

Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder Evaluation

2nd Interim Report

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

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Copies of this and the other interim reports are available on the CEDAR website at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/peip>

And on the DCSF website at www.dfes.gov.uk/research/
(NB At present this website still uses 'dfes' not 'dcsf')

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses Phase 2 of the evaluation of the roll out of the Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder (PEIP), an initiative to fund local authorities (LAs) to implement one of three parenting programmes selected by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) following a review of available programmes: Triple P, Webster-Stratton Incredible Years and Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities.

The Pathfinder funds 15 LAs (5 per programme) as the core group. In addition, three funded and two non-funded comparison LAs are in the study. The programme started in the summer of 2006 and is due to end by 31 March 2008. The final report is due by the end of March, 2008. The Pathfinder is designed to provide parenting programmes but underlying the rationale is the need to influence positively the behaviour of the children. The Pathfinder is designed to focus on children aged 8-13 years, although it is recognized that the benefits of improved parenting may influence younger and older siblings in the family. The severity of the children's problems, and whether parents voluntarily seek the support of the programme or are required to attend, are potentially key elements in how the programmes operate.

This is the 2nd Interim Report of the evaluation. It is based on interviews with 94 facilitators, 18 strategic leads and 21 operational leads across the 20 LAs during Phase 2 of the evaluation. At this point (June-October 2007), the PEIP was underway in all the LAs, sometimes after a slow start. Interviewees were therefore able to reflect on their experiences to date. This interim report presents data and in addition we have identified issues to address more fully in the final report, to be produced at the end of the project. It is also important to note that this report presents data and draws conclusions across the roll out as a whole. The purpose of the study is not to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the three Programmes: they were selected by DCSF on the basis of their having evidence for their effectiveness. The focus, therefore, is on evaluating roll out of three evidence-based programmes, identifying pertinent factors to address in the PEIP and which have implications for a larger scale roll out after the Pathfinder. The Final Report will address these issues more fully.

Main Findings

- The LAs have successfully begun to implement PEIP by training a substantial cadre of facilitators and starting to run parenting groups
- The rate of progress across LAs has been very variable in terms of numbers of groups run and parents supported, a function of the limited availability of accredited training for facilitators, the length of each of the Programmes and local recruitment factors
- There is optimism about the likely success of the PEIP
- A number of implementation issues have been identified for study during Phase 3, the final phase, including: recruitment and attendance of parents, drop out, facilitators' access to supervision and the impact of the group training on parents
- There is an interaction between the PEIP and each LA's parenting strategy: the PEIP is expected to influence further development of the strategy

Detailed Findings

Running the groups

Engagement

- There are three challenges to engaging parents
 - To attend the course
 - To stay for the duration of the course
 - To be actively engaged during the course sessions
- Schools and extended schools have played an important role in identifying parents (see the accompanying report on schools and extended schools¹)
- Facilitators have developed a range of strategies to engage parents to attend groups, including home visiting prior to the group starting
- Drop out is reported to occur mainly during the first weeks of a course
- Facilitators have developed a range of strategies to prevent drop out including home visits, phone contact and paying particular, individualised attention to the most needy parents
- The scale of drop out is unclear with differing reports between interviewees

¹ Lindsay, G. et al (2007) *Evaluation of the Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder: Additional Study of the Involvement of Extended Schools*. Coventry: CEDAR, University of Warwick - <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/peip>

- Four out of five facilitators reported that parents were engaged during the course; only 2/59 facilitators reported parents were hard or very hard to keep engaged
- Level of parent need was an important factor in gaining and maintaining engagement during the course

Course materials

- About nine out of ten facilitators regarded the course materials as very suitable or suitable
- The theoretical underpinnings and research basis for the Programmes were positively regarded
- There were, however, a number of criticisms by facilitators regarding
 - Cultural specificity of US and Australian material and limited or lack of match with UK or more specifically local settings
 - Materials reflecting more 'middle class' family experiences
- However, parents were reported to appreciate the materials and to use them well.
- Some facilitators wanted to modify the programme delivery but were aware of the strong insistence on the need for consistency of implementation (programme fidelity)

Relevance of training

- Facilitators were overwhelmingly positive about their training: over nine out of ten facilitators considered their training had been very relevant or relevant.
- The main criticism was its intensity
- There were also concerns about the need to undergo additional training where the Programme's researched course did not match the 8-13 age range of the PEIP.

Facilitators and co-facilitators

- Over nine out of ten facilitators rated the dynamic with their co-facilitator positively
- Positive co-facilitation occurred both with colleagues from the same service and also where the co-facilitator came from a different background
- Co-facilitation was supportive and increased flexibility
- Although a minority and not favoured by some Programmes, there is some limited evidence for the use of parent (i.e. non-professional) facilitators.

Support and supervision

- Over nine out of ten facilitators rated their managers as supportive, with over half rating managers very supportive.

- Supervision was more problematic and was patchy, reflecting the programmes' difficulties in meeting the scale of demand from the PEIP.
- Where available, facilitators valued support from experienced Programme personnel accredited to provide supervision.
- Only about half of the facilitators were able to comment on supervision; of these, over four out of five rated it very helpful or helpful.
- The variable access to appropriate supervision should be addressed during this Pathfinder and will be an important issue in any future roll out across more LAs

Strategic issues

Development of the parenting strategy

- LAs varied in the stage of development of their parenting strategy
- In some cases the development of locality structures was expected to be supportive of the development of the parenting strategy and specifically of PEIP
- LAs varied with respect to the balance between universal and targeted provision for parents and also with respect to the role of parenting groups and the number of different programmes they wished to support
- There were tensions in some LAs among professionals concerning whether to use, in addition, a locally developed parenting programme, but one without research evidence comparable to that of the PEIP Programme
- Where the LA had a history of parent support being a central policy area, and where there was a history of parenting programmes, there was optimism about the sustainability of PEIP

Recruitment and retention of facilitators

- Some LAs had a resource of previously trained facilitators on which to draw
- Recruitment was adversely affected in some cases by the lengthy procedures in the LA but more particularly by the limited availability of training because of the scale of the PEIP and the limited number of accredited trainers
- There are indications of some problems of retention and/or limited use of facilitators after training

Parent recruitment

- The scale of parent recruitment varies across the LAs with a variation in opinions as to whether the target number will be hit

- The appropriateness of the parents who are recruited to a course is a concern among some strategic leads with respect to both the severity of needs and the appropriate mix within any one group

Sustainability

- Local authorities are actively considering how to sustain their work after March 2008.
- Finance is a key but not the only factor: local arrangements to access facilitators will also be important
- Where an LA has a history of parent support groups, sustainability has been considered as a central issue in planning

Issues to address

This final section draws out a number of issues which the Phase 2 interviews have identified as requiring further exploration and analysis. These issues have been raised in various forms by interviewees or our own analysis of the data but should be seen as *indicative* at this time. All are important for the further roll out after March 2008. They will be presented here as a series of bullets.

- LAs' delivery systems
 - Which models enhance or limit delivery, e.g. use of core team or facilitators in other jobs allocating specific time allocations?
- Staffing
 - Importance of operational lead role and the role holder having appropriate skills and knowledge related to parenting support.
- Length of Parenting Programme
 - Number of sessions varies between the three Programmes
 - Length of programme has increased for Incredible Years and is now very substantial – 20 weeks.
 - Increased length raises issue of *cost* and also *practicability*, e.g. fitting into the school year.
- Training
 - Cost and practical limitations where training is supplied from another country.
 - Practicality of developing UK based training.

- Are there consistent standards of training for each model across LAs?
- Limited number of accredited trainers restricts further roll out.
- Information limitations
 - Commercial sensitivity limits information available until purchase, impeding LA officers' ability to persuade policy makers.
- Parents as facilitators
 - Should parents act as co-facilitators or take a lead as facilitators?
 - Evidence of *some* parents being trained as facilitators.
 - Programmes differ in their approval/support for parent facilitators.
- Fidelity
 - There are varying views on an operational definition of fidelity and some LAs are possibly developing 'variants' of the Programme – will this lead to a loss of fidelity of Programme(s) over time?
- Supervision
 - This is variable and limited by availability of appropriate mentors. How should LAs increase supervision support, e.g. using educational and clinical psychologists to provide local support.
- Accreditation
 - Arrangements for accreditations vary across the Programmes.
 - Facilitators may be practising without accreditation?
 - There is some uncertainty regarding accreditation for the new Incredible Years course.
- Materials
 - Programmes are developing materials – will they address concerns adequately concerning culture, language and severity of problem?
 - Cost of purchasing new materials (e.g. DVDs to replace videos) is significant.
 - Are the new versions different in content also?
- English as an Additional Language

- How are LAs responding to the challenge of parents for whom English is an additional language?
- Is there sufficient access to facilitators fluent in the home language
- How is this challenge being addressed with respect to the written materials?

- Parents
 - What degree of variation exists between the parents attending Programmes with respect to level of problems?
 - Is there variation between programmes? Between LAs?

- Parenting Strategy
 - How developed is the LA's Parenting Strategy?
 - How does this address the use of the Parenting programme used for PEIP, or any other programme.

- Cost
 - How will set up as well as recurrent costs be identified and resources found if PEIP is rolled out to other LAs?

These issues have been raised as comments, queries and concerns. In some cases they reflect the need for information but others are concerned with policy and/or practice decisions.

They are presented here for reflection and discussion in the first instance and then for further examination during Phase 3. The Final Report will address these among other issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder is an initiative to fund local authorities (LAs) to implement one of three selected parenting programmes: Triple P, Webster-Stratton Incredible Years and Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities. The three programmes were selected by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) following a review of available programmes.

