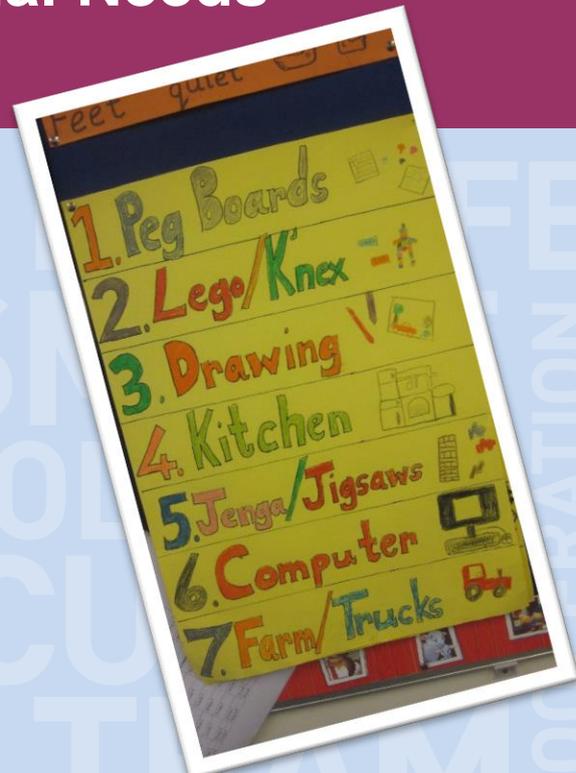# Review of the Pilot of a New Model for Allocating Teaching Resources to Mainstream Schools to Support Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Contents

1:   Introduction, Background and Context

In 2014, the National Council for Special Education's (NCSE) report *Delivery for Students with Special Educational Needs: A better and more equitable way* recommended that there be a new system for allocating teaching resources to mainstream schools to support students with special educational needs. During the 2015/2016 school year, the Department of Education and Skills (the Department) conducted a pilot study in forty-seven schools, at primary and post-primary levels, to examine the feasibility of such a system. As part of this pilot study, the Inspectorate was asked to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the allocation model as demonstrated in the pilot schools. This report examines the background to the project, outlines the features of the proposed new allocation model, reviews the operation of the model in a sample number of the pilot schools and makes recommendations intended to inform the wider implementation of the model in all schools.

The overall policy objective of the Department is to promote the inclusive education of children with special educational needs in mainstream educational settings where possible, or where this is not possible, to provide for specialised educational settings in special-class or special-school placements. The vast majority of students with special educational needs now attend mainstream schools with additional supports. In the decades since the Special Education Review Committee (1993) conducted a comprehensive review of the services that existed at that time, the State has invested significantly in supports allocated to students with special educational needs, especially in mainstream schools. The Department's total expenditure on special education grew from €468 million in 2004, to approximately €1.5 billion in 2016.

NCSE annual reports for the period 2009-2014 note that the number of students enabled to receive low-incidence resource-teaching support in mainstream schools increased from 38,000 in 2011 to 45,700 in 2014. These educational supports are provided through the allocation of a quantum of additional resource-teaching hours for individual students with appropriate diagnoses. Applications for these additional hours amount to over 13,000 applications per year, and this application process involves

assessment by professionals for each case, submission of applications by schools and adjudication of entitlements by the NCSE.

Currently, there are two separate means of allocating resources to support students with special educational needs:

- An automatic entitlement to resources based on categories of disability for students with low-incidence special educational needs (Appendix 1)
- A general-allocation model (GAM) based on the number of mainstream class teachers at primary level, or student numbers combined with set levels of high-incidence special educational needs at post-primary level (Appendix 2).

The existing system for allocating additional resource teachers to primary schools is governed by Circular 02/05. Under the terms of this circular, the Department uses the GAM to provide schools with an allocation of teaching hours (or full teaching posts) to cater for students in receipt of learning support, students with English as an additional language (EAL) and students with high-incidence special educational needs. For students with a diagnosed low-incidence special educational need, the NCSE allocates additional resource-teaching hours in accordance with Circular 02/05. Schools have not been allowed to combine their resource-teaching hours with their general-allocation hours for the purpose of creating fulltime posts.

At post-primary level, a similar system of general allocation of resource-teaching hours is applied through the staffing circulars (Circulars 0010/2012, 0070/2014, 0003/2016). Schools receive an allocation of teaching hours for students requiring learning support based on school size, on the number of students with English as an additional language and on a fixed allocation for students with a diagnosed high-incidence special educational need. The NCSE examines applications for students with low-incidence special educational needs, and allocates additional resource-teaching hours in accordance with the relevant circular.

The existing system of providing for low-incidence special educational needs is based on a diagnostic/medical approach. There is, however, research that highlights various shortcomings associated with a diagnostic approach to resource allocation. These

include issues around the reliability and validity of disability categories (Desforges and Lindsay, 2010), and the over-identification of children from certain minority and socio-economic groups (Florian et al., 2010). Other research highlights the potential for parents and teachers to hold lower educational expectations for students who have been labelled within a disability category (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2013). Increasingly, special educational needs are viewed as being on a continuum rather than comprising discrete categories (Lewis and Norwich, 2005).

In 2012, the NCSE was requested by the Department to provide policy advice on how students with special educational needs should be supported in schools. This policy paper, *Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Schools* (NCSE, 2013), recommended the following:

> …a new model should be developed for the allocation of additional teaching resources to mainstream schools based on the profiled need of each school, without the need for a diagnosis of disability (NCSE, 2013)

The policy advice also suggested that the current system of resource allocation was inequitable and potentially confirmed social advantage for some children and reinforced social disadvantage for others. Consequently, the NCSE recommended that the current system be changed.

Based on this advice, the Minister acknowledged the potential for improving the system of allocating resources to schools to support students with special educational needs and requested that the NCSE establish a working group to develop a proposal that would reflect of recommendations in the NCSE policy advice. This working group submitted a report, *Delivery for Students with Special Educational Needs* (NCSE, 2014), which cited the following reasons for the introduction of a new allocation model.

- A substantial component of the current model is based on the availability of a diagnosis of disability. However, access to professionals who can make this diagnosis is not readily available to all students. Some families can afford to pay for private assessments and, where eligible, these students can immediately access additional teaching resources. The allocation of additional State educational resources should not depend on parents' ability to pay for

professional assessments or their proximity to Health Service Executive supports.

- There is a real risk that children are being diagnosed as having a disability for resource-allocation purposes rather than such a diagnosis being required for clinical reasons.

- There is a spectrum of ability and disability within every category of special educational need. The current system allocates the same level of support for students within certain categories of disability even though one student may have a greater need for support than another with the same disability. A diagnosis of a disability, of itself, does not necessarily inform the level of need for additional teaching support.

- Additional resources are currently allocated to schools to cater for students with high-incidence disabilities and students with low attainments in literacy / numeracy on the basis of enrolment (post-primary), or number of class teachers (primary), and are not linked to the level of need for such support in schools.

- Under the current model, there has been no systematic attempt to assess outcomes achieved by those to whom resources are allocated.

In February 2015, the then Minister for Education and Skills announced that she was not proposing to change the way that teachers were allocated to schools for students with special educational needs for the 2015/16 school year. In taking this decision, the Minister was guided by the advice of the NCSE working group, which recommended that sufficient time be allowed for consultation before the new model was implemented. Through a consultation process, there was a broad welcome for the proposed new model from parents, disability groups, schools and the education partners and it was hoped that the new allocation model could be introduced in September 2015. However, there was not sufficient time to address all of the concerns that had been raised in advance of the 2015 school year so the Minister established a pilot of the new allocation model, which took place during the 2015/16 school year.

Responsibility for the design, implementation and review of the pilot was assigned to a steering group (Appendix 3) and a working group (Appendix 4) comprising representatives from the NCSE, the Educational Research Centre (ERC), Special

Education Support Service (SESS), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the Inspectorate and the Special Education Section of the Department. In order to provide for the broadest possible representation, this pilot aimed to test the model in a number of schools of different types and sizes, and to allow for the practical effect of the application of the new model in pilot schools to be gauged.

2: Features of the Proposed New Allocation Model

Underlying principles:

The proposed changes to the allocation of additional teaching resources are based on the following four principles:

- All students, irrespective of special educational need, are welcomed and enabled to enrol in their local schools.

- Additional teaching supports are allocated to schools in line with the school's educational profile, and are utilised by schools to support the meaningful education and inclusion of students with special educational needs in mainstream schools.

- Additional teaching supports are deployed and managed effectively by schools to support students with special educational needs, in line with their assessed learning needs.

- A whole-school approach is adopted by schools to the education of students with special educational needs, including programme planning and the implementation of early- intervention and prevention programmes.

The new model differs substantially from the existing model. Under the new model, the Department provides the resources directly to the schools, and enables the schools to allocate these resources flexibly to students according to their priority learning needs, without the requirement for a diagnosis, a professional report or disability labelling. Thus, it is expected that all schools will be more inclusive, and that they will have the capacity to enrol and provide appropriate education to all students, including those with special educational needs.

