



**Council for
Catholic
Maintained
Schools**

**Evaluation of the
Full Service
Community
Network**

**Public Sector
Consulting**

Final Report

March 2011



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vision

The Full Service Community Network (FSCN) is a pilot initiative which has sought to demonstrate the impact that can be achieved in raising educational attainment through integrated and collaborative working across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups. Its vision sets out long term aspirations for the FSCN:

“FSCN seeks to raise educational attainment through addressing the needs of the children, their families and the local community in the areas served by the West Belfast Partnership Board and the Upper Springfield Development Trust. Comprehensive family support services addressing education, health and well-being and employability needs will be delivered through integrated, collaborative working across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups.”

Using this pilot approach, it seeks to develop the network as a model of good practice for Full Service provision. FSCN seeks to fundamentally challenge and change (for the better) the way that services are delivered.

Resources

Total investment in the FSCN is around £850K; this covers a 4-year period (from set up in 2007/08 through to active delivery in 2009/10 and 2010/11). The FSCN has been funded since 2007/08 with a Manager and Administrator initially appointed and four operational staff (2 x Education Development Workers and 2 x Transition Workers) taking up posts in 2009.

Services Delivered

Between January and November 2010, FSCN staff have engaged with **2069 pupils** (1856 through group work and 213 through individual work) and **951 parents** (728 through group work and 223 through individual work) providing support on education and transition issues.

Under contract to the FSCN, Barnardo’s Time 4 Me Counselling Service has delivered:

- Between April 2009 and March 2010 - a counselling service to **80 individual children**. **105 parents** received support and parenting guidance and the **class teacher for each of the 80 pupils** also received support and advice from the Time 4 Me practitioner.
- Between April 2010 and end of November 2010 – a counselling service to **105 pupils and 121 parents**.

Impacts Achieved

The FSCN has had a positive impact on the five high level outcomes for children and young people as follows:

- **Being Healthy**
 - The impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service (as perceived by school stakeholders) on **Being healthy**: the following reported a ‘very’ or ‘quite’ positive impact on pupil’s overall health and wellbeing:
 - Confidence 95% (N = 41)

- Self-esteem 93% (N = 40)
- Attention/concentration 86% (N = 37)
- Happiness at school 100% (N = 43)
- Peer social interaction 93% (N = 40)
- Survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the FSCN with regard to **health and well-being**. 84% of staff and 77% of parents felt that the FSCN had a positive impact (limited or major) on the health and well-being of pupils; 92% of staff and 90% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on the self-esteem of children and young people and 92% of staff and 85% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on the confidence of children and young people. 80% of staff and 80% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on improvements in child behaviour and social and health skills.
- **Ability to enjoy Learning and Achieving**
 - The services directly provided by FSCN staff (2 Education Development Workers, 2 Transition Workers) and Barnardo's Counselling service working to achieve this outcome e.g. support for literacy, numeracy (impact on education) as well as transition support and counselling (impact on readiness to learn / preparing children to engage).
 - Between January and November 2010, FSCN staff have engaged with **2069 pupils** (1856 through group work and 213 through individual work) and **951 parents** (728 through group work and 223 through individual work).
 - Survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the project with regard to **educational attainment and readiness to learn** (see Table 4-9 for summary and Appendix IV for details of staff and parents' perceptions of the positive impact on a range of relevant issues including attendance, positive attitude, improving learning and achievement, raising performance in primary and post-primary schools, improving aspirations).
 - Feedback from the parents' survey is positive in terms of **support provided in school for their children both for learning** and for personal matters.
 - The impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service (as perceived by school stakeholders) on **Enjoying learning and achieving**; the following reported a 'very' or 'quite' positive impact on pupil's ability to enjoy learning and their overall attitude to school:
 - Participation in classroom or school activities 93% (N = 40)
 - Attendance 74% (N = 32)
 - Punctuality 72% (N = 31)
 - Motivation and enthusiasm 93% (N = 38)
 - Teacher-Pupil relationships 93% (N = 40)
- **Economic and Environmental Well Being**

- The FSCN has focused on early intervention and hence its focus initially has been on Early Years / Primary Schools. However, it has also taken forward some initiatives focused on employability and employment including:
 - Facilitating the involvement of the Bytes Project in local schools. This project is co-funded by DE and DEL; it seeks to identify those who may disengage and provide a means of retaining their interest.
 - Facilitating local training organisations to come into schools e.g. Springvale Training provides 3 days per week vocationally focused (construction, electrical / mechanical engineering) in Corpus Christi College – opening up training and employment opportunities
- Staff and parents’ survey results provide positive feedback on the **impact of the FSCN with regard to parents and families** (see Table 4-9 and Appendix IV) including that the project had a positive impact on opportunities for local adult education and family learning.
- **Living in Safety and with Stability; and** }
- **Contributing Positively to Community and Society** }
- FSCN staff have engaged with 951 parents (728 through group work and 223 through individual work) between January and November 2010. Activities supported include: Evening classes offered in Corpus Christi vocation centre; Parents rooms; Cross community parenting course. These types of interventions are helping parents to make a greater contribution to their children’s education in the first instance and ultimately to the wider community.
- Staff and parents’ survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the project with regard to parents and families. The proportion of staff and parents who felt that the FSCN had a positive impact on the following aspects (which contribute to community and society and/ or safety and stability) are:
 - Opportunities to develop parenting skills and to discuss parenting issues with other parents and professionals (79% staff, 84% parents)
 - Greater parental involvement in children's learning and development (76% staff, 82% parents)
 - More opportunities for local adult education and family learning (64% staff, 80% parents)
 - Closer relationships with the schools (75% staff, 85% parents)
- Social inclusion and a culture of tolerance are a core part of the ethos of the FSCN. Specific initiatives that the FSCN has supported (either financially or through its influence / involvement) include:
 - Active Citizenship project - Primary school cross community parent capacity building – St Paul’s and Harmony Primary School.
 - Primary 7 Transition Programme across a range of primary and post primary schools.

- Involvement with the Intervention Project, the Link Centre and the Bytes Project.
- Involvement with Black Mountain Shared Space Initiative.
- Youth Club support through 'Little Acorns'
- The impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service (as perceived by school stakeholders) on **Contributing to community/society**; the following reported a 'very' or 'quite' positive impact on pupil's overall behaviour at school
 - Anger 79% (N = 34)
 - Defiance and non-compliance 79% (N = 34)
 - Peer aggression or bullying 72% (N = 31)

It is also apparent that the FSCN has made considerable progress in a relatively short time towards the goal of **integrated service delivery and building local capacity**. This is evident in a number of areas:

- the breadth of membership (based on those who are active members and engaged) of the Board and Operational Group¹;
- FSCN joint / collaborative working with e.g. Barnardo's, Extended Schools Clusters, Sure Start, Intervention Project, Upper Springfield Healthy Living Centre and Whiterock Children's Centre amongst others;
- it is clear that considerable resources have been devoted by the FSCN to facilitate the building and maintenance of relationships / partnerships with representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors allowing the sharing of facilities, resources and expertise

FSCN acting as a catalyst to encourage integration and collaboration between organisations with an interest in improving educational outcomes (e.g. working with a range of organisations with regard to Social Inclusion and Employability encouraging links and also playing a role in a number of smaller relevant projects). An Interim Evaluation Report identified 6 recommendations which the Board has taken action to address. In this Final Evaluation Report, we set out 8 main recommendations for the future of the FSCN:

¹ Not all of the organisations invited to sit on the FSCN Project Board and FSCN Operational Group have either taken up their place or attended regularly.

Recommendations

Future of FSCN - Resourcing and sustainability

Recommendation 1:

Given the achievements of the FSCN (in terms of children and families supported through FSCN Workers and sub-contracted services such as Primary School Counselling as well as relationships / partnerships initiated and developed) in relatively short time-scales, we recommend that funding for the initiative should continue until it becomes mainstreamed, subject to issues highlighted in the following Recommendations being addressed.

Recommendation 2:

We recommend that the FSCN Board works with its key stakeholders and other initiatives to develop a plan in terms of future resourcing - and working with partners to identify where mainstreaming or focusing / targeting existing resources is possible (in the short, medium or long term) to meet identified needs.

Strategy versus adhococracy

Recommendation 3:

We recommend that the FSCN develops a causal analysis of the situation that it is seeking to address (drawing on existing information and analysis carried out by others).

Clarity of Purpose

Recommendation 4:

We recommend that the FSCN develops a coherent, long-term strategy to change the situation identified in the causal analysis.

Evaluating Progress

Recommendation 5:

We recommend developing appropriate long-term evaluation plans including long-term outcomes and appropriate (and robust) systems to track these (including providing trend information to confirm the direction of the FSCN).

Complex relationships

Recommendation 6:

In order to ensure that complex relationships are co-ordinated and sustained, we recommend that the FSCN continues to adopt the following principles and re-states these for the benefit of Board and Operational Group members:

- Relationships need time for partners to learn about each other and to develop trust, and stability in terms of the personnel involved.

- **Governance structures need to have a clear strategic role, rather than simply being concerned with ad hoc decision-making.**
- **Complex relationships and structures need leadership and maintenance.**

Community participation

Recommendation 7:

We recommend that the FSCN continues to ensure that appropriate partners are engaged in a relevant and appropriate manner and that there is buy in at strategic and operational levels and that this is revisited as part of the annual planning process.

Sharing Good Practice

Recommendation 8:

We recommend that the FSCN and other related initiatives such as in the Model Schools and others involved (or likely to be involved) in Full Service provision, establish a forum to share and exchange good practice and experience.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Introduction

FGS McClure Watters was commissioned by CCMS to undertake an evaluation of the Full Service Community Network (FSCN). The FSCN is a pilot initiative which has sought to demonstrate the impact that can be achieved in raising educational attainment through integrated and collaborative working across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups. Throughout this report the pilot initiative is referred to as FSCN. In this final report, we develop and update information from the Working Paper (issued April 2010) and the Interim Evaluation Report (issued August 2010) as well as reporting on additional workstreams completed since then (including surveys with pupils, parents and staff and benchmarking). *[Information already included in the Interim Evaluation Report is generally not repeated in this Final Evaluation Report; and where appropriate, the reader is referred to the Interim Evaluation Report for more details].*

2.2 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation specify the following key tasks:

- To measure the impact of the project's programmes in seeking the following high level outcomes for children and young people:
 - a) Being Healthy;
 - b) Ability to enjoy Learning and Achieving;
 - c) Living in Safety and with Stability;
 - d) Economic and Environmental Well Being; and
 - e) Contributing Positively to Community and Society.
- To examine and report on behavioural change, as related to the high level outcomes specified above, with children, parents, school staff and project staff;
- To examine and report on attitudinal change, as related to the high level outcomes specified above, with children, parents, school staff and project staff;
- To examine and report on the impact of the programme as contributing to the social inclusion and well being of children and young people;
- To evaluate the extent to which the project activity has influenced the increase in integrated service delivery and the building of local capacity;
- To evaluate the extent to which the Full Service Community Network Project can be held as a model of good practice;
- To evaluate the impact of the Educational Development and Transition workers in accordance with their job description and the agreed outcomes;

- To evaluate the impact of the Primary School Counselling Service delivered by Barnardo's NI;
- To evaluate the intention and ensuring practice of Extended Schools activity and how it relates in practice to the strategic relationship of the FSCN and influences its work; and
- To evaluate how the recent ETI Area Inspection Report may influence the role of the FSCN in the wider context of the schools and organisations involved.

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation required the scope of this evaluation to cover the period from **1 January 2009 to 31 March 2011**. As funding for the initiative expires at the end of March 2011, it was agreed that the final evaluation report be completed and issued prior to the end of the funding period in order to inform the future direction of the initiative.

2.3 Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation was agreed with the Evaluation Steering Group and documented in the Project Initiation Document, It consisted of the following main steps:

- **Policy Context and Desk Research:** this included a review of:
 - Policy and strategy documents which provide the context for the FSCN and describes the intended strategic linkages and impacts / outcomes to which it is intended to contribute;
 - Statistics related to educational attainment and related factors – providing a useful baseline against which future progress may be measured;
 - Detailed operational information about the FSCN – describing the management / operating structures, funding / resources and activities undertaken by the FSCN, planning and monitoring processes.

This is documented in both the Interim Evaluation Report and updated in this Final Evaluation Report.

- **Consultation** with key stakeholders (including statutory, voluntary and community organisations) using a variety of approaches including focus groups, 1-to-1 interviews, telephone interviews and questionnaires:
 - A list of consultees (and methods of consultation) is included in Appendix XI of the Interim Evaluation Report (including FSCN Board, FSCN Operational Group, FSCN Staff and Other stakeholders) and also in Appendix III of the Final Evaluation Report; findings from consultations inform both the Interim and Final Evaluation Reports;
 - Details of questionnaires (456 completed) by Pupils, Parents and Staff (teaching and non-teaching) is included in Appendix IV of the Final Evaluation Report. A summary of key findings is included in the Final Evaluation Report.
- **Benchmarking.** In order to address the requirement in the Terms of Reference: “*To evaluate the extent to which the Full Service Community Network Project can be held as a model of good practice*”, Professor Alan Dyson (University of Manchester) worked with us

to draw on experience of similar initiatives in other jurisdictions against which the FSCN may be compared.

- **Analysis and Reporting.** We analysed all the information gathered against each element of the Terms of Reference - this informed the conclusions and recommendations presented in both the Interim and Final Evaluation Reports.
 - The Interim Evaluation Report presented conclusions against each element of the Terms of Reference and set out recommendations based on strengths of the FSCN and areas for development.
 - This Final Evaluation Report presents an update on the Interim Evaluation Report, drawing on new information (e.g. questionnaires completed with pupils, parents and staff (teaching and non-teaching) and includes updated conclusions against each element of the Terms of Reference, the Board's response to the recommendations in the Interim Evaluation Report and final recommendations.

2.4 Structure of Report

The structure of this report is as follows:

- Section 2 – Introduction (including Terms of Reference and Methodology);
- Section 3 – Context for the FSCN
 - Strategic and policy context

A summary of the context in which the FSCN is operating and identifies how the FSCN is expected to contribute to the delivery of government and other targets. It also highlights strategic linkages and impacts / outcomes to which the FSCN will contribute.
 - Area Profile

A summary of the profile of the area in which the FSCN is operating which includes key statistics which are relevant for educational attainment – bringing this together in one place and providing a baseline against which future performance may be assessed.
- Section 4 – FSCN - Summary
 - A summary of the current status of the programme including objectives / targets, finance, details of services provided (including services delivered by the 4 Project Staff as well as the Barnardo's Primary School Counselling Service delivered under contract to FSCN), performance information;
- Section 5 – Consultation – Key Findings;
 - A summary of key issues raised from consultation with stakeholders; feedback on surveys with pupils, parents and staff.
- Section 6 – Benchmarking
 - Comparison with similar types of initiatives in GB and further afield

- Section 7 – Conclusions and Recommendations
 - Recap of Interim Recommendations and Updates on these
 - Final Conclusions and Recommendations

3 CONTEXT FOR THE FSCN

3.1 Strategic and Policy Context

3.1.1 Introduction

In the Interim Evaluation Report, we considered the strategic context for the Full Service Community Network and in particular linkages between key strategies, policies and initiatives and the FSCN. The purpose of considering these documents is to confirm that the strategic context under which the intervention is delivered remains valid. We explored the factors contributing to improved educational and other outcomes (as per the 5 high level outcomes for children and young people set out in the Terms of Reference).

In our review, we considered relevant strategic documents for the entire period which is the subject of this evaluation i.e. from 1 January 2009 to 31 March 2011 (including strategies which are well known and adopted e.g. Ten Year Children’s Strategy and those which reflect a changing environment in terms of the educational infrastructure e.g. role of ESA, CCMS and any implications for the FSCN).

There are many organisations and agencies working in West Belfast and concerned with some or all of the issues on which the FSCN is focused. We have focused on those which are involved in the FSCN e.g. through the Board, Operational Group or in service delivery (including health, youth, community organisations, etc.). The documents reviewed are listed below:

- Programme for Government 2008-2011;
- Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2006-2016;
- Department of Education – Strategic Plan 2006-08 and Business Plan 2008-09;
- DE – Every School A Good School (2009);
- DE – Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion;
- DE - Early Years Strategy;
- BELB - Achieving Belfast;
- DE - Extended Schools Programme including:
 - ES Programme Description;
 - Evaluation of Extended Schools (2009);
 - Upper Springfield and Greater Falls Extended Schools Clusters – Action Plans;
- Importance of STEM Education – drawing on a range of sources;
- BELB Corporate Plan & Resource Allocation Plan 2009-10
- Education and Skills Authority;
- ETI Area Inspection Report;

- DSD - Neighbourhood Renewal including:
 - Greater Falls Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP); and
 - Upper Springfield-Whiterock Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP).
- Integrated Service for Children and Young People Implementation Group (formerly West Belfast Local Implementation Action Group);
- DHSSPS - Investing for Health strategy (2002) – documents and information relating to education and links between health and education in particular;
- Institute of Public Health – Health Impacts of Education;
- DHSSPS - Caring for People – Beyond Tomorrow Caring For People Beyond Tomorrow (2005);
- Health Inequalities – Links with Educational Attainment – consideration of a range of research.

These documents (listed above) are reviewed in detail in Section 2 of the Interim Evaluation Report.

Since the Interim Evaluation Report was produced, the following documents have become available:

- Department of Education Business Plan 2010-2011; and
- Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) – Evaluation of Extended Schools (July 2010);

These are briefly considered in Sections 3.1.2 – 3.1.3 below.

A summary of key issues arising (from all of the strategies) is presented in Section 3.1.4 below.

3.1.2 DE – Business Plan 2010-2011

The Vision Statement for the Department is as follows:

DE exists to ensure that every learner fulfils her or his full potential at each stage of development.

The vision is supported by five priorities for the education sector:

- Raising Standards For All
- Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equity
- Developing The Education Workforce
- Improving The Learning Environment
- Transforming Education Management

A key emphasis in the vision statement is to ensure that every learner fulfils her or his full potential. Equality of opportunity is therefore central to everything that the department does, not only in relation to Section 75 groups but to any children or young people affected by educational disadvantage. This is reflected throughout the policy work and in the allocation of resources.

The Business Plan recognises that for a number of reasons, many children and young people will experience greater difficulties in learning and progressing than their peers. These children may have special educational needs, or may be experiencing social or personal circumstances which may create a barrier to learning. These barriers to learning and the additional needs they present need to be taken into account and appropriate interventions put in place if the children and young people are to fulfil their individual potential. Tackling barriers to learning combined with high expectations for all learners is one of the keys to raising overall educational outcomes.

Clearly there is a strong fit between the FSCN and the DE Business Plan and in particular the FSCN's role in removing barriers to learning (e.g. due to social or personal circumstances) and its potential to contribute to the strategic priorities:

- Raising Standards For All
- Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equity.

3.1.3 ETI – Evaluation of Extended Schools (July 2010)

The ETI has undertaken a number of inspections of Extended Schools. The first inspection report in November 2006 indicated that ES was in its very early days. Subsequently, in 2008-09, the ETI reported that:

“there was a widening range of programmes, targeted more closely than previously on the specific high level outcomes, with better collaboration and improved consultation and planning evident amongst the stakeholders. The quality of the majority of activities inspected was very good or better. With respect to areas for improvement, the Inspectorate reported that only in a significant minority of schools were action plans effectively integrated with whole-school improvement planning. It was recommended that more attention needed to be given to the key aims of ES, namely: raising standards and promoting the specific high level outcomes.

While the monitoring and evaluation of the provision was recognised as improving, it was recommended that schools needed to make a more systematic, rigorous assessment of the learning outcomes.”

This (July 2010) report provides an up-to-date perspective on Extended Schools (noting that strengths reported in 2009 remain valid and that there is evidence of significant further improvement). This report notes the significant role that ES has to play in catering for disadvantaged communities and delivering improvements including educational outcomes and further, the benefits of ES in removing barriers to learning:

“4.2 In almost 90% of cases (Figure 1), where ES are serving disadvantaged communities effectively (i.e. performance levels are good or better), significant improvements are evident in the educational outcomes and the personal and social well-being of pupils. Extended Schools activities are frequently improving the lives of parents and helping them to re-engage with education following their own, often poor, experiences and perceptions of schools.

4.3 While the schools involved in the survey are already heavily committed to and active in addressing disadvantage and in removing barriers to learning, the resources from ES have enabled them to be more flexible, creative and effective in enhancing their provision and in raising achievement. The schools have improved in their ability to demonstrate confidently improvements in the pupils' learning.

4.4 In the examples of outstanding practice observed, ES is most successful in transforming the life chances of individual pupils, thus providing good value for money.”

It also identifies indicators of effective practice for ES which reflect the improvements evident since the findings of earlier ETI reports.

Based on inspection evidence in 2010 and 2008-09, the following are key characteristics of effective practice in Extended Schools.

Table 3-1 Indicators of Effective Practice in Extended Schools	
Leadership and Management The leadership and management of Extended Schools in raising achievement and supporting learners is most effective where:	<p>Strategic Leadership There is a clear vision for ES. The leadership and support of the Principal is crucial. The SMT has a clear understanding of how ES leads to improvement, rather than seeing it as an initiative to provide extra-curricular activities. There is a collective responsibility within the school for ES.</p>
	<p>Action to Promote Improvement ES activities are clearly embedded into SDPs and associated action plans. Schools are able to demonstrate success through more robust and systematic evidence. Evidence from self-evaluation informs planning to ensure more targeted support for individual pupils. The uptake and use of the ELB-designed web-based monitoring and reporting software makes the planning, monitoring and reporting of the programmes more efficient.</p>
	<p>Staffing There is effective capacity building amongst staff, including the non-teaching support staff. This in turn, proves to be cost-effective, sustainable and results in heightened morale, leading staff developing their professional roles and seeking further training and qualifications. The ES co-ordinator supports and engages with the local community. Schools benefit greatly from the effective use and deployment of community based support workers and/or cluster co-ordinators who possess strong community links, local knowledge and credibility.</p>
	<p>Resourcing Schools are conscious of cost effectiveness and value for money which improves their decision-making. Schools use their expertise gained from managing ES to access other sources of funding to sustain programmes. improving the accommodation and physical resources through ES.</p>
	<p>Links and Partnerships Clusters are well focused with greater agreed and shared understanding of purpose and of what can be achieved. Clusters are generally more successful when established by the schools themselves. ELB officers provide schools with highly effective, efficacious and prompt support: offering advice; making contacts; assisting in financial matters and in supporting schools to be creative and flexible in meeting the needs of their pupils in difficult circumstances. Schools are adept in liaising with external agencies and organisations to meet needs effectively and in monitoring and evaluating the value of this support for the pupils and their parents</p>

Table 3-1 Indicators of Effective Practice in Extended Schools	
Quality of Provision The effectiveness of ES provision in meeting the needs of the learners and the wider community and in caring for, guiding and supporting them is most effective where:	Planning Schools demonstrate creativity and flexibility in the planning of activities and services for pupils and parents. A 'can-do' culture has emerged in ES where schools make decisions about arranging programmes which will work. They are able to demonstrate creativity and independence in decision making without fear of criticism or of not adhering to restrictive working parameters. Schools are targeting support, which delivers clear and discernible outcomes to meet the needs of individual pupils and discontinuing those which do not provide acceptable outcomes for the resources invested.
	Curriculum provision The ES provision supports specific aspects of the curriculum clearly. Schools plan for a breadth of experiences offered through ES
	Care, guidance and support The strong links between the ES programmes and the pastoral care systems within schools ensure that the needs of individual pupils are being addressed in a holistic manner. Improved communication between teachers, parents and external agencies which ensures that important information is shared between all those who support the children.
Achievements and Standards The effectiveness of ES provision in securing high quality achievements and high standards is most effective where:	Skills, attitudes and dispositions ES programmes are explicitly linked to a positive impact on children's learning. Schools are able to demonstrate that ES activities have a direct link to better engagement of pupils with classroom learning. Improved levels of attainment related to higher levels of motivation, attendance and more positive feelings of self-worth, together with a sense of belonging to a community through involvement in ES programmes. There is a sharp focus on ensuring that the programmes all contribute to, or are focused both directly and indirectly on, raising measurable attainment and performance in classrooms and at end of year examinations. Participants in ES programmes gain accreditation. The children engage in their learning and attain better because their parents are being supported to assist them in their learning. The pupils surmount barriers to learning.

