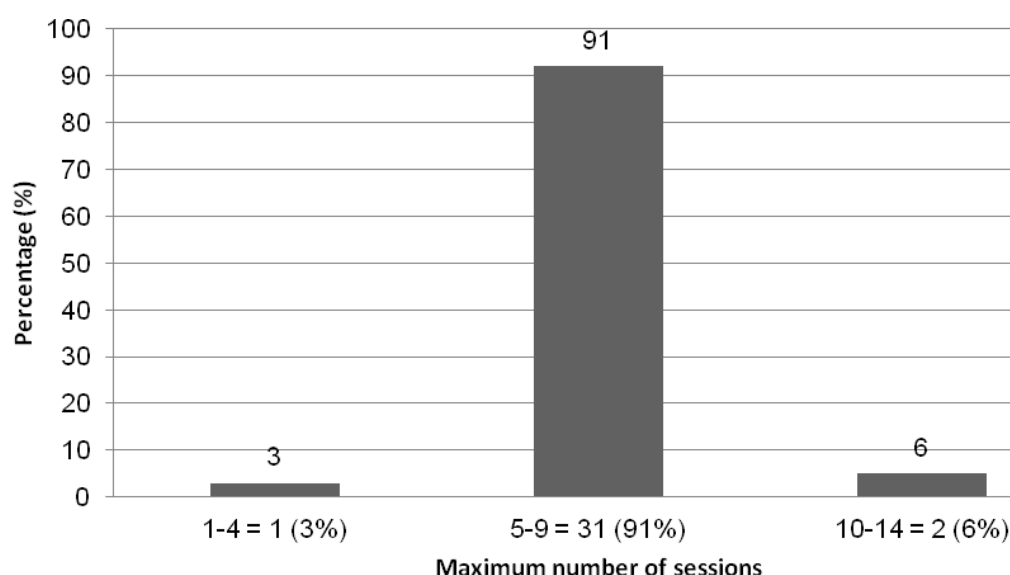
Source: Head/Link teachers telephone census

*Attitudes and opinions about the school counselling service*

3.64. There was significant net agreement (91%) among head/link teachers that the school's counselling service meets the needs of pupils. Bearing in mind the high response-rate to this survey, this is a very robust finding. In terms of the perceived impact on the attainment, attendance and behaviour of pupils who have received school counselling and on staff workload, overall results were positive, with over 60% net agreement that the school-based counselling service had resulted in improvements in attainment and attendance. Additionally there was 80% net agreement that behaviour had improved (Figure 12). It was generally agreed that staff workload had neither increased nor decreased since implementation of the strategy (Figure 13).

Figure 12 Perceptions of the impact of the school-based counselling service on attainment, attendance and behaviour of pupils

Figure 13 Perceptions of the impact of the school-based counselling service on staff workload
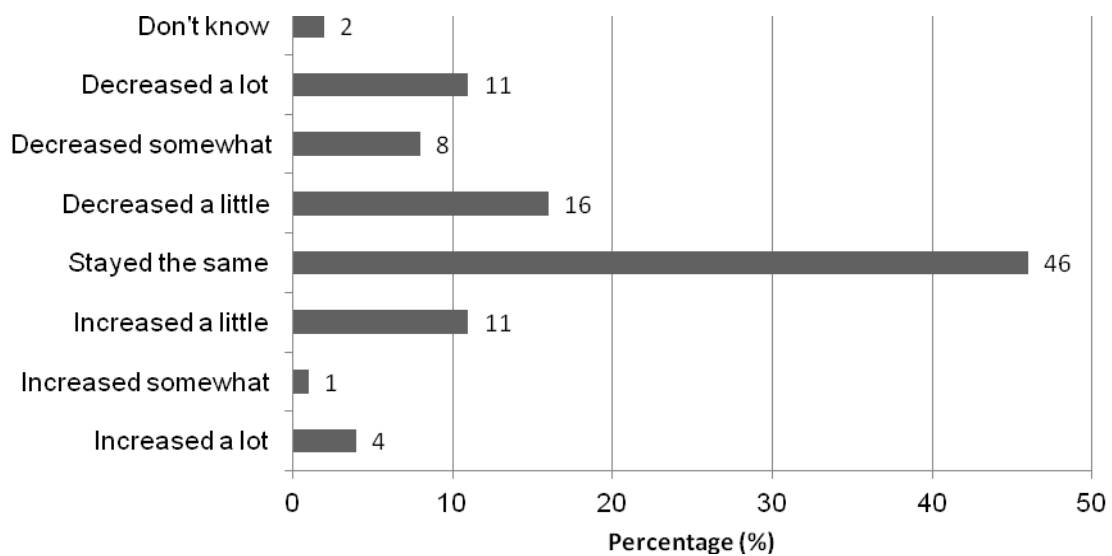
3.65. Head/link teachers were also asked to suggest recommendations for how the counselling service could be improved. As with the counsellors, recommendations varied, with the main recommendations relating to the need for more counselling staff and more liaison between counsellors and school staff (Figure 14). Interestingly 6% of respondents indicated nothing could be done to improve the counselling service.

Summary of head/link teacher census

3.66. Over half of schools included in the survey had provided a counselling service prior to operating as part of the national strategy, 78% of which felt the service had improved since the introduction of the Strategy, mostly due to more regular provision being available. Services were reported to be run on a regular, rather than an ad hoc basis, with flexibility in terms of session numbers and the average waiting time being 1-2 weeks.

3.67. Head/link teachers showed high levels of agreement that counselling services met the needs of pupils and were in agreement that the perceived attainment, attendance and behaviour of pupils who had received school counselling had improved, whilst in addition there had been little impact on staff workload.

3.68. In concurrence with school counsellors, head/link teachers recommended the service could be improved with more counselling sessions and increases in staffing levels.