The Pathfinder funds 15 LAs (5 per programme) as the core group. In addition, three funded and two non-funded comparison LAs are in the study. These are spread across England. The programme started in the summer of 2006 and is due to end by 31 March 2008. This evaluation started in September 2006 and the final report is due by the end of March, 2008. The Pathfinder is designed to provide parenting programmes but underlying the rationale is the need to influence positively the behaviour of the children. The Pathfinder is designed to focus on children aged 8-13 years, although it is recognized that the benefits of improved parenting may influence younger and older siblings in the family. The severity of the children's problems, and whether parents voluntarily seek the support of the programme or are required to attend, are potentially key elements in how the programmes operate.

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2. METHODOLOGY

The study took place between June and October 2007.

Interviews were held with 18 Local Authority strategic lead officers, 21 operational leads/coordinators and 94 facilitators, a total of 133 interviews. Interviews were conducted by the three field researchers, each of whom have responsibility for one of the three programmes; recorded, with the interviewees' permission; and detailed field notes were taken using standard pro formas bespoke for each of the three groups. The interviews were designed to be complementary, overlapping in content but with variations to limit the length of the interview, broaden coverage and optimise relevance. Interviews were mainly carried out either face to face, or by phone, by prior arrangement according to the constraints on or preferences of the interviewees.

All interviews were analysed thematically and the results collated into the following sections of this report. All quotations have been coded in such a way to anonymise the interviewee: LAs are coded randomly. Within each LA, the role is identified by a letter (strategic lead: S; operational lead: O; facilitator: F). Where there is more than one interviewee in an LA with that role (typically facilitators) they have been allocated a random number, e.g. LA3/S, LA7/O, LA12/F3.

3. RUNNING THE PARENTING GROUPS

3.1 Progress to date

The interviews with strategic leads, operational leads and facilitators were carried out over the period from June – October 2007. Consequently, the data reported here concern a developing picture. Nevertheless, the interviewees provided useful information on both their work to date and that which was planned. This Section draws mainly on the views of the facilitators with Section 4 focusing on more strategic issues, as discussed by the strategic and operational leads.

There was a substantial variation across the LAs in terms of progress to date by the end of the summer term. Also, individual facilitators² varied. For example, in one LA the facilitators interviewed varied from having delivered or were currently engaged in delivering, between 1 and 4 courses. In other LAs most facilitators had either just finished or were near to the end of their first programme and were expecting to deliver again in September.

These inter- and intra-LA variations reflected three main factors. Firstly, LAs varied with respect to their setting up initial training of facilitators. This related, at least in part, to the availability of training in the programme, which in turn differed between programmes. There were also delays in some LAs setting up the infrastructure. For example, as late as September 2007, one operational lead stated:

'If the locality teams had been established, people would have been keener to undertake [Programme] training and then got on with it. As it is, some people have been appointed, they know which team they are in but they are not in the right office [...] Yesterday I was trying to contact somebody in one locality team but they haven't got any phones yet. We are talking about some pretty basic problems' (LA9/0)

Secondly, the length of the three different programmes affected how many could be run by a facilitator over a period of time, with the Incredible Years requiring the longest period of time. Thirdly, the facilitators varied with respect to the time they had available. Whereas some worked full time, others had other main jobs and had to fit facilitating groups into those demands. This factor was also related to the programme as each had different requirements for the background and experience of the facilitator.

² In this report reference to facilitators indicates the interviewees

3.1.2 Further training

Interviewees had had different opportunities to undertake further training. Because of the early stage of these facilitators' development, almost nobody had undertaken further, additional training. Where this differed was mainly in the small number of cases where the facilitators had been trained in the programme prior to the Pathfinder: in such cases additional training was a reasonable possibility.

Some facilitators of Triple P had undertaken more of the different levels, reflecting this programme's structure, e.g.

Since my last interview I've done level 4 groups, a level 3, and then I did teen and now I've just completed what I would call level 5, which is now called Pathways (LA9/F4)

3.2 **Experience of facilitating parenting groups**

Because the situations of the facilitators varied, not all had actually started a course. Consequently, the evidence on the experience of running courses comes from a smaller number of facilitators who were in a position to make valid judgements. There were many positive comments from facilitators about the courses they had run. Many reported that they were pleasantly surprised by the high rate of retention on the programme. In this section the facilitators' experiences of running groups is examined.

3.2.1 The programme itself

Fundamental to the positive outcomes reported by facilitators was the programme being implemented. This was generally very positively regarded, with comments directed to different aspects, including the content and the methods, e.g. role play. There was a general recognition that the programme was successful in encouraging parents to try different strategies, and for some parents this brought about very significant and positive changes in their relationships with their children. For example, one facilitator stated:

'A couple of people turned their life around, one of them was going through marriage break-up and family difficulties in relation to a daughter, another had problems with her son's sleeping, and both found a solution to these problems' (LA19/F8)

Another commented:

'Parents learned different techniques for dealing with their children - it turned their ideas upside down in a gentle way'. (LA19/F4)

Other comments picked up on characteristics of particular programmes, for example, in commenting upon Triple P, one facilitator highlighted its flexibility.

'For me I feel that Triple P is such a universal programme that it's so varied, I mean there's so many bolt-ons that we can access that we would be able to meet quite a variety of needs within the community.'

I see people who are not part of a complete community, they're kind of outside of the community and I see Triple P as a way of engaging them in lots of different ways and whether we use it as...we do groups, we do what we call drop-in groups where it's like an open access group for parents to come along and meet us and talk about problems and we engage with them that way and once we've built up a relationship then we say "how about coming and doing this group with us, we're going to do this in...how about coming along and doing that?" and it's looking at how we use Triple P in lots of different ways to engage more and more people'. (LA9/F4)

The following facilitator was impressed by particular aspects of Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities as well as the general strategies

'I think the SF programme itself is fantastic. My only gripe is with the way the materials are presented. I love the way it gets parents to think of the bigger picture, not just a process of discipline, but rites of passage too – it made me stop and think and I think it's good too for parents to stop and think about why they do the things they do and where they learnt things themselves...I particularly liked the spiritual component' (LA2/F7).

Another interviewee summed up the views of facilitators working with the Incredible Years programme:

"Incredible Years is the best thing we've ever done in all my years, one of the most effective things in getting to the biggest group of parents all at once and having such amazing effects on the whole family, it seems to me. The whole family has calmed

down in many of the cases. Boyfriends, partners, they're saying first of all, 'Oh no, it's a load of rubbish' and then picking up the homework and trying it. They [the parents] were also saying yesterday that they use it in everyday life. They've done a module on how to handle teachers better so you get what you want. They've said, 'Yes. This is all good stuff'. And they've also said they're using it in their everyday life so when they're going to the shops they're using it. They're much more confident all round. I think it's amazing." (LA11/F10)

3.2.2 Engaging parents

A number of strategies were used to engage voluntary parents in the first instance. Open advertising in local areas was used. Information and advice were also available for families using the venue for the group (e.g. a school or Children's Centre). Families could also come from among the client group of the family support service or partner agencies such as Sure Start, Home Start or health visitors. Those parents required to attend may be referred by the youth justice system (e.g. Youth Offending Team – YOT) or Social Services, particularly where a child has been taken into care.

There are three aspects to the process of engaging parents to benefit from one of the programmes. Parents need to be engaged to *attend* the course, then to *stay* the course. Finally, there is the question of the engagement of parents *while attending* the course.

Gaining parents in the first place depends on the purpose of their attending the programme. In some cases there is a requirement for parents to attend. In other instances parents either attend because they access information, or they are encouraged/advised, but not coerced. These different modes may have very different impacts.

With respect to voluntary engagement an interviewee, who had facilitated three courses, made the general point that the main problem concerned getting parents to attend the first session. Once they had attended the initial session, she had found that parents only missed individual sessions because of unavoidable, and unexpected, problems, and were always keen to 'do a catch-up'. However, the problem of non-attendance for this facilitator was notable. In her first group, five parents were registered, but only one parent ever attended; for her second group, six parents were registered, but only three attended the first and subsequent, sessions; and for her final group, six parents were registered, but only one turned up for the first group. The target for groups in this LA had been 10 parents, on

average, per group.

All the facilitators in this LA indicated that personally encouraging parents to attend the first session by seeing them in their homes prior to the course was an effective way of ensuring attendance. These sessions were used to explain the nature of the [Programme] groups, and to complete the evaluation booklets. Nonetheless, there appeared to be a common problem of engaging parents to attend in the first place. In another LA dropout rates were believed to be low because:

“It’s the pre-pre-coursework, if you like, making sure that there are appropriate people being referred that can cope with group work. What we have done here, at this centre, with our families, we do a lot of pre-pre-coursework, because some of them have never sat in a group and never operated in a group..... [and] we do home visits prior to the course starting making sure that we meet them before we deliver.”
(LA15/0)

The initial and subsequent engagement of parents could vary depending on the route.

“Fifty percent of the families we had this time had had their children removed which is a very high percentage. We’ve never had that big a percentage of people coming – you’d maybe get one in the group. We’ve never had so many [in that situation] in the group. But this is where I think Social Services are picking up on how good the group has been, that they are utilising it as part of their resource. They’re not funding towards it, but they’re using it!” (LA4/F4)

Although the facilitator quoted above believed that parents were likely to stay the course once they had experienced a session, this was not a universal finding. For example, one group had started with 15 parents but by the third week only four remained. This was one of the least successful groups in terms of retention and the facilitator provided information on the reasons:

‘By the third week we’d dropped down to basically four who followed it through, and the reasons [why people dropped out] were quite varied, because some couldn’t get the time, well the [baby] sitters, others had so much else going on in their chaotic lives that it just wasn’t right for them, they just weren’t really there’.(LA9/F3))

By contrast, another interviewee had facilitated a group that opened with seven parents, and managed to keep five of them engaged for the length of the course. One of the parents who dropped out did so because she felt that she needed to attend a different version of the course, for which she subsequently registered, and the other mother who disengaged did so because she wanted to attend a group (same programme) in an area where no one knew her. Neither was disengaged by the programme itself.