School profiles

Under the new model, each school receives an allocated number of teaching hours to provide for the needs of all its students based on the school's profile. Once the profile is calculated, a school's allocation of resource-teaching hours is likely to remain unchanged for a period. This is to ensure stability in a school's staffing arrangements. A key feature of the proposed new allocation model is the school's ability to match the

available resources to students' needs. For the new model, additional teaching resources are allocated to schools based on:

- The school's educational profile
- A baseline component

The school's educational profile comprises three elements:[1]

- The number of students with complex special educational needs.
- The number of students performing at or below STen 4 on standardised tests of literacy and numeracy in primary schools, or the number of students scoring below grade levels corresponding to the 16th percentile in English and Mathematics at Junior Certificate in post-primary schools.
- The social context of the school.

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[1] The profiles were based on a redistribution of resources, 15% of those resources are applied to the baseline, approximately 50% were used for complex needs (based on the existing low-incidence allocations) and the remaining 35% were redistributed on a weighted points system, per qualifying pupil, as follows: gender (0.5%); Social context (1.37%); STen 3 results in literacy or numeracy (2.7%); STen 2 results in literacy or numeracy (5.5%); STen 1 results in literacy or numeracy (8.2%).

3:   Selecting and Supporting the Pilot Schools

Following a selection and invitation process, 47 mainstream schools (Appendix 6), comprising 28 primary schools and 19 post-primary schools from various parts of the country participated in the pilot. The pilot schools were chosen through a stratified sample devised by the ERC to ensure that there was participation by schools of various types and sizes.

Pilot schools were provided with an allocation of special-educational-needs teaching hours based on the application of the new resource-allocation model recommended by the NCSE to each school's individual school profile. The schools participated in the pilot on a voluntary basis, and for most, their allocation of additional teaching hours remained static or was increased based on the application of this model to their school. For a small number of schools, strict application of the school's profile criteria would have led to a reduction in their allocation of teaching hours. For the purpose of this voluntary pilot, no school had its allocation reduced. Inevitably, this limited the extent to which full implementation of the model could be tested and evaluated in the pilot project. The pilot was also constrained by the fact that the complex-educational-needs aspect of school profiles was calculated from each school's existing allocation of resource-teaching hours from the NCSE. In the event of full implementation of the allocation model, this aspect of the profile will require precise definition and reliable data sources. Consultations were held with education partners and representative bodies in advance of and during the pilot to explain its intended operation, to allay concerns, and to receive feedback.

In order to assist the pilot schools in allocating their resource-teaching hours equitably and effectively, the Department issued guidance for the pilot schools in its publication, *Better Services, Better Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs (2015)*. In that document, schools were requested to consider the following five themes to guide their engagement with the pilot:

1. Identification of educational need, and planning for evidence-informed interventions through the NEPS continuum-of-support process (Appendix 5)

2. Early intervention and prevention of learning and social/emotional difficulties using evidence-informed programmes

3. Effective teaching and learning at whole-school, classroom and individual learner level

4. Planning and monitoring outcomes for students with special educational needs

5. On-going, meaningful engagement between the school, parents and external agencies

During the year, the pilot schools were provided with a comprehensive suite of supports and guidance to enable them to implement the model as intended by the Department. At the start and end of the pilot, each school was invited to complete and submit a questionnaire to identify professional development needs, and to gauge each school's successes and challenges in engaging with the pilot and its themes. Information from these questionnaires was used in the design of five support meetings provided to each school during the year. These meetings were convened in Athlone or Dublin, and schools received support from personnel from NEPS, SESS, Special Education Section of the Department, NCSE and the Inspectorate. Presentations and workshops were provided for teachers on topics including differentiation, target setting and monitoring, group consultation, early intervention and evidence-based interventions. In addition to these central support meetings, personnel from NEPS and SESS provided a range of supports from their existing resources to many pilot schools through school visits on request.

4: The Monitoring and Review Process: Methodology

The steering group agreed the process for monitoring and reviewing the pilot. The Inspectorate was given responsibility for leading the monitoring and review of the effects of the application of the resource-allocation model in the pilot schools.

The Inspectorate invited and received submissions from Special Education Section of the Department, SESS, NEPS and the NCSE in respect of their involvement in the pilot, and particularly their comments on the successes and challenges in the operation of the allocation model. These responses are integrated throughout this report and incorporated in the conclusions and recommendations. Towards the end of the school year, all of the pilot schools were invited to submit anonymised versions of their completed self-reflective questionnaires to the ERC so that the schools' views of the allocation model could be gathered.

The Inspectorate conducted a detailed review of the implementation of the model in a sample of twenty schools (eleven primary and nine post-primary schools) in May 2016. The review model was designed as a series of monitoring and support visits which facilitated inspectors in working co-professionally with the schools. Data collected during the visits form a significant part of the evidence base for this report. Inspectors spent one day in each of the participating schools, and they collated and submitted information on the following key research questions.

1. **Does the new resource-allocation model facilitate schools in using the additional teaching resources more equitably and fairly for students in need of additional support?**
2. **Do schools welcome the flexibility the proposed new resource-allocation model provides them with to deploy the resources they receive to meet the needs of students with special educational needs?**
3. **Are schools able to use the additional teaching resources they receive under the model to engage with the five themes of the pilot and thereby provide a better educational service to students with special educational needs?**

Inspectors sought a copy of each school's self-report questionnaire prior to the school visit so that the school's views could be discussed in detail during the visit. The monitoring visits were designed to draw upon a variety of sources to review the operation and the effectiveness of the model as reported by the schools. It also sought to reflect the views of education partners and to identify practice that enabled the schools to improve provision for students with special educational needs.

The following activities were undertaken during the course of visits:

- Co-professional dialogue with principals, SEN co-ordinators and relevant staff members
- Collaborative review of relevant school documents with staff
- Visits to learning environments and observation of teaching and learning
- Use of a questionnaire to gather the views of parents of students with SEN
- Focus-group discussion and interview to sample the views of students with SEN.

5:   The Monitoring and Review Process: Findings

As well as engaging in co-professional discussions with principals and teachers in relation to the pilot themes, inspectors, at the invitation of the school, observed practice introduced or developed as a result of the new allocation model. The next section of this chapter presents and discusses the findings from these visits with reference to the three key research questions that guided the monitoring and review. The third part of the section is a little longer as it presents and discusses the findings in the light of the five themes that were intended to guide schools' engagement with the pilot. In the case of each research question and theme, the findings from primary and post-primary schools are first examined separately and then combined in a summary paragraph.

Throughout this report specific terms are used as quantitative measures. The table below indicates these terms and the corresponding percentage range.

Almost all	More than 90%
Most	75 – 90%
Majority	50 -70 %
Fewer than half	25 – 49%
A small number	16 – 24%
A few	Up to 15%

5.1   Key research question 1
Does the new resource-allocation model facilitate schools in using the additional teaching resources more equitably and fairly for students in need of additional support?

Findings from primary schools

Almost all of the primary schools agreed that the new resource-allocation model gives the school the autonomy to use its additional resources to meet students' needs in a timely manner. Welcoming this flexibility, one principal made the following comment.
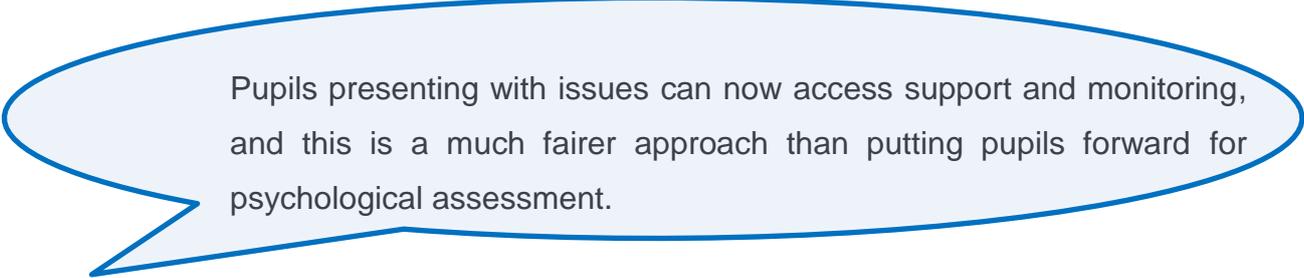
> Pupils presenting with issues can now access support and monitoring, and this is a much fairer approach than putting pupils forward for psychological assessment.

Evidence from the Inspectorate's monitoring visits clearly demonstrates that the primary schools have engaged conscientiously with this approach to prioritise and address students' needs equitably. The NEPS continuum-of-support approach was used in all of the primary schools as a means of early identification of learning needs and in the provision of a staged approach to meeting these needs. Many evidence-based interventions were implemented for literacy, numeracy and social and emotional needs. Support teaching in many of these schools was provided through a variety of group and co-operative teaching models to serve the needs of a greater number of students and to promote inclusion.