Given the close links between the FSCN and the Extended Schools Clusters in Greater Falls and Upper Springfield, it is important that the FSCN recognises and builds on the strengths identified in ES more generally and that it is guided by the indicators of effective practice.

3.1.4 Strategic Context: Summary

There are many organisations and agencies working in West Belfast (and some with a broader remit) which are concerned with some or all of the issues on which the FSCN is focused. We have focused on those which are involved in the FSCN e.g. through the Board, Operational Group or in service delivery (including health, youth, community organisations, etc.).

The FSCN contributes to a wide range of Government policies and strategies. It has the potential to contribute to a number of the Programme for Government's PSAs. The most pertinent one is PSA 19: Raising standards in our schools. One objective under this PSA relates directly to the aims of the FSCN as it focuses specifically to improving the levels of

fundamental skills in schools in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. PSA 10: Helping our young people achieve through education, also specially targets the needs of the most disadvantaged children and the wider health and wellbeing aims of FSCN are aligned with PSA 8: Promoting health and addressing health inequalities.

The FSCN is consistent with the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People as both have an underlying aim to improve the lives of children through addressing education, health and well-being and employability needs through partnership working, collaborative working, engagement with parents, communities, statutory and voluntary agencies and a move to preventative, early intervention.

The FSCN contributes to the overall strategic aims of DE by providing targeted support for learning and training to those who need it most. It also contributes to a number of DE policies. In particular, the FSCN contributes to DE's school improvement policy, Every School a Good School, which proposes a holistic approach to overcoming the barriers to education including support to develop pupils' emotional health and well being in order to improve their readiness to learn. This policy is the guiding framework for the entire FSCN. The FSCN will also contribute to proposed policies in DE's review of SEN through the personal and family support services they can offer to children with special educational needs.

In targeting the most deprived areas in West Belfast, the FSCN is helping to meet the objectives of DSD's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which is designed to promote joined-up working to help close the gap between the quality of life for people in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of society. In targeting health improvement in these deprived areas, the FSCN activities are contributing to the objectives in the Investing for Health strategy. In particular, they are contributing objective 2, 'to enable all people and young people in particular to develop the skills and attitudes that will give them the capacity to reach their full potential and make healthy choices'. This is also consistent with research published the Institute for Public Health that provides a positive link between improved educational attainment and lifelong good health. The FSCN activities will also contribute to the vision set out in DHSSPS's primary care strategy, Caring for People beyond Tomorrow, which aims to see communities engaged and participating in local delivery of primary care.

There have also been a number of recent developments in the strategic environment that are of importance to the FSCN.

ETI conducted an evaluation of Extended Schools in 2009 and a further update in 2010 and published a number of recommended actions for improvement as well as indicators of effective practice. These provide a useful set of "lessons learned" on previous Extended Schools and are areas which are of relevance to the evaluation of the FSCN. The ETI also conducted an area inspection of the educational pathways for learners in West Belfast in 2009 and cited the FSCN as strength in the area of transition arrangements in West Belfast. The evaluation also identified a number of key priorities for development for stakeholders involved in the delivery of education in West Belfast which are relevant to the future delivery of the FSCN.

In order to ensure the smooth and most effective running of the FSCN, up to the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority, it was agreed between the Department of Education, BELB and CCMS that management and operational responsibility should be transferred to CCMS with effect from 1 September 2009.

3.2 Area Profile

Aside from the strategic and policy context, the rationale for the FSCN is best described in terms of the following (connected) issues:

- Low educational attainment (and impacts on employment, life chances, etc.);
- Unemployment and lack of skills / qualifications;
- Health problems; and
- Widespread social deprivation.

In Section 3 of the Interim Evaluation Report, we describe the area in which the FSCN is operating, providing evidence of disadvantage drawing on a range of data sources and statistics including:

- Social Deprivation and Disadvantage (including Health) – using the Noble Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010;
- Education (Free School Meal Entitlement, Special Education Needs, Attendance and Suspension, Attainment, Progression to Further and Higher Education);
- Employment / Skills (levels of economic activity, claimant count, long term unemployed, income support claimants, job seekers allowance claimants, incapacity benefit claimants);
- Crime / Anti-Social Behaviour – level of anti social behaviours.

4 FSCN –SUMMARY

4.1 Introduction

In this section, we present information on the current status of the FSCN including:

- FSCN – Themes and Objectives;
- FSCN – Finance;
- FSCN - Organisation Structure & Project Team;
- FSCN – Services Delivered; and
- FSCN – Progress vs Objectives.

4.2 FSCN – Themes and Objectives

4.2.1 *Vision*

The vision sets out long term aspirations for the Full Service Community Network (FSCN).

FSCN seeks to raise educational attainment through addressing the needs of the children, their families and the local community in the areas served by the West Belfast Partnership Board and the Upper Springfield Development Trust. Comprehensive family support services addressing education, health and well-being and employability needs will be delivered through integrated, collaborative working across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups.

Using this pilot approach, it seeks to develop the network as a model of good practice for Full Service provision. FSCN seeks to fundamentally challenge and change (for the better) the way that services are delivered.

The overall strategic model used by the network serves to consolidate existing government strategy and facilitate a process of improved integrated working across statutory, community and voluntary organisations to produce sustainable improvement in education, health and employment opportunities.

4.2.2 *Themes and Objectives*

The FSCN is focused around six key themes (Table 4-1) and ten objectives (Table 4-2).

Table 4-1 FSCN – Themes	
Themes	
Theme 1 Support for Learning	Working within the context of the DE Policy 'Every school is a good school' Ensure literacy and numeracy targets are attained (link to BELB Achieving Belfast strategy - rolling out in schools / cluster primary and post-primary to raise attainment) Provision of targeted support e.g.: coursework clinics, Booster Revision classes, Homework Clubs, etc. Out of school hours learning
Theme 2 Supporting Links between Primary and Post Primary Schools	Ensure literacy and numeracy targets are attained (link to BELB Achieving Belfast strategy - rolling out in schools / cluster primary and post-primary to raise attainment) Collaboration between primary schools within cluster (sharing knowledge, experience, services) Transition support (easing process from primary to post-primary, building links and relationships)
Theme 3 Personal Support	Provision of services within school or referrals to external agencies to support pupils to address personal problems Support for range of issues - educational and other e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy, numeracy; • After school activities: educational and recreational; • Attendance / disengagement; • Specific e.g.: autism; • Links to Barnardos' programmes and services.
Theme 4 Family Support	Provision of services within school or referrals to external agencies to support families to address personal problems Support for range of issues - educational and other e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy, numeracy; • Attendance / disengagement; • Autism; • Links to Barnardos' programmes and services.
Theme 5 Health and Well-being	Provision of services within school or referrals to external health agencies to support pupils and families to ensure general health and well being within the community. May include e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health issues • Health screening programmes • Smoking cessation • Drugs and alcohol services Sport including links with existing activities in local leisure centre and sports clubs (soccer, boxing), GAA (recently appointed 2 full time Sports Development officers / coaches in Ballymurphy) and Sports Council Ante-natal Early Years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between early years provision within cluster (sharing knowledge, experience, services)
Theme 6 Employment and Enterprise	Working in partnership with DEL and others Employability of young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge re: young people not completing education / disengaged • Highlighted by Taskforce • Function of ESB (Employment Service Board) Responsibility to 19-25 year olds as well as 0-19 year olds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential that they will become unemployed / LTU • As they become parents, a vicious circle is established; need to break the cycle Working in partnership with business mentors to develop community capacity (e.g. with Business in the Community and others) Developing links with local social enterprises to build capacity and expertise

Table 4-2 FSCN – Objectives	
Objectives	
Objective 1 Establishment of FSCN	To provide a more immediate statutory (agency) response to need as it arises through the establishment, by Mar. 2008, of the full service community network which will integrate services by bringing together professionals (through regular meetings, dialogue and fora) from a range of services for the provision of education, family support, health and other community services.
Objective 2 Provision of Services and Activities	To provide a range of additional services and activities working in a complimentary and coherent way, to help meet the education, family support, health and other needs of children, their families and the wider community within the FSCN area by September 2008.
Objective 3 Collaboration and Partnership Working	To encourage collaboration and partnership with neighbouring schools, statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations operating in the local community in the development of the FSCN Action Plan by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring relevant organisations are members of FSCN; • taking full cognisance of existing action plans and initiatives e.g. Ballymurphy Sub Group Action Plans especially Upper Springfield Youth Sub Group and others • involvement of local community representative presently working in other forums,
Objective 4 Educational Attainment	To increase the level of educational attainment of pupils within the FSCN area, research required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact on GCSE outcomes by 2010 • measure 'distance travelled' from entry to various initiatives • reduce % leaving with no qualifications • improve attendance • reduce numbers disengaging from school Recognition of a 'value added' approach. Meaningful targets in context of school and community.
Objective 5 Health and Wellbeing	To improve the health and well-being of pupils, their families and the wider community within the FSCN area.
Objective 6 Social Inclusion	To promote social inclusion and a culture of tolerance working in partnership with NICCY, NICE, etc. to deliver activities through schools and youth organisations which are consistent with a Shared Future and the Good Relations agenda Working in partnership with DEL and others
Objective 7 Parental and Community Involvement	To improve parental involvement within schools in the FSCN area by introducing appropriate interventions in response to identified needs of each school by Sept. 2009; Attendance at parents' meetings — report meetings; Involvement in PTA; Engagement with lifelong learning activities organised by the school and happening in the community; A particular focus on the hard to reach parents; and Active involvement with the Early Years Projects.
Objective 8 Employability and Employment	To improve career opportunities for young people through preparing young people for the workplace; To develop mentoring / Student Advance Programme (through ESB) focusing on those with greatest potential re: disengagement; To develop closer links with alternative education providers; and (Track leaver destinations).
Objective 9 Action Plan / Strategy	To devise an action plan or strategy for implementation by end February 2008.
Objective 10 Baseline Audit: Current Provision and Need	To audit current provision as baseline and to identify current need in the community served by the FSCN by April 2008.

4.2.3 Outcomes

The FSCN also seeks to impact on the following high level outcomes:

- Being Healthy;
- Enjoying, Learning and Achieving;
- Living in Safety and with Stability;
- Experiencing Economic and Environmental Well-Being; and
- Contributing Positively to Community and Society.

4.3 FSCN – Finance

Funding for FSCN amounts to £850k over 3 years with the bulk of expenditure in Years 2 and 3 (2009/10, 2010/11). The ethos of the FSCN is to facilitate and encourage working across existing organisations and initiatives and to make use of existing resources – more effectively – rather than drawing down large amounts of additional funding. Hence the majority of funding supports the salaries of a small core team.

Table 4-3 presents a summary of the budget (more detail in Table 4-4). Overall 60% of funding is allocated to salaries (details of services / activities delivered by project staff in Section 4.5.2). The next largest area of spend (around 25%) is for therapeutic services in the 14 primary schools (delivered by Barnardo's – see Section 4.5.3).

Table 4-3 FSCN – Budget Summary						
	2007/08 (A)	2008/09 (A)	2009/10 (A)	2009/10 (B)	2010/2011 (C)	Total (using 2009/10 (B))
	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	
Salary costs incl contributions*	25,460.00	86,399.00	192,178.00	192,178.00	204,291.00	508,328.00
Therapeutic Support Services (14 Primary Schools)	-	22,000.00	87,314.00	90,014.00	102,625.00	214,639.00
Other Projects	0.00	7,100.00	58,000.00	55,000.00	15,000.00	77,100.00
Running Costs (incl. set up, financial admin, evaluation)	1,005.80	2,900.00	11,000.00	11,000.00	27,000.00	41,905.80
Conferences / Team Days	0.00	2,000.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	5,000.00
TOTAL	26,465.80	120,399.00	349,992.00	349,692.00	350,416.00	846,972.80
Salary costs incl contributions*	96%	72%	55%	54%	58%	60%
Therapeutic Support Services (14 Primary Schools)	0%	18%	25%	26%	29%	25%
Other Projects	0%	6%	17%	16%	4%	9%
Running Costs (incl. set up, financial admin, evaluation)	4%	2%	3%	3%	8%	5%
Conferences / Team Days	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Notes: * includes: Manager, Administrative Support, 2xFamily Support Workers, 2xEducation Development Workers Source: (A) FSCN Action Plan - Re-profiling of Budget September 2009; (B) FSCN Draft Annual Report 2009/10, June 2010; (C) FSCN Budget (December 2010)						

The remaining significant area of spend (accounting for almost 10% (£77k) of funding over the project lifetime) is allocated to several projects (discussed in Section 4.5.4) including:

- Easter School (£38,100);
- Heart Maths in Nursery Schools (£14,000);
- SPSS – Link Project (£10,000);
- Active Citizenship Cross Community (£6,000);
- Life Channel (£3,000);
- Little Acorns Project (£5,000); and
- Youth Providers Forum (£1,000).

Table 4-4
FSCN – Budget

Activity	2007/08 (A) Actual £	2008/09 (A) Actual £	2009/10 (A) Forecast £	2009/10 (B) Actual £	2010/2011 (C) Forecast £	Reference to Objectives
Manager1	21,525.00	21,471.00	-	-	-	Themes:1,2,3,4,5,6; Objectives:1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
Administrative Support 1	3,935.00	4,248.00	-	-	-	
Set-up/Running costs	1,005.80	2,900.00	3,000.00	5,000.00	1,000.00	
Financial Administration	-	-	2,000.00	-	2,000.00	
Manager 2 Including Contributions	-	26,750.00	47,500.00	47,500	45,300.00	
Administrative Support 2 (Sen. Cler. Off.) Inc Contr	-	11,430.00	19,992.00	19,992	16,991.00	
Family Support/ Early Years 1 Inc Contr	-	11,250.00	39,375.00	62,343	142,000.00	Themes 1,2,4,5. Objective. 4,5,7.
Ed. Dev. Prog. Leader 1 Inc Contr	-	11,250.00	39,375.00	62,343	Incl above-	Themes 1,2,3,4. Objective.4, 7.
Family Support/ Early Years 2 Inc Contr	-	-	22,968.00	Incl above-	Incl above-	Themes 1,2,4,5. Objective. 4,5,7.
Ed. Dev. Prog. Leader 2 Inc Contr	-	-	22,968.00	Incl above-	Incl above-	Themes 1,2,3,4. Objective. 4,7.
Extended Schools Conference Nov. 2008)	-	2,000.00	-	-	-	Themes 1, 2,4,5,6. Objective. 1,2,3,9,6.
Upper Springfield Area Services Co-Ord Team Day	-	-	500.00	-	-	
Community Conference Apr. 2009)	-	-	-	-	1,500.00	Themes 1,4,5,6 Objectives. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.
Teacher Secondment (1 term)	-	-	-	-	-	
Little Acorns Project	-	-	5,000.00	5,000	-	
Active Citizenship Cross Community	-	-	6,000.00	6,000	-	
Youth Providers Forum	-	1,000.00	-	-	-	Themes 5, 6. Objective. 5,6,7,8.
Life Channel	-	3,000.00	3,000.00	-	-	Themes 1, 3, 5. Objective. 5,6.
Therapeutic Support Services, 14 Primary Schools	-	22,000.00	87,314.00	90,014	102,625.00	Themes 1,3,4,5, Objective. 4,5,6,7,8.
Full Service Team Day	-	-	500.00	1,500	-	
Operational Group Day	-	-	500.00	-	-	
Easter School	-	3,100.00	20,000.00	20,000	15,000.00	Themes 1, 3, 6. Objective. 4,6,8.
Heart Maths in Nursery Schools	-	-	14,000.00	14,000	-	Themes 1, 3, 4. Objective. 2, 4, 5, 7
SPSS – Link Project	-	-	10,000.00	10,000	-	Themes 1,3,4,5. Objective. 2,3,4,5,6,7
Project Evaluation	-	-	6,000.00	6,000	24,000.00	
TOTAL	26,465.80	120,399.00	349,992	349,692	350,416.00	Total Based on 2009/10 (B) =£849,472.80

Note: Salary costs for the Family Support / Early Years Workers and the Education Development Workers include a management charge paid to Barnardo's
Source: (A) FSCN Action Plan - Re-profiling of Budget September 2009; (B): FSCN Draft Annual Report 2009/10, June 2010; C) FSCN Budget (December 2010)

4.4 FSCN - Organisation Structure & Project Team

4.4.1 FSCN Strategic Relationships

Although initially established under the auspices of BELB, the FSCN moved its Manager functions to CCMS (as it is envisaged that this will eventually fall under the remit of the ESA). The overarching structure of the FSCN links in with the Upper Springfield and Greater Falls Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, as well as other voluntary and community groups in the area. There are also close links (managerial, operational and administrative) with the Upper Springfield and Greater Falls Extended Schools Clusters.

The FSCN is managed through an Operational Group responsible for delivery and commissioning of Full Service Provision. There is an overall Board / Steering Group which is accountable for the project. These structures and relationships are illustrated in Figure 4-1 reflecting the important role that all local organisations have to play.

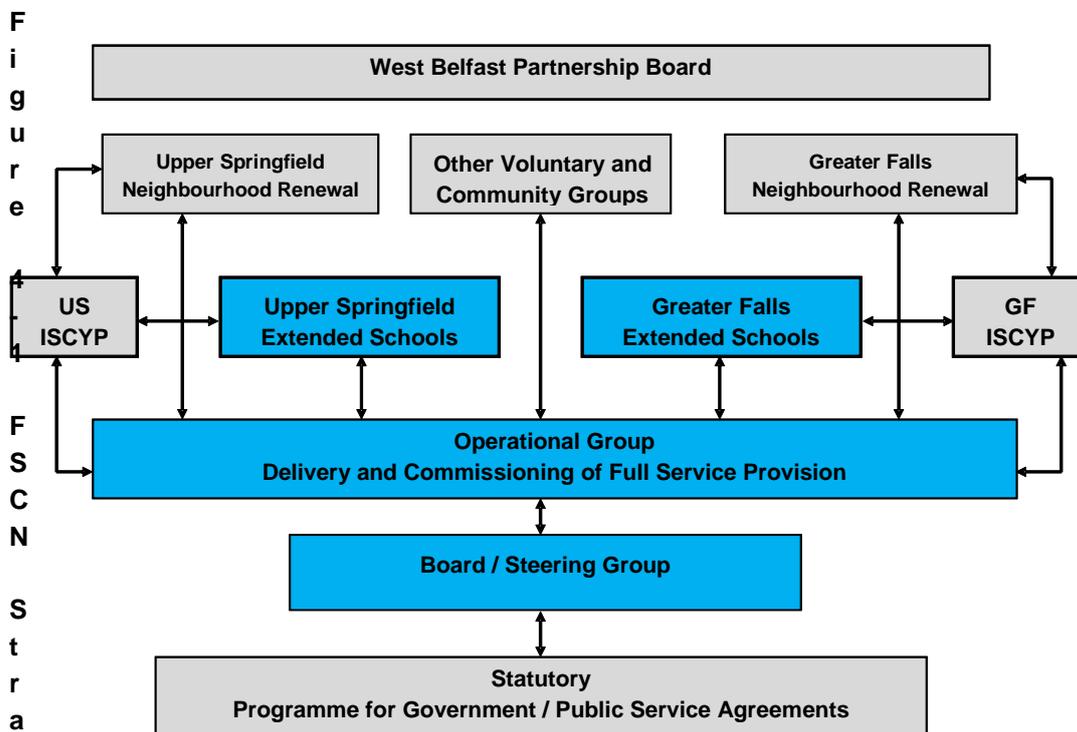


Figure 4-1 Strategic Relationships (source: FSCN)

Notes:

- Involvement of the West Belfast Partnership Board in the FSCN temporarily ceased; however the Chief Executive of the Board has assured the Chair of the FSCN that its involvement will be reinstated in the near future;
- Involvement of the Upper Springfield NRP in the FSCN continues through its Vice Chair who sits on the FSCN Board;
- Involvement of the Greater Falls NRP in the FSCN is aspirational; and
- ISCYP - Integrated Services for Children and Young People.

4.4.2 FSCN Staff

The FSCN has a staff complement of six:

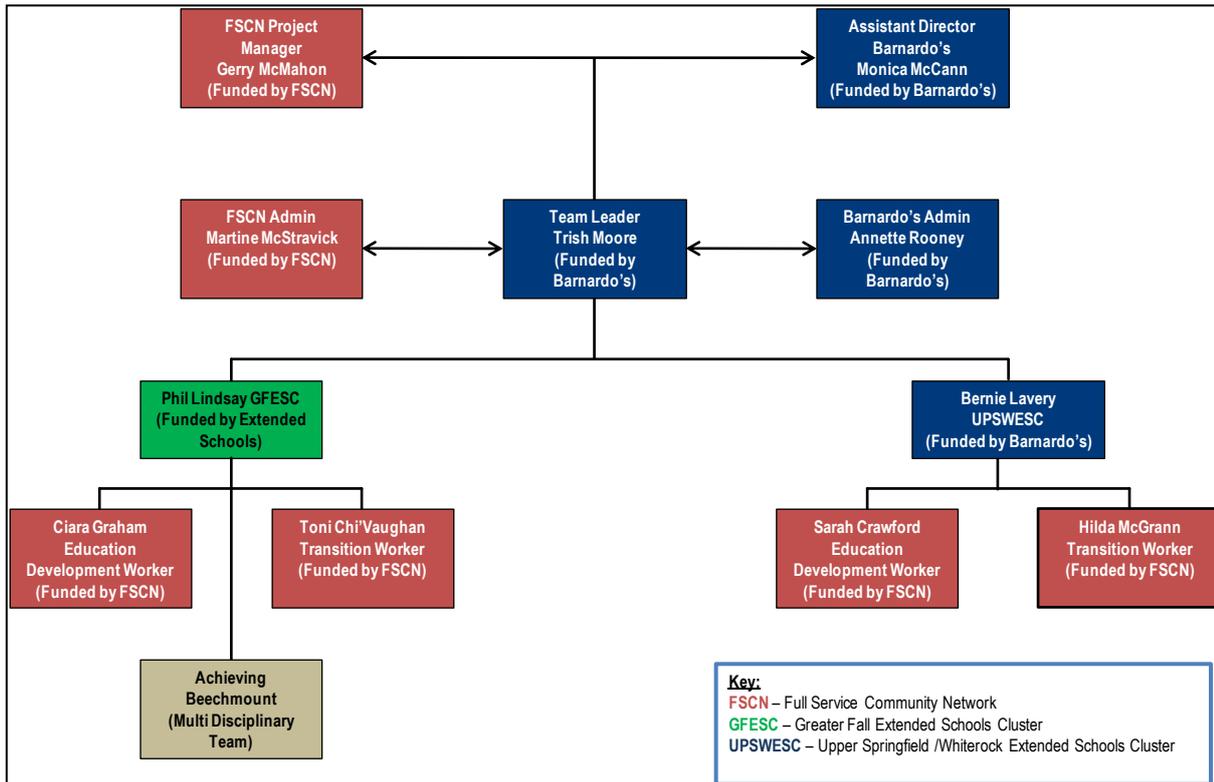
- Manager
- 2 x Education Development Workers:
 - Greater Falls (commenced August 2009); and
 - Upper Springfield (commenced March 2009)
- 2 x Transition Workers:
 - Greater Falls (commenced May 2009); and
 - Upper Springfield (March 2010 / 30 October 2010)². The ES Co-ordinator and the Barnardo's School Team are currently covering some of the work planned by the US Transition Worker with regard to School Readiness (in the US schools cluster) and community based provision which suits some of the parents better.
- Administrative Support

The FSCN staff work across: the Upper Springfield Cluster: 10 Schools spanning Nursery, Primary and Irish Medium and the Greater Falls Cluster: 20 Schools spanning Nursery, Primary, Post Primary and Irish Medium.