Many facilitators expressed positive surprise that so many parents had lasted the course: *'High retention on a 13 week course has been a surprise for a lot of people'*. (2PEIP10). In some cases parents had moved on to other beneficial activities. *'Retention had been very good and their interest and their motivation and the fact that they want to continue with some things themselves is great'*. (LA19/F13).

A key aspect to keeping parents on the courses was, naturally, the quality of the programme but the *processes* implemented by the facilitators were also crucial. A variety was tried. Support for parents when attending the first session, and even before this, was important. One facilitator referred to Home Start volunteers who accompany the parent to the first session until they feel able to go on their own – *'the buddy bit that is so often missing'*. This facilitator commented on the importance of the engagement and the need to finance it: (LA4/F5)

"I think the biggest difference it would make in getting the funding is, I think, the workers who could get [parents] to the state where they are willing to go out and do a course. It really is about getting them there. The amount of people that drop-out because it's scary to walk through the door! [...]"

This strategy, used in an unfunded comparison LA, placed an additional burden on the budget but was regarded as worthwhile. Providing transport was another helpful strategy, *'without the transport, even if you had all the other support, we might have seen a drop in attendances, very much so'* (LA14/F7).

Home visits were also useful, and at different stages. Home visits prior to the group starting were useful for the parent and facilitator to start to get to know each other and for anxieties to be identified and discussed and strategies to deal with problems could be developed. Home visits could also be used for 'catch-up'. This involved the facilitator either going to the home of the parent or the parent going to the facilitator's house for the next planning

session. They go through the activities and the facilitator answers any questions and keeps the parent on track with the work, e.g. reading, watching the video. This was clearly seen as a support for the programme, not a replacement:

'(Catch up) is good but the best part of [Programme] is that it's group work but, to keep them on track, it's a useful thing to do' (LA14/F2)

Other facilitators chose to see parents in other settings outside the group. One made a point of taking each parent out once individually to a café or to the park,

"Sometimes it's easier to speak to people when they're not in their own home, where it is chaotic, where sometimes they feel embarrassed because the house is not tidy or they perceive that that is how you want their house to be. I think you get a different sense of that person. That's been really useful to me to help me really perhaps to understand the level of depression and the level of poverty and the level of their chaotic lifestyle. It's given me a better understanding of it." (LA14/F7)

Other factors that were judged to aid retention included the environment of the setting for the group. Many venues were schools or extended schools and these were generally regarded positively³.

'I think it was good being at the school, the parents were familiar with the school, and seemed quite confident about coming into the school. And they had a parent room, so there was a room they could go to, and make coffee, and we had a break, which the [Programme] doesn't particularly suggest, and that worked well, because in the break they opened up about all sorts of stuff, and it felt that they were very relaxed and comfortable doing that.' (LA16/F7)

Incentives could be useful:

The little treats for them. Nice teas, coffees, biscuits. All that nice pampering and making them feel important and worthwhile. I think that does help. (LA14/F5)

³ A separate report which focuses on the relationship between the delivery of PEIP and schools/extended schools accompanies this 2nd Interim Report: (Lindsay, et al, 2007) <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/peip>

Another facilitator who had run a group for parents of children with special educational needs suggested that the parents were encouraged both by their knowledge of the location and the shared interests of the other parents:

‘The fact that they identified with [name of the centre] as being an organisation for parents of children with special needs [...] Then I think the fact that we made sure that everyone found something in common with other members of the group was very important - they really cohered as a group, and were very mutually supportive although they were quite diverse’. (LA16/F6)

Facilitators also found that keeping in contact by phone between meetings was a productive strategy that could be used differentially to take account of parental need. For example, one facilitator reported that all parents received a weekly call but the most needy parents had more than one. Furthermore, this facilitator used home visits as well as phone calls from the parents who were judged to be most needy of all. Some facilitators sent ‘miss you’ cards, organized taxis, organized leave from work for parents to attend, and were flexible about parents arriving late.

These various strategies support parents and seek to ensure that they join and stay with and benefit from the programme. These approaches, therefore, are used to provide the basis on which to build learning. Furthermore, engagement during the course is an indicator of parents’ benefiting from these methods and is also a reflection of their views of their experience on the programme. As indicated in Table 1, facilitators generally rated parents’ engagement during the groups highly. Almost four out of five facilitators (46/59) rated the parents as either very engaged or engaged. Most of the other facilitators (11 of the 13 remaining) reported mixed results, with only two reporting parents being hard or very hard to keep engaged.

Table 1 Facilitators’ ratings of parents’ engagement during the course

Very engaged	Engaged	Mixed response	Hard to keep engaged	Very hard to keep engaged
31	15	11	1	1

Facilitators frequently reported the atmosphere in the group as indicative of engagement and positive learning. More overtly, parents would provide feedback that demonstrated engagement.

'We had one dad who has really digested the book, has really taken it on board, knows the strategies inside out, and has really had huge changes take place in his home life, in his relationship with his wife, in the relationship with the children, and he just can't say enough about the course, and that has been fantastic to see'. (LA1/F4)

The level of need of parents was raised as a factor in gaining and maintaining engagement, notwithstanding the various strategies outlined above. For example, one facilitator who had started with six parents in her group and ended with three commented that those who persisted included one self referral who had been very engaged, together with two who had been only fairly engaged but had been provided with a good deal of support to maintain this level of engagement. Another facilitator commented that *'those who stuck it were mainly self referrals'*. (LA2/F5). However, facilitators had examples of success with parents who presented more challenges.

'Three were very engaged, the fourth happened to have a parenting order so was told she had to go to it or else her child would have ended up going to court so even though it was something that she had to do she still managed to engage and we got her to understand the reasons why her child and how she was responding and this cycle and actually that person is now going to be doing level 5 so even the knock-on for that is that it's helping us to recognise that that person needs to go through the process of level 4 to start introducing the way [Programme] works but actually needs level 5 to manage her emotions and to manage her child' (LA9/F4)

Facilitators reported groups that developed a supportive 'life' beyond the sessions e.g. *They formed a cohesive group that continues to meet on a monthly basis – they have formed a network.*

One facilitator reported that this gelling as a group even occurred in one instance where the majority of parents had been compelled to attend. Another noted *'They saw it as a real*

support group in itself' (LA11/F8). One facilitator commented that the co-operation from families, who were very responsive and contributed well, worked better than his 1:1 work. He thought this was a function of the collaborative approach within the group.

The benefit of group cohesion and support were also related to the gaining confidence of some parents including those from minority ethnic communities to go out into the wider community. The facilitator who reported this also spoke positively of the benefits of the multi-ethnic composition of groups.

Engagement, therefore, is a complex issue to address. It must be considered in terms of accessing parents and keeping them involved as well as what actually happens during group sessions.

3.3 Course materials

All three programmes have extensive support materials. Earlier in the evaluation⁴ we highlighted concerns about the language and style of the materials, reflecting their origins in the US and Australia. These concerns have been identified also by the facilitators now that they have had an opportunity to implement programmes. Note that concerns vary between the Programmes, but in this report these concerns are not linked to specific Programmes.

Table 2 Facilitators' views of the suitability of the programme materials

Very suitable	Suitable	Not particularly suitable	Not at all suitable
21	31	6	1

N= 59

As shown in Table 2, almost nine out of ten facilitators (52/60) rated the course materials as very suitable or suitable. This is not to say that there were no concerns. Although generally enthusiastic about the materials, concerns remained but often could be dealt with. For example, facilitators would have liked to have seen the language and cultural issues

⁴ 1st Interim Report (Lindsay et al, 2006) and the Phase 1 interviews <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/peip>

addressed to improve the programmes' suitability for the UK but did appreciate the cost involved. Also, there was concern that both the cultural specificity of the scenarios presented in some of the material and what were judged to be rather minor problems presented in some examples, were a cause of concern. Some material was criticized as 'a bit middle classy' compared with the reality described by facilitators as, in many cases, being large families in inadequate housing living in poverty.

On the other hand, facilitators across the three programmes were positive about the theoretical basis, programme content, structure and the resources to which they had access to support their work. With respect to the theoretical basis and structure, facilitators commented that:

'...the basis is sound, it brings into play things that no other courses I have run have.' (LA19/F5).

'The theory behind it, I was sold on straight away.' (LA14/F7)

'I think the structure of the programme Being able to highlight specific behaviours ... it's a more strict framework in which to operate and I think that's been beneficial.' (LA18/F6)

Despite the criticisms noted above, the content of the programmes was also commented upon positively:

"The programme is very relevant. I enjoyed the beginning when we were doing the praise and the play and that part of it. I've enjoyed the end bits as well where we're doing the supporting the parents, how they gain support and how they communicate with schools and other adults, the problem-solving bits. I've liked the fact that we've concentrated on the children and the parenting but yet, when we're coming to the ending, we're concentrating on how parents communicate effectively with the children, with other professionals, with their partners and how they model to their children. So I think it's all been quite relevant. I've liked how it has been planned; obviously a lot of thought and planning has gone in to it." (LA14/F7)

One facilitator considered the wording needed adapting *'but the techniques are very, very relevant and parents found them very useful'* (LA6/F6).