Findings from post-primary schools

Most of the post-primary schools reported using the allocation model to "move resources to quickly address the needs of students as they arise." Emphasising this flexibility, one SEN co-ordinator described how the new allocation model is focused on students' needs rather than on an allocation of low-incidence resource hours for a syndrome or label:
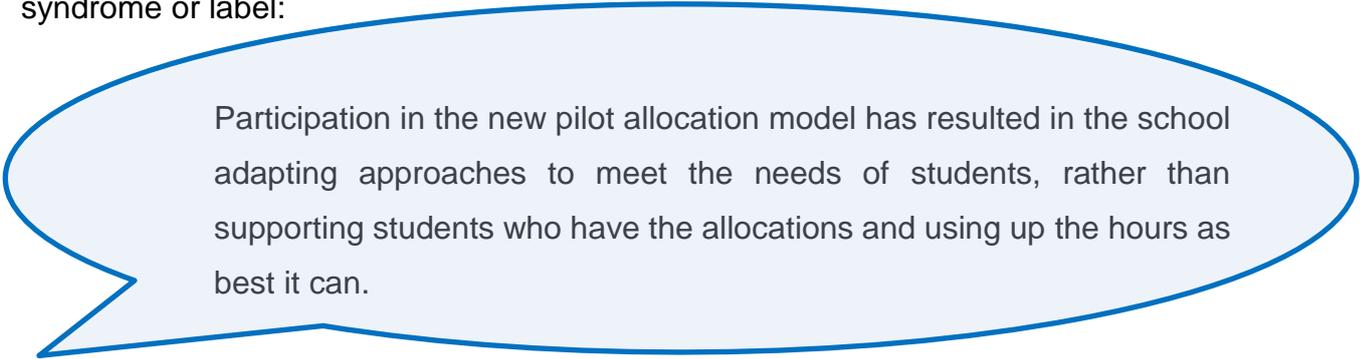
> Participation in the new pilot allocation model has resulted in the school adapting approaches to meet the needs of students, rather than supporting students who have the allocations and using up the hours as best it can.

The majority of post-primary schools report that using the allocation model improved their systems of assessing students' needs and enabled them to provide a range of interventions and supports through small-group withdrawal and team-teaching approaches. While current rigid timetabling in some schools makes it difficult to withdraw students flexibly, one teacher made the following suggestion:
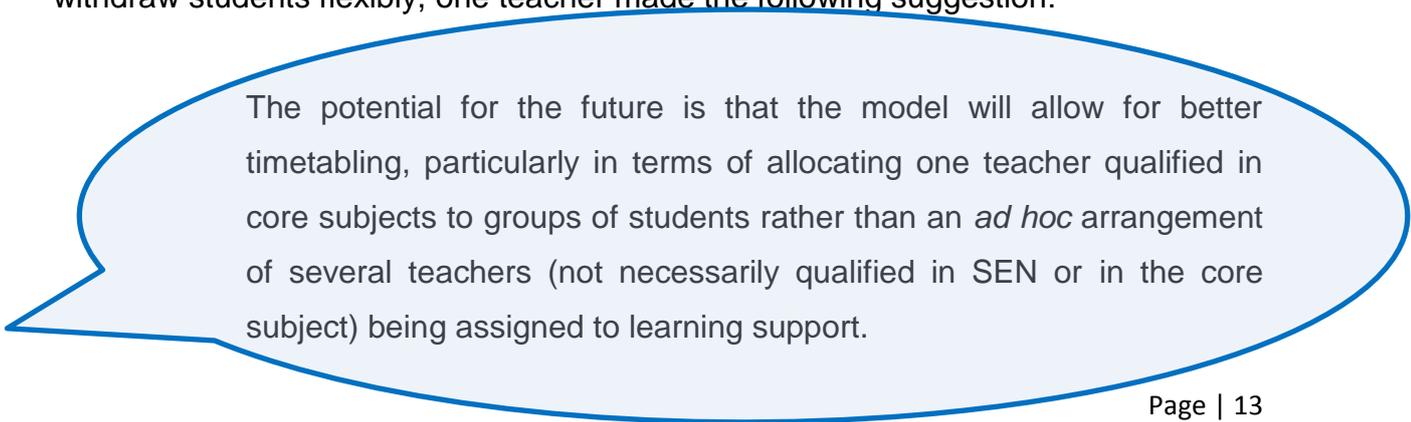
> The potential for the future is that the model will allow for better timetabling, particularly in terms of allocating one teacher qualified in core subjects to groups of students rather than an *ad hoc* arrangement of several teachers (not necessarily qualified in SEN or in the core subject) being assigned to learning support.

Summary of findings on key question 1

Overall, it is clear that almost all of the primary and post-primary schools felt enabled by the new allocation model to provide additional teaching resources to students with the greatest needs. Several teachers commented positively on how the model had allowed their schools to deal with particular students' academic or behavioural needs very efficiently without the immediate need for professional assessments. A minority of schools reported that whole-school approaches they had developed led to a fairer and more equitable allocation of resources for students and to an increase in team-teaching approaches. The NEPS group consultation approach to identifying need was valued by many schools as a collaborative problem-solving approach to identifying pupils' needs. The continuum-of-support approach was seen by many teachers as an important basis for prioritising learning needs and allocating resources equitably. On the evidence collected by the Inspectorate, the allocation model appeared to be particularly successful in the provision of early intervention and the implementation of short, targeted interventions to address priority issues.

5.2 Key research question 2

Do schools welcome the flexibility the proposed new resource-allocation model provides them with to deploy the resources they receive to meet the needs of students with special educational needs?

Findings from primary schools

Almost all of the primary schools welcomed the flexibility that the model allowed them to provide for particularly challenging situations in a timely and appropriate manner. Several examples of such interventions were provided to inspectors, and it was clear that teachers in these cases were able to access supports, implement appropriate interventions and scale back the intensity of interventions as the situation improved. The flexibility of the resource-allocation model was particularly welcomed in some of the smaller primary schools because it allows for the combination of part-time learning-support and resource-teaching roles into full-time positions, and thereby helps with the co-ordination of staff and the continuity of provision.

Findings from post-primary schools

Most of the post-primary schools regarded the flexibility to allocate their resource-teaching hours as being very positive. Most teachers acknowledged that through the pilot, their whole-school approaches had improved and that they were targeting students more effectively. There was also a broad welcome for the new initiatives introduced as part of the pilot. However, teachers in one school, mindful of the flexible nature of the allocations, suggested the need for further written guidelines from the Department on how they should deploy their teaching hours.

In another school, members of the SEN team reported that involvement in the pilot had prompted robust discussion about the school's internal structures for allocating resources. In a few schools, supports were limited by an over-reliance on withdrawing students with exemptions from Irish when that subject was timetabled, rather than expanding supports for a greater number of students through team-teaching approaches. Some of these teachers wondered how exemptions from Irish would be obtained for their new students without labelling or psychological reports in future years. While some of these issues reflect a misunderstanding of the model's needs-based approach, it would be opportune for the Department to consider the new allocation model in any revision of arrangements for exemptions from Irish.

Summary of findings on key question 2

Overall, schools welcomed the flexibility of allocation associated with the new model. It is clear that this flexibility has the potential to meet urgent needs very effectively and also to facilitate schools in introducing a variety of interventions focused on students' needs. However, further advice should be made available through the support services for the minority of schools that seek more clarity and guidance in exercising this flexibility.

5.3   Key research question 3

Are schools able to use the additional teaching resources they receive under the model to engage with the five themes of the pilot and thereby provide a better educational service to students with special educational needs?

Theme One:
Identification of educational need and planning for evidence-informed interventions through the continuum-of-support process

Findings from primary schools

Almost all of the primary schools visited were positively disposed towards the pilot model. This was clearly reflected in their reported engagement with theme one and also verified by inspectors' observations. All of the primary schools expressed their appreciation of the supports they received on the training days to help with the identification of educational needs and the NEPS continuum of support. In almost all of the primary schools, it was evident that schools' awareness of the continuum-of-support approach was significantly developed as a result of their participation in the piloting of the model. Schools reported that this awareness assisted them in improving their identification of students' early learning difficulties. While teachers in a minority of the schools reported systematic use of the continuum of support approach prior to the pilot, most schools reported further developing its use as a result of their participation in the pilot. Most schools provided evidence of a heightened awareness and more extensive use of a range of diagnostic and screening assessments to identify learning difficulties and to guide the target-setting process for student support plans. Almost all schools reported improvements in their planning for students, better collaboration between classroom and support teachers and more effective tracking of students' progress.

Schools reported much better use of in-class teaching supports, station teaching, appropriate reading materials and implementation of programmes such as Friends for Life, Maths Recovery, SNIP, Toe by Toe and social skills programmes. Not all of the primary schools reported positive engagement with theme one. In these cases, criticisms usually related to the schools not receiving additional staffing through the Department's calculation of their school profiles. These schools reported little change in the manner in which they planned and co-ordinated their available teaching resources.

Findings from post-primary schools

Positive responses to the pilot were recorded in most of the post-primary schools visited. There was a high level of satisfaction with the professional development provided during the support meetings for the pilot. Almost all of the post-primary schools reported that they had been able to improve their systems of assessment during the course of the pilot. This enabled them to identify students' learning needs and track progress. Inspectors saw evidence that the continuum-of-support files were used in almost all of the post-primary schools to outline targets and programmes for students requiring additional supports. Most schools reported that they were enabled to provide short-term, targeted interventions for students.

Schools evaluated the effectiveness of some of these interventions through specific assessment processes. Some evidence-based approaches, including *Friends for Life,* were implemented successfully in a majority of pilot schools. One school welcomed the freedom afforded by the new model to "look beyond those students with professional reports" to identify and support students who had arrived from primary schools without any previously documented concerns. Where post-primary schools indicated difficulties with the allocation model, they usually referred to time spent on co-ordination of provision and the time required for target setting.