Figure 14 Recommendations for improvements to the counselling service
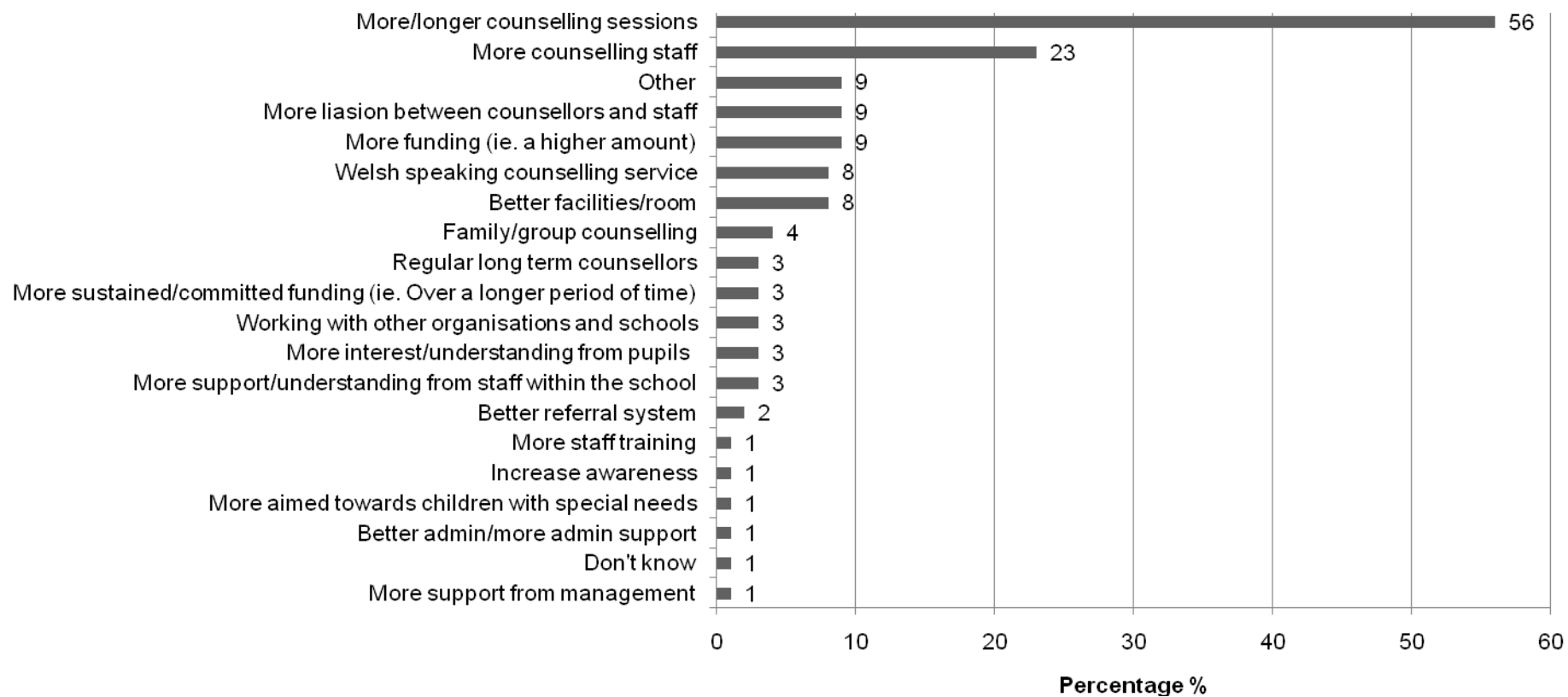
Source: Head/Link teacher telephone census

Census of Local Authority Main Lead/Service Managers

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Census of Local Authority Main Lead/Service Manager: Key Findings

- 96% of those who completed the questionnaire indicated they had good relations with specialist services such as CAMHS

- There was 100% net agreement that counsellors were provided with appropriate opportunities for clinical supervision. However responses were much lower for training (52%) and staffing (56%) levels

- There was net agreement of just 26% among school counsellors that the process of setting up the counselling service had been efficient and unproblematic, as compared with 64% among local authority leads/service managers and 79% within the head teachers/link teachers' survey

- Net agreement that counselling services were sensitive to the needs of Welsh speakers was 56% among local authority leads/service managers, just 47.4% among school counsellors and 28% in the head teachers/link teachers' survey

- The school counsellors' survey had 54% net agreement that the accommodation for the counselling service was adequate, compared with 89% for the head teachers/link teachers and 72% for the local authority leads/service managers.

- Net agreement among school counsellors that counselling services were adequately resourced was lower (55%) than for head teachers/link teachers (69%) and local authority leads/service managers (75%).

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Overview

3.69. This strand of the evaluation aimed to gather data on the views of Service Managers and Local Authority Leads responsible for the Strategy, enabling comparisons to be made with school counsellor and head/link teacher perspectives. Approximately 30 local authority main leads and service managers present at a meeting on 11th November 2010 were surveyed using a paper-based questionnaire. Those local authority leads unable to attend the meeting were contacted via email with an electronic version of the questionnaire. A total of 25 questionnaires were completed and returned to the evaluation team, indicating a response rate of 83%

3.70. The questionnaire (see annex 3) was derived from those already used in the school counsellor and head/link teacher surveys, similarly consisting of four areas of enquiry: details about counselling services; views on school counselling; relationships with other services; strengths and weaknesses of the strategy; and recommendations for the future.

3.71. 52% of respondents were local authority leads for the school counselling strategy with 40% indicating their role as a service manager, and a further 8% indicated their role to be 'other'.

About the school counselling service

3.72. 76% indicated the service they managed did not have a maximum number of sessions offered to pupils, supporting the findings of the school counsellors and link/head teachers' surveys.

3.73. 96% of those who completed the questionnaire indicated they had good relations with specialist services such as CAMHS, concurring with the school counsellor survey which found that two thirds of school counsellors have either received referrals from or made referrals to CAMHS.

Attitudes and opinions of the school counselling service

3.74. In addition to the attitudinal statements asked of school counsellors and link/head teachers, LA leads/service managers were also asked about provision for clinical supervision, opportunities for training and staffing levels. There was 100% net agreement that counsellors were provided with appropriate opportunities for clinical supervision. However responses were much lower for training (52%) and staffing (56%) levels (see Figure 15).