Facilitators offered further evidence for the practical usefulness of the programmes in the parents' responses to their tasks at home:

'We have had some really, really good feedback. And you can tell by the ones that are going away and doing things that we set them during the week, and when they've come back with the results of that, whether it be, you know, a tally chart, or a behaviour chart, or whatever they might have used. You can see that they've actually being doing things at home'. (LA1/F2)

The resources provided, including the manuals were also praised for their content and support for parents:

'The parent manuals are really good and the parents are very proud of them' (LA6/F6)

'Yes, definitely. The parents' workbook, we haven't had any comments about, any negative comments about it, I think they feel that they are glad that they've got something that looks good, you know, it's a proper book, it's for them, they can write in it, it's theirs to use, we haven't had any comments that it's hard to use. They do use it a lot, especially at home'. (LA1/F2)

The quality of the resources provided to the parents has been found to enhance engagement with the programme, as is evident from this facilitator's comment:

'They use the books as a bible, they take ownership of them and what I did was give everybody a folder with a pencil with their books so that they went away feeling that it was for them to keep and hold and put together and put their worksheets in at home and they all came back with the folders and the books with post-it notes and scribbles all over them and things like that and you're thinking "I've never seen this before, this is amazing!"' (LA9/F4)

Furthermore, despite concerns about literacy levels (discussed below) facilitators also noted that many parents accessed the material well:

'The materials are very good, and it's very friendly in the way it's written as well.'

Nobody had any difficulty with the resources that they were given'. (LA9/F3)

As identified by Table 2 as well as these comments, facilitators were positive about their programme's content. However, there were also a number of criticisms and improvement recommendations. Some of these, as noted above, relate to the UK context compared with that of the programme's origin. Others concern the flexibility of the programme and its literacy demands. Finally, there were concerns about the range of potential parents for whom the programme may be relevant.

There were concerns about the need to Anglicize the language and address the local situation:

'A bit American, and it needs to be pitched at a level people can work with, delivered in a [Town] kind of way. There is no ethnic mix in [Town], and gangland is not a big issue'. (LA12/F1)

Another facilitator stressed the urban-rural variation of content.

'The material comes from multi ethnic origins, but we are a remote little village and it's difficult to make the material fit the people. There are parts that don't resonate: spirituality and rites of passage. These apply only to a limited degree, and in a completely different culture. It's interesting, but we need to make it relevant' (LA19/F9)

The following quotation highlights both the concern about relevance of the material and also that the facilitators had found ways of presenting them positively:

"The families that we work with are predominantly from estates and some of the videos might not always be reflective of the lifestyles."..... there is quite a lot of problem-solving which shows a mother and a father and your 2.4 children idea of a family where, on that course, there was only one family that fit that. The others were single parents or blended families. So in some of the problem-solving [work] the women were like, 'Well, I'd have told him to bugger off! He wouldn't speak to me like that!' But as tools the videos are fantastic to use as talking points so they are suitable for that. I think they could do with updating. Some of them are a bit old-fashioned and the sometimes the parents get a bit distracted by the haircuts and you've got to bring them back on track and say, 'We're looking at the point, not what's going on in the

background'. So a bit of updating would be good on them but I know that's a huge expense." (LA14/F5)

Many facilitators found the structure of the programme a concern, wanting to be flexible in their delivery. This is a common concern among those who use a programme developed by others. Originators have a rationale for the structure and content. Also, especially when they are keen to ensure that any use follows the exact programme for which evidence of effectiveness is available, they desire fidelity – that others should follow their programme faithfully. This is challenged by many professionals wishing to 'tweak' programmes because of their own judgements as well as the more mundane issue of remembering to follow the programme as designed. There are often good reasons for wishing to amend programmes – at least in the minds of those wishing to do so. This tension is exemplified by the facilitator who commented:

It's important to deliver the different bits of the curriculum even though they may not particularly make sense at the time....but then on the other hand there is some flexibility, so it's finding out how you can do that...' (LA12/F3)

Nevertheless, this is a difficult area as any variation in the presentation of the programme challenges fidelity.

There were concerns about the literacy demands on some parents:

'I think, erm, wordy. Very wordy. To give you an example, one of the parents' on my third visit that I'd gone out to see, and I'd talked a lot about the course, and I'd waved this handbook around in a very kind of general way, and I did have a feeling that maybe her literacy skills were quite, not maybe as sufficient as could be.' (LA17/F9)

However, putting material onto a CD was one way that the literacy demands had been addressed.

There were also some concerns about the age relevance of materials as the PEIP age range (8-13) was not that for which materials had been developed. Some facilitators would have liked the material to show behaviour more typical of this age range.

"Some of the tantrums that the kids have [on the videos], if we're talking 8 – 13 year

olds in [area of city], they are very different from, 'Give me a cookie! I want a cookie!'. They are more, 'Effing Jeffing, I am going out tonight!' which I don't want to see on a video as such but I think getting the middle balance would perhaps bring it home a little bit more." (LA14/F5)

Although not part of the interview schedule, many facilitators commented upon the length of the course that parents undertook. This varied across the programmes and was seen as a major challenge in some cases. This issue will also be addressed further at Phase 3.

3.4 Relevance of training received

Facilitators who had been running programmes were now in a position to reflect on their training. They were, therefore, asked to rate the relevance of the training in their programme that they had received to enable them to deal with the reality of facilitating or co-facilitating parenting groups.

Table 3 **Facilitators' views on the relevance of their training**

Very relevant	Relevant	Not particularly relevant	Not at all relevant
35	28	2	1

N = 66

The facilitators were overwhelmingly positive about the relevance of their training: 95% considered it very relevant or relevant with over half (53%) rating it very relevant. These data present a strong endorsement of the training as the facilitators made these judgements on relevance once they had experienced facilitating or co-facilitating a group, unlike the situation where such scales are completed at the end of the training itself.

One facilitator commented that she:

'really enjoyed the week's training and being a parent myself with a young child, I benefited a lot. I still use the manual myself at home.....it did change a lot of my own personal parenting skills' (LA20/F9).

A strategic lead in the same LA provided a wider perspective that was also positive:

'The feedback about the training has been fantastic: I mean, there's been lots of informal feedback from the schools, from the staff who went who've talked to the head teachers or whoever about how good it was' (LA20/F10).

The use of manuals was welcomed:

'Very good training, because we also have a facilitator's manual which talks you all the way through [...] the overheads are brilliant as prompts, and the DVDs for actually getting the parents to see these children in action was very good'. (LA9/F3)

The main criticism of the training was its being concentrated.

'What she did, she did very well, but it needs another 2-3 day slots, for any important issues to be raised. [Name] is a fantastic trainer, but she was trying to train parents who had never done training before in a week (parent facilitators). What was left out was how to put this material over in an effective way'. (LA9/F5)

Another facilitator had run a course with only one parent on the course and so had concerns about their ability to cope with a larger group:

'The training was quite rushed, and a lot of context, and when you are running the group yourself, I found that the sessions, although they are two hours are not long enough, and we only had one parent. So I dread to think when you've got a large group, you know, how you're going to fit all that in, you're going to have to be quite strict with your timing while not trying to appear rude to people who obviously want to share their experiences, so that will be interesting on the next course to see how we engineer that really'. (LA1/F3).

Some facilitators had already undertaken training prior to PEIP but even so they could also have concerns. This was a result of programmes being developed to meet the PEIP requirements by adding elements of training. One such facilitator commented, *'So when we were delivering it for the first time, it was very new to us'. (LA5/F8).*

3.5 Facilitators and co-facilitators

Where a group has more than one facilitator it is important that they work together to complement each other's skills and contribution. We therefore asked our facilitator interviewees who had worked with co-facilitators to rate how well the dynamic between the two of them had worked.

Table 4 Facilitators' ratings of the dynamic between themselves and co-facilitators

Very well	Well	Not particularly well	Not at all well
40	9	2	0

N = 51

In general, facilitators reported that they worked well with co-facilitators (Table 4). This was assisted by a previous experience of collaboration or from their training.

'We got on really well. We did our training together and met up every week to prepare for the course' (LA2/F6)

The benefits could arise whether they came from the same service background or not. For example, different facilitators gave different reasons for the dynamic working very well. One thought this was because she and her co-facilitator had similar employment backgrounds. In cases where they actually worked together it was possible to discuss issues during their main job time. Another considered it worked well because she had a prior history of working with her co-facilitator, and a third attributed it to the shared experience of having undertaken the training in their parenting programme. Despite these different views, a theme that came through was that where co-facilitation had worked well facilitators had similar views and mutual respect:

"We're all coming from the same place. We've got that background of 'this is how we work with families' which is very different to some other agencies. I think a lot of it has come from that. [The way we work] is very much about doing things with families, rather than doing to families." (LA4/F5)

"It did feel very much that we were a team of people all trying to achieve the same things so that was brilliant." (LA14/F5)

In some cases there were three facilitators running a group. In a case where two from the core PEIP team worked with a co-facilitator from a partner agency additional benefits were reported:

"It's great! I've only ever run groups with two people so having that extra person is quite luxurious in a way but I think it's really good because often [the third facilitator] comes from one of the agencies where the parents have been referred from. So it shows the partnership working and it shows the parents that we are working together to try to solve the problems and, after the group, that person who was working with you may still be around for the parents as well, so that's a useful thing." (LA14/F2)

This is clearly a costly way to run a group but the arrangement had the potential for bringing more skills to the programme. It also increased flexibility and provided cover if a facilitator was unable to attend. *'We helped each other out and greater flexibility developed between us over time'*. (LA12/F2)

Co-facilitation could be supportive for both (or all three) facilitators:

'I feel I am there and someone is supporting me and I am supporting someone else, so it changes my role.' (LA20/F1).

However, a small number of cases had not worked so well.

Facilitator: *'I've delivered with 2 different people; the first time round it was OK but not brilliant, the second time round has been fantastic'*.

Interviewer: *'And what do you think made the difference between the two?'*

Facilitator: *'The difference was that the second person I'd worked with for a long time and we've always worked on the same sort of level. The first person that I delivered with is much higher level and a slightly different profession to myself'*. (LA17/F3)

In this case the reason for the less productive co-working was attributed by the facilitator to a status differential. This could potentially also be a factor where one facilitator was a parent and the other a professional. This was identified as an issue by one parent facilitator (Section 3.5.1).