Summary of findings on theme one

Overall, there is evidence that most primary and post-primary schools were able to engage meaningfully with Theme One of the pilot and that the quality of provision for students had improved consequently. There was almost universal acceptance of the continuum-of-support approach to identify additional learning needs and to implement evidence-based approaches to address these needs.

One principal made the following comment.
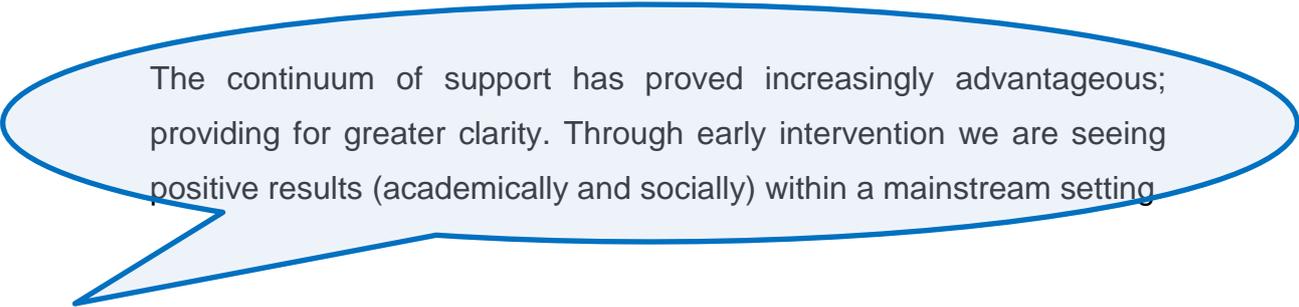
The continuum of support has proved increasingly advantageous; providing for greater clarity. Through early intervention we are seeing positive results (academically and socially) within a mainstream setting

There were some reservations about the amount of time required for the target-setting and monitoring process, and some post-primary schools expressed a strong desire for the appointment of a SEN co-ordinator post. In both school sectors, there was some anxiety about the feasibility of maintaining these improvements in the event of any future staffing reductions as a consequence of the allocation model.

Theme Two:
Early intervention and prevention of learning and social/emotional difficulties using evidence-informed programmes

Findings from primary schools

Almost all of the primary schools reported that they had introduced a range of evidence-based interventions as a result of their involvement in the pilot. Most of these interventions were deployed in junior classes and were aimed at preventing or addressing learning, social and emotional difficulties. They included Friends for Life; Fun Friends; Ready, Set Go; Reading Recovery; Literacy Lift Off; Maths Recovery; SNIP, speech-and-language programmes and mindfulness and social programmes. Inspectors observed the effective use of a number of these interventions during the school visits. One inspector commented as follows.
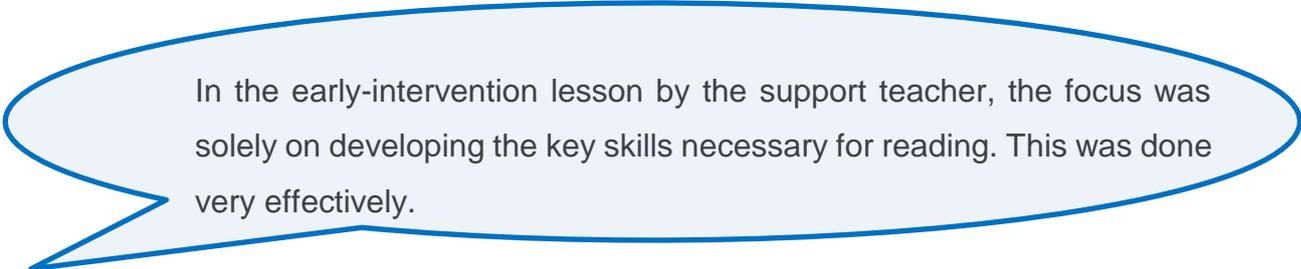
> In the early-intervention lesson by the support teacher, the focus was solely on developing the key skills necessary for reading. This was done very effectively.

Some of the pilot schools may have been using these programmes and interventions prior to the pilot study as part of their participation in the Department's programme to alleviate educational disadvantage Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS). However almost all of the pilot schools indicated that their implementation of evidence-based interventions had increased during the pilot year. Some schools reported that their involvement in the pilot facilitated improved extension interventions for a small number of high-functioning students with autism. These improvements included better differentiation by class teachers and provision of challenging activities such as film making, project work and additional work in Irish. In only one instance, where no additional teaching hours were allocated to the school, the principal indicated

that all of its early-intervention strategies pre-dated the pilot and that the model had not improved practice to any extent.

Findings from post-primary schools

Most post-primary schools reported increased use of early interventions and evidence-based initiatives to improve provision for students. Some of these interventions were implemented through team-teaching approaches, while others for students with exemptions from Irish were delivered through a withdrawal approach.

More than half of the post-primary schools implemented enhanced supports for their first-year students through provision of extra groups and extra support for students to enhance their organisational and social skills. One principal made the following comment.
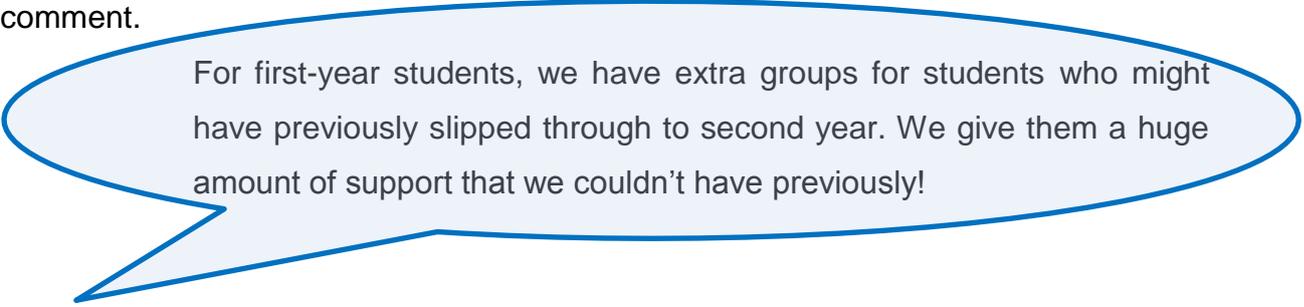
> For first-year students, we have extra groups for students who might have previously slipped through to second year. We give them a huge amount of support that we couldn't have previously!

Many of the post-primary schools indicated that they had implemented some of evidence-based interventions such as Rapid Plus, Speech-and-Language Communication Programme, SNIP, Friends for Life and other programmes for coping skills.

Some schools credited the use of these programmes for improvements in particular students' self-confidence, coping skills and attendance. One school linked improvements in outcomes for Traveller students to successful implementation of evidence-based interventions. In another school, where teachers ascribed difficulties in implementing the pilot model to an absence of support from school management for the flexible allocation of teaching resources, the inspector noted good implementation of early-intervention strategies under the guidance of a committed special education team.

Summary of findings on theme two

Overall, most primary and post-primary schools made very good efforts through engagement with the pilot themes to increase the provision and effectiveness of early

intervention approaches for students. These interventions spanned a wide range of social, emotional, welfare and academic needs. Many schools in both sectors introduced, and successfully implemented, some of the evidence-based interventions for which they received advice at the cluster meetings during the pilot.

The flexibility of the resource model has allowed schools to anticipate and identify emerging difficulties for groups of students in a holistic way, and to provide supports in an inclusive manner. As schools have greater autonomy to allocate their teaching hours, one principal commented that the potential of the new system lies in intervention happening quickly, and that "you catch them when they need it." In some post-primary schools, the complexity of the school timetable has been cited as a challenge to optimal flexibility in supporting students, especially those without exemptions from Irish.

Theme Three:
Effective teaching and learning at whole-school, classroom and individual learner level

Findings from primary schools

Almost all of the primary schools provided details about how involvement in the pilot had improved teaching and learning in the school. Where improvements were described by schools, these usually referred to greater collaboration among teachers, improved whole-school approaches, better differentiation by class teachers and more team-teaching and station-teaching approaches. One teacher said:
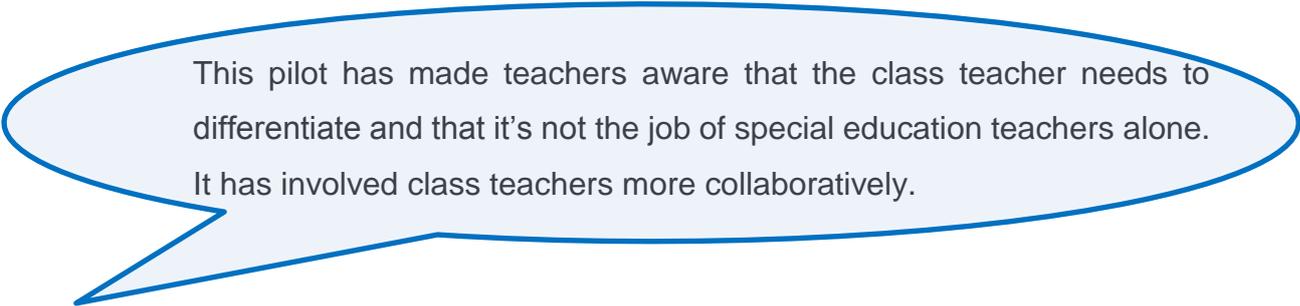
> This pilot has made teachers aware that the class teacher needs to differentiate and that it's not the job of special education teachers alone. It has involved class teachers more collaboratively.