Figure 15 Attitudinal questions asked of local authority leads/service managers
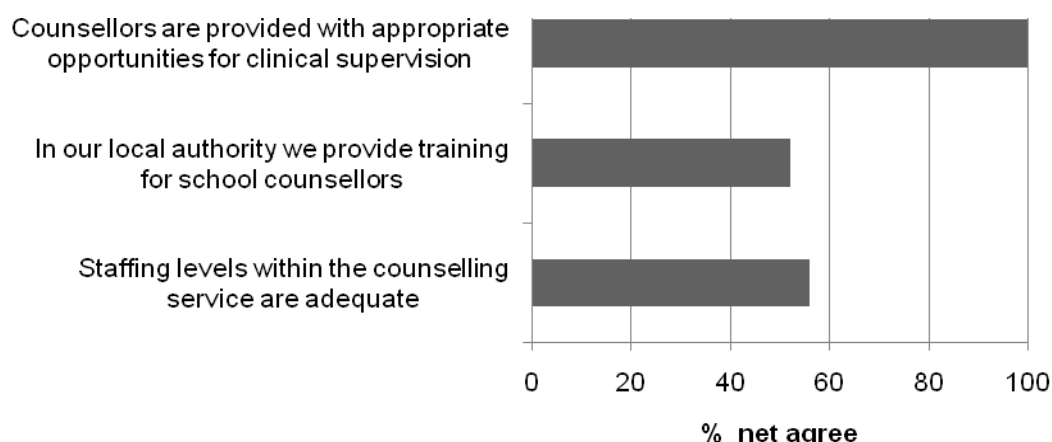
3.75. As with school counsellors and head/link teachers, local authority leads/service managers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of attitudinal statements regarding school-based counselling. The percentage net agreement to each statement, across each group is reported in Figure 16. There are four key statements where the level of agreement varied considerably across these three stakeholder groups:

- There was net agreement of just 26% among school counsellors that the process of setting up the counselling service had been efficient and unproblematic, as compared with 64% among local authority leads/service managers and 79% within the head teachers/link teachers' survey.

- Net agreement that counselling services were sensitive to the needs of Welsh speakers was 56% among local authority leads/service managers, just 47% among school counsellors and 28% in the head teachers/link teachers' survey.

- The school counsellors' survey had 54% net agreement that the accommodation for the counselling service was adequate, compared with 89% for the head teachers/link teachers and 72% for the local authority leads/service managers.

- Net agreement among school counsellors that counselling services were adequately resourced was lower (55%) than for head teachers/link teachers (69%) and local authority leads/service managers (75%).

Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommendations

3.76. As with the school counsellors' survey, local authority leads/service managers were asked three open questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy and recommendations for improvements. Results are as follows:

Strengths

- Support
- Funding has been made available
- Resources (e.g. Toolkit)
- Accessibility for pupils
- Whole Wales approach

Weaknesses

- Lack of certainty around future funding provision
- Variability in services across schools
- Data collection methods vary across services
- Demand will increase but concerns were expressed as to whether resources will match demand

Recommendations

- Increased/continued funding
- Collaboration with other agencies and school staff
- Joint training opportunities
- Continue to evaluate the service

Figure 16 Net agreement amongst school counsellors, head teachers/link people and local authority leads/service managers with attitudinal statements regarding the school counselling service
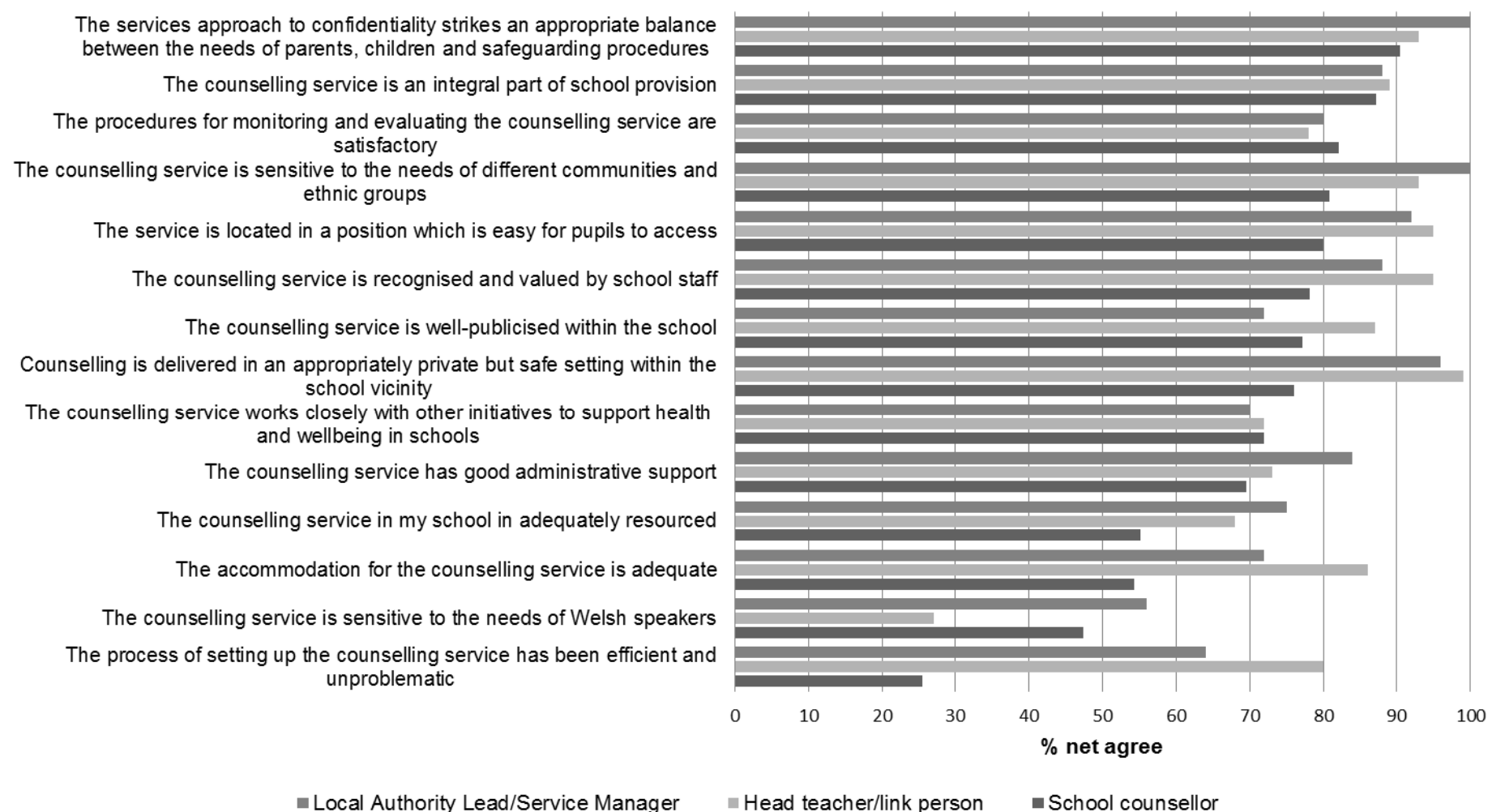
Source: Counsellor survey, head/link teacher survey and local authority lead/service manager survey

