starting to join

A BASELINE STUDY OF MULTI-AGENCY ACTIVITY

for
North East Lincolnshire Local Education Authority

by
Jo Haynes
Mary Atkinson
Kay Kinder

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NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL
EXCELLENT SERVICES

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INTRODUCTION

This report represents the findings of an evaluation by research of some of the multi-agency work under way within North East Lincolnshire's 'Promoting Positive Behaviour' Strategy.

BACKGROUND

The North East Lincolnshire multi-agency strategy to promote positive behaviour achieved both regional and national recognition, and there was a longstanding commitment to some form of evaluation of this initiative by NFER. Bearing in mind the scale and long-term nature of the strategy, it was clear that, with modest resources, any evaluation would need to have a specific focus, rather than attempt to research the initiative in all its ramifications. It was felt that a useful focus would be on aspects of multi-agency activity, given the development of this work in North East Lincolnshire, and the national focus on such approaches at this time. Thus, the evaluation focused on two examples of multi-agency activity:

i. ***the work of a multi-agency support team*** (MAST), where a total of 16 primary schools were involved; and

ii. ***the development of multi-agency courses***, where two events, 'Managing Drug-related Incidents' (one day) and 'Managing Conflict Situations' (one day), were planned for the autumn term 1998 and were attended by teachers and members of other agencies (e.g. educational psychologists, social workers, the police, and youth workers).

The Department of Professional and Curriculum Studies at the NFER was also interested in contributing financial resources to this evaluation, because it was felt the study could make a significant contribution to furthering its internal research and development theme of teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). Extending the Department's work on research into the impact and outcomes of professional development activity was a particular priority within this selected research and development theme.

AIMS

The evaluation had three aims. It sought to examine:

i. the impact of both the MAST team and the courses, on teachers, schools and other professionals;

ii. the relationship between CPD outcomes and the forms of CPD and support provided; and

iii. what multi-agency support offers in terms of additional benefits to schools, such as improving attendance, reducing the incidence of disruptive behaviour or reducing the incidence of exclusions.

METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate the respective effects of the courses and the activities of the MAST team in participating schools, the main approach utilised was qualitative in-depth interviews.

Multi-agency courses

For the evaluation of each course, interviews were carried out with 25 individuals from the different school sectors, and other agencies attending the course. Perspectives of course designers and providers were also sought. Issues discussed included impact on practice and school policy, challenges and advantages of multi-agency and cluster attendance, and areas for further development.

The fieldwork consisted of:

- attendance and observation at the courses for the purpose of assessing their immediate impact; and

- individual interviews, approximately six to eight weeks later, to evaluate their impact on teachers' perceptions and practice.

MAST activity in case-study schools

For the evaluation of the MAST activities in schools, interviews were carried out in six selected schools, as well as with the MAST team itself and with line managers of the MAST team members.

The fieldwork consisted of:

- a series of individual interviews with teachers and MAST personnel, in order to identify successes and challenges within schools, as well as operational issues or concerns, and also perceived impact; and

- interviews with senior personnel from all agencies associated with the MAST initiative.

To meet the third aim, baseline data on attendance and exclusions was collected from the authority on the six case-study schools as well as the ten others in the MAST initiative. The project began in December 1998 and was completed in early July 1999.

A central part of the analysis, and also the data collection, was to utilise 'a typology of INSET outcomes' developed through NFER Northern Office research into professional development. This typology is summarised in the appendix of the report. Accounts of the impact of the multi-agency activity on course attendees and case-study school staff and pupils are thus given particular attention.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This NFER evaluation focused on two examples of multi-agency activity within North East Lincolnshire: multi-agency courses and the work of a multi-agency support team (MAST) in primary schools. Qualitative in-depth interviews were carried out with course attendees and providers; teachers and pupils in six case-study schools; the MAST team and senior personnel from all agencies associated with the initiative. A summary of findings, focusing particularly on impact and implications for development, is presented here.

I. THE MULTI-AGENCY COURSES

Key findings: impact

A wide range of effects emerged from the two one-day multi-agency courses, which comprised one part of this research study. Some of the main findings with regard to the impact included:

- For most participants, the initial focus for and interest in the courses was content-related. Few participants recognised multi-agency aims prior to attending the course. However, multi-agency outcomes (e.g. sharing information; networking and making contacts; gaining awareness of how other agencies operate) did emerge as a main impact for many participants.

- The inclusion of group discussion and group activities was central to the success of the courses. An approach to group composition that maximises multi-agency interaction would appear central to ensuring the benefits of such courses are realised.