Almost all of the teachers were very positive about the flexibility afforded by the model to allow for short-term interventions for literacy, numeracy, language and social and behavioural needs. Many students were very positive about the help they received, and many expressed a preference for working in groups. One group of students referred to the increased levels of supports available to them this year: "Learning is a bit better this year. There is more help this year than last." However, teachers in two

schools argued that their involvement in the pilot had not resulted in any improvements in pedagogy because they had not been allocated any additional resources. Inspectors observed lessons in a variety of classroom and withdrawal settings, and overall the quality of teaching and learning was deemed to be effective at meeting the needs of the target group. Describing effective practice observed, inspectors commented favourably on the quality of teacher-student interactions, focused interventions, differentiated approaches, useful planning and effective assessment and recording of students' progress. Inspectors also commented positively about teachers' reflection and whole-school approaches in some schools.

> The teachers each appear to have a good shared understanding of their roles and of the fact that they work as part of a cohesive team in order for intervention to be successful.

Findings from post-primary schools

Most of the post-primary schools reported increased use of whole-school initiatives, small-group teaching, team-teaching and mixed-ability teaching approaches among the improvements attributable to involvement in the pilot. Teachers also referred to improved differentiation of lessons, more useful assessment and better student engagement in the majority of mainstream settings. One principal made the following comment.

> Through the pilot we could support more students with more access to teaching to their needs. We have encouraged team-teaching between two teachers with a group of ten students and there has been positive feedback from students, parents and teachers.

Students in one school described improvements in their own learning during the year as follows.

> Teachers sit down with you and help you work it out….. They have more time to explain things better. I understand better. You can't keep interrupting a class of thirty. Now there is someone to help and explain so you don't get worse and worse!

Fifth-year students in another school contrasted the "really improved" supports they received during the pilot year with their previous provision, during which they were "allowed to do their homework."

In their comments, inspectors spoke positively about the inclusion of students, effective differentiation, respectful interactions and the quality of teaching approaches in most of the lessons observed. In a small number of lessons, inspectors identified opportunities for greater use of active teaching methodologies and the need to provide for mixed-ability teaching. In a minority of post-primary schools there were difficulties in allocating the supports flexibly due to the rigidity of school timetables, which had been drafted prior to the implementation of the pilot model. Some of these schools anticipate that these difficulties will be resolved in future years through the certainty of staffing provided by the pilot model. One principal remarked:
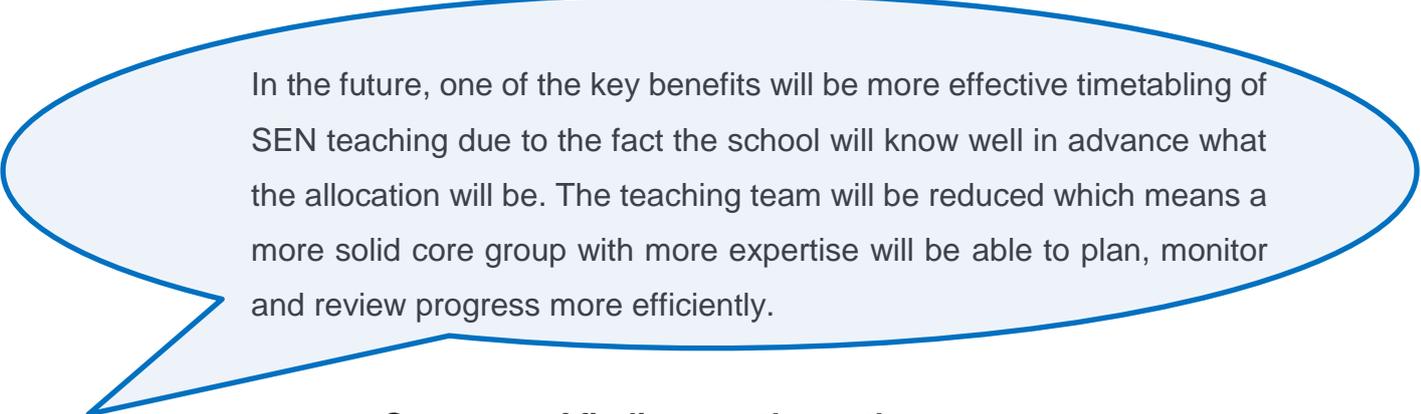
> In the future, one of the key benefits will be more effective timetabling of SEN teaching due to the fact the school will know well in advance what the allocation will be. The teaching team will be reduced which means a more solid core group with more expertise will be able to plan, monitor and review progress more efficiently.

Summary of findings on theme three

Overall, teachers in most of the primary and post-primary schools visited during the pilot spoke positively about the impact of the allocation model on teaching and learning in their schools. It is evident that the model provides for the flexible implementation of supports for students through withdrawal, in-class and co-operative teaching methods. Inspectors noted that many of these interventions were very effective, particularly where underpinned and monitored with reference to assessment information. It is reported that some teachers have engaged in valuable reflection at whole-school level to co-ordinate supports for students and to clarify teaching responsibilities. While challenges have been identified in the timetabling of interventions at post-primary level, some schools have suggested the creation of a core SEN team and prioritisation of SEN on the school timetable as a solution. Across both sectors, the first-line

responsibility of the class/subject teacher for all students has been identified as a key aspect of inclusion and support for students with SEN.

<table>
<tr><td>**Theme Four:**
Planning for and monitoring outcomes for students with special educational needs</td></tr>
</table>

Findings from primary schools

All of the primary schools stated that they had made improvements to their systems of planning for and monitoring of the outcomes for students with special educational needs. Teachers commented that students' progress was being tracked more effectively, and that needs were being identified more systematically. While some schools were using the NEPS student-support files prior to involvement in the pilot, many schools either introduced the student support files for the first time or increased their use during the year. There is evidence that many schools are now using assessment information as the basis for planning decisions, to evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions and to gauge progress in relation to targets set for students. In most cases, inspectors commented positively on the quality of the planning and monitoring documents presented during the school visits. Most schools acknowledged the quality of the professional development provided for them by NEPS and SESS regarding target setting. Teachers in two of the pilot schools were unhappy with the time needed to set, review and communicate targets for students. This was primarily related to the difficulty of releasing mainstream teachers for review meetings in very small schools during the school day. While effective planning and review documentation associated with the continuum-of-support approach was an additional task for teachers, it was widely acknowledged as being beneficial, especially where it eliminated the need for applications to the NCSE for low-incidence teaching hours.

Findings from post-primary schools

The NEPS student-support files were used to some extent in all of the post-primary schools. Most of the teachers reported that the system fostered greater awareness of students' needs among the staff, and that the provision was now more focused and more effectively tracked and monitored. Teachers in one school reported the following.

> The school has weekly meetings where students who need support are flagged. They are tested, and retested at intervals. We have noted the progress since becoming part of the pilot!

A minority of schools found the continuum process for setting and reviewing targets to be quite time consuming, and one school had reservations about using the student support file for a student who had previously been allocated low-incidence resource hours. Inspectors commented positively on the quality of targets in most of the support files they examined, but also noted in two schools that specific targets had not been set for some students receiving support.

Summary of findings on theme four

Overall, schools in both sectors have engaged effectively with the continuum of support approach advocated during the pilot. Approximately half of the schools cited improved planning for SEN as a success related to the allocation model. One school described how its planning for individual students had moved from being "*ad hoc*" to "focused." Where targets for students were outlined in specific and measurable language, this facilitated more effective tracking and monitoring of students' progress and dissemination of information to parents and other teachers. While all of the pilot schools were provided with professional development on target setting, this process has been identified as an ongoing need by a small number of schools.

Theme Five: On-going, meaningful engagement between the school, parents and external agencies

Findings from primary schools

Almost all of the primary schools acknowledged that involvement in the pilot made them much more aware of the range of supports available to schools through contact with agencies such as NEPS and SESS. Some schools reviewed their whole-school plans to include protocols for engaging with external agencies. Most schools consulted parents during the target-setting and review phases of student support plans, and many teachers reported improved communication with parents. In a few schools, teachers had concerns about their ability to communicate the key features of the

allocation model to board members and parents, especially parents of students who had previously been allocated a definite number of resources hours. One principal made the following point.
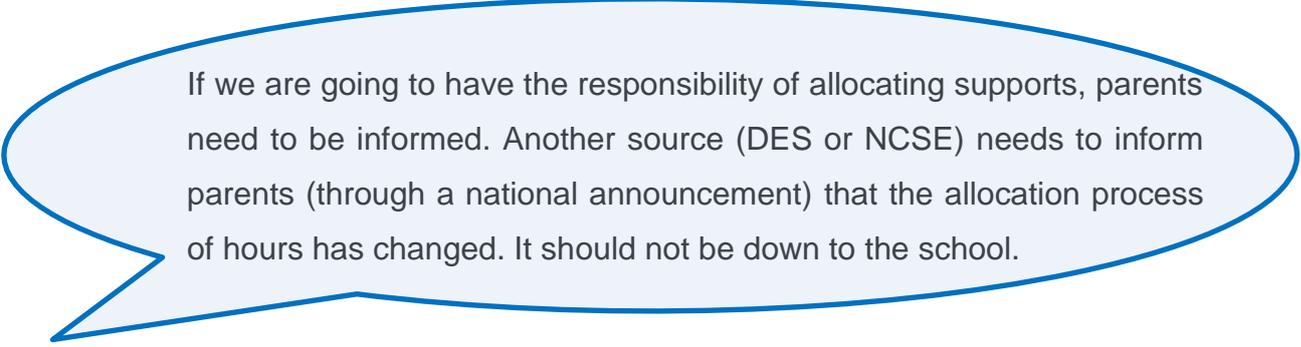
> If we are going to have the responsibility of allocating supports, parents need to be informed. Another source (DES or NCSE) needs to inform parents (through a national announcement) that the allocation process of hours has changed. It should not be down to the school.