In general, key factors leading to difficulties in co-facilitation were attributed to a personality difference,

'With my first co-facilitator we had different approaches and there was a personality clash' (LA19/F4)

or difference of views,

'I wanted to change the material, but the male facilitator had a very different view. I would want someone who shared my views next time' (LA12/F6).

or a lack of planning:

“At times, I’ve found that [dynamic] very difficult because we all come from very different backgrounds and from the beginning, no planning was put in place. Not enough planning and not enough relationship building. [...] I’d like to see more planning, more relationship building and looking at goals and what we’d like to achieve and perhaps trying to have some sort of balance and negotiation about where we all want to end up. I talked about the journey we’re all on. We all started out on the same journey but I’m not sure if we’re all on the same train but I think that comes from us all coming from very, very different backgrounds.” (LA14/F7)

On the other hand, where planning took place there was a greater chance of effective collaboration:

‘Yes, it worked really well actually, really, really well. We had a meeting before the first session, and we decided who was going to do each part. Usually we split the session completely in half if we can, just because it is easier rather than going from one to the other, from one to the other, we have DVD clips and the laptop presentation as well, so it is easier for one of us to do one half, and one the other, and then we usually split it, what we tend to do is one of us do the first half and one the other, then the next week we swap over ‘ (LA1/F2)

The importance of being able to work together productively was emphasized when the nature of the group was particularly challenging:

‘The co-deliverer and myself had worked together in the past in a different guise, we were both probably quite experienced in delivering training, you know, in other areas of the city within children’s services, and that seemed to me to be a great bonus because we were working with a group of parents whose young people were all high tariff, that is, with the exception of one, all had been in trouble with the police, and two had actually spent time in youth offenders institutions’ (LA1/F1).

Across the three programmes there were facilitators from a variety of professional and non-professional backgrounds. This can be strength across any LA’s team of facilitators,

because obviously those of us who were appointed through Children & Families are qualified, post-16, teachers, whereas a lot of them have come from, it really is a diverse range of settings that people have come from, that have also brought into the [Programme] training. So it has been very much a case of some of them are people who just work within a school, some of them are people that normally only work with children, so they've all got different skills that they can bring, which is a strength, because some of them are trained in drugs and alcohol misuse, some of them are trained in special needs, and you can guarantee that within your group you are going to have somebody that can benefit from each person that you are co-delivering with.
(LA1/F4)

However, the difference in prior experience has implications. Many facilitators who had professional training referred to using this experience as a basis for practice, onto which the specific training in their programme had been grafted. Where facilitators lacked this there might be a need for a more systematic and intensive mentoring system. Some facilitators realized they were, in fact, including mentoring in their group facilitation.

A disadvantage would be that a lot of them haven't had any formal tutoring experience, and for many of them it's a first time that they've delivered in a group environment, so obviously you feel like, not only are you watching the timing, you're trying to get to grips with the material yourself, but you're also really supporting and mentoring the people that you are co-tutoring with. A disadvantage is that you're only going to get to deliver with them once because we've got that many that we need to give an opportunity to deliver that you tend to deliver with them once then not again [...]' (LA1/F4)

3.5.1 Parents as facilitators

Among our interviewees were also some trained facilitators who were parents (rather than professionals). Parent facilitators were seen by some LAs as an important resource and those LAs had actively sought to recruit parents (see Section 4.2). This had worked well in a number of cases but not all parent facilitators reported positive experiences. One reported that, although accredited, she felt as though she was being treated as an inferior. However, interestingly, the co-facilitator was very positive about this parent's contribution, suggesting the need for better communication rather than an inherent problem with the recruitment of parent facilitators as part of the policy.

3.6 Support from managers

Facilitators were asked to rate the support they received from managers to release them from a 'day job' (if relevant) and in managing workload. Overall, nearly nine out of 10 facilitators rated their managers support positively (Table 5).

Table 5 Facilitators' ratings of their manager's support

Very supportive	Supportive	Not particularly supportive	Not at all supportive
31	18	5	1

N = 55

Involvement of managers in the programme in some form was considered helpful.

'Because some of our managers attended the training, they understood that it wouldn't work if we were only released for one day. They saw that we couldn't do it without everything that we needed and they pushed for that. They've been very supportive and very clear that we [as a service] won't do it unless things are put in place.' (LA11/F9)

Careful monitoring by a manager could lead to a change of responsibilities. One facilitator noted that, as PEIP had taken 1.5 days a week, the manager had recognised this in arranging for the teachers in her school to deal with the class without her being there. This example does, however, raise the issue of what is lost by staff taking on PEIP work. In this case, work was distributed to teaching assistants, as a direct teaching replacement was not possible. Managers' support could be enhanced by the evidence of impact on parents and children. This could be particularly evident where the facilitator worked in a school.

In the case of the facilitator who was very negative about the support received, this improved over time as the manager's scepticism was replaced as a result of evidence of success:

"I think initially maybe not [supportive] but, as it went on, and because of the number of families I managed to arrange within my own team, there was obviously feedback amongst those workers with those families. She became more supportive towards the end and there was a lot more flexibility in allowing me that time to do the discussion and supervision. I felt she was very sceptical to begin with. I still feel she is now actually. She's got her own ideas how things should be done (LA5/F6)

3.7 Supervision

Facilitators were asked to reflect on the supervision they had received separate from general support from their manager. The programmes have the facility to provide supervision for facilitators as they start to practise. However, it was apparent from initial discussions with programme representatives that this could be a difficult area given their limited resources to provide this and the demands posed by the substantial numbers of facilitators being trained.

The facilitators' responses confirmed that this was an area with challenges. For example, and as shown in Table 6, the number of facilitators who were able to offer a rating of supervision was lower than for other questions. Where facilitators could offer an opinion then it was generally positive, with half rating their supervision very helpful.

Table 6 Facilitators' ratings of the helpfulness of supervision they had received

Very helpful	Helpful	Not particularly helpful	Not at all helpful
12	8	2	2

N = 24

It was also evident that facilitators were accessing different types of supervision including supervision outside the programme. For example, educational and clinical psychologists receive supervision as part of their role and so issues arising from PEIP could be addressed in that forum. Those that did receive supervision of some kind, whether programme specific or more general, were generally positive.

"I found it quite helpful actually because I've realised that some of them [the other facilitators] had very limited experience of the social context for some of the [...] acute needs that some of these families have as well. I found that the supervision was very good at helping through that process and at identifying a process to support those particular problems. So you didn't have to try and deal with that yourself, you could go to supervision and discuss that through. (LA5/F6)

Where the supervision was organized by the programme, facilitators welcomed the opportunity to discuss specifics and develop their programme-specific skills as well as gained general benefit. The relative lack of this form of supervision, reported by many facilitators was regretted.

'There is no supervision with the Pathfinder, and yes, I would have liked supervision from someone trained in group dynamic working from [Programme] (I had difficulties with the second group). Someone came to evaluate the course once; I think it would have been from [Programme]. But had she phoned me up to say 'how are you?' every 2 weeks, that would have been useful, very supportive' (LA20/F4).

However, another facilitator reported that this was just what had happened in their case (same programme):

'Someone from [Programme] comes and monitors and is always there if you call them' (LA20/F8).

However, there were also concerns from some facilitators of what they regarded as a high level of supervision.

'It can be useful but it's not useful every week, especially if the session has gone well. Other times, it is really necessary for us to talk it over.' (LA11/F10)

There was substantial variation within and between programmes with respect to the supervision provided. A particularly extensive system of four forms of supervision was available in one LA: One-off group consultation with a trainer, which they all attended; fortnightly group consultation with their mentor; individual sessions with another mentor where each facilitator could review the sections of the session they had delivered and receive written feedback on that; and six-weekly group supervision with the operational lead. For those employed full-time as facilitators, there was also "regular" one-to-one professional supervision with the operational lead.

Hence, it appears that supervision is an area for development. Where it occurs and where the time commitment is judged appropriate, supervision is welcomed, but currently there is inconsistency in its provision.

3.8 Accreditation

Facilitators were also asked about their intentions regarding *accreditation*. The timescale and procedures for this vary between the programmes. Also, many facilitators were at an early stage in their groupwork experience. Nevertheless, facilitators generally had sought accreditation where this was feasible or intended to do so once they were in an appropriate position.

3.9 Demands of the evaluation

Facilitators were also asked to comment on the demands placed by the national evaluation. It was clear that for facilitators (and parents) these requirements were confounded with the programme's own requirements. Despite the evaluation being developed to limit demands on parents, in some cases parents were asked also to complete additional programme evaluation measures. This was addressed by the DCSF by a communication to all LAs pointing out the primacy of the national evaluation, conducted by CEDAR, and that there was no obligation to complete any other measures. To assist further, we have agreed to provide each programme with anonymised data from the pre- and post- course measures for each parent. Nevertheless, some facilitators expressed concern about the load on parents resulting from their being asked to complete two sets of evaluation measures, a finding that differed between programmes.

There are implications for consideration arising from this finding regarding this evaluation and others sponsored by the DCSF.

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES

This section addresses strategic issues concerning the LAs' approach to the PEIP. It includes discussion of LA parenting strategy and how PEIP fits into that; recruitment and retention of facilitators; projections regarding targets for parents attending groups; and sustainability after March 2008. This section is based mainly on the interviews with strategic lead officers and PEIP coordinators in each LA.

It is also important to recognize the operational issues relating to setting up the PEIP, reported in the 1st Interim Report⁵, as these should influence the development of strategy. As a flavour, the comments of two operational leads are reported as these indicate the issues concerned with setting up the infrastructure:

'In hindsight, it would have been better to have got the earlier intervention clinics established first and the screening tool embedded into practice and then bought it [the Programme] instead of trying to run with three things simultaneously. (LA18/O).