- With reference to the NFER typology of outcomes, participants identified an extensive range of professional development outcomes, albeit these were most often 'lower-order' in nature. The provision of new resources and materials, new information and particularly new awareness about the issues under discussion (i.e. drugs and conflict management) were frequently mentioned. Positive motivation outcomes also often emerged.

- Accounts of changes to actual individual practice or institutional policy were not so evident, although a number of examples did surface. Reasons for lack of impact included the course attendee's prior experience and knowledge; changes in practice not being incorporated into course design; too much material being covered in one day and work-related constraints.

- Other advantages of multi-agency activity specifically highlighted by course attendees included likely benefits for both the agency professionals and their client group. Being better able to meet the needs of young people, as well as the possible cost-effectiveness of such training and the

reduction of individual agency workers' sense of isolation emerged in course attendees' views about the potential of such approaches.

Implications for the development of multi-agency courses

Given the many positive outcomes identified, the findings from the evaluation of the impact of these two courses would suggest a number of issues for consideration:

- The desirability and benefits of **continuing multi-agency courses and activity** was noted by many interviewees.

- The need to **raise the profile of multi-agency outcomes** (such as sharing information, networking and gaining greater awareness of other agencies) would seem an important aspect for pre-course information.

- The **inclusion of inter-agency group discussion and activities** was a vital component of the courses' success, and the composition of such groupings may also need consideration in course planning.

- Impact on practice may be assisted by **designing follow-up activities and support networks** as an integral component of the course. Where whole-school or agency outcomes were intended or likely (e.g. an impact on policy), these too might be made clear in course information.

- **Investment in a coordinating role** to ensure the development of multi-agency INSET activity was considered a valuable resource for the authority.

- **Providing other opportunities for inter-agency communication** (such as networks and informal meetings or forums at operational level) was also suggested, and this too was seen to require a coordinated approach.

- Ensuring that **the content of multi-agency courses had equal applicability to all agencies** was seen as a particular challenge, raising the issue of differentiation in both design and delivery.

II. THE MULTI-AGENCY SUPPORT TEAM (MAST)

Key findings: impact

Although impact on attendance and exclusion figures was difficult to comment on at this stage of the MAST team's development, there were indications of a positive impact on schools as a whole. The impact of MAST activity on the participants involved was widespread, although varying in degree for different individuals. Involvement in MAST appeared to have a major impact on the team members, whilst for teachers, impact varied depending on their degree of involvement with the team and their willingness to take on board new ideas. For

pupils who participated in the MAST activity, impact was described in terms of a wide range of outcomes.

- Involvement in the MAST team had a major impact on the professional development of team members, particularly those new to working in schools, and specifically with regard to the development of 'knowledge and skills', which refers to deeper levels of understanding and critical reflexivity, a first-order professional development outcome.

- One of the major outcomes for teachers was in the development of 'new awareness' about children. This was particularly evident where teachers had the opportunity to observe the MAST team in action.

- Impact on teachers in terms of 'motivational and attitudinal' outcomes varied. Where teachers had been directly involved with the MAST work and had witnessed the benefits to pupils, they were motivated to try out new ideas that had been introduced.

- Changes in teachers' practice were evident, particularly where they had been able to observe the team in action, had access to feedback and review time with the team and where the activity had been incorporated within the structure of the school and extended or adapted in some way to suit their own and their pupils' needs.

- Impact on pupils was described in terms of a range of outcomes. Improved self-esteem and the opportunity to share and resolve problems were the major outcomes identified, with the former also affecting pupils' learning. However, impact on behaviour was more likely where intervention involved direct work of the MAST team with individuals targeted because of their behavioural difficulties.

The key factors that facilitated impact of the MAST activity were identified as teachers' openness to new ideas, a shared responsibility between the team and the school personnel involved, aims that were negotiated and clear and where there were opportunities for teachers to gain feedback and review the activities with the team.

The key contribution of the multi-agency aspect of the team for teachers was the ability to see the problem from a range of different perspectives and the wide range of expertise available. This facilitated a focus on the problem from a non-teaching viewpoint and enabled personal and social development issues to be addressed.