Findings from post-primary schools

Most schools stated that the quality of their engagement with NEPS and SESS had improved during the pilot and many teachers felt upskilled as a result. There was a mixed response from post-primary schools in relation to their engagement with parents and external agencies.

While most schools made reference to improved parental consultation, parents were not always directly involved in the target-setting or review processes. One school reported positive outcomes for the *Check & Connect* intervention in maintaining ongoing and positive contact with families of students at risk of disengagement. In a minority of schools, teachers expressed concerns about the time required for meaningful consultation with parents on students' targets and plans. In some of these schools, teachers were also concerned about the possible future implications for students who receive flexible support at school level under the new model without psychological reports, especially in terms of their eligibility for supports in state examinations as part of Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations (RACE). NEPS and the State Examinations Commission (SEC) are currently introducing a modified scheme for RACE that is needs-based and aligned with the new allocation model, which is likely to address this concern.

Summary of findings on theme five

Overall, schools acknowledge that involvement in the pilot has heightened their awareness of the work of a range of external agencies, and many schools accessed support from SESS, NEPS and other relevant professionals during the year. Some

schools have developed improved protocols to formalise their contacts with external agencies. Most schools reported that their consultation with parents had increased through involvement with the pilot. In response to the Inspectorate survey (Appendix 7), 81% of parents of students with SEN agreed that they were aware of their children's support plans and 91% were happy with the opportunities they got to discuss their child's learning progress with teachers. However, it is not clear why 8.6% of parents were not aware of the support plans, nor why 6% had not been consulted on the development of these plans. It is possible that some of these students had been assisted through in-class or group supports rather than individualised additional teaching.

In a few cases, schools indicated that parents of students who had previously been allocated low-incidence teaching hours were happy with the flexible sharing of these hours to provide the social benefits of group learning for their children.

6: Schools' Perspectives on the Allocation Model

At the end of the school visits, inspectors engaged in co-professional dialogue with principals and teachers to collect the schools' perspectives on the feasibility of the resource-allocation model. The dialogue enabled inspectors to further investigate issues raised by schools in their self-reflective questionnaires and to analyse the successes and challenges the schools experienced in implementing the model over the full year.

Successes in implementing the model:

- Schools reported a high level of satisfaction with the manner in which teachers' professional development in SEN was supported during the pilot.
- Teachers welcomed the flexible allocation of teaching resources to various cohorts of students through in-class supports, team-teaching and small-group teaching.
- It was reported that more early interventions and evidence-based approaches were enabled through the flexibility of the model.
- Almost all schools welcomed the autonomy to allocate teaching supports according to students' needs, and almost all schools used the continuum-of-support approach to identify and prioritise those needs.
- Teachers at both levels claimed that involvement in the pilot had improved their planning, assessment and differentiation for students with SEN and that supports were now provided for a greater number of students.
- It was acknowledged that involvement in the model had facilitated greater reflection and collaboration among teachers in relation to SEN.
- Overall, schools welcomed the certainty of staffing levels that the model provides, and some schools identified opportunities to utilise this certainty to timetable provision more effectively and to establish skilled SEN teams.

Challenges in implementing the model

While almost all of the schools expressed satisfaction with the operation of the pilot, a number of challenges in implementing the model were identified.

- A minority of teachers indicated a need for continuing professional development in the areas of differentiation, target setting and monitoring of students' progress.

- The rigidity of timetabling at post-primary level was also identified by some schools as a challenge in allocating teaching resources flexibly. However, this difficulty was addressed in one pilot school by commencing the timetable design with the core SEN team rather than filling up various subject teachers' caseloads with SEN hours in an unco-ordinated manner.

- More than half of the schools argued that an SEN co-ordinator role would be essential to guide the identification, target-setting, planning, monitoring and allocation processes in each school.

- A small number of schools indicated that while they were enabled to engage with the pilot's themes and to implement the model with their current allocation of teaching hours, they would be unable to do so in the event of a reduced allocation.

- It was also argued that the model, if correctly implemented, would place additional demands on class/subject teachers to differentiate more effectively for students with additional needs. However, teachers in all schools are expected to differentiate their teaching to meet the range of learning needs of students, a good practice not exclusive to the pilot schools.

- Some schools received no extra allocation in resources on foot of their participation in the pilot. In a few of these schools, it was evident that little changed in terms of the provision of support for students with SEN.

7:   Perspectives of those Supporting the Pilot

The NCSE reported that its personnel had very few enquiries from the pilot schools during the year in relation to additional teaching hours. A small number of schools re-engaged with the NCSE to process their applications at the end of the pilot year. NEPS psychologists indicated that the pilot was effective overall in that it provided a structured opportunity for schools to reflect more in relation to how they are meeting the needs of students with SEN.

SESS personnel reported a very positive experience with respect to their engagement and involvement with the pilot project and with the individual schools. Good links were forged with the pilot schools, and there was evidence of a move towards sustained support through a variety of SESS support models. Applications to SESS from the pilot schools focused more on inclusion, and on individual planning and assessment as compared to applications from the general population of schools. It is notable that 33% of all applications to SESS for support on the topic of inclusion in the school year 2015/16 were made by pilot schools. This may point to the fact that the pilot schools were operating proactively on planning for eventualities as opposed to applying for support when issues arose. Commenting on supports provided for her, one post-primary teacher made the following comment.
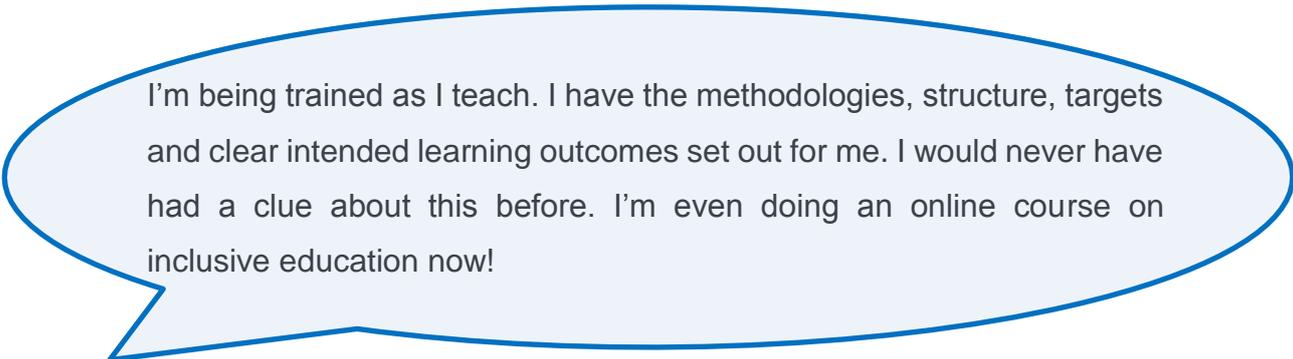
I'm being trained as I teach. I have the methodologies, structure, targets and clear intended learning outcomes set out for me. I would never have had a clue about this before. I'm even doing an online course on inclusive education now!

8: Perspectives of Education Partners

The Department's Special Education Section invited representatives of the education partners (Appendix 8) to a series of meetings to provide information on the pilot and to gather the partners' perspectives on the model. Some of the queries raised by the partners are outlined below and are also reflected in the recommendations of this report.

- Will the calculation of a school's profile be flexible enough to provide resources for rapidly growing schools or exceptional situations?
- Will guidelines and training be provided for principals, teachers and boards of management to explain the model?
- Will assessment materials and guidelines be provided for Gaelscoileanna?
- How will complex special educational needs be defined for the purpose of creating school profiles?
- What appeals mechanism will be available to schools to review their profiles?
- Will posts for SEN co-ordinators be sanctioned in large schools?
- How will schools be supported in the event of the model's rollout to all schools?
- What type of individual planning will be required in respect of students receiving additional support?
- How will the model be aligned with other supports (SNA, RACE, assistive technology) for students?

9:   Conclusion

The overall reaction to the pilot allocation model from teachers, students and parents has been very positive. Thirty-nine of the forty-seven pilot schools (80%) voluntarily extended their involvement with the model for another year. However, it is important to note that these positive outcomes are presented in the context of the schools being guaranteed that they will not lose any of their existing resources for the duration of the pilot. Notwithstanding this, schools, in their self-reflective questionnaires and co-professional dialogues with the Inspectorate, have provided a frank, but positive, assessment of the feasibility of the allocation model.