And the financial/staffing arrangements:

Backfill is taking quite a big chunk of the budget. Maybe that is the area where we had to use more money this time than previously. Some people needed more convincing – they found it very difficult to release staff and they were not fully aware of expectations of staff, the time commitment – that its not only running the session but that, in order to run, to have to have the preparation time, you have to attend the supervision and then, as a facilitator, you need to be in touch with the caseworker. It is the time commitment which somehow the managers didn't appreciate properly – or maybe we were not very clear when we were approaching them about what it entails. Probably partially it is our fault in not making it clear, but probably we didn't want to scare them at the outset! (LA11/O)

Furthermore, the post of operational lead, responsible for coordinating the PEIP, is important; it is also clear that the person in that role should be experienced in parenting programmes. For example, one facilitator in a non-funded LA noted that *'There is not*

⁵ 1st Interim Report (Lindsay et al, 2006) and the Phase 1 interviews.
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/peip>

anyone with the professional knowledge you need, operational, management level [...] it needs an operational coordinator'. Furthermore, another facilitator in this LA commented:

'We don't have an operations manager, so we don't have a sort of somebody who is coordinating the team to whom you would look to as a manager, who would know about [Programme], preferably trained in it, would be communicating with the providers, would be the key communicator to other links like [UK Programme representative], and to take issues and go and resolve them by getting one answer. Instead what we have got is a number of different providers, all of whom, theoretically, go to a providers meeting, all of whom seem to get a slightly different end of the stick [...] and then they transmit that back, and when people ask, they are not clear, because they don't know [...] and the referral process doesn't work.'
(LA 17/F5)

In other LAs the operational lead might have direct experience of the Programme being implemented and have been, or currently still was a facilitator.

4.1 The development of a Parenting Strategy

Two main issues arose when considering how the LAs were developing their parenting strategy and the place of PEIP within this. Firstly, it was necessary to take account of the general LA context, including changes in structures, and how the parenting strategy and its delivery would fit into these. Secondly, there is the more specific focus on the parenting strategy itself and how this is being developed and delivered.

Some LAs were undergoing many structural changes. In one case in particular this context in the LA was described as 'very unsettled' and 'not helping' PEIP. There was reported to be a major funding problem which coincided with the restructuring of Children's Services: 'We are at a very painful part of a necessary process' commented the strategic lead.

More positively, other interviewees spoke of developments such as the creation of a locality structure which was seen as having the potential to support PEIP and the parenting strategy.

We are trying to operationalise the Pathfinder through the locality structure. We did our pilot first group [...] in [a locality area] which is our most developed locality and where we have a new team of Tier 2 workers seconded from other parts of the

Children's Services system. ... We're trying to get them to be pivotal people in terms of publicising the Pathfinder and in a way embodying it and representing it. One of the workers who has come from a social work preventative team has trained on the Pathfinder. We're hoping she will promulgate more knowledge about the Pathfinder and that we could get to a position where it is mainstreamed and operationalised through these localities. [laughs] If it works, it will be a miracle! We haven't got there yet! But that's my aspiration, to do that - but there's quite a few things that might get in the way."(LA11/S)

Another strategic lead also noted the development of locality teams:

We've organised into area teams so that the relationship with the neighbourhood and the practitioners working in a locality is something we've continued to build on in the pathfinder, so we've tried to train people in locality groups [...] in terms of multi agency practice but also neighbourhood practice. (LA16/S)

In another LA the strategic lead commented that the development of locality teams, within the roll out of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was a positive development.

'I would say that one of our big successes with the PEIP has been our working with the county strategic steering group for the roll out of the CAF locality teams, [...] and within the last few months it has been established that [Programe] is going to be one of the core provisions of the CAF locality teams for parenting. Which is great. It is a big strategic success. Operationally, like all these things, it is taking some time to catch up with the strategic vision, but, nevertheless, I would see that as a significant step.' (LA4/S)

The development of each LA's strategy varied with respect to both its content and rate of progress. The parenting strategy is more wide-ranging than parenting programmes but the latter were seen as a key component. Conceptually, an important issue for the parenting strategy is the balance between universal and targeted provision. This is of particular relevance to PEIP and its location within a strategy:

We've tried to describe the balance between achieving strength in universal provision and targeted but specific provision. Because this has got to be understood by

everyone, it has been very interesting how the Pathfinder has fitted so neatly in to that. Quite specifically.” (LA11/S)

A related issue concerns the number of parenting interventions that an LA will include in its strategy. This should be, at least in part, a reflection of the balance between universal and targeted provision as programmes have different purposes and foci. With respect to the focus of PEIP there is still a question for LAs, however. There are different histories across the 20 PEIP LAs with some having developed services using one or more of the three PEIP programmes prior to PEIP, plus other programmes. Should an LA focus on one programme for its targeted provision or invest in several? There are benefits in diversity but also challenges, not least in the training and purchasing of resources, coupled with a greater complexity.

In an unfunded LA the strategic lead commented that the LA wants to be able to offer ‘*a whole range of different parenting interventions [...] to meet different needs*’ (LA4/S). This arrangement would address a range of different parent needs including those where parenting orders or parenting constraints were relevant. In that LA two non-PEIP programmes in particular were implemented with different characteristics such as length of programme and focus. These provide a range of services and programmes suitable for parents with different needs.

There was a mixed picture with respect to LAs having integrated PEIP into their parenting strategy. One strategic lead noted a degree of duplication:

But I can’t honestly say that the PEIP has been incorporated into the strategy, you know, not duplicating services locally, for example. And I do think there are cases out there where duplication has gone on, because it hasn’t been incorporated within the strategy’. (LA9/S)

The strategic lead went on to describe tension between professionals and, in particular, concern about the relative merits of the LA’s own programme.

The phrase that you hear, is “are you saying that our own stuff is not as good as [Programme]” And that is quite difficult because the PEIP, and, in our case, the [Programme], comes with a massive, international evidence base, which, of course, our home grown stuff, doesn’t have’. (LA9/S)

In other cases there was evidence of a stronger, coherent relationship between PEIP and the overall strategy, or at least where its development had reached. This partly depended upon the prior history of the LA with respect to parent support but it was also argued to be a function of the overall strategy, including the balance between different elements in the parenting strategy. One strategic lead argued that having a ‘total package’ of parent support had been a key element in implementing PEIP:

‘I think the problem is that other local authorities haven’t got the total package that we’ve got, so with the one to one workers they’re able to offer advice and guidance and support in the home; then we’ve got the group work, the Early Intervention Pathfinder, and then we’ve got this other thing called the Senior Parenting Practitioner, where she is supporting the one to one workers. So if there’s a family that is so high need that it really needs an intensive parenting worker to be working with them, that’s her role; she will go in with the one to one workers and then maybe continue with that family on the parenting side of things, over a more sustained involvement. But really our aim with the one to one families is as much as possible to engage them into the groups rather than working systematically through the programme in the home’. (LA1/S).

This strategic lead argued that there was a ‘massive infrastructure across the (LA)’ driven by the LA’s intervention programme for parents. Funding was accessed from other sources to support families with higher levels of need. The task was to ‘make some sense of the whole sort of range of family support initiatives that have mushroomed over time’. However, the benefits of long experience were stressed.

We’re just very fortunate we had an infrastructure in place that we could just capitalise on, and particularly that we had the [Service] that is just geared up and that’s its reason for being. It just runs parenting support programmes and family learning programmes primarily, but the same model was able to just be used straight away. So we didn’t have any problem finding an agency to deliver it; we didn’t have any problem with partners wanting to take part in it, because we’ve got the experience of the family links way that we work’. (LA1/S)

Even when there was substantial progress in developing a coherent parenting strategy there could still be difficulties. For example, in one LA the intention to include the Child and

Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) had so far not been successful because of internal problems within CAMHS.

Furthermore it became apparent that LAs were at different stages in the development of their parenting strategy. Some strategic leads were having an important influence on this process and so were able, directly, to influence the relationship between the strategy and PEIP.

4.2 Recruitment and retention

In some LAs where they were previously using one of the three PEIP programmes there was an existing stock of trained facilitators. In terms of running PEIP this could cause difficulties at an administrative level, differentiating who was PEIP and who was not. One strategic lead noted that eventually they gave up trying to address that issue. Another strategic lead reported that the LA had around 160 facilitators trained in some aspects of the Programme prior to PEIP. However, there were concerns about the pre-PEIP system:

Before the PEIP came along we had trained people inappropriately, no question about that [...] It [had been] 'who would like to do this?' rather than embedding it in the CPD (Continuing Professional Development) of the organizations that were involved. (LA15/S)

Before PEIP there had been take up of the offer of training from people who then had not been able to deliver. Under the PEIP this had changed and facilitators were contractually obliged to deliver the Programme, increasing cost effectiveness.

The LAs developed at different speeds in terms of implementing PEIP. As the first requirement was training facilitators this was typically the main stumbling block. The reasons for delay were of two main types: access to training from the programme and local human resource systems for recruitment.

The nature of each programme is that the authors are non-UK (two in the US and one Australia). There is a different level of development of a UK system of training currently across the three programmes which reflects past history, pre-PEIP. This issue will be addressed in the final report when it will be possible to examine the position for further roll out: this is a developing area and it will be more profitable to examine the situation then. However, at this time it is important to note that the limited resources available for training (and supervision) were raised as an issue. Each of the programmes made substantial efforts to provide resources to train facilitators but the scale of the PEIP was so large that this was far from an easy task. Furthermore, an important characteristic of the Programmes, and one that attracted the DCSF to use them, was their adherence to a policy of fidelity. That is, training would not be 'watered down' or amended to meet pressures. Rather, the

policy was that training would remain true to that for which an evidence base had been developed.

A flavour of the concerns follows can be found in the comments of one strategic lead who noted that it was *'frustrating that the [Programme] training of facilitators had to be undertaken by trainers from [Country], with notable cost, and time problems, as well as the intensity of training while the trainers were in England'* (LA15/S1). This quotation sums up a frequently expressed opinion.