Summary of main lead/service manager census

- Supports findings of counsellors and head/link teacher surveys that services don't limit the number of counselling sessions for pupils
- Supports the finding that services work closely with specialist services such as CAMHS
- There was less than 60% net agreement that LAs provided training for school counsellors
- There was less than 60% net agreement that staffing levels were adequate (this supports the findings of the counsellor survey)
- As to whether services are sensitive to the needs of Welsh speakers, LA leads/service managers had highest levels of net agreement as compared with school counsellors and link/head teachers (see Figure 16)
- Strengths, weaknesses and recommendations corroborate those reported by school counsellors and head/link teachers.

4   Conclusions

The effectiveness of school-based counselling

4.1. Variations in the availability of good-quality outcome data across Wales signal a degree of caution in interpreting the results. However, the available data from the first year of the Strategy suggest that outcomes are good and compare well with other UK school-based counselling services. Demographic and session details for young people using services are very complete, providing a clear picture of who uses services and in what ways. The profile of young people using the services is very similar to other UK school-based counselling provisions. Attendance rates are high, with young people attending, on average, about four sessions of counselling per episode.

4.2. Assessment of the outcomes of the Strategy will, to a large extent, be dependent on the effect-size associated with the intervention, and this can only be estimated with robust outcome data. Without a high percentage of returns from the different areas, it will be difficult to give a credible estimate of the overall effectiveness of the intervention. So far, results look promising, but these findings may not stand up to critical scrutiny without more comprehensive coverage. We would strongly encourage all areas, therefore, to ensure that they are using standardised outcome measures (YP-CORE or SDQ) with *all* clients, and ideally on a session-by-session basis, so that 'end of therapy' data is available even for clients who drop out of therapy. Counselling services should also consider sending out Post Counselling Evaluation Questionnaires (in an appropriately anonymous and sensitive way) to ensure the maximum possible response rates. Wherever possible, we would also encourage services to use standardised measures, such that responses can be collated across areas, and we hope the Welsh Government would encourage this across Local Authorities and their schools. Finally, we would encourage areas to use the spreadsheets that will be provided to enter 2010-11 data, such that data from all areas, wherever possible, can be easily combined.

The school counselling workforce

4.3. The evaluation provides a clear picture of the profile of counsellors working in services. Predominantly female, white and British, the vast majority of counsellors are members of a professional body, particularly BACP, and have prior experience of working with children and young people. There is considerable variation in therapeutic approach

used by counsellors and in level of qualification, although the majority have been trained to postgraduate level. With regard to the availability of training for counsellors, there was less than 60% net agreement among local authority leads that they make training provision for school counsellors and data from the counsellors' survey identified a desire for greater training opportunities. The counsellors' survey also suggests that training in the role of counselling in schools for school staff may promote better understanding and increase levels of cooperation.

Counselling services

4.4. Survey data suggests services are generally flexible in terms of the number of sessions offered to pupils and location, with counselling services operating both within and outside of school premises in more than half of cases. Services are run on a regular, rather than an ad hoc basis, with flexibility in terms of session numbers and the average waiting time being 1-2 weeks. Likewise close working relationships with specialist services such as CAMHS are reported. Generally high levels of satisfaction were expressed in relation to the integration of services into school provision, the methods for monitoring and evaluating services, accessibility and the value placed on services by school staff, pupils and parents.

4.5. Over half of schools included in the survey had provided a counselling service prior to operating as part of the Strategy, and these services have improved since the introduction of the Strategy. Survey data suggests that the establishment of services has had little impact on staff workload, but that the perceived attainment, attendance and behaviour of pupils who had received school counselling had improved.

4.6. There is variation in perceptions across the different stakeholder groups as to how sensitive services are to the needs of Welsh speakers. Local Authority leads/service managers had highest levels of net agreement that services were sensitive as compared with school counsellors and link/head teachers whose responses were, on average, less positive.

Resources

4.7. A mixed picture emerges in terms of levels of satisfaction with resources: there was just over 50% net agreement among school counsellors that accommodation for school counselling was adequate and that services are adequately resourced. There is less than 60% net agreement among LA leads/service managers that staffing levels are adequate, concurring with the school counsellor survey data. A key

recommendation made by school counsellors was for increased funding and security of future funding. Similarly head/link teachers suggested improvements could be achieved with more counselling sessions being made available and increases in staffing levels. It is noteworthy that since the data collection the Welsh Government has secured funding for the Strategy for a further three years.