Responsibility for the management and supervision of the four operational staff (2 x Educational Workers and 2 x Transition Workers) lies with Barnardo's NI – see Figure 4-2. This relationship is discussed further in Section 4.4.3.

² A previous post-holder was appointed in September 2009 / left in January 2010.

Figure 4-2 FSCN and Barnardo's Schools Programme (source: FSCN)



4.4.3 Relationship between FSCN Staff and Barnardo's

Barnardo's Schools Programme

The Barnardo's Schools Programme incorporates Greater Falls and Upper Springfield Extended Schools Clusters, FSCN, School Age Mothers (SAM) Programme and Benefits Advice and Information Service. The team includes Barnardo's Assistant Director, Children's Services Manager and Admin Support, the 2 Extended Schools Co-ordinators (Greater Falls and Upper Springfield), 2 FSCN Education Workers, 2 FSCN Transition Workers and Barnardo's staff with responsibility for the SAM Programme and the Advice and Information Service³. The team serves the needs of children, young people and their families within the areas covered by the Greater Falls Extended Schools Cluster and the Upper Springfield Extended Schools Cluster. Barnardo's is responsible for management of the ES Schools Co-ordinators as well as management and supervision of the FSCN Staff.

Barnardo's – Support to FSCN / Greater Falls & Upper Springfield ES Clusters

Barnardo's provides support to the FSCN and the Greater Falls and Upper Springfield ES Clusters in the form of Voluntary Funding and Management and Supervision of FSCN staff.

³ These 2 programmes are regional services – they provide young women with advice and support that will help them to make informed decisions about continuing with their education. Additional support is provided to help them find out about: benefits and money advice; antenatal and healthcare advice; personal and social development; childcare and transport.

Voluntary Funding

Barnardo's makes financial contributions to the areas targeted by the FSCN and the Barnardo's Schools Programme. The Voluntary Funds (VF) allocation from Barnardo's, a total of contribution of £78,528, consists of:

- £58,882 allocated to ES Clusters:
 - Upper Springfield Extended School Cluster: £34,935
 - Greater Falls Extended Schools Cluster: £23,947
- £19,646 allocated to FSCN as follows:
 - Whiterock: £8,734
 - Greater Falls: £10,912

Management and Supervision of FSCN Staff

Barnardo's supports the FSCN through undertaking a management and supervision role for the 4 FSCN staff (and these are incorporated within the Barnardo's School Team which includes others who are delivering complementary services). The support provided by Barnardo's includes:

- **Managerial and Operational support**
 - **Induction**
Each staff member has a formal Induction Process into Barnardo's Policy & Procedures and has a six monthly ongoing process that is monitored and assessed by the Children's Services Manager.

Confirmation in post: Reviewed and agreed after six months.
 - **Supervision** is regular and ongoing on a monthly basis and is recorded on our Livelink Structure. This is monitored by the Assistant Director of Children's Services. Staffing issues are discussed during Supervision and agreed actions are implemented and monitored by the CSM.
 - **Team Meetings / Action Planning**
These are on a weekly basis to encourage regular information updates on the work that is taking place. These meetings also provide a forum for planning future work. Policy and procedures are discussed and reviewed. Training would also be highlighted during these meetings.
 - **Annual appraisal / Performance Management**
All Barnardo's staff have an Annual Appraisal
- **Admin support** (funded by Barnardo's) – financial returns, admin support for FSCN staff, responsible for invoices /ordering equipment etc;
- **Support from Core Services** include: HR, Finance Team, Properties, Health and Safety.

The relationship between Barnardo's and the FSCN (with regard to staff management and supervision) is documented in a Service Level Agreement (see Appendix VI). Details of

Barnardo's Management and Reporting Structures are included in Appendix V. Barnardo's applies a management charge for this service.

4.4.4 Relationship between FSCN and Extended Schools

As noted in Section 4.4.3, the 2 Extended Schools Co-ordinators sit on the Schools Programme team along with the FSCN staff and other Barnardo's staff. The work programme undertaken by each of these Co-ordinators is closely allied with the work of the FSCN. Details of the range of initiatives which are delivering direct services to children / young people / parents / wider community through Extended Schools are set out in the Extended Schools Action Plans. These initiatives are aligned to the overall aims of the Extended Schools programme and the FSCN aims.

The role of the Extended Schools' Cluster co-ordinators is important in facilitating the introduction of the FSCN Staff into the schools associated with each cluster. The FSCN consolidates the work of the ES Programme and provides additional services and greater flexibility.

Annual Reports 2009-10 for the Extended Schools Clusters provide evidence of the joint working and achievements of the ES Clusters and the FSCN including:

- Integrated / Partnership working between Clusters and FSCN as well as with other statutory, community and voluntary agencies
- ES Cluster Coordinators assisting Education and Transition Worker to actively work within the cluster – addressing identified need (language, literacy, Transition Programme, etc.)
- Primary school counselling (ES Coordinators assist in organisation of this)

These activities (with which the ES Clusters and FSCN are involved) help to deliver against the following indicators (for those in receipt of interventions):

- **Reducing Under Achievement**
 - Supported children and young people to make informed decisions
 - Provide strategies to overcome barriers to learning
- **Fostering Health Well-Being and Social Inclusion**
 - Supported children to make healthy lifestyle choices
- **Improve Life Chances**
 - Improved access to services and activities for pupils, schools, families and communities
- **Developing Integrated Delivery of Support and Services**
 - Enhanced and augmented existing local provision
 - Enhanced range of services and activities on offer

In addition, the activities (with which the ES Clusters and FSCN are involved) help to deliver against the following outcomes (for those in receipt of interventions):

- Improvements in educational attainment (children);

- Improvements in attendance (children);
- Improvements in children’s behaviour (children); and
- Improved communication / partnership working (between agencies).

4.5 FSCN – Services Delivered

4.5.1 Introduction - FSCN Action Plan / Core Activity

The overall approach to delivery of the FSCN is set out in its Action Plan which has been distilled from other plans in the area. This was prepared by the FSCN Manager in conjunction with Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Extended Schools Clusters and other agencies. Through the Action Plan, the FSCN seeks to prioritise areas for action which have already been identified and facilitate delivery of these (where gaps exist) in line with the ethos of the FSCN. The Action Plan provides operational details against each budget line including – baseline information, lead body, summary details of activity, resources, outputs, monitoring and evaluation, timescales and links to Project Themes and Objectives. This encompasses all of the FSCN Staff, the Primary School Counselling Service delivered by Barnardo’s NI (TIME 4 ME) and the various other activities in which the FSCN is engaged.

The FSCN Action Plan (September 2009) notes that there would be a staged implementation of the programme of work to be undertaken to deliver against the Project Objectives. The Board and the Operational Group agreed that the initial focus of the Action Plan should be towards addressing the needs identified in early years by various partners, other local Action Plans and the Project Initiation Document of the Full Service Community Network.

The Action Plan states that in the first year 2008/2009 the following objectives were addressed:

- Objective 1 Establishment of the Full Service Community Network
- Objective 2 Provision of Services and Activities — On-going
- Objective 3 Collaboration and Partnership Working — On-going
- Objective 7 Parental and Community Involvement
- Objective 9 Action Plan / Strategy

The Action Plan also states that in 2009/2010 the following objectives will take on greater significance:

- Objective 4 Educational Attainment
- Objective 5 Health and Well Being
- Objective 6 Social Inclusion
- Objective 8 Employability and Employment.

4.5.2 FSCN Education Development Workers and Transition Workers

The scope of the work undertaken by the 4 FSCN Workers is described in this section. The two Education Workers and two Transition workers engage with schools, children, young

people, families, community groups and other external agencies in an effort to help and support the most vulnerable, socially disadvantaged and educationally marginalised children and young people.

Needs Assessment

Initially, each of the 4 workers engaged with schools and community groups in their specific areas in order to assess needs and to identify gaps in provision. As part of the consultation with schools, the staff members and schools agreed a referral system for both children and families.

The “ethos “of their work is one of early Intervention and they have specifically targeted Nursery and Key Stage 1 children and young people. As this is a “needs based “ Programme there has also been an emphasis on Key Stage 2 children and young people especially around Transitions from Nursery to Primary and onto Post Primary as identified in the ETI Inspection Report for West Belfast as a key Priority.

Action Plans

Each of the 4 workers developed an Action Plan for 2009/10 based on the needs and gaps identified. Subsequently 2010/2011 Action Plans were developed – taking on board the review of the previous year’s activities.

The Full Service Community Network Team are delivering on specific Action Plans (which contribute to the High Level Outcomes for Children and Young People) for both the Education work and the Transition work within the two Clusters which also complement the wider Extended Schools Action Plans for the two Cluster areas.

Progress vs Action Plans

Monitoring information for each of the 4 FSCN Workers is included in Appendix VIII of the Interim Evaluation Report and Appendix I of the Final Evaluation Report; a standard monitoring report format was introduced from January 2010 when all team members were in post. At this stage, initial needs analysis had been undertaken and a programme of work agreed and identified by relevant school or community link people through the initial consultations and draft Action Plans. The summary monthly Monitoring Reports provide an indication of the scale and breadth of activity undertaken by each post-holder.

This includes: work with children, parents and families including direct one to one support work and group work setting. This may also include Home Visits. Where appropriate, there is joint working by the FSCN Workers. The workers support all of the schools in the 2 ES clusters in which they operate.

In addition, to ensure continuity of approach and “connectivity” of services and resources for children, young people and families of the Greater Falls Cluster, the FSCN Workers are involved in: inter-agency working (engaging with other agencies with specialist expertise) and Multi-Disciplinary Team Working.

Apart from direct support (including delivering on Linguistic Phonics, Language Development and Numeracy Support), the workers develop programmes and materials e.g.: Early Years Language Development support for Foundation stage children, Nursery Packs both for parents and children moving into Nursery and for parents and children moving into Primary to

help both with the Transitions. A recent development has been the introduction of the Incredible Years School Readiness Programme being introduced into schools and with parents.

During this current Academic year the two Education Workers were trained in the therapeutic Incredible Years Dino Programme; this targets children with specific behavioural problems in small groups over a period of 18 weeks. The schools in both Clusters were very keen to be selected for this Programme; a Pilot is currently ongoing in St Kevin’s Primary School in the Greater Falls Cluster and also in Holy Trinity Primary School in the Upper Springfield Cluster. This was funded through the FSCN.

The Incredible Years School Readiness Programme is also ongoing in both Clusters during this Academic Year and future plans include training for the two Transition Workers in this specific Programme to enable transitions to be more successful for children and families in response to issues raised in the ETI Inspection Report.

Planning Day

In July 2010, the School’s Programme Team held a planning day to reflect on progress to date and to consider lessons for the year ahead (see Interim Evaluation Report – Section 4.5.2).

A summary of activities undertaken by the 4 project staff is presented in the following table. This demonstrates that in the period January– November 2010, the 4 project workers collectively supported 2069 pupils (1856 through group work and 213 through individual work) and 951 parents (728 through group work and 223 through individual work).

Table 4-5
FSCN Educational Development Workers and Transition Workers – Summary of beneficiaries

Numbers supported Year to Date / Category	Education Worker, Greater Falls	Education Worker, Upper Springfield	Transition Worker, Greater Falls	Transition Worker, Upper Springfield
	Jan – Nov 2010	Jan – Nov 2010	Jan – Nov 2010	Mar – Sep 2010
Direct Education / Transition Support Group Pupils	427	220	881	328
Individual Education / Transition Support Pupils	51	97	65	n/a
Parent Support/Group	107	62	427	132
Parent Support/Individual	75	25	106	17
Home Visits	26	20	-	-
New Referrals this month: pupils	166	164	60	As above – group work only
New Referrals this month: parents	106	59	116	As above group work only
Inter Agency Working	20+	20+	20+	-

Source: Full Service Community Network Draft Annual Report 2009/10

4.5.3 Primary School Counselling Service

The service delivered by Barnardo’s under contract to FSCN is described in this section.

Appointment of Barnardo’s

Barnardo’s Northern Ireland was successful in its application for Tender Number 40428, jointly issued by the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) and the South Eastern Education

and Library Board (SEELB) to deliver ‘an independent counselling service to primary school pupils’. The stipulated time period for the tender was ‘01 September 2009 to 31 August 2010, with an option to extend for a further period of 12 months’. The original tender stated that the BELB counselling service requirement was to be on the basis of 4 hours per week in each of 8 named primary schools across the Greater Falls and Upper Springfield school clusters. In addition the Tender stated that ‘this could be extended to other schools in each cluster’ and that ‘the number of hours required will depend on need and can not be specified at this point’.

Budget and Spending to Date

Spend is as follows:

- 01 September 2009 to 31 March 2010: £52,496.50;
- April – June 2010: £28,542.50;
- April 2010 – end of November 2010: £59,584.50.

Barnardo’s Service Administrator and Children’s Services Manager (CSM) prepare a monthly report for the FSCN Manager and FSCN Board – this includes details of the budget spend each month. All face-to-face work carried out by TIME 4 ME staff is charged at a fixed hourly rate as agreed in the original tender; this includes the 4 hours’ service delivery per week in each school and any training or consultation work that the CSM undertakes.

Overall Aims of the Service

The Barnardo’s TIME 4 ME service provides a term-time, school-based counselling and support service. TIME 4 ME is currently the largest provider of school-based counselling to primary school pupils in Northern Ireland, working in 26 primary and special schools with over 100 children each week. The main aim of the service is to increase pupils’ emotional well-being in order to improve their learning potential. The service seeks to provide individual counselling, consultation and support to parents, and consultation and training to school staff.

Since April 2009 Barnardo’s Time 4 Me has provided a systemic counselling and consultation service to primary and special schools in two BELB clusters, Greater Falls and Upper Springfield. The service has been able to provide counselling and support to pupils, families and schools where there is a significant degree of recognised risk that is monitored both by schools and social services.

The practice model developed by TIME 4 ME is fundamentally systemic, employing a ‘team around the child’ approach. This involves supporting the key adults in a child’s life – parents/carers and teachers – as well as the individual child. The service outcomes to date highlight that this systemic, integrated delivery model is crucial to effective work with younger children, who rely on adult support in resolving life problems and building future resilience. In operationalising this model, TIME 4 ME offers a menu of integrated services to promote pupil’s emotional well-being and resilience:

- 1. TIME 4 ME – individual counselling for children aged 4 – 11 years with a focus on reducing the personal and social barriers to learning by helping children cope better with life problems;
- 2. TIME 4 US – therapeutic group work with a focus on preventing social and emotional problems from escalating; practitioners work with teachers to design and deliver

programmes that focus on (1) improving emotional literacy, (2) increasing friendship skills, or (3) responding to bullying.

- 3. TIME 4 PARENTS - support and guidance for parents to enhance the impact of the individual counselling and help them support their child more effectively;
- 4. TIME 4 TEACHERS – consultation and training for schools, supporting staff to enhance the impact of individual counselling and helping staff teams better understand and respond more effectively to their pupils' emotional well-being needs.

Details of Service Provided

TIME 4 ME is currently active in 14 out of the 15 eligible primary schools in the two clusters; each of these receives a counselling and support service for 4 hours per week. TIME 4 ME has been in negotiation with the 15th school since September 2009. However, due to the Principal's prolonged absence and other contributing factors, it has not been possible to progress the counselling provision.

Apart from counselling, the tender allows for training and consultation input to schools. To date, this has taken either an 'induction' or 'project orientation' focus. In each school there is an identified 'Link Teacher' who co-ordinates all referrals to the service and acts as a central point of contact with the TIME 4 ME practitioner. There was an extensive induction given to all Link Teachers in the 14 schools in the first term of the 09-10 academic year. Each full staff group also received a shorter 'project orientation' input; most often this training was delivered during staff 'directed time' after pupil hours.

The TIME 4 ME service is provided by a team of professionally trained counsellors each with additional extensive experience of work with young children from the field of teaching, social work, youth and community work or social care. All TIME 4 ME staff also have training in Therapeutic Play Skills. The manager of the service has 20 years' experience of therapeutic work with children and families and is an 'Accredited Counsellor-Psychotherapist' with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) as well as a registered Social Worker. The service is an organisational member of BACP, abiding by its code of ethics and 'good practice guidance for counselling in schools'. All staff have received a full police check.

Monitoring Information - Activity Levels

From April to June 2009 the service was piloted in 8 schools (numbers 1 - 8 in Table 4-6). From 01 September 2010 to 31 March 2010 the service was delivered as part of the tender to deliver 'an independent counselling service to primary school pupils'. During this period the service was activated in the remaining 6 schools. By January 2010 all 14 schools listed above were receiving a service and by 31 March had received the hours as indicated.

Table 4-6

Time 4 Me, Barnardo's Northern Ireland - Time 4 Me: School-based Counselling & Support
FSCN Activity Summary April 2009 - March 2010

Name of School	Total Counselling/Support Hours	In-school Family As a percentage
1. St. Kevin's	131.5	10.66%
2. St. Joseph's	116.5	9.44%
3. St. Clare's	132	10.70%
4. St. Paul's	112.5	9.12%
5. St. Aidan's	131	10.62%
6. St. Bernadette's	107	8.67%
7. St. Gerard's	106	8.59%
8. Holy Trinity	121	9.81%
9. St. Peter's	59.5	4.82%
10. Gaelscoil na Mona	41	3.32%
11. Bunscoil tSleibhe Dhuibh	48	3.89%
12. Gaelscoil na Bhfal	40	3.24%
13. St. Mary's	40	3.24%
14. Gaelscoil an Lonnaln	48	3.89%
	1,234	100.00%

Source: Full Service Community Network Draft Annual Report 2009/10

From April 2009 – March 2010 the service delivered a total of **1234 hours of counselling and consultation** across the **14 locations**. During this time **80 individual children** received a counselling service and **105 parents** have received support and parenting guidance. The **class teacher for each of the 80 pupils** also received support and advice from the Time 4 Me practitioner. In addition the Children's Services Manager has offered **72 hours of training and consultation to Principals and staff teams across the 14 schools**.

Between April 2010 and end of November 2010, Barnardo's have provided a Barnardo's Time 4 Me counselling service to **105 pupils** and **121 parents**; of the referrals during this period approx **30%** were **for family problems** (separation/divorce, domestic violence etc), **21% bereavement** (including bereavement by suicide), **18% friendship/bullying** problems and **15% academic worry/stress**. 63% of referrals were for boys; 37% for girls; the average age for a child worked with was 10 years old and the average number of sessions was 10-12. Since April 2010, there has been 86.5 hours of counselling in each of the 14 participating schools, a total of 1210.5 hours.

As at 31 May 2010, TIME 4 ME was involved with 41 pupils across the 14 schools and 18 of these were from families known to social services. This represents 40% of the TIME 4 ME case load at that time and is indicative of the level of risk that the service is regularly responding to. Barnardo's have highlighted that *"arguably, this exceeds the anticipated level of complexity for a school-based counselling service which is more usually identified as a 'tier 2' service (Hardiker model). However, qualitative and quantitative outcome reports indicate that TIME 4 ME is well-placed to respond effectively to this level of complexity and risk (tiers 3 and 4)."*

Barnardo's provide a monthly report to the FSCN Manager and Board including rolling totals and provide a summary of "new" children and parents availing of the services across the 14

schools.

Monitoring Information - Reasons for Referrals

Since the tender was awarded, pupils have presented with a wide range of needs and difficulties, including the impact of:

- Family separation and divorce
- Bereavement (including bereavement through suicide)
- Domestic Violence
- Family communication difficulties and conflict
- Trauma (including community feud-related trauma)
- Bullying
- Academic anxiety and stress
- Social anxiety and peer relationship difficulties
- Low self-confidence and self-esteem

Monitoring Information - Impacts of the Service

In terms of establishing and monitoring the impacts achieved by the service, TIME 4 ME routinely administer two standardised measures for each piece of work; each generate a numeric quantitative score:

- (1) Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) – this is administered to parents/carers and class teachers pre and post counselling; the SDQ is a behavioural screening tool which measures a child’s difficulties in the areas of (i) emotional distress; (ii) conduct problems; (iii) hyperactivity; (iv) peer relationship problems. It generates an ‘overall difficulties’ score out of a total of 40; the higher the score the greater the perceived difficulties for the child; cut-off scores for this measure are as follows:

Table 4-7
FSCN – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997)

TEACHERS	PARENTS
Normal 0 – 11	Normal 0 – 13
Borderline 12-15	Borderline 14 - 16
Abnormal 16-40	Abnormal 17 - 40

Source: Barnardo’s, Children’s Services Manager, TIME 4 ME: School-based Counselling and Support

- (2) Child Outcome Rating Scale (Duncan, Miller & Sparks, 2003) – this is administered session-by-session to all pupils who receive a counselling intervention and to all parents/carers and teachers pre- and post counselling; it is a ‘global distress’ measure and generates a score of overall distress out of 40; with this measure the higher the score the lower the distress for the child; the cut-off for this measure is 33 out of 40; any score of 33 and above is deemed to be within the ‘normal band’ (i.e. not requiring external intervention).

Monitoring Information - Qualitative Feedback

An example of the type of qualitative feedback provided by Barnardo's to the Project Steering Group is included in the Interim Evaluation Report Appendix X. Barnardo's holds further information detailing qualitative feedback from service users.