The new resource model represents a radical change in policy for the allocation of additional resources for students with special educational needs. It is a move away from a diagnostic/medical approach towards a needs-based allocation system to foster inclusion and effective teaching and learning. Under the new model, resources are provided to the school and then distributed through in-school decision making to the students with the greatest needs. This allocation can be made flexibly and through various teaching modes to meet the changing needs of all students in a school.

Almost all schools welcomed the autonomy to allocate teaching supports according to students' needs, and almost all schools used the continuum-of-support approach to identify and prioritise those needs. It was acknowledged that involvement in the model facilitated greater reflection and collaboration among teachers in relation to SEN. Overall, teachers in most of the primary and post-primary schools visited during the pilot spoke positively about the impact of the allocation model on teaching and learning in their schools. It is evident that the model provides for the flexible implementation of supports for students through withdrawal, in-class support and co-operative teaching modes. The findings clearly demonstrate that schools are enabled to allocate their resources fairly and inclusively through the continuum-of-support approach. There was almost universal acceptance of the continuum-of-support system to identify additional learning needs and to implement evidence-based approaches to address these needs. On the evidence collected, the model appeared to be particularly

successful in encouraging the flexible provision of early interventions and the implementation of targeted interventions to address students' priority academic, emotional and social needs. Inspectors noted that many of these interventions were very effective, particularly when planned and monitored with reference to assessment information.

The pilot has identified a number of challenges encountered by schools in allocating their resources. The SESS, the NCSE and the Department, through NEPS and the Inspectorate, provided a high level of support for the pilot schools to assist with teachers' continuing professional development in the areas of differentiation, target setting and monitoring of students' progress. It will be a challenge to provide this level of support, as requested by education partners, to all schools as the model is introduced nationally.

School management bodies and teachers have raised some concerns about the co-ordination of SEN provision at school level, and these concerns have been articulated in support of demands for additional promoted posts in larger schools. Post-primary schools have indicated that rigid timetables pose difficulty for the flexible allocation of teaching resources or short-term interventions for students. However, some post-primary schools have suggested worked solutions to these problems, and these solutions could be shared with all schools as examples of best practice.

One of the key elements of the new resource-allocation model is the flexibility it offers to schools to make decisions regarding the provision of support to students. In that context, it will be an ongoing challenge for the Department to support schools in making good decisions regarding the deployment of their resources and personnel. Further development of national guidelines for schools (including the use of case studies) is advised, particularly in relation to whole-school provision for students with SEN, approaches to planning and monitoring of outcomes and deployment of resources. This process should be supplemented by inspection of schools to carefully monitor how resources are used.

Further consideration of the implications of the new resource-allocation model for some existing accommodations for students with special educational needs is

required. For example, the manner in which Irish-language exemptions are granted to students should be reviewed.

Perhaps of most concern, however, is the reported lack of impact of the new allocation model in some schools where no additional teaching resources were granted. This may require the Department to consider whether an immediate reduction of SEN allocations to some schools, and an associated increase in SEN allocations to others, as originally envisaged in the NCSE recommendations, is feasible. The pilot project did not test this aspect of the proposed model. Clearly, this has potential implications for the overall allocation of resources for students with special educational needs.

10:   Recommendations

To support the extension of the resource-allocation model to all schools, the following recommendations are made.

- The Department should continue to support and monitor the needs of the pilot schools as they progress the implementation of the new model of resource allocation.

- A communications strategy is required to inform parents, education partners and the general public about the needs-based philosophy of equity and inclusion underpinning the new resource-allocation model. It must be emphasised that all schools will be provided with sufficient teaching resources to enable them to meet students' needs in a timely and flexible manner.

- The Department should establish and publish an agreed definition for complex special educational needs as this is a key constituent of the school profile. Further refinement of the weighting system used to generate the school profiles will be required to ensure that the new allocation model is viewed as robust and acceptable by all the education partners.

- Profiles and proposed allocations should be calculated for all schools as soon as possible. For the sake of clarity, information on the criteria for calculating the school profiles should be published.

- An appeals mechanism is required to cater for schools that have concerns about their profiles and their subsequent allocations. To remain consistent with the new model, processing of appeals should centre on mistakes in procedures or the application of criteria.

- A mechanism for meeting challenges arising from significant unanticipated changes to the school's profile rather than on professional reports on

individual students should also be developed. This mechanism should be managed by the NCSE's Inclusion Support Service.

- The successful rollout of the new model will require significant and co-ordinated input from the Department's support services. In this regard, NEPS, and the Inclusion Support Service (ISS) will be required to play a central and leading role in supporting schools in adopting the new model.

- Further development and implementation of the new model will require continued effective communication between Special Education Section, the Inspectorate, NEPS and the NCSE.

- There will be an urgent need for NEPS, SEC and NCSE to review other support systems, (i.e. exemptions from Irish, the SNA scheme, assistive technology and eligibility for special-class provision) so that these are aligned with the needs-based philosophy underpinning the new model.

- Additional training will be required for class teachers, subject teachers and support teachers to help promote inclusion and meet the learning needs of students with SEN. This will involve setting out a national programme of continuing professional development based on the five themes of good practice as set out in *Better Services, Better Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs* (Department of Education and Skills, 2015).

- In conjunction with ongoing supports from NEPS, SESS, NCSE and ISS, schools in general would benefit from the pilot schools' experiences of planning, timetabling, differentiation, assessment and evidence-based interventions. The co-operation of pilot schools should be sought in this regard.

- *A Programme for Partnership Government* (Department of the Taoiseach, 2016) contains commitments to rebuild middle management capacity in schools. SEN coordination needs to be considered within this overall context.

- Post-primary schools would benefit from the development of a valid and reliable standardised test of literacy, such as that being designed by NEPS, which would facilitate the gathering of data to inform interventions and to monitor outcomes. The cost to schools of purchasing additional assessment materials and educational resources for special programmes should be examined with a view to consideration of one-off grants during the transition to the new model.

- Further development of national guidelines for schools (including the use of case studies) is advised, particularly in relation to whole-school provision for students with SEN, approaches to planning and monitoring of outcomes and deployment of resources. Guidelines should detail how the school self-evaluation process could support teachers to develop the most effective SEN provision in their schools. This process should be supplemented by a quality assurance process designed to monitor how resources are used. The Inspectorate, NEPS and the NCSE will need to set out their roles and functions in promoting quality assurance around SEN provision.

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Appendix 1:   Definition of low-incidence categories

Circular SP02/05 outlines the following low-incidence categories:

Physical disability

Hearing impairment

Visual impairment

Emotional disturbance

Severe emotional disturbance

Moderate general learning disability

Severe / profound general learning disability

Autism / autistic spectrum disorders

Specific speech and language disorder

Assessed syndrome in conjunction with one of the above low-incidence disabilities

Multiple disabilities

(Each category is allocated an automatic quantum of resource- teaching hours)

Appendix 2:   Definition of high-incidence categories

High-incidence disabilities comprise borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability and specific learning disability. Students with learning-support needs are those whose achievement is at or below the tenth percentile on standardised tests of reading or mathematics. Students with learning difficulties include those with mild speech and language difficulties, those with mild social or emotional difficulties, and those with mild co-ordination or attention control difficulties (Department of Education and Skills Circular 02/2005).

Appendix 3: Membership of the steering group

Dalton Tatton (Assistant Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills)

Dermot Mulligan (Assistant Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills)

Jim Mulkerrins (Principal Officer, Department of Education and Skills)

Terry Reynolds (Assistant Principal, Department of Education and Skills)

Melanie Hudson (Secretariat, Department of Education and Skills)

Helen Flanagan Forbes (Secretariat, Department of Education and Skills)

Hubert Loftus (Principal Officer, Department of Education and Skills)

Josephine O'Connor (Assistant Principal, Department of Education and Skills)

Peter Archer (Chief Executive Officer, Educational Research Centre)

Susan Weir (Research Fellow, Educational Research Centre)

Teresa Griffin (Chief Executive Officer, NCSE)

Mary Byrne (Head of Special Education, NCSE)

Maureen Costello (Director, NEPS)

Anne Tansey (Director, NEPS)

Michael Cullinane (Regional Director, NEPS)

Brendan Doody (Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Skills)

Don Mahon (Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Skills)

Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig (Divisional Inspector, Department of Education and Skills)

Suzanne Dillon (Assistant Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Skills

Appendix 4: Membership of the working group

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Finn Ó Murchú, (Senior Inspector, Department of Education and Skills)

Seán Ó Murchú (Divisional Inspector, Department of Education and Skills)

Eamon Clavin (Divisional Inspector, Department of Education and Skills)

Nicola Tickner (Statistician, Department of Education and Skills)

Josephine O'Connor (Assistant Principal, Department of Education and Skills)

Eddie Costello (Secretariat, Department of Education and Skills)

Michael Cullinane (Regional Director, NEPS)

Theresa Tierney (Senior Psychologist, NEPS)

Mary Nugent (Regional Director, NEPS)

Madeline Hickey (Director, Special Education Support Service)