5   Recommendations

5.1. The data gathered as part of the Stage 1 evaluation indicates that the Strategy is well-advanced in its implementation and that high levels of satisfaction exist among the key stakeholder groups. High levels of agreement were noted across the survey data sets suggesting considerable consensus across the groups. Also early indications are that counselling interventions may be effective in reducing levels of distress among pupils. Key recommendations from this phase of the evaluation are as follows:

- Local authorities and individual services should make every effort to collect more complete and uniform outcome data to ensure the effectiveness of school-based counselling can be measured

- Wider opportunities for ongoing continuing professional development of school counsellors and training of school staff in school-based counselling should be developed by local authorities and schools

- Further investigation into how well school-based counselling services meet the needs of Welsh-speaking pupils should be conducted as part of the Stage Two evaluation

- Resourcing of the Strategy should be monitored to ensure that staffing levels are adequate and that services continue to meet demand.

6   References

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7   Annexes

Annex 1: Schools counsellors' questionnaire

Evaluation of the implementation of the Welsh Assembly Government's National School-based Counselling Strategy

This questionnaire aims to gain information regarding your opinion of the effectiveness of the implementation of the school counselling strategy for Wales. It forms part of a wider study conducted on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and aims to identify improvements to the implementation of the school counselling strategy.

Information will remain strictly confidential and will be treated with the utmost respect. Under no circumstances will individual respondents be identified in reports.

ABOUT THE SERVICE YOU WORK IN

1. How long has the school counselling service in which you work been operating as part of the Welsh Assembly Government schools counselling strategy?

   Years ☐   Months ☐

                    Don't know ☐

2. Is there a maximum number of sessions offered to each client in your service?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

   If yes, please specify _____

3. Does the service in which you work provide counselling (tick both if applicable):

   a) Within school premises ☐

   b) In a location outside of school premises ☐

4. Are you employed by:

a) A school ☐

b) A local education authority ☐

c) An external agency ☐

Please specify _____

d) Other, please specify _____

5. Please specify which school(s) you work in as a school counsellor:

Name of school	Town	Local authority

6. Have you referred pupils onto specialist services such as NHS CAMHS?

Yes ☐   No ☐

7. Have young people been referred to you for counselling from specialist services such as NHS CAMHS?

Yes ☐   No ☐

YOUR VIEWS ON SCHOOL COUNSELLING

Please circle the appropriate response indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement in relation to the work that you are undertaking as part of the Welsh Assembly Government School Counselling Strategy. If you are working in more than one school please select the school in which you spend the most time and answer in relation to this school. Please mark this school with an asterisk in Question 5, above.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	The accommodation for the counselling service in which I work is adequate	4	3	2	1	0
2	I feel clear about when to refer a pupil to other agencies such as NHS CAMHS	4	3	2	1	0
3	The service is located in a position on site which is easy for pupils to access	4	3	2	1	0
4	Counselling is delivered in an appropriately private but safe setting within the school vicinity	4	3	2	1	0
5	The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the counselling service are satisfactory	4	3	2	1	0
6	Staffing levels within the counselling service are adequate	4	3	2	1	0
7	The counselling service in which I work is adequately resourced	4	3	2	1	0
8	I am provided with appropriate opportunities for further training related to school counselling	4	3	2	1	0
9	The counselling service works closely with other initiatives to support health and wellbeing in schools	4	3	2	1	0
10	I am happy with arrangements provided for clinical supervision	4	3	2	1	0
11	The counselling service is an integral part of school provision	4	3	2	1	0
12	The counselling service is recognised and valued by pupils	4	3	2	1	0
13	The counselling service is well-publicised within the school	4	3	2	1	0

14	The counselling service is sensitive to the needs of different communities and ethnic groups	4	3	2	1	0
15	The service's approach to confidentiality strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of parents, children, and safeguarding procedures	4	3	2	1	0
17	The counselling service is sensitive to the needs of Welsh speakers	4	3	2	1	0
18	The counselling service has good administrative support	4	3	2	1	0
19	The counselling service is recognised and valued by school staff	4	3	2	1	0
20	The process of setting up the counselling service has been efficient and unproblematic	4	3	2	1	0
21	The counselling service is recognised and valued by parents	4	3	2	1	0
22	I feel well-supported in my role as school counsellor	4	3	2	1	0

Additional information

What do you feel have been the strengths of the Welsh Assembly Government School-based Counselling Strategy?

What do you feel have been the weaknesses of the Welsh Assembly Government School-based Counselling Strategy?

If any, what recommendations would you make to improve the Counselling Strategy?

ABOUT YOU

Demographic questions to be used for analysis purposes only. All information will remain anonymous.

1. Gender   Male ☐   Female ☐

2. Age   18 – 29 ☐   50 – 59 ☐

     30 – 39 ☐   60 – 69 ☐

     40 – 49 ☐   70+ ☐

3. What do you consider to be your ethnicity?

White British	☐	Black or Black British Caribbean	☐
White Irish	☐	Black or Black British African	☐
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	☐	Asian or Asian British Indian	☐
Mixed White & Black African	☐	Asian or Asian British Pakistani	☐
Mixed White & Asian	☐	Asian or Asian British	☐
Any other Mixed Background (please state below)	☐	Bangladeshi	☐
		Any other Asian Background	☐
		Chinese	☐

_____

Any other Ethnic group, please specify _____

This information is sought to ascertain the number of Welsh Counsellors involved in the WAG strategy.

What do you consider to be your nationality? _____

4. Disability is defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial long-term effect on ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

   Do you consider yourself to have a disability?   Yes ☐   No ☐

5. Are you a member of a professional body?   Yes ☐   No ☐

   If yes, please specify: _____

   BACP ☐   BPS ☐   UKCP ☐
        BABCP ☐

   Other, please specify _____

6. What is your highest level of counselling qualification?

Doctorate ☐   Masters ☐   Post-graduate Diploma ☐

FE Diploma ☐   Undergraduate Diploma ☐

Other, please specify _____

7. Did you have experience of working with children and young people prior to taking on your current role as school counsellor?

Yes ☐   No ☐

8. Have you undertaken specific training or qualifications related to working with children and young people?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, please specify approximately when you undertook this training and/or qualification and whether it was related to the school counselling strategy.

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9. How long have you worked as a school counsellor?