Impact – Research Report

Research has recently been completed into the impact of this intervention “Research Report Evaluating the Satisfaction with, and Impact of, the Service Provided by ‘Time 4 Me: School Based Counselling and Support’ within 14 Primary Schools in Belfast”. During January 2009 to June 2010 14 primary schools engaged the services of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service through funding provided by the FSCN. The Time 4 Me evaluation report marks the half way period of this funding and provides an initial overview of how the service is being received

The limitations of the study are noted – in terms of its ability to make generalisations about the satisfaction with, and impact of, the service provided by the Time 4 Me Counselling Service. This arises as any improvements found in overall behavioural functioning, overall indicators of treatment progress or the identified Barnardo's high-level outcomes for children cannot be assigned to the Counselling Service alone as the effect of other variables was not examined by the use of a control group.

However, the study findings, although tentative, suggest that the current Time 4 Me Counselling Service:

- is highly valued by the school stakeholders (high levels of satisfaction; evidence of continued need and limited ability of schools to provide similar support themselves);
- has had a notable impact on the individual children who accessed the service, as measured by the SDQ, CORS; and
- has had a notable impact on the identified Barnardo's high-level outcomes for children: being healthy, enjoying learning and achieving, and contributing to community/society.

Suggested areas for future practice development include: increased joint-working with the school staff, an increased focus on impacting change within the wider school community, perhaps by providing further support or training to the school staff, or to the parents of children who have not yet accessed the service.

The impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service on identified Barnardo's high level outcomes for children (as perceived by school stakeholders) includes:

- **Being healthy:** The following reported a ‘very’ or ‘quite’ positive impact on pupil's overall health and wellbeing:
 - Confidence 95% (N = 41)
 - Self-esteem 93% (N = 40)
 - Attention/concentration 86% (N = 37)
 - Happiness at school 100% (N = 43)
 - Peer social interaction 93% (N = 40)
- **Enjoying learning and achieving:** The following reported a ‘very’ or ‘quite’ positive impact on pupil's ability to enjoy learning and their overall attitude to school

- Participation in classroom or school activities 93% (N = 40)
- Attendance 74% (N = 32)
- Punctuality 72% (N = 31)
- Motivation and enthusiasm 93% (N = 38)
- Teacher-Pupil relationships 93% (N = 40)
- **Contributing to community/society:** The following reported a 'very' or 'quite' positive impact on pupil's overall behaviour at school
 - Anger 79% (N = 34)
 - Defiance and non-compliance 79% (N = 34)
 - Peer aggression or bullying 72% (N = 31)
- **Other:** The following reported a 'very' or 'quite' positive impact on pupil's overall studies
 - Class work 83% (N = 35)
 - Home work 74% (N = 31)
 - Communication 91% (N = 38)
 - Team working 81% (N = 34)
 - Independent working 79% (N = 33)
 - Ability to complete tasks on time 81% (N = 34)
 - Increased school readiness 81% (N = 34)

Other impacts include:

- **a 'very' or 'quite' positive impact on the pupils' parents, families and wider communities:**
 - Better understanding of the child's needs 95% (N = 41)
 - Increased interest and involvement in their child's academic-related activities at home 88% (N = 38)
 - Increased linkages between the school and the home 93% (N = 39)
 - Improved relationships with their child's school and teachers 91% (N = 39)
 - Improved physical and mental health through stress reduction 83% (N = 35)
- **school stakeholders ability to undertake their roles and responsibilities within the school:**
 - 81% (N = 35) of respondents reported that the service had helped them to undertake their roles more effectively, e.g. teaching and classroom management.
- **perceived impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service on the overall behavioural functioning of the pupils who have accessed the service**
 - The results of a paired samples t-test on the class teacher report (N = 53) of the Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire indicate that there was a

- statistically significant decrease in behavioural difficulties after a period of individual counselling.
- The results of a paired samples t-test on the parent report (N = 49) of the Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire indicate that there was a statistically significant decrease in behavioural difficulties after a period of individual counselling.
- **perceived impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service on the overall treatment progress of the pupils who have accessed the service**
 - The results of a paired samples t-test on the child report (N = 53) of the Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS) indicate that there was a statistically significant increase in treatment progress after a period of individual counselling.
 - The results of a paired samples t-test on the parent report (N = 49) of the CORS indicate that there was a statistically significant increase in treatment progress after a period of individual counselling.
 - The results of a paired samples t-test on the class teacher report (N = 52) of the CORS indicate that there was a statistically significant increase in treatment progress after a period of individual counselling.

4.5.4 Small time-bound projects

Around 10% of project spend is allocated across 7 smaller projects. Details of each of these projects are presented in the Interim Evaluation Report (see Section 4.5.4 and Table 4-9).

- West Belfast Partnership Board Easter School (£38,100)
- Heart Maths in Nursery Schools (£14,000)
- SPSS – Link Project with Corpus Christi College (£10,000)
- Active Citizenship Cross Community Parents Leadership Programme (£6,000)
- Life Channel – Corpus Christi College Pilot (£3,000)
- Little Acorns Project (£5,000)
- Youth Providers Forum (£1,000)

4.5.5 Other Activities

The FSCN is also involved in the following activities although these do not have any FSCN spend associated.

Achieving Belfast/Beechmount

Evidence from the NI Audit Office / PAC Committee Report (2006) identified some issues in respect of the outcomes achieved in Belfast where many schools face difficult and challenging circumstances and urged the Department of Education to put in place measures to address these issues. The Department worked with the BELB to devise an improvement programme, Achieving Belfast, for selected primary and post primary schools.

A number of schools entered Achieving Belfast in January 2008 and received wrap around support from various agencies. Achieving Beechmount was based on this approach and involves three local schools (St Paul's Nursery, St Paul's Primary and Corpus Christi College). An Operational Group and Executive Steering Group have been created to take forward the shared concerns of the local schools and the community.

It is intended that the local Sure Start will join the forum to increase the number of children, families and young children that may gain from the services being co-ordinated through the initiative. Apart from the agencies involved it was considered important that a common multi-agency approach across the three schools would engender more effective service delivery. The cluster receives close support from the FSCN Educational Development Worker and the Transition Workers and the Greater Falls Extended School Cluster Co-ordinator. The anticipated outcomes are:

- Wrap around service provision for vulnerable children, young people and families.
- Clearer communication between the schools and positive working relationships.
- Identified and clear procedures for the transfer of necessary information.
- Children and young people and parental involvement in all aspects of decision making.
- Stream-lining and co-ordinating various services working with the family.

At the end of the academic year (2009/10), it was intended that an evaluation would be carried out; however this has not yet been completed.

Building and Maintaining Relationships / Developing the Network

Apart from the distinct areas of project spend and tangible activities already described, the FSCN has a key role to play in building and maintaining relationships and trust with a wide range of stakeholders in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. The connections being maintained and developed are a crucial part of the FSCN: particularly as many of them are resourced by other organisations and do not draw on the FSCN budget. This aspect of the FSCN's role is about identifying a need, sourcing the service and bringing the service to the point of need – some examples of this are included in Section 4.5.4. While recognising the distinct identity of the FSCN, the FSCN's ethos is working with and through other teams from other organizations.

In 2009/10, the FSCN has focused on continuing to promote and build a 'team of teams' approach, working through a range of agencies based on agreed shared outcomes and aspirations. The aim is to create a pathway of care and to support educational development and aspiration for children, their families and the community. This includes delivering specific services at the point of need (by the FSCN Workers), as well as drawing in other existing services to support families.

In addition to the inter-agency work of the FSCN staff, the various conferences and away day events organised by the FSCN - including the successful "One Year On" conference (attended by 140 delegates in May 2010) - play a key part in sustaining this aspect of the project's work. These events seek to ensure that there is a shared vision and common understanding of purpose and seeking to complement rather than duplicate provision.

The FSCN Manager also seeks to maintain links and connections with a wide range of stakeholder organisations with common interests. He currently has affiliations as set out in Table 4-8.

Table 4-8

FSCN – Manager Affiliations (based on information tabled at FSCN Board Meeting 18 November 2010)

Organisation	Role	Rationale for Affiliation
Barnardo's NI Board	Member	By invitation. Apart from my personal interest, as a member of the Board I am aware of the desire of the organisation to become more involved in schools, particular those in deprived areas. I have used this knowledge to lever additional resources into Extended Schools and the FSCN.
Belfast Education and Library Board	Member	As recommended by CCMS. As a Board member I am aware of the broader educational policies and in a better position to promote policy coherence.
Belfast Education and Library Board Audit & Risk Ctte	Chair	My position serves to broaden my understanding of DE and BELB policies and how both work to achieve their stated aims and outcomes.
Greater Shankill and West Belfast Employment Service Board (ESB)	Member	By invitation. This Board provides me with experience and knowledge of employment and employability initiatives across various statutory departments and local organisations.
ESB Education Committee	Chair	This position provides an opportunity to influence and drive various employment initiatives through local employers, most notably the Belfast Trust.
Greater Falls Extended Schools Cluster	Chair	By invitation. As Chair I have gained a fuller knowledge of local issues and improved relationships across schools and community. The position also promotes improved working relationship with FSCN.
Upper Springfield Extended Schools Cluster	Member	As above.
Upper Springfield Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	Member	By invitation. Provides an insight into local issues and offers an opportunity to promote extended schools and FSCN at a community forum.
Springvale Learning Board	Chair	By invitation. As Chair of this Board I can influence how this organisation can respond to the needs of the local community, schools and employers. It also provides FSCN with a platform for the future employability agenda.
St Pauls Primary School BOG	Member	By invitation. As a member of this Board I gain a grounded understanding of the issues faced by local schools and will be in a position to promote the 'Achieving Beechmount' Project.
Whiterock Children Centre Board	Member	By invitation. Two FSCN workers are based in the centre. The centre provides a range of services which complement the work of the FSCN and the ES Clusters.

Source: FSCN

The FSCN also has links with the ISC&YP initiative – the FSCN Manager was invited to sit on

the Operational Steering Group of the Upper Springfield ISC&YP; the Greater Falls Extended Schools Co-ordinator was invited to sit on the Operational Steering Group of the Greater Falls ISC&YP.

4.6 FSCN – Progress vs Objectives

In this section, we consider the performance to date against the original FSCN objectives.

Table 4-9 FSCN – Objectives and Progress		
Objectives	Status @ December 2010 (Summary)	
Objective 1 Establishment of FSCN	To provide a more immediate statutory (agency) response to need as it arises through the establishment, by March 2008, of the full service community network which will integrate services by bringing together professionals (through regular meetings, dialogue and fora) from a range of services for the provision of education, family support, health and other community services.	
Objective 2 Provision of Services and Activities	<p>To provide a range of additional services and activities working in a complementary and coherent way, to help meet the education, family support, health and other needs of children, their families and the wider community within the FSCN area by September 2008.</p> <p>Project established in 2008 with key stakeholders included in Board and Operational Group</p> <p>Service provision through 4 FSCN Staff (2 Education Workers, 2 Transition Workers), Barnardo's Counselling services (Time 4 Me) and a number of smaller time-bound projects supported directly by FSCN.</p> <p>Between January and November 2010, FSCN staff have engaged with 2069 pupils (1856 through group work and 213 through individual work) and 951 parents (728 through group work and 223 through individual work).</p> <p>Between April 2009 and March 2010, Barnardo's Time 4 Me Counselling Service has delivered: 1234 hours of counselling and consultation across 14 schools with 80 individual children receiving a counselling service. 105 parents received support and parenting guidance and the class teacher for each of the 80 pupils also received support and advice from the Time 4 Me practitioner. In addition the Children's Services Manager has offered 72 hours of training and consultation to Principals and staff teams across the 14 schools.</p> <p>Between April 2010 and end of November 2010, Barnardo's provided a Barnardo's Time 4 Me counselling service to 105 pupils and 121 parents;</p> <p>Since April 2010, there has been 86.5 hours of counselling in each of the 14 participating schools, a total of 1210.5 hours.</p> <p>Links with ES Clusters and Barnardo's Schools Programme to ensure complementarity of services provided.</p> <p>FSCN Staff work informed by initial needs assessment.</p>	
Objective 3 Collaboration and Partnership Working	<p>To encourage collaboration and partnership with neighbouring schools, statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations operating in the local community in the development of the FSCN Action Plan by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring relevant organisations are members of FSCN; • taking full cognisance of existing action plans and initiatives e.g. Ballymurphy Sub Group Action Plans especially Upper <p>Ongoing through involvement of a range of organisations on the Board and Operational Group</p> <p>Collaboration and partnership working facilitated by links with ES Cluster Coordinators and Barnardo's Schools Programme in particular</p> <p>Existing action plans and initiatives informed the development of the FSCN Action Plan</p>	

Table 4-9 FSCN – Objectives and Progress		
Objectives	Status @ December 2010 (Summary)	
	Springfield Youth Sub Group and others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> involvement of local community representative presently working in other forums, 	
Objective 4 Educational Attainment	To increase the level of educational attainment of pupils within the FSCN area, research required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> impact on GCSE outcomes by 2010 measure 'distance travelled' from entry to various initiatives reduce % leaving with no qualifications improve attendance reduce numbers disengaging from school A recognition of a 'value added' approach. Meaningful targets in the context of school and community.	The services directly provided by FSCN staff (2 Education Development Workers, 2 Transition Workers) and Barnardo's Counselling service working to achieve this outcome e.g. support for literacy, numeracy (impact on education) as well as transition support and counselling (impact on readiness to learn / preparing children to engage). Survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the project with regard to educational attainment and readiness to learn. The proportion of staff and parents who felt that the project had a positive impact on the following aspects are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases attendance (57% staff, 60% parents) Increases positive attitude towards learning (89% staff, 90% parents) Enhances opportunities to learn new skills/talents and develop existing skills/talents (85% staff, 70% parents) Improves learning and achievement (educational attainment) of pupils (84% staff, 79% parents) Raises performance in primary and post-primary schools in FSCN area (64% staff, 71% parents) Improves aspirations re: Further Education and Higher Education (50% staff, 61% parents) Improves career aspirations for children and young people (56% staff, 57% parents) Coupled with other interventions in the area, the FSCN is contributing to gradual changes / improvements as demonstrated in generally upward trends with regard to % achieving 5+ GCSEs at A*-C and improving attendance levels (see detailed tables in Appendix I of the Interim Evaluation Report).
Objective 5 Health and Wellbeing	To improve the health and well-being of pupils, their families and the wider community within the FSCN area.	Ongoing activities e.g. Time 4 Me / Barnardo's School Counselling, SPSS Link Project, Heartmath, Life Channel in particular are working to achieve this outcome. The largest area of provision is the Barnardo's Time 4 Me Counselling Service which delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between April 2009 and March 2010: 1234 hours of counselling and consultation across 14 schools with 80 individual children receiving a counselling service. 105 parents received support and parenting guidance and the class teacher for each of the 80 pupils also received support and advice from the Time 4 Me practitioner. In addition the Children's Services Manager has offered 72 hours of training and consultation to Principals and staff teams across the 14 schools. Between April 2010 and end of November 2010, counselling service to 105 pupils and 121 parents. Since April 2010, there has been 86.5 hours of counselling in each of the 14 participating schools, a total of 1210.5

Table 4-9 FSCN – Objectives and Progress		
Objectives		Status @ December 2010 (Summary)
		<p>hours.</p> <p>A snapshot of service users at May 2010 indicated that 40% of the case load was from families known to social services i.e. indicative of the level of risk that the service is responding to on a regular basis.</p> <p>A research report completed in June 2010 noted the positive impact of the service on high level outcomes for children including: Being healthy, Enjoying Learning and Achieving, Contributing to Society as well as on pupils' overall studies. The service was also reported to have had a positive impact on pupils' parents, families and wider communities. Analysis also demonstrated significant decreases in behavioural difficulties after a period of counselling.</p> <p>Survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the project with regard to health and well-being. 84% of staff and 77% of parents felt that the FSCN had a positive impact (limited or major) on the health and well-being of pupils; 92% of staff and 90% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on the self-esteem of children and young people and 92% of staff and 85% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on the confidence of children and young people. 80% of staff and 80% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on improvements in child behaviour and social and health skills.</p>
Objective 6 Social Inclusion	To promote social inclusion and a culture of tolerance working in partnership with NICCY, NICE, etc. to deliver activities through schools and youth organisations which are consistent with a Shared Future and the Good Relations agenda Working in partnership with DEL and others	<p>Social inclusion and a culture of tolerance are a core part of the ethos of the FSCN. Specific initiatives that the FSCN has supported (either financially or through its influence / involvement) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Citizenship project - Primary school cross community parent capacity building – St Paul's and Harmony Primary School. • Primary 7 Transition Programme across a range of primary and post primary schools. • Involvement with the Intervention Project, the Link Centre and the Bytes Project. • Involvement with Black Mountain Shared Space Initiative. • Youth Club support through 'Little Acorns'
Objective 7 Parental and Community Involvement	To improve parental involvement within schools in the FSCN area by introducing appropriate interventions in response to identified needs of each school by September 2009; Attendance at parents' meetings — report meetings; Involvement in PTA; Engagement with lifelong learning activities organised by the school and happening in the community; A particular focus on the hard to reach parents; and	<p>Ongoing activities e.g. through services engaging with parents provided by FSCN staff (Education Development Workers, Transition Workers) working to achieve this outcome</p> <p>FSCN staff have engaged with 951 parents (728 through group work and 223 through individual work) between January and November 2010.</p> <p>Activities supported include: Evening classes offered in Corpus Christi vocation centre; Parents rooms; Cross community parenting course</p> <p>Feedback from the parents' survey is positive in terms of support provided in school for their children both for learning and for personal matters. Parents also responded favourably on a range of issues related to their relationship with schools, their role and support provided e.g.: at least 79% agreed with statements including:</p>

Table 4-9 FSCN – Objectives and Progress		
Objectives	Status @ December 2010 (Summary)	
	Active involvement with the Early Years Projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know who to talk to ask for help if I have a problem (e.g. if my child has difficulty with learning) • I understand how my children learn • I understand my role in helping my child to learn • I feel confident about helping my child to learn • I feel confident about helping my child to move to a new school <p>Staff and parents' survey results also provide positive feedback on the impact of the project with regard to parents and families. The proportion of staff and parents who felt that the FSCN had a positive impact on the following aspects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to develop parenting skills and to discuss parenting issues with other parents and professionals (79% staff, 84% parents) • Greater parental involvement in children's learning and development (76% staff, 82% parents) • More opportunities for local adult education and family learning (64% staff, 80% parents) • Closer relationships with the schools (75% staff, 85% parents)
Objective 8 Employability and Employment	To improve career opportunities for young people through preparing young people for the workplace; To develop mentoring / Student Advance Programme (through ESB) focusing on those with greatest potential re: disengagement; To develop closer links with alternative education providers; and (Track leaver destinations).	The FSCN has focused on early intervention and hence its focus initially has been on Early Years / Primary Schools. However, it has also taken forward some initiatives focused on employability and employment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating the involvement of the Bytes Project in local schools. This project is co-funded by DE and DEL; it seeks to identify those who may disengage and provide a means of retaining their interest. • Facilitating local training organisations to come into schools e.g. Springvale Training provides 3 days per week vocationally focused (construction, electrical / mechanical engineering) in Corpus Christi College – opening up training and employment opportunities
Objective 9 Action Plan / Strategy	To devise an action plan or strategy for implementation by end February 2008.	Overall FSCN Action Plan (re core activities) devised Individual FSCN Staff Action Plans (Educational Workers and Transition Workers) devised
Objective 10 Baseline Audit: Current Provision and Need	To audit current provision as baseline and to identify current need in the community served by the FSCN by April 2008.	Overall FSCN Action Plan developed in response to needs identified by partners, other local Action Plans and FSCN PID. Audit of need in individual schools informs the FSCN Staff Action Plans

5 CONSULTATION: SURVEYS

5.1 Introduction

In this section, we provide details of key findings from surveys with parents, pupils and staff in the 2 clusters in which the FSCN operates. Feedback is presented on the basis of consultees' *perceptions* of the project (more details in Appendix IV).

5.2 Survey Results

5.2.1 Methodology

Three questionnaires were developed specifically for children; parents and staff who availed of services provided by the FSCN. The questionnaires were designed to capture information about the respondents' profile; support received from the FSCN; impacts of the FSCN on individuals and schools; additionality and future development. The questionnaire was piloted to ensure that it captured the required data. The FSCN staff assisted in issuing and collecting questionnaires across schools involved in the FSCN. A total of 456 questionnaires were completed.

5.2.2 Responses

Table 5-1
FSCN – Summary of Survey Responses by School

School	Number of Questionnaires		
	Staff	Pupils	Parents*
GREATER FALLS			
Cathedral Nursery School	0	0	7
Gaelscoil na Bhfal	10	2	0
St Peter's Nursery School	0	2	19
St Clare's Primary School	12	6	7
St Joseph's Primary School	10	1	0
St. Kevin's Primary School	8	2	0
St Mary's Primary School	8	4	0
St Paul's Primary School	12	9	6
Colaiste Feirste	86	0	0
St Louise's Secondary School	105	2	0
UPPER SPRINGFIELD			
Matt Talbot Nursery School	0	1	0
St Bernadette's Nursery School	10	3	7
St Martin's Nursery School	0	1	0
Holy Trinity Primary School	15	3	0
Gaelscoil na Mona	12	2	1
St Aidan's Christian Brothers Primary School	15	3	6
St Bernadette's Primary School	11	5	11
Tsleibhe Dhuibh	13	3	1
Vere Foster Primary School	6	0	0
St Gerard's ERC	1	2	1
Saol Ur Sure Start	0	2	7
Total by Group	334	53	69*
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	456		
Note: * Parents responses include some who have children at more than one school; therefore, the breakdown of parents' responses includes 69 respondents who had children at 73 schools.			
Source: FGS McClure Watters (November 2010)			

5.3 Pupil Survey

5.3.1 *Profile of Responses (Pupils)*

There were 334 responses to the pupil survey; these are profiled in tables in Appendix IV:

- Just over half (56%) were from the Upper Springfield Cluster and the remainder from the Greater Falls Cluster;
- Almost two thirds (64%) of pupil responses were from girls; with about one third (34%) from boys;
- About half (51%) of pupil responses were from post-primary year groups (Years 8 and 9); with the remainder from primary year groups; and
- Overall, pupil responses were obtained from 16 schools (2 nursery, 11 primary and 4 post-primary; the number of responses ranged from 1 to 105 per school.

5.3.2 *Perception of FSCN Interventions*

In each of the categories in which pupils were invited to comment, there was a high level of positive feedback:

- **My School:** at least 61% of respondents agreed with the statements provided in this category (with the exception of “Children behave well in this school”); very few (no more than 12%) disagreed with any of the statements.
- **Support in School:** at least 71% of pupils agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 5%) disagreed with any of the statements.
- **Numeracy Support:** at least 63% of pupils agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 11%) disagreed with any of the statements.
- **Literacy Support:** at least 68% of pupils agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 7%) disagreed with any of the statements.
- **Transition Support:** at least 63% of pupils agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 16%) disagreed with any of the statements.