Recruitment policies also varied across LAs, influenced by the requirements of the programme. In some cases there was concern about the LA's recruitment policy. One strategic lead suggested that the process had led to people attending the first round of training who had not fully understood what it was all about and who did not want to go on and facilitate groups. There was also a concern in some LAs that the level of skill and prior experience necessary had been underestimated.

'The level of skill required to deliver this stuff is much greater than people realised. Delivering parenting groups is not just something you can ask any old member of staff to do.' (LA9/S)

Substantial numbers of facilitators have so far been recruited. One strategic lead referred to 88 facilitators having been trained with 67 left in post. In another LA the operational lead referred to 40 having been trained, another referred to 60. These data are presented as illustrative and were reported by strategic leads and/or operational leads. For the final report we hope to include comprehensive data on both recruitment and retention.

At this stage there is evidence of some retention difficulties which suggest a need for improved recruitment to avoid wastage. In one LA it was reported that they had not retained half of their facilitators.

A separate factor affecting recruitment was the LA's own Human Resources (HR) system. This is not specifically a PEIP issue but delays in recruitment because of local administrative requirements did have an effect of delaying implementation of PEIP. In one case, the important role of operational lead was delayed:

“That’s been a disaster. The whole issue about recruiting fixed term contracts has been a whitewash and I would never do it like this again. I feel I have learned so much. It took me three months to get the job graded. That was inexcusably slow. Then, when it was graded, I had to go through all this ‘at risk’ nonsense where it had to go to people in different stages. To be fair, the HR Department has been efficient but that [process] meant I’ve had a trickle of relatively inappropriate applications that I’ve had to process and see and discard. That’s been time-consuming and hasn’t delivered the goods. So the next three months got spent seeing people who weren’t appropriate. So six months have been wasted not getting anyone. (LA11/S)

4.2.1 Parents as facilitators

The recruitment of parents as facilitators varied. Two of the programmes stressed the importance of professional background when recruiting facilitators but in one case the LA had taken a strong position to recruit parents despite this general policy and the reported resistance and skepticism of that Programmes’ representative. The LA strategic lead believed that their position had been justified by experience to date:

It's going extremely well. All the parent co-facilitators have been accredited alongside the practitioners [...] and are running groups successfully in their buddy pairs. (LA16/S1)

Furthermore, this strategic lead commented that the feedback from the Programme’s accreditation was that it was not possible to identify which of the facilitators were parents and which had a professional background.

4.3 The Programmes

As noted above, the origins of the programmes led to some difficulties in providing training because of the scale of the PEIP. However, there was a high level of support for the programmes from strategic and operational leads, as was also the case from facilitators (See sections 3.2.2, 3.3). This section focuses on issues that have arisen regarding the programmes that have implications for PEIP. The first concerns the applicability of the three programmes, as they had been developed, to the 8-13 age range on which the Pathfinder focuses. This led to modifications of training in some form of enhancements, again in an attempt not to dilute or fundamentally change the programme for which evidence of

effectiveness existed. However, there were criticisms of resulting programmes. There was concern about the need to add to the training and the appropriateness of some of the elements for the target age group:

One of the things that hasn't worked very well is that [Programme] is meant for the under-8s and when you are taught for the first three days of it it's very much getting down on the floor and learning how to play. That's been quite a shock to people who have come from Youth Offending and who are working with teenagers who are completely in a different place. [...] I've had feedback from that people have found that difficult or patronising or irrelevant. (LA11/S).

Some LAs had more specific, local difficulties arising from decision on how to implement the training and delivery of their programme. In some cases there were tensions. One strategic lead noted:

I'm working with some very formidable clinical colleagues who have got a very strong say-so about how this model is implemented. In other parts of the country, I would think, and with different models, the trainers may not have the same 'emphaticness', or degree of emphasis, or even actually more about control. Normally you would think, 'I've commissioned this service. As a commissioner, I can say what I'm going to get.' But, actually, it doesn't feel like that. (LA11/S)

A key issue here was the insistence by these colleagues on fidelity and a more extended package into which the programme training was fitted. This led to misunderstandings among some staff. In addition, some interviewees were not convinced by the goodness of fit.

Another difficulty concerned supervision from the Programme. In the case of one Programme, a well established UK system was in place and this was generally welcomed and valued. In the case of another Programme, several LAs accessed supervision from a practitioner who had the appropriate accreditation to carry out this role. Here also, the support provided was valued. The third programme faced similar difficulties, with comparable comments:

Because [Programme] is a country wide programme I think they are quite hard-pressed sometimes to meet the needs of what they have said they will provide...they do come up with the goods but it takes a while to get there. (LA12/S)

However, this is also an area for review towards the end of the evaluation. As indicated by the facilitators also (Section 3.7) the relative lack of, or difficulty in accessing supervision is a limitation in the current roll out. Furthermore, this will become an even more pressing issue if roll out continues beyond the present 20 LAs.

4.4 Parents

There is an element of concern about the appropriateness of the parents who have been attending the programmes. Ultimately, this must be related both to the LA's parenting policy and the intended scope of the programme. Given the resources invested in each of these programmes it is important to ensure that there is appropriate targeting of parents, in terms of need, and also that recruitment of parents brings in the appropriate numbers.

Some LAs were clearly having difficulty in meeting their intended targets for group membership. No systematic data have been collected during this phase but interviewees were asked to report their estimates. Some reported 'massive demand' and high numbers recruited and retained. For example one strategic lead claimed that by July 280 parents had attended groups and that the LA was on target to deliver to 900 parents by the end of the Pathfinder. One strategic lead expressed surprise with the ease by which schools had been able to recruit parents. Others, however, noted recruitment difficulties. In one LA the expectation of groups of 10 had been reduced to five or six average. One strategic lead commented:

Actual parental engagement has gone a heck of a lot slower than any of us had realized [...] We don't really have [in the LA] a culture of parenting support and I think what none of us anticipated was just how long it would take to build up a culture'
(LA9/S)

There were also questions about the level of need, whether they were targeting correctly, and the most appropriate mix of parents in a group to assist its functionality. One strategic lead argued that:

We are in danger of parents who don't really need it, taking up the resources, and you, therefore, don't actually get to grips with that particular group of parents that you need. (LA15/S)

She went on to argue for a more targeted approach than was the case, she believed, with the Programme in her LA because:

the bottom line is, these are the families we've got to get to, because these are the families where their self-esteem is low, it's where the offending comes from. [...] I think it [parenting] is about trying to target those who are causing society a lot of money and a lot of difficulties, because their outcomes are very, very poor. So, intervene early is right, but it has got to be very targeted. (LA15/S)

4.5 Sustainability

Local authorities were looking towards the end of the PEIP and considering how their work could be sustained. Each now had a substantial resource of trained facilitators but, as noted above, there were issues of their retention. Also, the organization of the PEIP at a local level could result in the LA having relatively little, if any, control over retention, especially when they had arrangements with other agencies to provide the facilitators.

The other major factor regarding sustainability was finance. The PEIP has provided a substantial resource to the funded LAs and much of this will be recurrent costs. Training expenditure can be seen as a capital investment whose benefit could be reaped after March 2008, assuming high retention of facilitators. The running of programmes, however, is costly, some strategic leads regarding it as 'very expensive' although the balance between cost and quality was also recognized. Nevertheless, finance for running parenting programmes would need to be found after March 2008 to maintain the resource which was becoming established.

Ultimately, unless there is more direct grant from the DCSF, it will be for each LA to build the parenting programme into its parenting policy. The development of extended schools is a key element on how PEIP may be extended. This has been elaborated in our separate report⁶. In summary, across the 20 LAs there is evidence of a substantial (if patchy) involvement of schools and extended schools in the PEIP, including providing facilitators, venues and support. Given that this is a central government policy imperative, the use of extended schools as a vehicle to sustain PEIP is an important area for consideration.

Some LAs have well developed plans to ensure sustainability.

⁶ Lindsay et al, (2007) *Evaluation of the Parent Early Intervention Pathfinder: Additional Study of the Involvement of Extended Schools*. <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/peip>

'Our model has always been that we don't fund any training; we don't pay any agency to deliver training for us. What we do is provide training for their staff to be able to deliver the training, and in return for that we then expect them to deliver a certain number of programmes. We like them to deliver two programmes a year, but work on the basis that they must deliver one or their accreditation would lapse, and because we've got so many staff, if all of those staff did deliver one programme a year then we've got plenty of provision, and obviously some agencies deliver more than that. So the only cost to us at the moment - we don't pay for venues either – we say if we're coming in to deliver a programme in your venue your parents benefit. We hope that people will be bending over backwards to want provision to happen. So the only thing we do pay for, if anything at all, is the child care'. (LA1/S)

It is also noteworthy that this strategic lead stressed that the LA had addressed sustainability as a central element in its planning over the years.

4.6 Impact

There was a general feeling among both facilitators and the strategic and operational leads that the PEIP in their LA was having success. This was not uncritical commentary, as the previous sections confirm. Rather, those involved considered that there was a good deal of evidence from their experience to date to indicate that the parenting programme in use was having positive effects on parents. Furthermore there were indications of beneficial engagements with schools (see also the accompanying report on Extended Schools⁶). For example, one operational lead commented:

'I think actually, although it is early days, the impact has been huge [...] and I think one of things I've noticed is the relationships with us and schools is really getting better as well. Schools really wanted to look at this programme and I think that's really good'. (LA19/O)

There were two main themes: firstly, for parents to complete the course was a success in itself, and secondly the change in their skills and sense of competence and self esteem:

"It's a huge achievement to complete the Pathfinder. For them to go every week, as they have been, this group of seven, and to graduate. It's massive for them. They are so excited about their graduation! They kept saying, 'Can I have a copy of the

photograph because my mum wants it up on her bureau.' They're going to have a graduation hat and certificate and everything. [...] [Programme] is the best thing we've ever done in all my years, one of the most effective things in getting to the biggest group of parents all at once and having such amazing effects on the whole family, it seems to me. The whole family has calmed down in many of the cases. Boyfriends, partners, they're saying first of all, 'Oh no, it's a load of rubbish' and then picking up the homework and trying it. (LA11/F10)

Impact will be a major element of the quantitative analysis to be undertaken of the pre- and post- parenting group measures to be completed by the parents. Currently, the number of booklets returned is still short of the number we had expected. At 5 November 2007 there have been 836 pre-course and 392 post-course booklets returned. We know that one reason for the shortfall on expected numbers reflects the late start of groups. Already the returns will provide a substantial dataset for analysis but it is important to optimize the response rate over this last period.