Years ☐   Months ☐

10. How would you describe your principal therapeutic orientation?

Psychodynamic ☐   Integrative ☐

Humanistic / Person Centred ☐   CBT ☐

Other, please specify _____

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.
Please return it in the envelope provided

Annex 2: Telephone questionnaire for school heads/link teachers

Evaluation of the implementation of the Welsh Assembly Government's National School-based Counselling Strategy

IF NO NAMED CONTACT, ASK TO SPEAK TO THE "LINK PERSON" OR OTHER SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEACHER WHO HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELLING SERVICE. IF NOT KNOWN, ASK TO SPEAK TO THE HEADTEACHER. ONCE THROUGH TO RESPONDENT, SAY:

Good morning/afternoon.   My name is … and I'm calling from Ipsos MORI, the social research company.

We are carrying out a survey of all secondary schools, and special schools with pupils aged 11 to 15 in Wales to find out opinions and experiences of the school-based counselling strategy.

This is part of a wider evaluation on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government, which is being coordinated by a consortium of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, Ipsos MORI, The University of Strathclyde, the University of Newcastle, Cardiff Educational Psychology Service and the University of Wales Newport. The evaluation aims to identify improvements to the implementation of the strategy.

A letter was recently sent to you about this research. <INTERVIEWER PLEASE OFFER TO RESEND THE LETTER IF THE RESPONDENT HAS NOT RECEIVED IT>.
The interview will take around 10 minutes of your time.

Before we start, I would like to assure you that your answers will be treated in strict confidence by the consortium and in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.   Your answers will only be used for research purposes.   Reported data will be aggregated so that It will not be possible to identify any particular individual or school/college in the data provided to the Welsh Assembly Government.

ASK ALL

S1. *Can I just check, are you the "Link Person" for the school-based counselling service in your school?* READ OUT.   SINGLE CODE

Yes	CONTINUE
No	ASK TO SPEAK TO THE LINK PERSON FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICE IN SCHOOL OR, IF THERE IS NO LINK PERSON, ASK TO SPEAK TO THE HEADTEACHER
Don't know	

S2. *What is your current, most senior level of responsibility?* READ OUT CATEGORIES. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Headteacher/principal	CONTINUE
Deputy or assistant headteacher	
Other senior management or leadership team	
Classroom or subject teacher/ lecturer	IF YES AT Q1 CONTINUE
Other (please specify)	IF NO AT Q2, CHECK WITH SUPERVISOR

S3. *And are you happy to proceed with the interview, and for us to share your responses with the consortium mentioned above?*

Yes	CONTINUE
No	THANK AND CLOSE

IF WE HAVE A RECORD OF START DATE ON SAMPLE, ASK:
S4. According to our records, your school has been operating as part of the Welsh government's school-based counselling strategy since [INSERT DATE ON SAMPLE]. Is this correct? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes
No
Don't know

IF NO OR DON'T KNOW AT S4, OR IF NO RECORD OF START DATE ON SAMPLE, ASK:
Approximately when did your school start operating as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's school-based counselling strategy*?* ENTER YEAR AND MONTH (or best estimate)

Year:	CONTINUE
Month:	
Don't know	

S5. Did your school provide school-based counselling for pupils prior to operating as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's National Strategy for school-based counselling? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes
No
Don't Know

INTERVIEWER READ OUT:
In the rest of this interview I will be asking you about your school's counselling service, by which I mean the counselling service which the school provides in line with the Welsh Assembly Government's National Strategy for School-based Counselling.

I would like to begin by asking you about provision and usage of the counselling service in your school.

Q1. Is your school counselling service operated within school premises or at a location outside of school premises? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Within school premises
Location outside of school premises
Both

Don't know

Q2A. Is the counsellor (or counsellors) working within your school's counselling service employed by…? READ OUT CODES 1-3. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Your school (GO TO Q2B)
A local education authority (GO TO Q3)
An external agency (Please specify) (GO TO Q3)

Don't know

ASK IF SCHOOL COUNSELLOR IS EMPLOYED BY SCHOOL AT Q2A
Q2B. Does the counsellor working within your school have any other role within your school, for

example teacher or school nurse? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes
No
Don't know

ASK ALL
Q3. Does the counsellor working within your school run regular sessions, or visit on an ad-hoc basis as and when required? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Regular sessions
Ad-hoc basis as required
Other (please specify)
Don't know

Q4. In an average case, once a pupil has been identified as needing to see a school counsellor, how long does that pupil typically wait for his or her first appointment? SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Same day
2 – 3 days
4 – 5 days
1 – 2 weeks
3 – 4 weeks
Longer than four weeks
Don't know

Q5A. Is there a maximum number of sessions offered to each pupil requiring counselling in your school? SINGLE CODE

Yes (GO TO Q5B)
No (GO TO Q7)
Don't know (GO TO Q7)

IF YES AT Q5A, OTHERS TO GO TO Q7
Q5B. Usually, what is the maximum number of sessions offered to each pupil?

WRITE IN NUMBER
Don't know

Don't Know

ASK ALL
Q7-23. I am going to read out a series of statements that may or may not describe the counselling service in your school. For each statement, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree. READ OUT. ROTATE STATEMENTS. REVERSE CODEFRAME FOR 50% OF RESPONDENTS. SINGLE CODE FOR EACH. ALLOW DON'T KNOW.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7	The accommodation for the school's counselling service is adequate	4	3	2	1	0
8	Staff in my school have enough training to understand when to refer a pupil to the school counsellor	4	3	2	1	0
9	The service is located in a position which is easy for pupils to access	4	3	2	1	0
10	Counselling is delivered in an appropriately private but safe setting within the school vicinity	4	3	2	1	0

11	The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the counselling service are satisfactory	4	3	2	1	0
13	The counselling service in my school is adequately resourced	4	3	2	1	0
14	The counselling service works closely with other initiatives to support health and wellbeing in schools	4	3	2	1	0
15	The counselling service is an integral part of school provision	4	3	2	1	0
16	My school has received adequate support to develop and deliver its school-based counselling service effectively	4	3	2	1	0
17	The counselling service is well-publicised within the school	4	3	2	1	0
18	The counselling service is sensitive to the needs of different communities and ethnic groups	4	3	2	1	0
19	The service's approach to confidentiality strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of parents, children, and safeguarding procedures	4	3	2	1	0
20	The counselling service is sensitive to the needs of Welsh speakers	4	3	2	1	0
21	The counselling service has good administrative support	4	3	2	1	0
22	The counselling service is recognised and valued by school staff	4	3	2	1	0
23	The process of setting up the counselling service has been efficient and unproblematic	4	3	2	1	0