5.3.3 *Strengths and Areas for Improvement (FSCN)*

Of the > 500 comments provided by over 220 respondents, the most common responses with regard to strengths included:

Table 5-2
FSCN – Responses from Pupils’ Survey
Best things about support from Education Development / Transition Workers

Best Aspects	% of respondents
Literacy	47%
Games & fun	29%
Friendliness of / help from staff	22%
Transition / Transition DVD	12%
Learning	11%
Meeting friends	10%
Drama	9%
Behaviour	9%
Numeracy	8%
Positive comment (I like it, Very good)	8%
Confidence	5%
Help wit your problems / when you are upset	5%
Learning about characters	5%
Meeting people	4%

Source: FGS McClure Watters (November 2010)

Pupils provided a wide range of answers regarding aspects that could be better about the support from the Education Development / Transition Workers. The majority of respondents indicated they would like more help, support and/or specific activities / work in some areas. The following table summarises their answers in categories. Of the > 300 comments provided by over 140 respondents, the most common responses with regard to areas for improvement included the following.

Table 5-3
FSCN – Responses from Pupils’ Survey
Things that could be better about support from Education Development / Transition Workers

Areas for Improvements	% of respondents
More of named activities (e.g. drama, sports, reading, listening, drawing, stories, writing, imagination, healthy eating)	45%
More time with Education Worker	26%
More games & fun	17%
More help with homework & self-organisation	17%
More activities outdoors / trips	8%
More subjects / variety / choices	8%
More support & help	7%
More time / Longer sessions	7%
More choices – books	5%

Source: FGS McClure Watters (November 2010)

5.4 Staff Survey

5.4.1 Profile of Respondents (Staff)

There were 53 responses to the staff survey; these are profiled in the following tables. Key issues of note are as follows:

- Just over half (53%) were from the Greater Falls Cluster and the remainder from the Upper Springfield Cluster;
- The majority (45%) of staff responses were from Teachers; followed by Heads of Year (15%), Principals and Extended Schools Coordinators (11% each);
- Almost a third of staff respondents indicated that their management responsibilities were at senior management level (e.g. Senior Leadership Team), followed by 'no formal management responsibilities' (17%) and 'some formal management responsibilities' (15%).
- Overall, staff responses were obtained from 18 schools (5 nursery, 10 primary and 3 post-primary); the number of responses ranged from 1 to 9 per school.

5.4.2 Perception of FSCN Interventions

In each of the categories on which staff were invited to comment, there was a high level of positive feedback:

- **FSCN Role:** at least 86% of respondents agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 2%) disagreed with any of the statements.
- **Communication / Involvement:** at least 84% of staff agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 4%) disagreed with any of the statements.
- **Operational / Resources:** no more than 33% of staff agreed that there are adequate financial, human and/or physical resources for FSCN; in contrast, at least 84% agreed that FSCN seeks to provide a comprehensive range of integrated services and/or is a flexible service.
- **Support in School:** at least 87% of staff agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 4%) disagreed with any of the statements.
- **Parents:** at least 92% of staff agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 2%) disagreed with any of the statements.
- **Impact of FSCN on Teachers' Role:** respondents indicated that FSCN had an impact on accessing external specialist support (81% agreed) and internal support (74%) regarding pastoral care issues. In contrast, a large proportion of staff did not agree with the statements about spending less time on pastoral care (45% disagreed) and/or dealing with fewer pupils (37%).

5.4.3 Impacts

Overall, respondents indicated positive impacts of FSCN on different areas. A breakdown by area is as follows:

- **Benefits for Pupils:** the highest impact of FSCN provision was on improving confidence and self-esteem of children and young people (92% stating this was whether positive-limited or positive-major). No more than 2% indicated a negative impact.
- **Benefits for Schools in FSCN Area:** at least 67% of staff respondents indicated whether a positive-limited or positive-major impact. No more than 2% indicated a negative impact.

- **Benefits for Families/ Communities:** at least 64% of staff respondents indicated whether a positive-limited or positive-major impact. No more than 2% indicated a negative impact.
- **Benefits for Statutory Agencies and Voluntary & Community groups:** the highest impact of FSCN provision was on improving connectivity and relationships between all agencies including statutory, voluntary and community and schools (73% stating this was whether positive-limited or positive-major). No more than 2% indicated a negative impact.

Table 5-4
FSCN – Responses from Staff Survey

Areas in which staff felt there had been an impact for individual pupils or groups as a result of the work of the Educational Development / Transition Workers

Areas	Frequency	Percentage of Total Respondents (n=53)
Attendance	18	34%
Suspensions	1	2%
Literacy	32	60%
Numeracy	6	11%
Educational Attainment	16	30%
Transition (Nursery to Primary)	14	26%
Transition (Primary to Secondary)	13	25%
Confidence / Self-Esteem	33	62%
Other	7	13%

Source: FGS McClure Watters (November 2010)

5.4.4 Strengths and Areas for Improvement (FSCN)

Of the > 126 comments provided by 48 respondents, the most common responses with regard to strengths included the following.

Table 5-5
FSCN – Responses from Staff Survey
Best Aspects about support from Education Development / Transition Workers

Best Aspects	Frequency	% of respondents
Support for children (e.g. transition support, literacy, SEN children, phonics, counselling)	27	56%
Additional professional opinion / knowledge / support for staff	19	40%
Communication / relationship with parents	12	25%
Pupils' self-esteem / confidence / motivation improved	9	19%
Workers (positive comments in general e.g. commitment, enthusiasm)	9	19%
1 to 1 support	8	17%
Small groups benefits	8	17%
Support provided to parents / children & parents	6	6%
Teachers have more time	5	10%
Link child-parents-school-community	5	10%
Different approaches / range of activities	5	10%

Source: FGS McClure Watters (November 2010)

Of the 71 comments provided by 36 respondents, the most common responses with regard to strengths included the following.

Table 5-6
FSCN – Response from Staff Survey
Things that could be better about support from Education Development / Transition Workers

Areas for Improvements	Frequency	% of respondents
More time / longer period	19	53%
Development of the programme improved (e.g. more time, longer period, better planning)	12	33%
Continue over sustained period	6	17%
Contact with parents / children should start at an earlier stage	5	14%
More Educational Workers needed	5	14%
Source: FGS McClure Watters (November 2010)		

5.5 Survey results – parents

5.5.1 Profile of Respondents (Parents)

There were 69 responses to the parents' survey; these are profiled in the following tables. Key issues of note are as follows:

- The majority (93%) of parents' responses were from females; with only 7% from males.
- On average, respondents had 2.4 children aged 18 and under (56% girls and 44% boys);
- The 69 respondents had 160 children aged 18 and under (56% girls and 44% boys); therefore, 2.4 children on average per respondent.
- Just over half (52%) of the respondents' children were at nursery, followed by P2 (17%) and nursery (14%).

5.5.2 Perception of FSCN Interventions

In each of the categories on which parents were invited to comment, there was a high level of positive feedback:

- **Support in School – Learning:** at least 89% of respondents agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 2%) disagreed with any of the statements provided.
- **Support in School – Personal Support:** at least 76% of parents agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 7%) disagreed with any of the statements provided.
- **Parents:** at least 79% of parents agreed with the statements provided in this category; very few (no more than 4%) disagreed with any of the statements provided.

5.5.3 Impacts

Overall, respondents indicated positive impacts of FSCN on different areas. A breakdown by area is as follows:

- **Benefits for Pupils:** the highest impact of FSCN provision was on increasing positive attitudes towards learning and improving self-esteem of children and young people (90% stating this was whether positive-limited or positive-major for each). No more than 1% indicated a negative impact.
- **Benefits for Schools in FSCN Area:** at least 66% of staff respondents indicated whether a positive-limited or positive-major impact. No respondents indicated a negative impact.
- **Benefits for Families/ Communities:** at least 80% of staff respondents indicated whether a positive-limited or positive-major impact. No respondents indicated a negative impact.

5.5.4 *Strengths and Areas for Improvement*

Of the > 120 comments provided by almost 70 respondents, the most common responses with regard to strengths included the following.

Table 5-7
FSCN – Responses from Parent Survey
Best Aspects about support from Education Development / Transition Workers

Best Aspects	Frequency	% of respondents
Help and support for my children	27	50%
Friendliness, knowledge and support from workers	25	46%
Resources & activities e.g. activity packs, books, award chart, sin along	22	41%
Gained knowledge / Able to help children (e.g. homework, linguistics, confidence, transition)	21	39%
Parent group / Learning from other parents	6	11%
After school projects	5	9%
Open day / evening	4	7%
Sharing ideas	4	7%
Support coming home	3	6%

Source: FGS McClure Watters (November 2010)

Of the 60 comments provided by 24 respondents, the most common responses with regard to areas for improvement included the following.

Table 5-8
FSCN – Response from Parent Survey
Things that could be better about support from Education Development / Transition Workers

Areas for Improvements	Frequency	% of respondents
Educational Worker - more time / support (e.g. full time)	17	71%
Extra work on some areas (e.g. confidence, anger, packs explained)	8	33%
Work over the summer	5	21%
Colouring / painting	4	17%
Own space for parents and children	4	17%

Source: FGS McClure Watters (November 2010)

6 BENCHMARKING

6.1 Introduction

In this section we address the following aspect of the Terms of Reference:

- *To evaluate the extent to which the Full Service Community Network Project can be held as a model of good practice*

We include an overview of approaches to Full Service provision in GB and further afield; consider what is distinctive about the FSCN approach and then present some key issues for consideration.

6.2 Full service provision: an international perspective

In many administrations across the world there are attempts to extend the role of schools. Whilst the core of that role remains the business of enabling children to learn within the context of a more or less formalised curriculum, schools in many places are also involved with non-academic aspects of children's development, with working with their families, and with contributing to community development and area regeneration. Typically, this involves schools in accessing a greater range of expertise and resource than is necessary for their core teaching and learning remit. They can do this by expanding their staffing to include adults who have skills different from those of teachers – for instance, in family support, youth work, social care, or counselling. Additionally or alternatively, they might develop closer links with other community agencies and organisations, such as Health, Social Services, Adult Learning, the Police, or Youth Services. Workers from these agencies may be based in the school and/or joint strategies may be developed for early intervention, preventive work, or coordinated action.

There is no agreed name for developments of this kind. 'Full service' (usually in the form of 'full service school') is a term that is widely used, particularly in the USA. However, the term 'community school' is also used there, whilst the Netherlands has 'brede (broad) scholen', Saskatchewan in Canada has 'SchoolPlus', Scotland has 'integrated community schools', Germany has 'all day schools', and England has (or has had) 'schools plus', 'extended schools' and 'extended services'. The lack of agreed terminology is a signal that, although there is a common attempt across all of these developments to extend the role and capacity of the school, the purposes and methods of such an extension are extremely diverse. For instance, in some administrations (such as Germany and South Korea), that extension is concerned primarily with offering additional learning and development opportunities to children outside normal school hours. In others (Saskatchewan being the most obvious example), the extension is seen as part of a democratisation of schooling, with an emphasis on community involvement and cultural valorisation. In others again (Sweden being an example), the role of the school is already 'extended' without the need for special initiatives, because the services and relationships that are distinctive features of full service schools elsewhere are, to some extent, already embedded in common school provision and practice.

Despite this diversity, there is undoubtedly a dominant model of full service provision that underpins developments in many – though, it is important to note, not all – places. The rationale for this model is that social and economic change has rendered the traditional, insular model of schooling inappropriate. In hard-pressed areas particularly, schools cannot fulfil their core teaching remit effectively because their students face so many disadvantages which act as barriers to their capacity to learn. At the same time, family and community services are

themselves unable to undertake effective interventions because they are overwhelmed by the challenges posed by the disadvantaged populations they serve. It makes sense, therefore, for schools and other services to work more closely together, so that the barriers to learning faced by children can be tackled at source, other services get access to hard-to-reach families, and services together are able to focus on early intervention rather than on the hopeless task of trying to tackle entrenched disadvantage. As one of the pioneers of full service schools in the USA succinctly puts it:

...schools are failing because they cannot meet the complex needs of today's students...The cumulative effects of poverty have created social environments that challenge educators, community leaders, and practitioners of health, mental health, and social services to invent new kinds of institutional responses.

(Dryfoos, 1994, p.^pp., p. xvii)

6.2.1 Developments in England

There is a long history of full service approaches (by a variety of names) in England. That history reaches as back at least as far as the establishment of village colleges in Cambridgeshire from the 1920s onwards (Morris, 1925, p.^pp.), includes the community schools developed in response to the Plowden report in the 1960s (Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967, p.^pp.), and the rich array of community-oriented and out of hours provision that was sustained throughout the 1980s and 1990s, largely as a result of local initiatives (Ball, 1998, p.^pp., Wilkin et al., 2003, p.^pp.). However, developments from 1997 onwards have received a powerful impetus from central government policy and funding, beginning with the call for 'Schools Plus' as part of the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (DfEE, 1999, p.^pp.), and leading through a series of pilot and demonstration projects to a national 'roll out' of extended schools starting in 2005 (DfES, 2005, p.^pp.) and now effectively complete.

Although the precise form of provision has varied at each stage of this development, there have been some common features:

- An expectation that schools would offer a range of services and activities over and above their core provision of teaching and learning opportunities;
- Encouragement for schools and other child, family and community agencies to work together in delivering these services and activities;
- A limited amount of 'seed corn' funding made available to schools (either directly, or through local authorities) to stimulate the development of services and activities, but with an expectation that provision would become self-sustaining over a relatively short timescale;
- An expectation that these 'extended school' approaches would produce outcomes and have impacts in a range of domains, including but not necessarily restricted to, student attainment; and
- A mixture of central prescription of the broad types of services and activities to be provided with considerable local determination of the precise package to be offered and the purposes to be achieved.

Within this broad policy approach, a significant shift of emphasis has taken place within recent years. Prior to 2005, extended schools were seen as being lone institutions developing their own forms of provision to meet local needs as interpreted by school leaders. As in the full service extended schools initiative of 2003-2006, they were typically (though not universally) located in

areas of disadvantage, driven more often by school than by local authority concerns, and surrounded by other schools that were not offering full service provision (see, for instance, (Cummings *et al.*, 2007, p.^pp., DfES, 2003b, p.^pp.). The national roll out from 2005 onwards, however, brought about a number of significant changes:

- All schools (rather than just willing volunteers or those serving hard-pressed areas) were expected to become involved in making available a 'core offer' of additional services and activities: childcare, out-of hours activities for students, parenting support, swifter referral to specialist services, and community access to school facilities (DfES, p.^pp., 2005b, p. 8).
- Although all schools were involved, the expectation was not that they would all provide a full range of services and activities on the school site, but that they would 'provide access', which they could do by working with other schools or with providers in community settings. As a result, the unit of provision was not the lone school, but the cluster of schools and its associated network of community-based providers.
- Local authorities played a greater role in establishing and supporting this approach, since they were able to retain some of the available funding centrally, and played a brokering role in the formation of school clusters and networks of providers.
- To signal the shift of emphasis, the nomenclature changed from 'extended schools' to 'extended services' (sometimes with the addition of 'in and around schools').

This shift has to be understood in relation to two key strands of New Labour domestic policy as they unfolded between 1997 and 2010. One is a commitment to 'progressive universalism'. Rather than targeting services and support only on the most obviously needy, they should be made available to everyone, but with a mechanism for ensuring that those who could benefit from them most would be able to access most. As the former deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, put it, such an approach is:

...universal because we aim to help everyone;...and progressive because we aim to do more for those who need it most.

(Prescott, 2002, p.^pp.)

In terms of extended services, the implication is that all children and families should have access, rather than just those in schools serving the most hard-pressed areas, recognising, amongst other things, that children anywhere can face disadvantages.

The second strand is the attempt to establish integrated services for children and families – an attempt embodied originally in the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003a, p.^pp.) and then in the Children's plan (DCSF, 2007, p.^pp.). Put simply, the aim was to 'join up' previously separate education, health and social care services (inter alia) at operational, local and national level. The expectation was that this would avoid children falling through the cracks between agency boundaries, and would encourage earlier, more effective, and more efficient interventions. As the process of integration gathered pace after 2003, this meant that schools were increasingly becoming part of a network of local services, offering greater possibilities for collaborative working rather than relying on tradition often highly cumbersome) processes of referral to services based outside the school and (often) operating to different priorities. Hence, the shift from 'extended schools' to 'extended services' indicates, amongst other things, that schools would not have to assemble services on their own site, but could rely on the collaborative efforts of the service network of which they were already an integral part.

These changes have created a policy framework within which a range of approaches to collaborative provision are now emerging in England. There are, for instance, examples of:

- Clusters of schools playing a key role in commissioning local services;
- Academies (i.e. state-funded but privately-governed schools) being sponsored by housing associations to pursue an agenda of community development and area regeneration;
- Local authorities devolving the governance of services to local (e.g. town) level, and involving schools closely in that governance;
- Local authority-wide reforms establishing full service schools as community ‘learning centres’ offering educational and recreational facilities to adults as well as children, working closely with locality-based family and community services, and contributing to borough-wide regeneration strategies.

The future direction of policy under the (still relatively new) Coalition government following the 2010 general election is still not entirely clear. Some commitment to the continuation of the extended services agenda appears to have been made in the recent Education White Paper (Department for Education, 2010, p.^pp.) and in the extension of funding for school involvement. However, it seems likely that the governance arrangements for child and family services and the precise expectations on schools will be left as a matter for local determination – with considerable power in the latter respect remaining with individual schools.

6.2.2 Outcomes and process issues in full service approaches

Full service provision is notoriously difficult to evaluate. This is because of the variability of provision from school to school, the wide range of possible outcomes (for many of which there are no good measures), and the multiple other initiatives, developments and confounding factors that are typically found in the contexts within which full service approaches are implemented. It is also the case that evaluations are often too short-term and under-powered to meet these technical challenges. Nonetheless, there is a broad consensus about the outcomes that might be expected. It is captured neatly in a review of US evidence produced by the Coalition for Community Schools. This concludes that positive outcomes can be expected in four areas:

Student learning: *Community school students show significant and widely evident gains in academic achievement and in essential areas of non-academic development.*

Family engagement: *Families of community school students show increased stability, communication with teachers and school involvement. Parents demonstrate a greater sense of responsibility for their children’s learning success.*

School effectiveness: *Community schools enjoy stronger parent-teacher relationships, increased teacher satisfaction, a more positive school environment and greater community support.*

Community vitality: *Community schools promote better use of school buildings, and their neighborhoods enjoy increased security, heightened community pride, and better rapport among students and residents.*

(Blank *et al.*, 2003, p.^pp., p. 1-2, emphases in original)

In broad terms, these conclusions are supported by the evidence from the evaluation of full service extended schools and by the early findings of the evaluation of extended services in England (Carpenter *et al.*, 2010, p.^pp., Cummings *et al.*, 2007, p.^pp.). However, it is possible to paint a more nuanced picture from these studies. Specifically:

- There is little evidence for an ‘extended school effect’ on overall levels of student attainment, at least in the short term. Not surprisingly, the best way to get students to do better at tests and examinations in the short term is to teach them more effectively and more intensively rather than to offer them health, social and leisure services.
- There is, however, strong evidence that extended schools can have powerful effects on *individual* children, families and adults - particularly those facing major disadvantages – and that these effects can, in some cases, be transformative. These effects can be traced across a range of domains, including attainments, engagement with learning, health, family functioning, employment.
- The difference between weak or non-existent overall effects and powerful individual effects seems likely to be attributable to targeting and purpose. Extended schools tend to target their efforts on their most disadvantaged students and families, to concern themselves with a much wider range of outcomes than measured attainments, and to look for effects on attainment through indirect routes (for instance, by changing family attitudes to learning) and in the long term.
- There is good evidence that developing extended provision is entirely compatible with school ‘improvement’ strategies – that is, with strategies aimed more directly at raising levels of measured attainment. Most extended schools in fact pursue a twin-track approach.
- Many extended schools aim at long-term outcomes across a range of child, family and community domains (for instance, changes in community culture, more widespread engagement in education, increased levels of adult skills and employment). There are good reasons to believe that such outcomes may materialise in due course. However, they are likely to require schools’ approaches to be maintained over a number of years and to be supported by well-aligned approaches for other agencies and organisations. This in turn requires policy and funding stability, and calls for suitably high-powered and longitudinal evaluation.

The implication of these findings is that the purposes and expectations of developing full service provision need to be thought through clearly. If the aim is to increase overall levels of measured attainment in the short term, there are almost certainly more powerful strategies. If, however, the aim is a more long term one, to impact on a wider range of outcomes for children, to focus particularly on those who are most disadvantaged, and to contribute to wider family and community development, there may be an important role for full service schools to play.

6.2.3 *Recent developments*

The emphasis on ‘joined up’ services and policy in the English context, and the related shift from extended schools to extended services, have begun to bear fruit in the shape of a number of promising local initiatives. Although these take very different forms in different contexts, they share the common characteristic of integrating schools into a coherent local strategy for community development and regeneration, and into a carefully-aligned network of services and interventions. Some of these initiatives rely on strong leadership from local authorities. For instance, both Barnsley and Knowsley have undertaken radical reforms of their school systems, turning schools into community learning centres, linking them closely with area-based community services, and seeing education as a key component of a borough-wide economic regeneration strategy. However, other initiatives rely on other kinds of leadership – as, for instance, in the

case of academy schools sponsored by social housing providers as part of a community sustainability strategy, or clusters of schools becoming involved in the commissioning of family and community services, or schools becoming part of ‘town management’ initiatives.

Evaluation evidence on the impacts of initiatives such as these is indicative rather than conclusive. Nonetheless, early signs are promising and they point the way to how schools might become part of more powerful approaches to the problems of disadvantaged areas than they alone could marshal. In this respect, the example of the Harlem Children’s Zone (<http://www.hcz.org/>) in the USA has attracted considerable international attention as an attempt to create just such a wide-ranging area approach with schools at its core. Much is claimed for the ‘Harlem miracle’, and the model is very promising. Evaluations to date, however, have focused on some dramatic improvements in children’s measured attainments, which seem attributable to within-school improvements. There appears as yet to be little evidence about outcomes across a wider range of domains or on longer term family and community effects.

6.3 What is distinctive about the Full Service Community Network approach

In the light of the foregoing discussion, the FSCN can be seen as a particularly promising initiative. In line with some of the more recent local developments in England and with the spirit of the Harlem children’s zone, it seeks to align interventions across a range of domains. Although extended schools are integral to its work, these operate as clusters, and in principle this makes possible an area approach rather than one which is based solely on the populations of individual schools and their families. Similarly, the Network encompasses agencies from the voluntary sector (Barnardo’s) as well as a range of other community and statutory organisations.

The rationale for the FSCN is one which recognises the inter-connected nature of the difficulties facing disadvantaged areas and the need for multi-strand interventions to tackle these difficulties. The ‘themes and objectives’ are therefore appropriately wide-ranging, as are the intended outcomes. Crucially, a focus on might be called ‘personal issues’ – for instance, on the attainments and well being of children and their families – are accompanied by an equivalent focus on ‘structural’ issues – that is, on efforts to address the economic and material conditions within which people live, and which are deeply implicated in the personal difficulties they face. In this respect, it is significant that the FSCN is embedded within a broad strategic and policy framework at Northern Ireland level.

6.4 Issues to consider

If the FSCN is to fulfil its promise, there is much that it can learn from initiatives elsewhere. The following issues in particular are important:

6.4.1 *Clarity of purpose*

The FSCN’s aims are ambitious and wide-ranging. However, there is (potentially at least) a tension between the recognition of the inter-connectedness of problems in areas of disadvantage and the aim of tackling these problems simultaneously on the one hand, and the apparent privileging of improving children’s educational attainment as the priority outcome on the other.