5. CONCLUSIONS

By the summer of 2007 all the PEIP LAs had started to implement their Programme. Some had been underway since early on during the PEIP but others were only running their first groups at this time. Consequently our interviews were spread into the early autumn to access the views of the LAs that were slower to get underway. At this point a number of indications are apparent - but it is important to recognize that these are *indications* which need to be explored and validated during the final Phase 3 of the study which begins in December 2007.

The present findings, as with the 1st Interim Report, focus on the Pathfinder as a whole rather than comparisons between the three Programmes. This is partly because the purpose of the project is primarily to examine roll out of the PEIP as a whole, with the three specified Programmes; it was not set up by DCSF to be a comparative study of the three Programmes. That said, there are some themes which could be explored during the final phase as there are differences between them. However, for the present report, the focus is on PEIP-wide issues.

LAs have produced a varied response to the PEIP. This reflects past histories and experience, in particular, as well as different circumstances in each LA. Nevertheless, all now have a cadre of facilitators in place, with variations in numbers per LA; a large number of groups have been run and it is claimed that a large number of parents have been through these. We have not examined LA data on these issues directly. It is the case that CEDAR has received a much smaller number of pre- and post-course parent booklets than the figures suggested by LAs' targets imply. This will be examined further for the final report.

In summary, the present 2nd Interim Report identifies a number of issues concerning the roll out of the PEIP that are of importance in the further development of this initiative. A number of these will be examined further during Phase 3. Also, for the Final Report there will be an examination of the pre- and post-group parent data.

5.1 Main Findings

- The LAs have successfully begun to implement PEIP by training a substantial cadre of facilitators and starting to run parenting groups

- The rate of progress across LAs has been very variable in terms of numbers of groups run and parents supported, a function of the limited availability of accredited training for facilitators, the length of each of the Programmes and local recruitment factors
- There is optimism about the likely success of the PEIP
- A number of implementation issues have been identified for study during Phase 3, the final phase, including: recruitment and attendance of parents, drop out, facilitators' access to supervision and the impact of the group training on parents
- There is an interaction between the PEIP and each LA's parenting strategy: the PEIP is expected to influence further development of the strategy

Detailed Findings

Running the groups

Engagement

- There are three challenges to engaging parents
 - To attend the course
 - To stay for the duration of the course
 - To be actively engaged during the course sessions
- Schools and extended schools have played an important role in identifying parents (see the accompanying report on schools and extended schools⁷)
- Facilitators have developed a range of strategies to engage parents to attend groups, including home visiting prior to the group starting
- Drop out is reported to occur mainly during the first weeks of a course
- Facilitators have developed a range of strategies to prevent drop out including home visits, phone contact and paying particular, individualised attention to the most needy parents
- The scale of drop out is unclear with differing reports between interviewees
- Four out of five facilitators reported that parents were engaged during the course; only 2/59 facilitators reported parents were hard or very hard to keep engaged:
- Level of parent need was an important factor in gaining and maintaining engagement during the course

⁷ Lindsay, G. et al (2007) *Evaluation of the Parent Early Intervention Pathfinder: Additional Study of the Involvement of Extended Schools*. <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/projects/current/peip>

Course materials

- About nine out of ten facilitators regarded the course materials as very suitable or suitable
- The theoretical underpinnings and research basis for the Programmes were positively regarded
- There were, however, a number of criticisms by facilitators regarding
 - Cultural specificity of US and Australian material and limited or lack of match with UK or more specifically local settings
 - Materials reflecting more ‘middle class’ family experiences
- However, parents were reported to appreciate the materials and to use them well.
- Some facilitators wanted to modify the programme delivery but were aware of the strong insistence on the need for consistency of implementation (programme fidelity)

Relevance of training

- Facilitators were overwhelmingly positive about their training: Over nine out of ten facilitators considered their training had been very relevant or relevant.
- The main criticism was its intensity
- There were also concerns about the need to undergo additional training where the Programme’s researched course did not match the 8-13 age range of the PEIP.

Facilitators and co-facilitators

- Over nine out of ten facilitators rated the dynamic with their co-facilitator positively
- Positive co-facilitation occurred both with colleagues from the same service and also where the co-facilitator came from a different background
- Co-facilitation was supportive and increased flexibility
- Although a minority and not favoured by some Programmes, there is some limited evidence for the use of parent (i.e. non-professional) facilitators.

Support and supervision

- Over nine out of ten facilitators rated their managers as supportive, with over half rating managers very supportive,
- Supervision was more problematic and was patchy, reflecting the programmes’ difficulties in meeting the scale of demand from the PEIP.

- Where available, facilitators valued support from experienced Programme personnel accredited to provide supervision.
- Only about half of the facilitators were able to comment on supervision; of these, over four out of five rated it very helpful or helpful.
- The variable access to appropriate supervision should be addressed during this Pathfinder and will be an important issue in any future roll out across more LAs

Strategic issues

Development of the parenting strategy

- LAs varied in the stage of development of their parenting strategy
- In some cases the development of locality structures was expected to be supportive of the development of the parenting strategy and specifically of PEIP
- LAs varied with respect to the balance between universal and targeted provision for parents and also with respect to the role of parenting groups and the number of different programmes they wished to support
- There were tensions in some LAs among professionals concerning whether to use, in addition, a locally developed parenting programme, but one without research evidence comparable to that of the PEIP Programme
- Where the LA had a history of parent support being a central policy area, and where there was a history of parenting programmes, there was optimism about the sustainability of PEIP

Recruitment and retention of facilitators

- Some LAs had a resource of previously trained facilitators on which to draw
- Recruitment was adversely affected in some cases by the lengthy procedures in the LA but more particularly by the limited availability of training because of the scale of the PEIP and the limited number of accredited trainers
- There are indications of some problems of retention and/or limited use of facilitators after training

Parent recruitment

- The scale of parent recruitment varies across the LAs with a variation in opinions as to whether the target number will be hit

- The appropriateness of the parents who are recruited to a course is a concern among some strategic leads with respect to both the severity of needs and the appropriate mix within any one group

Sustainability

- Local authorities are actively considering how to sustain their work after March 2008.
- Finance is a key but not only factor: local arrangements to access facilitators will also be important
- Where an LA has a history of parent support groups, sustainability has been considered as a central issue in planning

5.2 Issues to address

This final section draws out a number of issues which the Phase 2 interviews have identified as requiring further exploration and analysis. These issues have been raised in various forms by interviewees or our own analysis of the data but should be seen as *indicative* at this time. All are important for the further roll out after March 2008. They will be presented here as a series of bullets.

- LAs' delivery systems
 - Which models enhance or limit delivery, e.g. use of core team or facilitators in other jobs allocating specific time allocations?
- Staffing
 - Importance of operational lead role and the role holder having appropriate skills and knowledge related to parenting support.
- Length of Parenting Programme
 - Number of sessions varies between the three Programmes
 - Length of programme has increased for Incredible Years and is now very substantial – 20 weeks.
 - Increased length raises issue of *cost* and also *practicability*, e.g. fitting into the school year.
- Training
 - Cost and practical limitations where training is supplied from another country.

- Practicality of developing UK based training.
- Are there consistent standards of training for each model across LAs?
- Limited number of accredited trainers restricts further roll out.
- Information limitations
 - Commercial sensitivity limits information available until purchase, impeding LA officers' ability to persuade policy makers.
- Parents as facilitators
 - Should parents act as co-facilitators or take a lead as facilitators?
 - Evidence of *some* parents being trained as facilitators.
 - Programmes differ in their approval/support for parent facilitators.
- Fidelity
 - There are varying views on an operational definition of fidelity and some LAs are possibly developing 'variants' of the Programme – will this lead to a loss of fidelity of Programme(s) over time?
- Supervision
 - This is variable and limited by availability of appropriate mentors. How should LAs increase supervision support, e.g. using educational and clinical psychologists to provide local support.
- Accreditation
 - Arrangements for accreditations vary across the Programmes.
 - Facilitators may be practising without accreditation?
 - There is some uncertainty regarding accreditation for the new Incredible Years course.
- Materials
 - Programmes are developing materials – will they address concerns adequately concerning culture, language and severity of problem?
 - Cost of purchasing new materials (e.g. DVDs to replace videos) is significant.
 - Are the new versions different in content also?
- English as an Additional Language

- How are LAs responding to the challenge of parents for whom English is an additional language?
- Is there sufficient access to facilitators fluent in the home language
- How is this challenge being addressed with respect to the written materials?

- Parents
 - What degree of variation exists between the parents attending Programmes with respect to level of problems?
 - Is there variation between programmes? Between LAs?

- Parenting Strategy
 - How developed is the LA's Parenting Strategy?
 - How does this address the use of the Parenting programme used for PEIP, or any other programme..

- Cost
 - How will set up as well as recurrent costs be identified and resources found if PEIP is rolled out to other LAs?

These issues have been raised as comments, queries and concerns. In some cases they reflect the need for information but others are concerned with policy and/or practice decisions.

They are presented here for reflection and discussion in the first instance and then for further examination during Phase 3. The Final Report will address these among other issues.

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