Q24. What impact, if any, would you say your school-based counselling service has on each of the following in your school? READ OUT. ROTATE STATEMENTS. REVERSE CODEFRAME FOR 50%. SINGLE CODE FOR EACH.

a. Behaviour of pupils who have received school counselling
b. Attainment of pupils who have received school counselling
c. Attendance of pupils who have received school counselling

Improved a lot
Improved somewhat
Improved a little
Stayed the same (no impact)
Deteriorated a little
Deteriorated somewhat
Deteriorated a lot

Don't know

ASK ALL
Q25. And what impact, if any, would you say your school-based counselling service has had on STAFF WORKLOAD in your school? READ OUT. REVERSE CODEFRAME FOR 50% SINGLE CODE FOR EACH.

Increased a lot
Increased somewhat
Increased a little
Stayed the same (no impact)
Decreased a little
Decreased somewhat
Decreased a lot

Don't know

Q26. Overall, how well do you feel your school's counselling service currently meets the needs of pupils? READ OUT. REVERSE CODEFRAME FOR 50%. SINGLE CODE

Very well
Fairly well
Not very well
Not at all well

Don't know

ASK IF SAID 'YES' AT QS5 (DID OPERATE A SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELLING SYSTEM BEFORE WAG's SCHOOL COUNSELLING STRATEGY). OTHERS GO TO Q28

Q27 Overall, would you say that your school's counselling service got better or worse since the introduction of the Welsh Assembly Government's school-based counselling strategy in [INSERT DATE FROM S3], or has there been no change? SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Much better (GO TO Q27A)
Slightly better (GO TO Q27A)
No change (GO TO Q29)
Slightly worse (GO TO Q27B)
Much worse (GO TO Q27B)
Don't know (GO TO Q29)

ASK IF BETTER AT Q27
Q27A Why do you say it has got better? DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

Increased funding available
Better quality of counsellors available
Provision available more regularly
Provision available for more pupils
Strategy is now better focused/planned
Better accommodation is available
Counselling service is now more closely linked into the rest of the school
Better understanding between counsellors and other school staff
Increased sensitivity to the needs of different groups
Service is easier to access
Better training opportunities are available for counsellors
Children have easier access to counselling services
Other – SPECIFY
Don't know

GO TO Q29

ASK IF WORSE AT Q27
Q27B Why do you say it has got worse? DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

Lower quality of counselling
Less funding available
Provision available less regularly
Provision available to fewer pupils
Strategy is now less well focussed/planned
Accommodation is now not as good
Less freedom to do as the school wants
More time being spent on administration
Counselling service now not so well linked to the rest of the school
Less understanding between counsellors and other school staff
Less sensitivity to the needs of different groups
Service is harder to access
Counsellor training is not as well provided for as before
Other – SPECIFY
Don't know

Q29. What if anything, would improve the counselling service in your school? DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

More funding (ie. a higher amount)
More sustained/committed funding (ie. over a longer period of time)
More counselling staff
More/longer counselling sessions
Better facilities/room
More interest/understanding from pupils
More support/understanding from staff within the school
More support from management
Working with other organisations and schools
More liaison between counsellors and staff
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY

Nothing
Don't know

Q31. As part of this research the consortium will be conducting some case study visits in a small number of schools in early 2011. We would arrange a time with you to visit the school to interview a number of students and a small number of school staff. In principle, might your school be willing to take part? If so we would contact you nearer the time if your school fits the required profile.
Yes
No
Don't know

IF YES:
Thank you. Who should we contact about this nearer the time?

Check contact details and ask for school landline and e-mail address.
Thank respondent.

Annex 3: Questionnaire for local authority leads

Evaluation of the implementation of the Welsh Assembly Government's National School-based Counselling Strategy

This questionnaire for Local Authority Leads and Service Managers aims to gain your views on the implementation of the school counselling strategy for Wales. It forms part of a wider study conducted on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and aims to identify improvements to the implementation of the school counselling strategy.

Information will remain strictly confidential and will be treated with the utmost respect. Under no circumstances will individual respondents be identified in reports.

ABOUT THE SERVICE YOU LEAD/MANAGE

1. In relation to the Welsh Assembly Government's National School-based Counselling Strategy what is your role?

   a) Local Authority Lead ☐

   b) Service Manager ☐

   c) Other (please specify) _____

2. Within which Local Authority in Wales do you lead the counselling service for schools **OR** which Service in relation to the WAG school counselling strategy do you manage?

   _____

3. How long has the school counselling service you lead/manage been operating as part of the Welsh Assembly Government school counselling strategy?

   Years ☐   Months ☐

   Don't know ☐

4. How long have you been your Local Authority's Main Lead / Service Manager for the WAG school based counselling strategy?