There is no reason, given the international experience, why raised attainment cannot go hand in hand with wider impacts on child and family well being, community development and area

regeneration. On the contrary, there are reasons to believe that different kinds of outcome might reinforce one another, particularly in respect of disadvantaged individuals and families, and particularly in the longer term. However, it is important to be clear how these different outcomes relate to one another. In particular, is the FSCN's overriding priority to bring about short term gains in measured attainment? If so, other outcomes are valuable only insofar as they contribute to this end, schools might reasonably expect to take the lead in decision-making, and the success or otherwise of the initiative can be judged in terms of what happens to attainment levels. On the other hand, if the FSCN aims at a wide range of outcomes, including but not restricted to rises in attainment, then very different patterns of action, decision-making and judgement might be expected. Either of these positions is defensible. The problem is when there is lack of clarity, or when different stakeholders hold different views. Perhaps the greatest danger of all is when the accountability mechanisms to which initiatives are subject operate with different priorities and on a different timescale from those guiding the initiative itself.

6.4.2 *Complex relationships*

The FSCN, like many similar initiatives, depends for its success on a complex series of relationships between schools and other providers and stakeholders. These are mirrored in similarly complex governance arrangements. Such complexity is inevitable where coordinated, multi-strand approaches are attempted. However,

, an obvious pitfall of such initiatives is that either they fall apart or (more commonly) descend into a bureaucratic exercise.

The ways of avoiding this are obvious, but may be worth restating:

- Relationships need time for partners to learn about each other and to develop trust, and stability in terms of the personnel involved. False starts and teething problems are inevitable. It often takes schools, for instance, many years to develop strong relationships with other agencies.
- Governance structures need to have a clear strategic role, rather than simply being concerned with ad hoc decision-making. The formulation of a joint strategy creates a framework within which partners can begin to find their way into productive relationships with each other rather than drifting into tokenistic participation or becoming concerned only with protecting their own interests.
- Complex relationships and structures need leadership and maintenance. Someone or some group needs to have the capacity to give a clear lead and to ensure that the work of the partnership gets done.

6.4.3 *Strategy versus adhocacy*

Multi-strand approaches to tackling disadvantage run the risk of degenerating into an unbundle of ad hoc events, interventions and developments. Such an ad hoc approach is costly to maintain, difficult to sustain over time, and highly unlikely to make much impact on underlying problems. To guard against this, approaches need to be genuinely strategic in nature. In other words, they need to be based on:

- An analysis of the situation in which they are based, not simply in the form of a list of problems or a statistical demonstration of levels of disadvantage, but an identification of

underlying causal factors and their relationship. A clear articulation of the outcomes that are aimed at in the long term and how these outcomes relate to one another.

- An identification of the strands of action that will be undertaken over time, and an analysis of precisely how these actions will generate the outcomes that are intended.

An analysis of this kind tends to be omitted where practitioners and decision-makers are keen to 'get on' with tackling presenting problems whose causes and solutions seem self-evident. However, the evidence from elsewhere is that it is a task which requires substantial attention in its own right, and which needs constantly to be revisited. An advantage of working in this way is that the initiative can be evaluated against this analysis (sometimes known as its 'theory of change'). In other words, it can be judged against the outcomes at which it actually aims, and the intermediate changes it intends can be identified well before final outcomes are evident.

6.4.4 *Resourcing and sustainability*

Most full service initiatives depend on resourcing that is additional to that routinely provided to schools and other services. Usually this takes the form of extra funding or resources in kind such as staff time. A danger arises when the additional resourcing is available only in the short term but the initiative becomes dependent on it for its longer term survival. When the resourcing is withdrawn, therefore, the initiative either ceases or scales back its activities, or many of its energies go into the pursuit of other short-term resources. This in turn makes a strategic approach difficult to sustain.

There seem to be two possible solutions to this difficult. One is that the additional resourcing on which the initiative depends can be mainstreamed. There are, for instance, clear differences between administrations as to what resources they regard as 'core' and what they regard as 'additional' and therefore needing to be supported through funded projects. The other is that the initiative uses any additional resources as seed corn, but focuses as soon as possible on 'bending' existing resources to support its aims. In any case, it is likely that the value of existing resources reconfigured in this way will exceed by many times the amount of additional funding available. The bending of resources in this way, however, requires a high level of trust between partners in the initiative, and a clear strategic plan, so that partners feel confident in contributing their core resources to its work.

6.4.5 *Community participation*

Initiatives located in areas of disadvantage almost always present themselves as working for the benefit of disadvantaged children, families and communities. In practice, however, there are few ways for these people to become involved in the decisions made by the initiative. Typically, professionals decide what is in local people's 'best interest', and restrict their participation to limited forms of consultation and market research.

There are often real problems in changing this situation in view of the lack of willingness and capacity on the part of some communities to become involved, and the danger of non-representative voices claiming to speak for local people. There is, therefore, no easy solution to this problem, but some initiatives do take the issue of representation seriously, and develop multiple means of engaging with children and adults rather than relying on a one-shot approach. Some also engage in community capacity building so that the lack of experience local people may have with decision-making is less of a barrier. Others involve local people in the provision process and enable them to control some of the initiative's activities directly.

[Note:

- The issues raised in this section come from looking at ‘bad’ practice as much as at ‘good’. It is quite difficult to identify schools which have unequivocally got things right, and what looks like good practice often contains significant problems (just as ‘bad’ practice often has some good features).
- Detailed examples are available in evaluations of the various extended school/service initiatives in England undertaken by Professor Alan Dyson et al. These are written up in various reports, but in an anonymised form – for example refer to the Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools Initiative: Final Report⁴ which has sections (in chapter 5) which look across the whole initiative to identify a) the characteristics of successful full service schools and b) the kinds of policy context which such schools need in order to do well.]

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⁴ DfES, 2007, Research Report RR852 - Colleen Cummings * Alan Dyson # , Daniel Muijs # , Ivy Papps ¶ , Diana Pearson # , Carlo Raffo # , Lucy Tiplady * and Liz Todd * with Deanne Crowther (*School of Education, Language and Communication Sciences, University of Newcastle, # Education in Urban Contexts Group, School of Education, University of Manchester, ¶ Tecis Ltd)

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7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

In this section, we present interim conclusions – based on information gathered to date – against each of the elements of the Terms of Reference.

7.1.1 *Impact of the FSCN*

To measure the impact of the project's programmes in seeking the following high level outcomes for children and young people:

- a) *Being Healthy;*
- b) *Ability to enjoy Learning and Achieving;*
- c) *Living in Safety and with Stability;*
- d) *Economic and Environmental Well Being; and*
- e) *Contributing Positively to Community and Society.*

To examine and report on behavioural change, as related to the high level outcomes specified above, with children, parents, school staff and project staff;

To examine and report on attitudinal change, as related to the high level outcomes specified above, with children, parents, school staff and project staff

To examine and report on the impact of the programme as contributing to the social inclusion and well being of children and young people;

Overall, the FSCN has achieved a lot in relatively short time-scales. This has included building relationships / partnerships with representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors allowing the sharing of facilities, resources and expertise. The FSCN has also recruited 4 Workers (2 Education Workers, 2 Transition Workers) who have proactively engaged in an assessment of local need and initiation of delivery of services directly within schools with 2000+ children and 1000+ parents in response to their specific needs. Another aspect of the project has involved commissioning Primary School Counselling Services from Barnardo's (again in response to local need). This level of progress with direct interventions in the short-term provides a firm basis for the achievement of the 5 high level impacts in the longer-term.

In terms of assessing impacts, it is important to consider:

- a) the level at which impacts will be evident - i.e. this will be for individuals directly impacted by the FSCN;
- b) the timescales over which impacts will become evident - i.e. individuals may experience a positive impact in the short-term but there is unlikely to be a noticeable impact on high level / area-wide statistics and indicators until the longer term given the embedded / cyclic nature of deprivation in the area.

Early indications from feedback on the interventions undertaken by the FSCN Staff and the Barnardo's Time 4 Me project are encouraging and generally favourable. This is borne out by feedback from the surveys with children, parents and school staff and the Barnardo's Time 4 Me project evaluation. However, the positive impacts are focused on individuals who have directly

benefited from the FSCN – and it is at this individual level that impacts will be seen in the short-term. The nature of impacts evident against each of the high level outcomes is described under each heading below.

- **Being Healthy**

- Ongoing activities e.g. Time 4 Me / Barnardo’s School Counselling, SPSS Link Project, Heartmath, Life Channel in particular are working to achieve this outcome. The largest area of provision is the Barnardo’s Time 4 Me Counselling Service which delivered:

- Between April 2009 and March 2010: **1234 hours of counselling and consultation** across **14 schools with 80 individual children** receiving a counselling service. **105 parents** received support and parenting guidance and the **class teacher for each of the 80 pupils** also received support and advice from the Time 4 Me practitioner. In addition the Children’s Services Manager has offered **72 hours of training and consultation to Principals and staff teams across the 14 schools.**
- Between April 2010 and end of November 2010, counselling service to **105 pupils and 121 parents.** Since April 2010, there has been 86.5 hours of counselling in each of the 14 participating schools, a total of **1210.5 hours.**

- A research report (June 2010) notes the positive impact of the Barnardo’s Time 4 Me Counselling service on high level outcomes for children including: **Being healthy.** The impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service (as perceived by school stakeholders) includes:

- **Being healthy:** The following reported a ‘very’ or ‘quite’ positive impact on pupil’s overall health and wellbeing:
 - Confidence 95% (N = 41)
 - Self-esteem 93% (N = 40)
 - Attention/concentration 86% (N = 37)
 - Happiness at school 100% (N = 43)
 - Peer social interaction 93% (N = 40)

- Survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the FSCN with regard to **health and well-being.** 84% of staff and 77% of parents felt that the FSCN had a positive impact (limited or major) on the health and well-being of pupils; 92% of staff and 90% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on the self-esteem of children and young people and 92% of staff and 85% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on the confidence of children and young people. 80% of staff and 80% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on improvements in child behaviour and social and health skills.

- **Ability to enjoy Learning and Achieving**

- The services directly provided by FSCN staff (2 Education Development Workers, 2 Transition Workers) and Barnardo’s Counselling service working to achieve this outcome e.g. support for literacy, numeracy (impact on education) as well as

transition support and counselling (impact on readiness to learn / preparing children to engage).

- Between January and November 2010, FSCN staff have engaged with **2069 pupils** (1856 through group work and 213 through individual work) and **951 parents** (728 through group work and 223 through individual work).
- Survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the project with regard to **educational attainment and readiness to learn** (see Table 4-9 for summary and Appendix IV for details of staff and parents’ perceptions of the positive impact on a range of relevant issues including attendance, positive attitude, improving learning and achievement, raising performance in primary and post-primary schools, improving aspirations).
- Feedback from the parents’ survey is positive in terms of **support provided in school for their children both for learning** and for personal matters.
- A research report (June 2010) notes the positive impact of the Barnardo’s Time 4 Me Counselling service on high level outcomes for children including: **Enjoying Learning and Achieving**. The impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service (as perceived by school stakeholders) includes:
 - **Enjoying learning and achieving:** The following reported a ‘very’ or ‘quite’ positive impact on pupil’s ability to enjoy learning and their overall attitude to school
 - Participation in classroom or school activities 93% (N = 40)
 - Attendance 74% (N = 32)
 - Punctuality 72% (N = 31)
 - Motivation and enthusiasm 93% (N = 38)
 - Teacher-Pupil relationships 93% (N = 40)
- **Economic and Environmental Well Being**
 - The FSCN has focused on early intervention and hence its focus initially has been on Early Years / Primary Schools. However, it has also taken forward some initiatives focused on employability and employment including:
 - Facilitating the involvement of the Bytes Project in local schools. This project is co-funded by DE and DEL; it seeks to identify those who may disengage and provide a means of retaining their interest.
 - Facilitating local training organisations to come into schools e.g. Springvale Training provides 3 days per week vocationally focused (construction, electrical / mechanical engineering) in Corpus Christi College – opening up training and employment opportunities
 - Staff and parents’ survey results provide positive feedback on the **impact of the FSCN with regard to parents and families** (see Table 4-9 and Appendix IV) including that the project had a positive impact on opportunities for local adult education and family learning.
- **Living in Safety and with Stability; and** }

- **Contributing Positively to Community and Society** }
- FSCN staff have engaged with 951 parents (728 through group work and 223 through individual work) between January and November 2010. Activities supported include: Evening classes offered in Corpus Christi vocation centre; Parents rooms; Cross community parenting course. These types of interventions are helping parents to make a greater contribution to their children’s education in the first instance and ultimately to the wider community.
- Staff and parents’ survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the project with regard to parents and families. The proportion of staff and parents who felt that the FSCN had a positive impact on the following aspects (which contribute to community and society and/ or safety and stability) are:
 - Opportunities to develop parenting skills and to discuss parenting issues with other parents and professionals (79% staff, 84% parents)
 - Greater parental involvement in children’s learning and development (76% staff, 82% parents)
 - More opportunities for local adult education and family learning (64% staff, 80% parents)
 - Closer relationships with the schools (75% staff, 85% parents)
- Social inclusion and a culture of tolerance are a core part of the ethos of the FSCN. Specific initiatives that the FSCN has supported (either financially or through its influence / involvement) include:
 - Active Citizenship project - Primary school cross community parent capacity building – St Paul’s and Harmony Primary School.
 - Primary 7 Transition Programme across a range of primary and post primary schools.
 - Involvement with the Intervention Project, the Link Centre and the Bytes Project.
 - Involvement with Black Mountain Shared Space Initiative.
 - Youth Club support through ‘Little Acorns’
- A research report (June 2010) notes the positive impact of the Barnardo’s Time 4 Me Counselling service on high level outcomes for children including: **Contributing to Society**. The impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service (as perceived by school stakeholders) includes:
 - **Contributing to community/society:** The following reported a ‘very’ or ‘quite’ positive impact on pupil’s overall behaviour at school
 - Anger 79% (N = 34)
 - Defiance and non-compliance 79% (N = 34)
 - Peer aggression or bullying 72% (N = 31)

7.1.2 Integrated Service Delivery and Building Capacity

To evaluate the extent to which the project activity has influenced the increase in integrated service delivery and the building of local capacity;

Overall, the FSCN has made **considerable progress** in a relatively short time towards the goal of integrated service delivery and building local capacity. This is evident in a number of areas:

- the breadth of membership of the Board and Operational Group – many of whom are actively involved and engaged. However, not all of the organisations invited to sit on the FSCN Board and FSCN Operational Group have either taken up their place or attended regularly;
- FSCN joint / collaborative working with e.g. Barnardo's, Extended Schools Clusters, Sure Start, Intervention Project, Upper Springfield Healthy Living Centre and Whiterock Children's Centre amongst others;
- It is clear that considerable resources have been devoted by the FSCN to facilitate the building and maintenance of relationships / partnerships with representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors allowing the sharing of facilities, resources and expertise (see Section 4.5.5 and in particular Table 4.8 for details of formal roles/relationships with other organisations for the FSCN Manager as well as Appendix I which includes details of Inter-Agency working undertaken by other FSCN staff)
- FSCN acting as a catalyst to encourage integration and collaboration between organisations with an interest in improving educational outcomes (e.g. working with a range of organisations with regard to Social Inclusion and Employability encouraging links – see Table 4.9 and details of performance with regard to Objective 6 and 8; also Section 4.5.4 – details of smaller projects in which FSCN has had a role to play).

The development of these relationships and connections provides a firm foundation for a longer-term, sustainable approach to delivering improvements in educational attainment. Feedback from consultation reported in the Interim Evaluation Report and from the staff survey (e.g. 73% of respondents to the staff survey stated that the FSCN had a positive impact on improving connectivity and relationships between all agencies including statutory, voluntary and community and schools)- supports these points.

Whilst much has been achieved in this area, the lack of engagement from some of those invited to participate in the Board and Operational Group has been a barrier to achieving more with regard to this outcome. Recommendation 1 from the Interim Evaluation Report sought to address this issue – in tasking the FSCN with reconsidering the composition of its Board. Recommendations 6 and 7 in this Final Evaluation Report also seek to address this issue.

7.1.3 FSCN as a model of good practice

To evaluate the extent to which the Full Service Community Network Project can be held as a model of good practice.

Given the benchmarking comparators considered, the FSCN can be seen as a particularly promising initiative. In line with some of the more recent local developments in England and with the spirit of the Harlem children's zone, it seeks to align interventions across a range of domains. Although extended schools are integral to its work, these operate as clusters, and in principle this makes possible an area approach rather than one which is based solely on the

populations of individual schools and their families. Similarly, the FSCN encompasses agencies from the voluntary sector (Barnardo’s) as well as a range of other community and statutory organisations.

The rationale for the FSCN is one which recognises the inter-connected nature of the difficulties facing disadvantaged areas and the need for multi-strand interventions to tackle these difficulties. The ‘themes and objectives’ are therefore appropriately wide-ranging, as are the intended outcomes. Crucially, a focus on might be called ‘personal issues’ – for instance, on the attainments and well being of children and their families – are accompanied by an equivalent focus on ‘structural’ issues – that is, on efforts to address the economic and material conditions within which people live, and which are deeply implicated in the personal difficulties they face. In this respect, it is significant that the FSCN is embedded within a broad strategic and policy framework at Northern Ireland level.

7.1.4 **Impact of Educational Development and Transition Workers**

To evaluate the impact of the Educational Development and Transition workers in accordance with their job description and the agreed outcomes

The job descriptions for the Educational Development and Transition Workers are included in Appendix VII. In this section, we describe how the Workers are progressing in terms of fulfilling these.

The main purpose of the Educational Development Workers is to:

“deliver educational support to parents/carers and children in a way that addresses their needs and promotes their inclusion within the education system and also within the wider community. Particular emphasis will be placed on developing contact with vulnerable parents and children in the schools and community and in delivering ‘needs led’ programmes of support in an appropriately diverse way.”

Considering the evidence provided in Section 4.5.2 and Appendix VIII and Appendix IX in the Interim Evaluation Report and Appendix I of this Final Evaluation Report, it is clear that both Educational Development Workers are fulfilling this job purpose through the provision of support to parents and children based on analysis of need and that a variety of approaches are being used to cater for specific needs identified.

Table 7-1
FSCN Educational Development Workers – Impact relative to Job Description

Main Duties and Responsibilities	Summary of Progress (detail in Section 4.5.2, Appendix VIII, Appendix IX)
To work in partnership with parents/ carers to empower them and enable them to achieve better outcomes for their children	Evidence of working with parents / carers including home visits, parent groups etc. and work with individual children / families with specific learning difficulties
To conduct audit of needs and interests of parents/carers with each cohort of parents.	Annual Plan informed by audit of need at school level and awareness of gaps / overlaps
To work closely with the designated officers in Achieving Belfast schools to promote a culture of aspiration and achievement.	Upper Springfield and greater Falls Education Workers are members of Achieving Beechmount multi-disciplinary groups
To provide support and training to parents/carers in a variety of ways and within a flexible working approach	Range of supports provided to parents / carers including home visits, parent groups, both in school and community settings to suit the needs of parents / carers.

Table 7-1
FSCN Educational Development Workers – Impact relative to Job Description

Main Duties and Responsibilities	Summary of Progress (detail in Section 4.5.2, Appendix VIII, Appendix IX)
To negotiate home visits in order to establish and develop mutual respect and trust with parents/carers/children	Evidence of success in that home visits have been completed during the year
To develop a parents' resource point in the school which will include a range of materials reflecting the different areas of support and programming aimed at helping parents and their children.	Range of programmes and materials developed e.g.: -Early Years Language Development support for Foundation stage children; -Nursery Packs both for parents and children moving into Nursery and for parents and children moving into Primary to help both with the Transitions -Incredible Years School Readiness Programme
To organise programmes/courses and activities which focus on improving numeracy and literacy and increase engagement in learning.	Activities include: -Group work with children, language and literacy support, speech development and behaviour support -Workshops in reading, talking and listening -P3 Talking and Listening -Nursery storytelling workshops -Linguistic phonics Numeracy Support – one to one or group setting
To be aware of the relevant provision of local schools and community groups, liaising appropriately in order to avoid overlap/repetition.	Programme of work informed by audit of need at school level and awareness of gaps / overlaps
To contribute to the teaching of a programme or programmes.	Work undertaken by Education Workers supports teaching of literacy and numeracy in schools
To network with other service providers with the aim of increasing the confidence, self-esteem, physical and mental health which will encourage parents/carers to achieve their own potential.	Evidence of Inter-Agency Working recorded in monthly monitoring reports. The Education workers and Transition Workers sit on multi disciplinary teams to ensure parents /carers get appropriate support.
To organise programmes and activities which will help parents recognise their role as primary educators and increase their knowledge of early years' services and understanding of child development.	Evidence of working with parents / carers including home visits, parent groups etc. and work with individual children / families with specific learning difficulties – see Table 4-5
To develop linkages with local feeder primary schools to ease pupil transition from nursery to primary.	Upper Springfield Education Worker and the Greater Falls Education Worker engage in Joint work with Transition Worker to improve transitions stages both for children and parents
To produce monthly progress reports to be submitted to the Upper Springfield Cluster, FSCN and line manager.	Monthly progress reports prepared / submitted
To establish appropriate recording mechanisms in relation to the work.	Annual Action Plan developed including targets Monthly monitoring reports including progress v target Feedback / evaluation forms issued to participants
To set realistic targets and monitor the project development and the progress of the participants.	Annual Action Plan developed including targets Monthly monitoring reports including progress v target Feedback / evaluation forms issued to participants

Source: FGS McClure Watters, 2010

The main purpose of the Transition Workers is to:

“provide advice, support, consultation and services to children, young people, their families and the school in accordance with the aims and objectives of the service”

Considering the evidence provided in Section 4.5.2 and Appendix VIII and Appendix IX in the Interim Evaluation Report and Appendix I of this Final Evaluation Report, it is clear that both Transition Workers are fulfilling this job purpose through the provision of support to children, young people, their families and the school based on analysis of need and that a variety of approaches are being used to cater for specific needs identified.