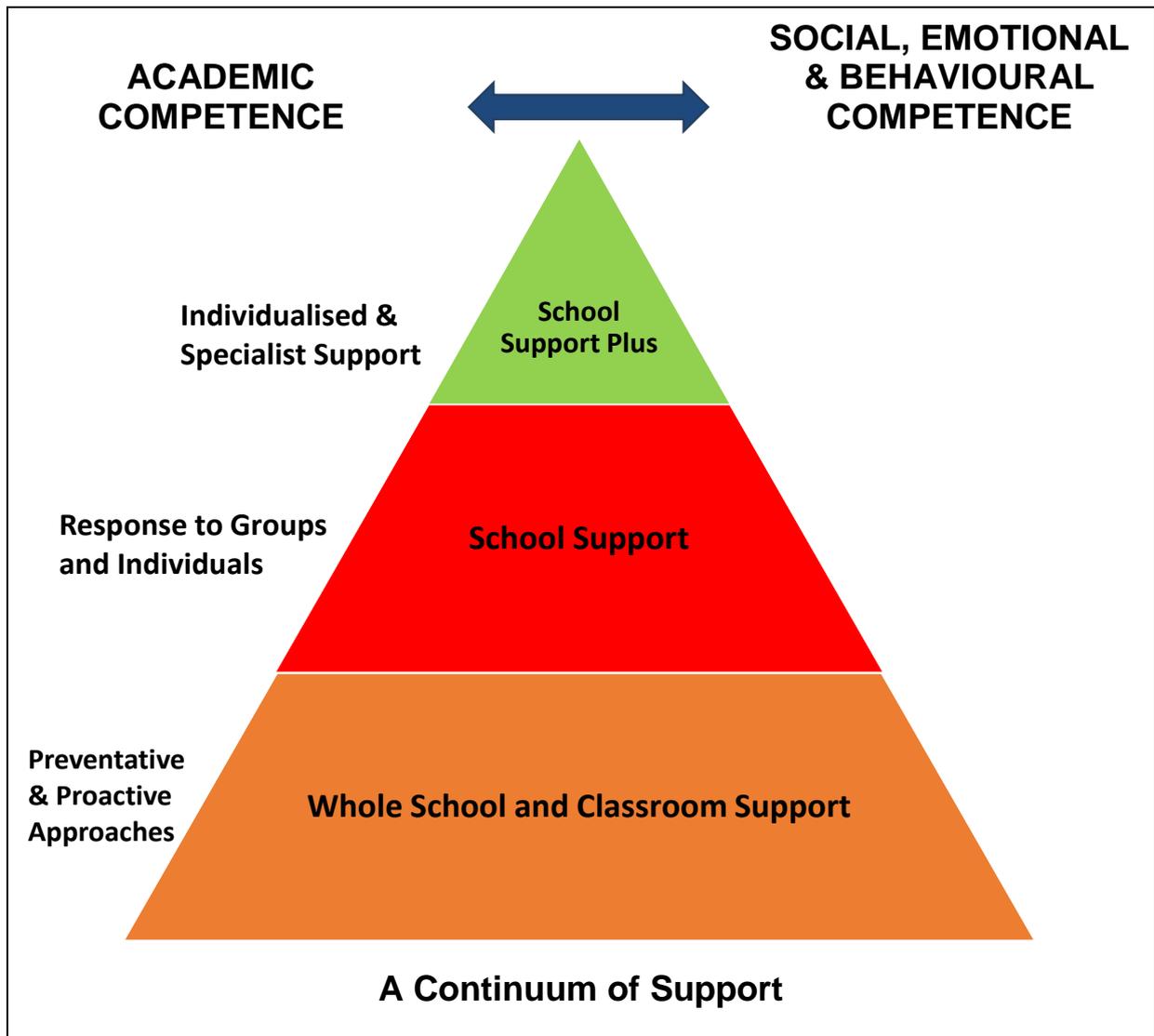Sé Goulding (Head of Operational and Support Services, NCSE)

Mary Byrne (Head of Special Education, NCSE)

Sylvia Denner (Research Assistant, Educational Research Centre)

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The continuum of support suggests the following levels of support:

ACADEMIC COMPETENCE

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCE

Individualised & Specialist Support — School Support Plus

Response to Groups and Individuals — School Support

Preventative & Proactive Approaches — Whole School and Classroom Support

A Continuum of Support

Appendix 6: Schools that participated in the pilot

Schools marked with an asterisk * were visited by the Inspectorate as part of the review.

Primary Schools (28)	Post-primary Schools (19)
- SN Naomh Eoin, An Rath, Birr, Co. Offaly - SN an Chúil, An Cúl, Muileann Cearr, Co. na hIarmmhí *Annalitten NS, Castleblaney, Co. Monaghan - Doon Convent NS, Doon, Co. Limerick *St. Stephen's NS, Waterford - Quignamanger NS (The Quay NS) Ballina, Co. Mayo - Clologue NS, Clologue, Ferns, Co. Wexford - St. John's NS, Carrowmore, Swinford, Co. Mayo *SN Loch an Iubhair, Anagaire, Leitir Ceanainn, Co. Dhún na nGall - SN Naomh Philomena, Tullamore, Co. Offaly *Rosenallis NS, Rosenallis, - Co. Laois *SN Bheinín Naofa, Duleek, Co. Meath - Cornamaddy NS, Athlone, Co. Westmeath *Donard NS, Donard, Co. Wicklow - Scoil Mhuire, Tullamore, Co. Offaly *SN Baile Mhuine, Ballineen, Co. Cork - SN na hInse, Thurles, Co. Tipperary *Earnain Mixed NS, Dealbhna Mór, Co. Westmeath - Castlerahan NS, Castlerahan, Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan - Scoil Mhuire, Ballyboden, Dublin 16 - St. Joseph's SNS, Balcurris, Ballymun, Dublin 11 *St. Mary's NS, Woodview, Esker, Lucan, Co. Dublin *Drimnagh Castle CBS NS, Drimnagh, Dublin 12 - Realt na Maidne NS, Listowel, Co. Kerry *St. Benedict's NS, Ongar, Dublin 15 - Gaelscoil Chluainín, Sráid an Chaisleáin, Cluainín Uí Ruairc, Co. Leitrim - Maynooth ETNS, Celbridge Rd, Maynooth, Co. Kildare - Mary Mother of Hope JNS, Littlepace, Castaheany, Dublin 15	- St. Vincent's CBS, Glasnevin, Dublin 11 - Meanscoil Iognáid Rís, Longmile Rd, Walkinstown, Dublin 12 *Muckross Park College, Donnybrook, Dublin 4 - Coláiste Bhréanainn, Cill Áirne, Co. Chiarraí - St. Brigid's Secondary School, New Street, Killarney, Co. Kerry - Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare - St. Colman's College, Claremorris, Co. Mayo *Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, Ozanam Street, Waterford - St. Joseph's CBS, Summerhill, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary *Ardscoil na Trionode, Rathstewart, Athy, Co. Kildare - Marino College, 14-20 Marino Mart, Fairview, Dublin 3 - Borris Vocational School, Borris, Co. Carlow *Coláiste Cois Siúire, Mooncoin, Co. Kilkenny *Coachford College, Coachford, Co. Cork *Mullingar Community College, Millmount Rd, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath - Moyne College, Ballina, Co. Mayo *Gaelcholáiste an Eachreidh, An Coiléar Bán, Baile Átha an Rí, Co. na Gaillimhe - Loreto Community School, Milford, Co. Donegal *St. Wolstan's Community School, Ballymakeely, Clane Rd, Celbridge, Co. Kildare

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My child feels safe and well looked after in school	68.4%	27.4%	1.8%	1.6%	0.8%
My child is fully included in school and classroom life	62.7%	30.6%	3.8%	2.1%	0.8%
The work my child is asked to do by his class teacher is matched to his/her ability	46.9%	41.8%	5.6%	5.0%	0.8%
I am happy with the opportunities I receive to discuss my child's learning with teachers	58.1%	32.6%	3.7%	4.8%	0.8%
I was consulted about the extra support my child receives in school	62.4%	28.8%	2.9%	5.0%	1.0%
The work my child is asked to do by his support teacher is matched to his/her ability	60.0%	32.7%	5.5%	1.1%	0.6%
I am aware of my child's learning plan	44.8%	36.4%	10.2%	7.5%	1.1%
The school is helping my child to progress with reading and writing	63.8%	30.8%	3.1%	1.4%	1.0%
The school is helping my child to progress with Maths	60.3%	29.3%	5.4%	3.7%	1.3%
The school is helping my child to interact well with others	56.6%	32.1%	7.0%	3.0%	1.3%

Catholic Primary School Managers' Association (CPSMA)

Educate Together

An Foras Pátrúnachta

National Association for Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE)

Church of Ireland Board of Education

Islamic Foundation of Ireland

Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN)

Gaelscoileanna Teo

Joint Managerial Body Secretariat of Secondary Schools (JMB)

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)

Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS)

National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)

Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)

Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)

Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)

Irish Learning Support Association (ILSA)

Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE)

Irish Autism Action

Saplings School Patron Body

Down Syndrome Ireland

Inclusion Ireland

National Disability Authority

Aspire

Enable Ireland

COPE Foundation

Féach

Dyslexia Association of Ireland

Dyspraxia Association of Ireland

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

Deaf Education Partnership Group

The National Council for ADHD Support

Irish Society for Autism

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, Epilepsy Ireland

National Parents Council Primary

National Parents Council Post-Primary

Special Needs Parents Association

Special Needs Active Parents (SNAP).