   Years ☐   Months ☐

5. Is there a maximum number of sessions offered to each client in your service?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Don't Know ☐

If yes, please specify _____

YOUR VIEWS ON SCHOOL COUNSELLING

Please circle the appropriate response indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement in relation to the work that your service is undertaking as part of the Welsh Assembly Government School Counselling Strategy. Responses should be based on the **AVERAGE ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS WITHIN YOUR SERVICE / LOCAL AUTHORITY.**

If you do not know the answer or feel unable to respond to a question please leave the response blank.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	The accommodation for the counselling service is adequate	4	3	2	1	0
2	Services are easily accessible to pupils	4	3	2	1	0
3	Counselling is delivered in an appropriately private but safe setting within the school vicinity	4	3	2	1	0
4	The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the counselling service are satisfactory	4	3	2	1	0
5	Staffing levels within the counselling service are adequate	4	3	2	1	0
6	The counselling service is adequately resourced	4	3	2	1	0
7	In our local authority we provide training for school counsellors	4	3	2	1	0
8	The counselling service works closely with other initiatives to support health and wellbeing in schools	4	3	2	1	0
9	Counsellors are provided with suitable arrangements for clinical supervision	4	3	2	1	0

No.	Statement					
10	The counselling service is an integral part of school provision	4	3	2	1	0
11	The counselling service is well-publicised within schools	4	3	2	1	0
12	The counselling service is sensitive to the needs of different communities and ethnic groups	4	3	2	1	0
13	The service's approach to confidentiality strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of parents, children, and safeguarding procedures	4	3	2	1	0
14	The counselling service is sensitive to the needs of Welsh speakers	4	3	2	1	0
15	The counselling service has good administrative support	4	3	2	1	0
16	The counselling service is recognised and valued by school staff	4	3	2	1	0
17	The process of setting up the counselling service has been efficient and unproblematic	4	3	2	1	0
18	The counselling service is recognised and valued by parents	4	3	2	1	0

Additional information

Do you feel the counselling service you lead/manage has good relations with specialist services such as CAMHS, social services, educational psychology etc?
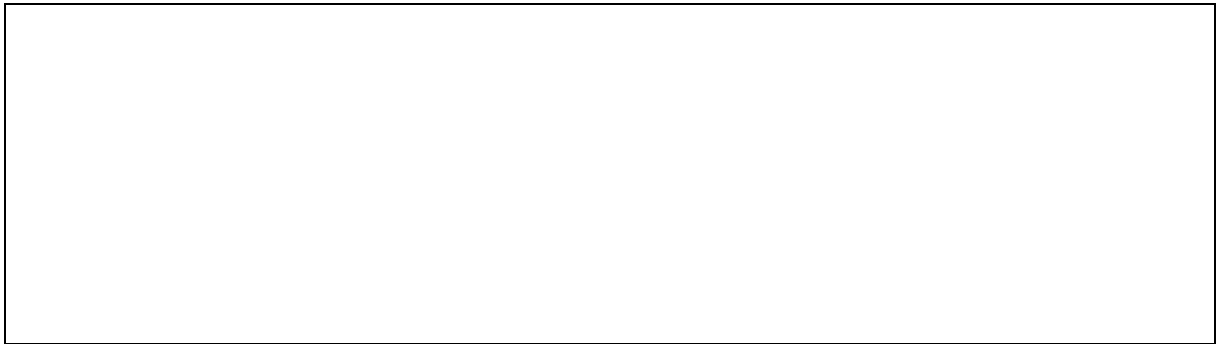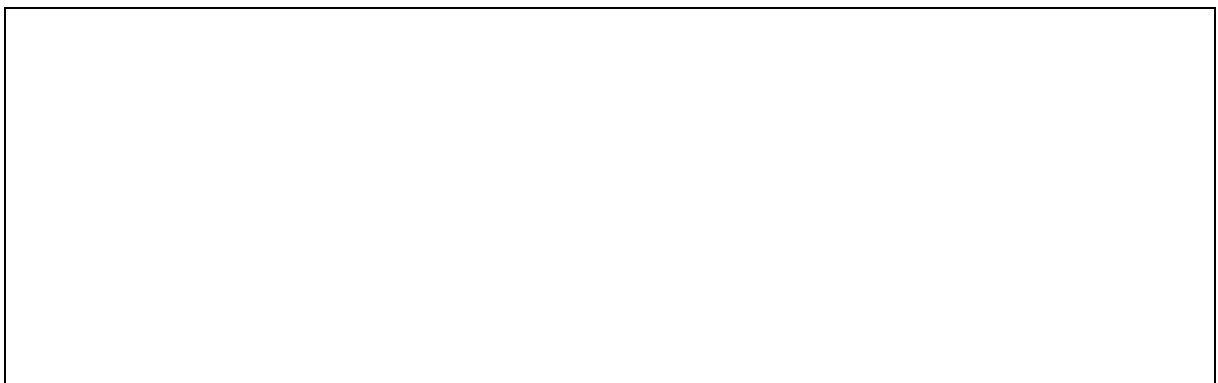
Yes ☐   No ☐

Don't know ☐

Please explain your response
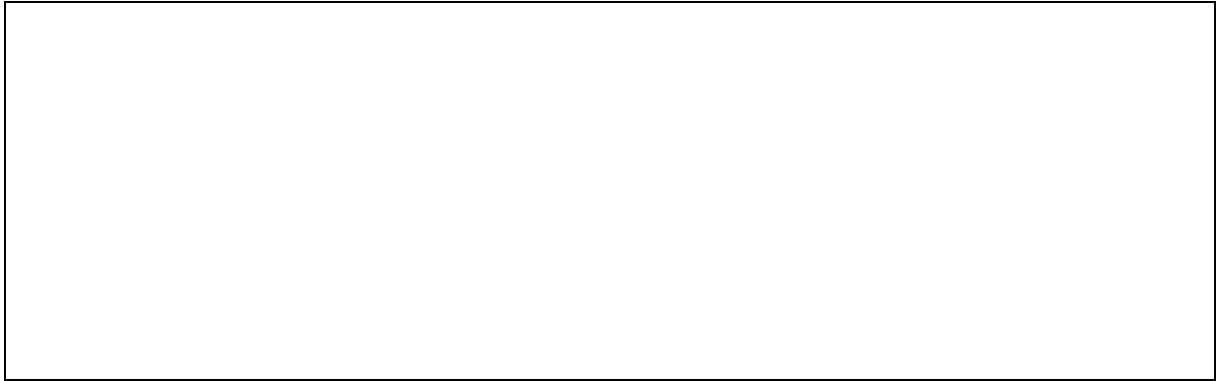
What do you feel have been the strengths of the Welsh Assembly Government School-based Counselling Strategy?

What do you feel have been the weaknesses of the Welsh Assembly Government School-based Counselling Strategy?

If any, what recommendations would you make to improve the Counselling Strategy?

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Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.
Please return it in the envelope provided