Table 7-2
FSCN Transition Workers – Impact relative to Job Description

Main Duties and Responsibilities	Summary of Progress (detail in Section 4.5.2, Appendix VIII, Appendix IX)
FOR SERVICE USERS	
To work with children, young people and their families, on a one to one or group basis, using a variety of interventions, to identify needs and to achieve positive outcomes. The jobholder is likely to be dealing with the most complex of cases/situations.	Audit of Need undertaken at outset Work using variety of interventions / formats and including 1-to-1, workshops, group work with children, young people and parents to achieve outcomes – see Table 4-6 and Appendix VIII and Appendix IX in the Interim Evaluation Report and Table 4-5 in this report for detail of activities and feedback on these
To work in partnership with parents/carers to empower them and to enable them to achieve better outcomes for their children.	Audit of Need undertaken at outset Work using variety of interventions / formats and including 1-to-1, workshops, group work parents to achieve outcomes – see Table 4-6 and Appendix VIII and Appendix IX in the Interim Evaluation Report and Table 4-5 in this report for detail of activities and feedback on these Specific work with parents includes: -Using Home as a Learning Environment -Nursery Work with Parents -Primary Parents: Motivating Children, Homework Routines and Reducing Stress -Individual Parents' Support in Transition Issues
To work co-operatively with schools and other professionals in children's services, health agencies and other community based services, to provide the most effective service for children young people and families.	Evidence of inter-agency working in monthly monitoring reports see Appendix VIII and Appendix IX in Interim Evaluation Report and Table 4-5 in this report for detail of activities and feedback on these
To apply safeguarding and child protection procedures and to report as necessary.	Compliance essential part of job
FOR ADVICE and or SERVICE DEVELOPMENT/LEADERSHIP	
To advise on and/or lead practice and policy and standard setting (in area of specialism)	Research has been undertaken by Transitions workers into models of good practice which has informed service delivery methods.
To develop and evaluate practice or aspects of the service	Preparation of action plans Monthly monitoring reports
FOR RESOURCES	
To be responsible for any equipment/resources linked to service delivery.	Administrator coordinates Transition Resources / Equipment.
To be responsible for case recording, report writing (to include reports for external agencies (e.g. courts) and complex management reports,) and producing and keeping management information.	Records of meetings Audit of needs Preparation of action plans Monthly monitoring reports

Table 7-2
FSCN Transition Workers – Impact relative to Job Description

Main Duties and Responsibilities	Summary of Progress (detail in Section 4.5.2, Appendix VIII, Appendix IX)
FOR SERVICE USERS	
To be responsible for the requisition of resources needed by staff managed	N/A – No staff managed by Transition Worker in this post.
FOR PEOPLE (STAFF, STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS)	
Supervision* of staff, students or volunteers may be expected *allocating work, day to day supervision and support	N/A - No staff supervised by Transition Worker in this post.
FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY	
To promote, monitor and maintain health, safety and security in the working environment	Risk Assessments are carried out by the Children’s Services Manager in liaison with staff team to ensure safety at all costs in working environments.
Source: FGS McClure Watters, 2010	

In working to overcome barriers to educational attainment, the roles of the Educational Development Workers and Transition Workers are critical to the overall success of the FSCN and to the achievement of impacts in the longer term (and in a sustainable way).

7.1.5 Impact of Primary School Counselling Service

To evaluate the impact of the Primary School Counselling Service delivered by Barnardo's NI

Barnardo's Northern Ireland was successful in its application for Tender Number 40428, jointly issued by the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) and the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) to deliver ‘an independent counselling service to primary school pupils’. The stipulated time period for the tender was ‘01 September 2009 to 31 August 2010, with an option to extend for a further period of 12 months’. The original tender stated that the BELB counselling service provision was to be on the basis of 4 hours per week in each of 8 named primary schools across the Greater Falls and Upper Springfield school clusters. In addition the Tender stated that ‘this could be extended to other schools in each cluster’ and that ‘the number of hours required will depend on need and can not be specified at this point’.

The Barnardo's TIME 4 ME service provides a term-time, school-based counselling and support service. TIME 4 ME is currently the largest provider of school-based counselling to primary school pupils in Northern Ireland, working in 26 primary and special schools with over 100 children each week. The main aim of the service is to increase pupils’ emotional well-being in order to improve their learning potential.

TIME 4 ME is currently active in 14 out of the 15 eligible primary schools in the two BELB clusters, Greater Falls and Upper Springfield clusters; each of these receives a counselling and support service for 4 hours per week. Apart from counselling, the tender allows for training and consultation input to schools. The service has been able to provide counselling and support to pupils, families and schools where there is a significant degree of recognised risk that is monitored both by schools and social services.

From April 2009 – March 2010 the service delivered a total of **1234 hours of counselling and consultation** across the **14 locations**. During this time **80 individual children** received a counselling service and **105 parents** have received support and parenting guidance. The **class**

teacher for each of the 80 pupils also received support and advice from the Time 4 Me practitioner. In addition the Children’s Services Manager has offered **72 hours of training and consultation to Principals and staff teams across the 14 schools.**

Between April 2010 and end of November 2010, Barnardo’s have provided a Barnardo’s Time 4 Me counselling service to **105 pupils** and **121 parents**. Since April 2010, there has been 86.5 hours of counselling in each of the 14 participating schools, a total of 1210.5 hours.

At 31 May 2010, TIME 4 ME was involved with 41 pupils across the 14 schools and 18 of these were from families known to social services. This represents 40% of the TIME 4 ME case load at that time and is indicative of the level of risk that the service is regularly responding to. Research has recently been completed into the impact of this intervention “Research Report Evaluating the Satisfaction with, and Impact of, the Service Provided by ‘Time 4 Me: School Based Counselling and Support’ within 14 Primary Schools in Belfast”. This highlights the positive impacts of the intervention on those children with which it works. The study findings, although tentative, suggest that the current Time 4 Me Counselling Service:

- is highly valued by the school stakeholders (high levels of satisfaction; evidence of continued need and limited ability of schools to provide similar support themselves);
- has had a notable impact on the individual children who accessed the service, as measured by the SDQ, CORS; and
- has had a notable impact on the identified Barnardo’s high-level outcomes for children: being healthy, enjoying learning and achieving, and contributing to community/society (as perceived by school stakeholders).
- **Other impacts include:**
 - **a ‘very’ or ‘quite’ positive impact on the pupils’ parents, families and wider communities:**
 - Better understanding of the child’s needs 95% (N = 41)
 - Increased interest and involvement in their child’s academic-related activities at home 88% (N = 38)
 - Increased linkages between the school and the home 93% (N = 39)
 - Improved relationships with their child’s school and teachers 91% (N = 39)
 - Improved physical and mental health through stress reduction 83% (N = 35)
 - **school stakeholders ability to undertake their roles and responsibilities within the school:**
 - 81% (N = 35) of respondents reported that the service had helped them to undertake their roles more effectively, e.g. teaching and classroom management.
 - **perceived impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service on the overall behavioural functioning of the pupils who have accessed the service**
 - The results of a paired samples t-test on the class teacher report (N = 53) of the Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire indicate

that there was a statistically significant decrease in behavioural difficulties after a period of individual counselling.

- The results of a paired samples t-test on the parent report (N = 49) of the Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire indicate that there was a statistically significant decrease in behavioural difficulties after a period of individual counselling.
- **perceived impact of the Time 4 Me Counselling Service on the overall treatment progress of the pupils who have accessed the service**
 - The results of a paired samples t-test on the child report (N = 53) of the CORS indicate that there was a statistically significant increase in treatment progress after a period of individual counselling.
 - The results of a paired samples t-test on the parent report (N = 49) of the CORS indicate that there was a statistically significant increase in treatment progress after a period of individual counselling.
 - The results of a paired samples t-test on the class teacher report (N = 52) of the CORS indicate that there was a statistically significant increase in treatment progress after a period of individual counselling.

7.1.6 Extended Schools and FSCN

To evaluate the intention and ensuring practice of Extended Schools activity and how it relates in practice to the strategic relationship of the FSCN and influences its work

As noted in Section 4.4.3 and Section 4.4.4, the work of the FSCN and the Extended Schools clusters are inextricably linked. Both are operating within the same policy framework and share the same high level goals (five key outcomes for children and young people). In terms of linkages / communication / influence, both ES Cluster Co-ordinators are members of the FSCN Operational Group and both are members of the Barnardo’s Schools Programme Team along with the 4 FSCN Project Staff. These arrangements ensure that complementarity between the two projects is effectively managed. The FSCN consolidates the work of the ES Programme and provides additional services and greater flexibility.

Annual Reports for each of the Extended Schools Clusters highlight the benefits of partnership working along with the FSCN and joint initiatives.

7.1.7 ETI Area Inspection Report

To evaluate how the recent ETI Area Inspection Report may influence the role of the FSCN in the wider context of the schools and organisations involved.

The ETI Area Inspection report (conducted in March-April 2009) assessed the extent to which a range of organisations in the West Belfast area work together to provide coherent and relevant educational pathways for learners.

The report recognised the FSCN as a strength in the area of transition arrangements:

“The positive impact of the newly set up FSCN in strengthening the working relationships and effectiveness of connections between the various stakeholders, for example in their facilitation

of collaborative arrangements between groups of schools, other government agencies and local community groups.”

The report also identified a number of key priorities for development for stakeholders involved in the delivery of education – in order to promote continuous improvement in the quality of the education and training within the West Belfast area. The priorities in Table 7-3 are of particular relevance to the FSCN.

Table 7-3
Key priorities for development

Stakeholder	Area for development
DE/DEL	Review funding of provision to encourage and facilitate increased collaboration within and across sectors
Key educational stakeholders	Collaborate on a strategic plan which includes employers and the wider community, to meet more effectively the current and future needs of all learners and their community
	Facilitate the sharing of expertise between staff, in particular at the key transition stages

Source: ETI (2000): An Evaluation of the Quality of: Strategic Planning; Learning; and Transition Arrangements for Education and Training in the West Belfast Area Area-Based Inspection: March-April 2009

These findings are clearly important in informing the role of the FSCN, highlighting the positive impact of the project (and hence the need to build and develop this aspect) in terms of relationships / connections / collaborations, the need to develop a strategic vision for education in the area and the sharing of expertise – particularly at key transition stages.

7.2 Interim Recommendations and Board Response (Aug/Sept 2010)

7.2.1 Role and Vision

The FSCN was established in 2008 and in a relatively short time has achieved considerable progress in engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, building and developing relationships with them and involving many of them in its structures e.g. through the Board and Operational Group. Over this relatively short period, there has also inevitably been some flux in the membership of these groups – partly due to individual post-holders changing / moving jobs and also due to new stakeholders being identified and invited to join.

Having reviewed information available on the current structure and relationships within FSCN and associated initiatives and taking on board feedback from consultation (including Board members, Operational Group members and other stakeholders), it is apparent that there is a lack of clarity / consistent understanding with regard to the role of the FSCN Board and Operational Group members. As signatory to the Letter of Offer from DE, it is important that CCMS plays an appropriate role in addressing issues raised.

Recommendation 1: Given that a number of the Board members are unclear on the contribution it as a Board can make and their specific contributions, we recommend that the following steps are taken:

- **That the FSCN PID and Terms of Reference are revisited and amended (if necessary) to ensure that these reflect the current strategic environment and developments within the FSCN since it was initially developed;**
- **That CCMS reviews the composition / membership of the Board to ensure that there**

is appropriate stakeholder representation to fulfil the role as defined in the PID (and Terms of Reference);

- That the FSCN Board meets to clarify / reaffirm its role, key success measures and deliverables;
- That the FSCN Board clarifies the specific contribution required from each stakeholder organisation represented on the Board in delivery of the agreed objectives and deliverables;
- That the FSCN Board specifies its information requirements in order to discharge its responsibilities;
- That the FSCN Board then ensures that the Operational Group is reviewed in light of any changes above to ensure that it is fully up to date with the role of the project, the deliverables expected from the Group in relation to this and in support of the Board. The membership of the Operational Group should be revised in light of any changes to the Board;
- that there is periodic self assessment of the effectiveness of the Board and Operational Group to ensure their ongoing fitness for purpose.

Board Response - Recommendation 1

The Board (as led by CCMS) will undertake a review of the Board and the Operational Group in order to clarify and re-affirm the roles of the structures. As part of this review the Board will consider its own information needs and communicate this to Operational Group through the Manager. The Board will also consider the skills required to operate effectively, if there is a skills gap and if so, how it can be filled. In order to do so the CCMS (as Chair) will meet with the appropriate personnel with the Department of Education, to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board as soon as possible.

Timescale: Papers will be provided to the Board in advance of the next Project Board meeting (18/11/10) in order to ensure that any actions are signed off during that Board Meeting. Additional Board meetings will be arranged by CCMS if required before 18/11/10.

7.2.2 Management / Governance Issues

As noted under Section 4 (in the Interim Evaluation Report), in a relatively short time (since 2008), the FSCN has achieved considerable progress in engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, building and developing relationships with them. This has been largely due to the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of the FSCN Manager, the regard in which he is held in West Belfast and hence the credibility which he (and hence the FSCN) enjoys.

In addition to his position as FSCN Manager, the post holder also sits on a number of different boards as follows (rationale for involvement included in brackets):

- Barnardo’s (leveraging resources from Barnardo’s into West Belfast);
- Springvale Training Association (links with employability);
- St Paul’s Primary School (part of Achieving Beechmount Cluster);
- Whiterock Children’s Centre (2 FSCN workers based there; common goals)

- Greater Shankill and West Belfast Employment Services Board (links with employability);
- BELB (links with educational attainment);
- Upper Springfield Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (involved in education sub-group).

The FSCN Manager’s involvement in the award of the contract for Primary Counselling Service to Barnardo’s (of which he is a Board Member) is of some concern – in terms of the conflict of interest and how this was handled - and this is also **perceived** as an issue within the community (based on feedback from consultation). The FSCN Manager currently has a role in managing the contract which Barnardo’s is currently delivering on behalf of the FSCN. Responsibility for contract management of the Barnardo’s Primary Counselling Service should not sit with a Barnardo’s Board member.

Recommendation 2: There are benefits to the FSCN Manager being so well linked into the local community. However it is important that in being represented on these Boards, there is seen to be proper management of any potential conflicts of interest. In order to ensure this, we recommend that the FSCN adheres to best practice with regard to financial and governance matters (as promulgated by DFP) and that CCMS circulates its conflict of interest policy to FSCN Board, Operational Group and staff periodically.

Board Response - Recommendation 2

It was agreed with those attending the working group that main contributor to concerns surrounding potential conflicts of interest arose from a contract awarded to Barnardo's, where the Project Manager also sits on the Board. CCMS noted that after a review of the situation the Board were content that the appropriate procedures had been followed. However, it is imperative that appropriate audit trails are available in order to fully account for the use of public expenditure and that all members of the Project team adhere to the appropriate governance procedures. The Manager will provide a full report to the Board detailing the circumstances under which the Barnardo’s contract was awarded. The CCMS should ensure that all members of the Board, Operational Group and the Manager are provided with its conflict of interest policy. A process for addressing potential / future conflicts of interest should be developed.

The report should also provide details of any other Board Memberships held by the Manager (and in what capacity i.e. the benefit to FSCN from this relationship). The purpose of this will be to provide a formal audit trail, to understand and ensure visibility of all of the valuable links that exist (and that may be capitalised on) and also to ensure that the FSCN Manager workload is not unreasonable.

Timescale: This report will be provided to Board members with their Board papers on the 18/11/10 by 11/11/10.

There are specific anticipated outcomes associated with the funding awarded to the FSCN (by DE) and CCMS (through the FSCN Board / Manager) is responsible for these deliverables to DE. This means that there is a need for clear accountability in terms of activities supported under the remit of the FSCN, how these are managed and how these contribute to the deliverables / outcomes expected.

Current arrangements are such that the management and supervision of the four FSCN Staff (Education Workers and Transition Workers) is undertaken by Barnardo’s. Each staff member develops Action Plans prepares monthly monitoring reports; the four staff form part of

Barnardo's Schools Programme Team. However there is no formal agreement between the FSCN and Barnardo's with regard to the management and supervision of staff; Barnardo's is paid a fee for managing the staff.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that there should be clear management structures and systems in place to demonstrate how the resources being funded by DE under this project are being managed. Through the FSCN Manager, CCMS needs to be able to demonstrate accountability of the resources being funded under the project. In the FSCN, this should be achieved by

- a) clarification of roles, responsibilities and line management arrangements for all employees;
- b) direct line management and performance management of all FSCN staff (against SMART targets for each individual staff member aligned to the Project Role and Deliverables). There may be a need for CCMS Board oversight.

Board Response - Recommendation 3

The working group noted that a draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been drawn up between Barnardo's and the FSCN to formalise the working arrangements with the FSCN Staff funded by FSCN and managed by Barnardo's. This SLA will include SMART targets for these staff that are directly aligned to the FSCN aims and objectives, details of the service provided by Barnardo's (management, supervision, etc.) and details of the management charge which the FSCN incurs for this service.

Timescale: The Manager will provide the Board with the draft SLA by 11/11/10. The Board will discuss and review the SLA (with a review for approval) during the Board meeting group 18/11/10.

7.2.3 Additionality

The FSCN operates within a crowded infrastructure in West Belfast – given the wide range of projects and interventions catering for the social and economic needs of the population in that area. Many organisations and agencies work with same target groups and/or focus on addressing similar issues.

The FSCN Manager and other staff are involved with many other organisations and agencies and through this, they seek to ensure that their supports are a) targeted where there is specific need and b) addressing needs that would not otherwise be met (i.e. avoid duplication).

The importance of engaging with the ISC&YP is recognised by the FSCN Board Chair and FSCN Manager and we recognise that considerable efforts have been made to engage with and involve the ISC&YP project. To date these have not proved to be particularly fruitful. However, we understand that given recent positive developments, this situation may change in the near future.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that the FSCN Manager continues to build and maintain relationships with other stakeholders delivering similar services in the FSCN area in order to ensure that there is no duplication / overlap and to maximise the benefits for the area. This should be done in a focused and systematic manner (linked back to the overall aims of the FSCN).

Board Response – Recommendation 4

The FSCN Manager will continue to build relationships with appropriate staff within the Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYP) initiative. Lines of communication will be kept open in order to maximise the impacts of both initiatives.

Timescale: On going.

7.2.4 Monitoring / Evaluation

In the relatively short period of time in which the FSCN has been up and running, considerable efforts have been undertaken to track and record its work. This includes: monthly monitoring reports prepared by each of the four FSCN Staff, monitoring reports provided by the Barnardo’s Time 4 Me Counselling services and the recent Annual Report submitted to DE.

Many of these reports focus on activity levels (e.g. number of initiatives undertaken, number of people engaged with, number of hours of counselling, etc.) and this is important in understanding the work that is being undertaken. The FSCN Staff also capture some qualitative feedback through questionnaires issued to parents and children with whom they engage. These questionnaires vary in terms of types of questions and format. Barnardo’s also captures some qualitative feedback on its interventions and has recently completed research into the impact of the Time 4 Me intervention (“Research Report Evaluating the Satisfaction with, and Impact of, the Service Provided by ‘Time 4 Me: School Based Counselling and Support’ within 14 Primary Schools in Belfast”).

There has been a focus of tracking progress using quantitative measures (activity levels). There is some capture of qualitative feedback but this is not done in a consistent way (e.g. using common “core” questions) that links to the high level project outcomes. These core questions could sit alongside specific questions tailored to each specific initiative.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that:

- that monitoring information collected captures appropriate and relevant information on impacts as well as outputs in order to demonstrate the added value and benefits of the project;
- that this information is kept in a consistent / standard way which links back to the five high level project outcomes;
- that this information is regularly reviewed against targets and appropriate action taken to address any shortfall;
- that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that CCMS (as lead body) reviews and approves monitoring reports to DE.

Board Response - Recommendation 5

The Working Group agreed the benefits of standardised monitoring data collection processes that link directly to the overall aims and objectives of the FSCN. The Manager will work with the project staff and Barnardo's to develop a proforma in which input, output and impact data can be recorded in a standardised way (and related back to the overall FSCN aims and objectives). The monitoring data will be SMART. As a result of which the Manager will be able to analyse the collected data to provide information relating to the impact of the project. A quarterly monitoring report will be provided to the Board.

Timescale: The first quarterly monitoring report that will include a standardised review of inputs and outputs and impacts will be provided to the Board by the end of December 2010.

A wide range of organisations work alongside the FSCN and many focus on similar target groups. In some of the reports and other documents (e.g. conference packs) produced by the FSCN, a range of activities and initiatives are described. However, it is not always clear what the specific contribution of the FSCN has been nor how much of the impacts achieved is attributable to the FSCN. Greater clarity will ensure that there is appropriate recognition of inputs, outputs and impacts.

Recommendation 6: We recommend that any FSCN documentation (including conference packs, reports etc.) clearly attributes relevant activities, outputs and impacts achieved to the FSCN. It should also make clear any other organisations involved in and the extent of their involvement. This will help to distinguish between impacts directly attributable to the FSCN and those which it may have leveraged in to the area.

Board Response - Recommendation 6

The Working Group agreed that it was important to clearly demonstrate where the project has had a direct impact and where the project has provided added value or leverage to others. The development of a database/proforma of input/output and impact evaluation criteria and a quarterly report as noted above will provide a reference document, which can be used to identify impacts that are directly attributable to the FSCN.

Any materials issued in connection with the FSCN will clearly distinguish between those initiatives which are directly funded by the FSCN and those where it has had an indirect influence; input from other organisations will be appropriately acknowledged.

Timescale: Work has already started on the development of the reporting proforma noted above and all future outputs will clearly indicate which outputs have been as a direct result of the project and which are indirect.

7.2.5 Action Plan to Address Interim Evaluation Report Recommendations

The following table provides an overview of the Action points which arose from the working group and the timescales for each action as agreed during the working group session. In addition, it was generally agreed that all action points should be addressed within eight weeks (end of November 2010). The status column provides an update on progress made against each action.

Table 7-4
Action Plan to address Recommendations from Interim Evaluation

Action	Responsibility	Timescales	Status
The Board (as led by CCMS) will undertake a review of the Board and the Operational Group in order to clarify and re-affirm the roles of the structures. As part of this review the Board will consider its own information needs and communicate this to Operational Group through the Manager.	CCMS, as Chair of the Board	To be reviewed and ratified by the Board by 18/11/10	Changes to PID and ToR recommended and approved at Board meeting 18 November Proposed full day (January 2011) to be arranged to cover other aspects of Recommendation 1
It is imperative that appropriate audit trails are available in order to fully account for the use of public expenditure and that all members of the Project team adhere to the appropriate governance procedures. The Manager will provide a full report to the Board detailing the circumstances under which the Barnardo's contract was awarded. The CCMS should ensure that all members of the Board, Operational Group and the Manager are provided with its conflict of interest policy. A process for addressing potential / future conflicts of interest should be developed.	Manager Board	To be provided within the Board Meeting papers by 11/11/10 for review by the Board 18/11/10	Report provided at Board meeting on 18 November. With regard to potential future conflicts, it is intended to consider a risk register from April 2011 and to keep this issue under review.
A Service Level Agreement (SLA) should be drawn up between Barnardo's and the FSCN to formalise the working arrangements with the FSCN Staff funded by FSCN and managed by Barnardo's. This SLA will include SMART targets for these staff that are directly aligned to the FSCN aims and objectives, details of the service provided by Barnardo's (management, supervision, etc.) and details of the management charge which the FSCN incurs for this service.	Manager Board	To be provided within the Board Meeting papers by 11/11/10 for review by the Board 18/11/10	Revised SLA has been drawn up and approved by the Board 18 November
The FSCN Manager will continue to build relationships with appropriate staff within the Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYP) initiative. Lines of communication will be kept open in order to maximise the impacts of both initiatives.	Manager	On-going	ManagerFSCN Manager affiliations tabled at meeting on 18 November
The Manager will work with the project staff and Barnardo's to develop a proforma in which input, output and impact data can be recorded in a standardised way (and related back to the overall FSCN aims and objectives). The monitoring data will be SMART. As a result of which the Manager will be able to analyse the collected data to provide information relating to the impact of the FSCN. A quarterly monitoring report will be provided to the Board.	Manager	First report to be submitted by 31/12/10	Revised proforma has been drawn up to record all required information as required
The development of a database/proforma of input/output and impact evaluation criteria and a quarterly report as noted above will provide a reference document, which can be used to identify impacts that are directly attributable to the FSCN.	Manager	On-going	See above
Any materials issued in connection with the FSCN will clearly distinguish between those initiatives which are directly funded by the FSCN and those where it has had an indirect influence; input from other organisations will be appropriately acknowledged.	On-going	Started	Issue discussed at Board meeting 18 November

Table 7-4
Action Plan to address Recommendations from Interim Evaluation

Action	Responsibility	Timescales	Status
FSCN Manager to provide details of all Board memberships (and in what capacity / what benefit to FSCN) – to be minuted at Board meeting	FSCN Manager	Next Board Meeting 18 Oct 2010	See above re affiliations
Ensure that any payments to Barnardo's (e.g. for Time4Me or management fee for management / supervision) are authorised by someone other than the FSCN Manager	Chair of Board Chair of Operational Group	Next Board Meeting 18 Oct 2010	Issue discussed at Board meeting 18 November; agreed that the Chair sign off on these.

7.3 Final Recommendations

In this section, we set out final recommendations in a number of key areas. Each recommendation is preceded by lessons learned from Benchmarking (set out in Section 6 and drawing on experience in other initiatives (in GB and further afield including USA, Canada, Netherlands, Germany, South Korea and Sweden)) highlighting areas of good practice and potential pitfalls to be avoided (where relevant), as well as evidence from the Full Service Community Network performance to date.

7.3.1 *Future of FSCN - Resourcing and sustainability*

Benchmarking – Lessons Learned from Other Initiatives: Most full service initiatives depend on resourcing that is additional to that routinely provided to schools in their budgets and other services. Usually this takes the form of extra funding or resources in kind such as staff time. A danger arises when the additional resourcing is available only in the short term but the initiative becomes dependent on it for its longer term survival. When the resourcing is withdrawn, therefore, the initiative either ceases or scales back its activities, or many of its energies go into the pursuit of other short-term resources. This in turn makes a strategic approach difficult to sustain.

Based on experience from elsewhere, there seem to be two possible solutions to this difficulty. One is that the additional resourcing on which the initiative depends can be mainstreamed. (However, it is worth noting that there are, for instance, clear differences between administrations as to what resources they regard as 'core' and what they regard as 'additional' and therefore needing to be supported through funded projects). The other is that the initiative uses any additional resources as seed corn (i.e. pump primer), but focuses as soon as possible on directing/ targeting existing resources to support its aims. In any case, it is likely that the value of existing resources reconfigured in this way will exceed by many times the amount of additional funding available (i.e. using existing resources in smarter, more effective ways is likely to be worth more than buying in new resources). The refocusing of resources in this way, however, requires a high level of trust between partners in the initiative, and a clear strategic plan, so that partners feel confident in contributing their core resources to its work.

FSCN – Key Findings: The FSCN has been funded as a pilot through additional time-bound funding made available by DE and it is dependent on this funding stream. As the funding comes near an end, the options for the FSCN are:

- Funding is mainstreamed;

- A potential shift in focus to the pursuit of resources (for survival) and hence detract from the key work of the project;
- That the funding stream from DE is maintained; or
- That the funding is discontinued.

The first option is unlikely in the prevailing economic environment. The second option would be detrimental to the work of the FSCN and is unlikely to yield the levels of funding required (in the current economic climate). It could also result in the FSCN being changed to support the funding streams available, rather than focus on the DE aims and objectives which are concerned with improving educational attainment. Consideration then must be given to the evidence in favour of the continuation of the current funding stream. With a relatively small core team of staff, the FSCN has proved to be effective and efficient and has made considerable progress as follows:

- it has developed links and relationships with a number of organisations and agencies from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and is beginning to build momentum in the area served by the FSCN – thus helping to initiate conversations about getting the best use from existing resources;
- through bringing relevant stakeholders onto its Board and Operational Group, it is creating new ways of working; for example: the FSCN acting as a catalyst / facilitator between “needs” and “solutions” e.g. liaising between schools which had difficulty with lack of engagement and organisations such as the Bytes Project which has a range of interventions to address such issues (this is just one example);
- it is delivering services to address key needs and hence working to achieve important outcomes (including educational attainment) for considerable numbers of children and young people and their parents in areas of disadvantage. Without the FSCN, these needs would not be addressed. To give an indication of the scale of activity:
- Between January and November 2010, FSCN staff have engaged with **2069 pupils** (1856 through group work and 213 through individual work) and **951 parents** (728 through group work and 223 through individual work) providing support on education and transition issues.
- Between April 2009 and March 2010, Barnardo’s Time 4 Me Counselling Service has delivered a counselling service to **80 individual children** receiving a counselling service. **105 parents** received support and parenting guidance and the **class teacher for each of the 80 pupils** also received support and advice from the Time 4 Me practitioner.
- Between April 2010 and end of November 2010, Barnardo’s provided a Barnardo’s Time 4 Me counselling service to **105 pupils and 121 parents**;

After a relatively short period of active delivery (although the project commenced in 2008, the Education and Transition Workers did not take up post until various points during 2009), the FSCN has shown its potential in terms of short-term successes; it has also developed a mechanism by which it can move to deliver more against key outcomes in the longer-term. However, it is worth highlighting that some expected outcomes will be difficult to measure, others will take some years to come through and some may be difficult to attribute directly to the service. In England the evaluation of FSES in 2005 used a multi-strand evaluation

methodology to overcome this problem. At the heart of the methodology was a ‘theory of change’ approach⁵.

Continued investment in the FSCN would deliver the following:

- begin to address deep-seated needs (including those which impact on ability or readiness to learn, as well as educational needs) which require long-term solutions - in the FSCN area;
- consolidate and build on successes to date in terms of existing operational delivery (such as the range of services provided and number of children (2000+) and parents (1000+) it has engaged with – see above);
- secure key outcomes and impacts in the longer term (including raised aspirations, employability and health as well as educational outcomes) by developing the model of “coherent and connected” working which has taken shape over the pilot phase;
 - Survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the project with regard to **educational attainment and readiness to learn** (see Table 4-9 for summary and Appendix IV for details of staff and parents perceptions of the positive impact on a range of relevant issues including attendance, positive attitude, improving learning and achievement, raising performance in primary and post-primary schools, improving aspirations);
 - A research report completed in June 2010 noted the positive impact of the Barnardo’s Time 4 Me Counselling service on high level outcomes for children including: **Being healthy, Enjoying Learning and Achieving, Contributing to Society** as well as on pupils’ overall studies. The service was also reported to have had a positive impact on pupils’ parents, families and wider communities. Analysis also demonstrated significant decreases in behavioural difficulties after a period of counselling.
 - Survey results provide positive feedback on the impact of the FSCN with regard to **health and well-being**. 84% of staff and 77% of parents felt that the FSCN had a positive impact (limited or major) on the health and well-being of pupils; 92% of staff and 90% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on the self-esteem of children and young people and 92% of staff and 85% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on the confidence of children and young people. 80% of staff and 80% of parents felt that it had a positive impact on improvements in child behaviour and social and health skills.
 - Feedback from the parents’ survey is positive in terms of support provided in school for their children both for learning and for personal matters. Parents also responded favourably on a range of issues related to their relationship with schools, their role

⁵ This involved:

- Mapping the activities undertaken in a series of case study schools;
 Working with leaders in these schools to characterise the situations they faced in their schools and the areas they served which made a full service approach necessary;
- Working with the leaders to make explicit the long-term outcomes for children, families and communities which they expected their full-service approaches to generate;
- Articulating the intermediate changes that were expected to lead from the school’s actions to these long-term outcomes; and
- Monitoring these changes in the short and medium term in order to predict the likelihood of the intended long-term outcomes emerging.

and support provided. Staff and parents' survey results also provide positive feedback on the **impact of the FSCN with regard to parents and families** (see Table 4-9 and Appendix IV) including that the project had a positive impact on parenting skills, parental involvement and opportunities for local adult education and family learning.

- demonstrate that it is delivering value to the public purse through a cost-effective model of working (by gathering further evidence of outcomes and impacts achieved vs investment):
 - To date, the total investment in the FSCN is around £850K; this covers a 4-year period (from project set up 2007/08 through to active delivery in 2009/10 and 2010/11);
 - Considering the last 2 years where services have been developed and rolled out, there has been investment of around £700k which has supported 2000+ children and 1000+ parents i.e. approximately £350 per child supported (this is a crude measure of cost per activity / output but allows us to consider how FSCN fares against other initiatives));
 - This compares favourably with benchmark examples: a GB evaluation⁶ of FSES initiatives (albeit taking into account that they sometimes received substantial amounts of funding from other agencies) demonstrated that the average cost per pupil per year in these schools, works out at between almost £400 and just under £2000.

Recommendation 1:

Given the achievements of the FSCN (in terms of children and families supported through FSCN Workers and sub-contracted services such as Primary School Counselling as well as relationships / partnerships initiated and developed) in relatively short time-scales, we recommend that funding for the initiative should continue until it becomes mainstreamed, subject to issues highlighted in the following Recommendations being addressed.

Recommendation 2:

We recommend that the FSCN Board works with its key stakeholders and other initiatives to develop a plan in terms of future resourcing - and working with partners to identify where mainstreaming or focusing / targeting existing resources is possible (in the short, medium or long term) to meet identified needs.

7.3.2 Strategy versus adhocacy

Benchmarking - – Lessons Learned from Other Initiatives: As noted in Section 6, multi-strand approaches to tackling disadvantage run the risk of degenerating into a disparate group of ad hoc events, interventions and developments. Such an ad hoc approach is costly to maintain, confusing to users, difficult to sustain over time, and highly unlikely to make much impact on underlying problems. To guard against this happening, approaches need to be genuinely strategic in nature. In other words, good practice (based on experience from elsewhere) dictates that they need to be based on:

⁶ Cummings, C., Dyson, A., Muijs, D., Papps, I., Pearson, D., Raffo, C., Tiplady, L., Todd, L. & with Crowther, D. (2007) Evaluation of the full service extended schools initiative: final report. Research report RR852 (London, DfES)

- An analysis of the situation in which they are based, not simply in the form of a list of problems or a statistical demonstration of levels of disadvantage, but an identification of underlying causal factors and their relationship (this should be based on existing evidence). A clear articulation of the outcomes that are aimed at in the long term and how these outcomes relate to one another.
- An identification of the strands of action that will be undertaken over time, and an analysis of precisely how these actions will generate the outcomes that are intended.

An analysis of this kind tends to be omitted where practitioners and decision-makers are keen to 'get on' with tackling presenting problems whose causes and solutions seem self-evident. However, the evidence from elsewhere is that it is a task which requires substantial attention in its own right, and which needs constantly to be revisited. An advantage of working in this way is that the initiative can be evaluated against both the short term and long term outcomes expected from it; funders can also review the progress being achieved against a range of indicators that demonstrate whether progress is being made towards achievement of the key outcomes. In other words, it can be judged against the outcomes at which it actually aims, and the intermediate changes it intends can be identified well before final outcomes are evident.

FSCN – Key Findings: The FSCN set out its overarching vision, themes and objectives through documents including its PID, Terms of Reference and Action Plan. These documents are informed by identified needs and gaps (identified from a review of other local plans and strategies) and guide the work of the Board and Operational Group and also dictate the direction of travel and areas of focus for the work of the FSCN Staff (documented in their action plans). In this way, it has worked to develop a shared / collective understanding of issues and gaps.

Experience from other “multi-strand” initiatives suggests that such plans should focus on understanding the underlying root causes of problems and the dynamics between these in order to effect long term change. This would help to ensure a **collective** understanding of the issues and identified gaps and potential areas of **responsibility** for some of the issues. This does not mean that the FSCN should have responsibility for addressing all of these difficulties but the availability of such an analysis would help to highlight connections between issues and areas in which the FSCN can have an impact and areas where intervention from another agency (outside the FSCN) may be required. This is consistent with the FSCN’s style of working: aiming to influence and shape an approach to improve future ways of joint working.

Evidence to date demonstrates that the FSCN is working in a way that is consistent with good practice from elsewhere and it has avoided the potential risks of degenerating into an ad hoc / disparate approach that has been apparent in some initiatives considered in benchmarking. There is scope to build on and develop these established foundations – continuing to work in a strategic way that takes on board lessons from good practice elsewhere.

Recommendation 3:

We recommend that the FSCN develops a causal analysis of the situation that it is seeking to address (drawing on existing information and analysis carried out by others). This has already been begun to the extent that information is available on the difficulties faced by the schools and the pupils, families and communities they serve. However, existing information should be brought together in a way which explores the dynamics which underlie those difficulties. This will involve accessing information on causal analysis carried out by relevant agencies working in the areas to ensure a collective view and understanding.

7.3.3 *Clarity of Purpose*

Benchmarking – Lessons Learned from Other Initiatives: In common with other similar types of initiatives considered in Section 6, the FSCN's aims are ambitious and wide-ranging. However, experience from other such initiatives demonstrates that there is (potentially at least) a tension between the recognition of the inter-connectedness of problems in areas of disadvantage and the aim of tackling these problems simultaneously on the one hand, and the apparent prioritising of improving children's educational attainment as the most important outcome on the other.

In other words, bringing people together from agencies / organisations (with an interest in a range of outcomes and each with a different focus / targets) under an initiative which gives highest priority to the outcome of educational attainment can lead to some tensions. By ensuring that there is a clear statement of purpose explaining what the issues are and how they are connected, participating organisations should have a greater stake in / commitment to / ownership of the project.

From international experience, there is no reason why raised attainment cannot go hand in hand with wider impacts on child and family well being, community development and area regeneration. (It is widely recognised that these issues are inter-connected). On the contrary, there are reasons to believe that different kinds of outcome might reinforce one another (positively or negatively), particularly in respect of disadvantaged individuals and families, and particularly in the longer term. However, it is important to be clear how these different outcomes relate to one another.

Where the overriding priority is to bring about short term gains in measured attainment, then other outcomes are valuable only insofar as they contribute to this end, schools might reasonably expect to take the lead in decision-making, and the success or otherwise of the initiative can be judged in terms of what happens to attainment levels. (If the intention is to achieve short term improvements in attainment, then such initiatives are best led by schools. However, the FSCN has a much wider remit than that and a different approach is required). On the other hand, if a project aims at a wide range of outcomes, including but not restricted to rises in attainment, then very different patterns of action, decision-making and judgement might be expected. Either of these positions is defensible. The problem is when there is lack of clarity, or when different stakeholders hold different views. Perhaps the greatest risk is when the accountability mechanisms to which initiatives are subject operate with different priorities and on a different timescale from those guiding the initiative itself.

FSCN – Key Findings: The FSCN set out its overarching vision, themes and objectives through documents including its PID, Terms of Reference and Action Plan. These documents are informed by identified needs and gaps (identified from a review of other local plans and strategies) and guide the work of the Board and Operational Group and also dictate the direction of travel and areas of focus for the work of the FSCN Staff (documented in their action plans).

As highlighted in the Interim Evaluation Report (Recommendation 1), at this early stage in the lifetime of the project, there was a need to revisit and refocus on the role, measures of success and deliverables of the FSCN to ensure clarity and consistent understanding amongst Board and Operational Group members (and hence avoid any of the potential for tensions that are noted as an issue in the review of experience from elsewhere). Since then, action has been taken to clarify and reaffirm the position. This means that the project is well-placed to look ahead – having brought organisations and agencies together, built positive links and created / enhanced working

relationships and approaches to collective working to address common aims. However this is not area in which it can become complacent as the external environment changes.

Security of funding (as per Recommendations 1 and 2 above) would allow the project to develop a longer-term strategy which should be based on understanding of the underlying issues (and dynamics between these) which manifest themselves in the problems which the FSCN is seeking to address (as described in Recommendation 3).

As a pilot, the FSCN has demonstrated its potential in the short term. To fulfil that potential, there is an opportunity to build on its success to date, bringing partners who are already engaged and methods of working already developed but taking the Project to the next level – collaborative / connected working (whilst maintaining focus on educational attainment) to address deeper issues over a longer timescale.

Recommendation 4:

We recommend that the FSCN develops a coherent, long-term strategy to change the situation identified in the causal analysis. This means identifying how the situation needs to change in the long term, and how the FSCN (and its partners working collaboratively) can put in place actions to bring about these changes. These actions have to do more than address individual problems one by one. They have to address the underlying dynamics of the situation as revealed by the causal analysis. The plan should be flexible to allow for external changes. (Given the time-bound nature of funding for the FSCN, in practice, this may dictate that the FSCN follows a Programme for Government strategy involving other responsible bodies and focusing on the role of FSCN in achieving this.)

7.3.4 Evaluating Progress

Consistent with good practice in project management and linked to the development of a longer-term strategy (Recommendation 4) is the need to evaluate progress, reflect back on plans and make any necessary adjustments.

At present, in its early stages, the FSCN has made use of a number of tools to capture feedback and assess its progress to date including:

- Monthly activity reports from the FSCN Staff detailing the numbers of parents and children they have supported and the types of intervention provided;
- Feedback forms used by the FSCN Staff gathering views from those they have supported;
- Monthly activity reports relating to Barnardo's Time 4 Me Primary Counselling Service providing details of services delivered under contract to the FSCN;
- Annual Report prepared by the FSCN Manager providing an overview of progress across the project;
- Broad-ranging consultation with stakeholders through interviews and focus groups (conducted by FGS McClure Watters);
- Surveys undertaken with parents, children and school staff (conducted By FGS McClure Watters with support from the FSCN staff).

It is important that such tools continue to be used to capture feedback on progress towards the FSCN outcomes and that feedback from these tools continues to be considered and has an influence on the FSCN's plans.

There is also a need to complement existing tools (which tend to be focused on the short-medium term indicators) with mechanisms which track progress on a longer-term (and with a focus on outcomes).

Recommendation 5:

We recommend developing appropriate long-term evaluation plans including long-term outcomes and appropriate (and robust) systems to track these (including providing trend information to confirm the direction of the FSCN). Whilst it is important that (individual) outcomes continue to be monitored in the short to medium term, the next stage in evaluation has to take into account both the long-term nature of some outcomes and the complex processes through which they are likely to be generated. The evaluation plan has to be based on the fundamental analysis of situation dynamics and on the (strategic) long term aims of the initiative, rather than simply on a monitoring of performance indicators.

7.3.5 *Complex relationships*

Benchmarking – Lessons Learned from Other Initiatives: Many initiatives which are similar to the FSCN, depend for their success on a complex series of relationships between schools and other providers and stakeholders. These are mirrored in similarly complex governance arrangements. Such complexity is inevitable where coordinated, multi-strand approaches are attempted. However, experience from elsewhere indicates that a common pitfall of such initiatives elsewhere is that either they fall apart or (more commonly) descend into a bureaucratic exercise.

FSCN – Key Findings. The Interim Evaluation Report highlighted some of the issues arising from the involvement of a wide range of organisations in the FSCN and, particularly in its very early stages, the need to ensure that those involved in the FSCN understood their role and the purpose of the initiative. Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 in the Interim Evaluation Report proposed actions to address the situation at that time and the FSCN has responded accordingly.

However, this is not an area in which the FSCN should become complacent; much of the success of the project depends on the strength of relationships leading to connected and collaborative working. As individuals are likely to come and go on the Board and Operational Group and within the Staff Team, it is important to embed and adhere to “good practice” principles regarding joint working and managing complex relationships. Many of these are already implicit in the work of the FSCN – however it is important that these are stated explicitly to ensure the continued effective working of the FSCN and to avoid any of the pitfalls that have highlighted in the review of experience from elsewhere.

Recommendation 6:

In order to ensure that complex relationships are co-ordinated and sustained, we recommend that the FSCN continues to adopt the following principles and re-states these for the benefit of Board and Operational Group members:

- **Relationships need time for partners to learn about each other and to develop trust, and stability in terms of the personnel involved.** False starts and teething problems are inevitable. It often takes schools, for instance, many years to develop strong relationships with other agencies.
- **Governance structures need to have a clear strategic role, rather than simply being concerned with ad hoc decision-making.** The formulation of a joint strategy creates a

framework within which partners can begin to find their way into productive relationships with each other rather than drifting into tokenistic participation or becoming concerned only with protecting their own interests.

- **Complex relationships and structures need leadership and maintenance.** Someone or some group needs to have the capacity to give a clear lead and to ensure that the work of the partnership gets done.

Key to the achievement of all of these is the role of the Manager in continuing to build and maintain relationships with other stakeholders delivering similar services in the FSCN area in order to ensure that there is no duplication / overlap and to maximise the benefits for the area. This should be done in a focused and systematic manner (linked back to overall aims of the FSCN).

7.3.6 Community participation

Benchmarking – Lessons Learned from Other Initiatives: Based on experience from elsewhere, it is evident that initiatives located in areas of disadvantage almost always present themselves as working for the benefit of disadvantaged children, families and communities. In practice, however, there are few ways for these people to become involved in the decisions made by the initiative. Typically, professionals decide what is in local people’s ‘best interest’, and restrict their participation to limited forms of consultation and market research.

There are often real problems in changing this situation in view of the lack of willingness and capacity on the part of some communities to become involved, and the danger of non-representative voices claiming to speak for local people. There is, therefore, no easy solution to this problem, but some initiatives do take the issue of representation seriously, and develop multiple means of engaging with children and adults rather than relying on a one-shot approach. Some also engage in community capacity building so that the lack of experience local people may have with decision-making is less of a barrier. Others involve local people in the provision process and enable them to control some of the initiative’s activities directly.

FSCN – Key Findings: The FSCN Manager plays a key role in building and maintaining relationships with a wide range of organizations. He has actively engaged with key individuals, and has successfully introduced them to the FSCN and secured their involvement. Sustaining these relationships is important to the future success of the FSCN. It is also important to ensure that this is kept under regular review to ensure that all those who have a stake in the FSCN are involved. These relationships, together with the contacts established by the FSCN Staff ensure that there are open channels of communication between the wider community and the FSCN – i.e. multiple means of engaging the local community in line with good practice from similar initiatives from elsewhere.

Recommendation 7:

We recommend that the FSCN continues to ensure that appropriate partners are engaged in a relevant and appropriate manner and that there is buy in at strategic and operational levels and that this is revisited as part of the annual planning process.

7.3.7 *Sharing Good Practice*

Benchmarking – Lessons Learned from Other Initiatives: Evidence from benchmarking with similar initiatives based elsewhere, including on an international basis, demonstrates that there is a wide range of approaches to Full Service provision.

FSCN – Key Findings: Within Northern Ireland, the Full Service Extended Schools project based in the Boys' Model and Model School for Girls provides one such local example of an alternative approach to project delivery. Given the initiatives have been established to tackle similar issues, albeit that the delivery mechanism are substantially different, there would be merit in them working more closely together to share information, ideas and experience and to take advantage of any economies of scale which may arise from closer working.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the FSCN and other related initiatives such as in the Model Schools and others involved (or likely to be involved) in Full Service provision, establish a forum to share and exchange good practice and experience. By bringing together representatives of various Full Service initiatives, there is clearly scope for learning and sharing of experience.