Implications for development of future MAST activity

The professionals involved highlighted a number of areas and ways in which future MAST work could be developed, as well as raising some concerns. In addition to these suggestions, the key findings from this evaluation might be utilised to build on previous examples of effective practice and to guide further development of the MAST work. The key findings suggest that further consideration might be given to:

- the **importance of coordination** with other agencies working in schools and other projects within the authority;
- **the consistency of the team members**, their time allocation to the team and the implications of short-term secondments/appointments for work with young people and their schools;
- **the management of the team**, the autonomy of this team manager role and where it might lie within the authority;
- the value of **strategic-level service line managers being in agreement** about the approaches adopted by a multi-agency team;
- **more resources** and a viable working base for the team;
- **raising the awareness of heads and teachers** about the value and impact of multi-agency approaches;
- **the balance between whole-school and individual pupil intervention** and whether and how the latter focus has an effect on teacher attitudes, and approaches to young people;
- **the balance between prevention and working with the most difficult cases**, as findings might suggest that more direct input with individuals identified as having behavioural difficulties might result in a greater or, at least faster, impact on exclusion figures and the number of behavioural incidents;
- **voluntary involvement of schools**, and the process of negotiation with the host school, with the possible use of 'contracts' to ensure a clearly understood focus for the team's work;
- **built-in opportunities for teachers to be given feedback** and to review the activities with the team;
- **support for teachers following the MAST input** in order to achieve the most impact on their continuing practice;
- **maintaining records on the attendance and behaviour of individual pupils** who have encountered MAST activity; and
- **monitoring and continued analysis of fixed-term exclusion rates in schools,** noting particularly high-excluding schools.

PART ONE: AN EVALUATION OF MULTI-AGENCY COURSES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The first part of this report focuses on one specific aspect of multi-agency activity in North East Lincolnshire – the development of multi-agency courses. Two courses have been part of the evaluation, which has addressed three key areas:

- the impact of the course on practice and policy;
- the challenges and advantages of multi-agency and cluster attendance; and
- areas for further development.

During the autumn term of 1998, two one-day courses were held: '*Managing Drug-related Incidents*' and '*Understanding and Managing Conflict*'. These were attended by teachers and school senior managers, and representatives from a range of other agencies within the authority. To support the evaluation and to contextualise and enhance the follow-up interviews, a researcher also attended each course.

Approximately two months after the INSET events, a subsample of 29 course attendees were contacted by telephone and asked whether they would be willing to participate in the evaluation. These individuals were selected to ensure representation from the different school sectors (nursery, primary and secondary) and from all the agencies represented at each course. Twenty-five course attendees agreed to be involved, and the perspectives of course providers were also garnered, as was an overall LEA perspective. Thus, in total, 29 face-to-face interviews and one telephone interview were carried out: 13 from the drug-related incidents course, 12 from the conflict management course, four course providers and an LEA representative.

The two courses that are the focus of this evaluation are described briefly in Figure 1.1. The first – drug-related incidents – was run for participants forming part of a comprehensive school cluster, and was attended by teachers from all school sectors, as well as representatives from the Education Welfare Service, the Careers Service, Social Services, the Youth Service, school nursing, the police and the FE sector. The conflict management course included participants from a similar range of agencies, but was offered solely to secondary schools.

Figure 1.1 Details of courses

Managing Drug-related Incidents	
Date:	26th November, 1998
Attendees:	19, including representatives from nursery, infant, junior, primary and secondary schools; the Education Welfare Service; the Careers Service; the Early Years Team; the Youth Service; school nursing; further education; and the police
Providers:	3, including 'Impact' – a voluntary drugs counselling and information service, the police and a member of the health promotion unit
Aim:	*'to have a better understanding of how to deal with drug-related incidents on school or other sites'* (taken from the course outline and evaluation form).
Understanding and Managing Conflict	
Date:	14th December 1998
Attendees:	16, including representatives from secondary schools; the police; the Careers Service; the Youth Service; the Education Welfare Service; the Educational Psychology Service; and Employment Development
Provider:	1, an independent training consultant
Aim:	*'to provide participants with an opportunity to examine the nature of conflict and develop strategies and ways of managing conflict in daily practice'* (taken from the course evaluation form).

As outlined above, 25 participants out of a possible 35 were interviewed as part of the evaluation. They were employed within the following agencies and organisations (Table 1.1). Throughout the report, the organisation or agency of the interviewee has been stated after any quotations. In some cases, however, only one member of an agency attended, and, in order to ensure anonymity, the course has not been identified.

Table 1.1 Organisation or agency of participants interviewed

Organisation/agency		Number interviewed
Schools:	secondary	4
	primary	3
	nursery	1
Youth Service		4
Education Welfare Service		3
Training/careers		3
Police		2
Social Services		2
School nursing		1
FE sector		1
Educational Psychology		1
TOTAL		**25**

This chapter addresses the three key areas of the evaluation (impact on practice and policy, multi-agency and cluster attendance, and areas for development), and is structured as follows:

1.1 Reasons for attendance and perceived aims
1.2 Views on format and content
1.3 Impact (discussion of the typology of professional development outcomes)
1.4 The multi-agency dimension (including the advantages and challenges of multi-agency and cluster attendance)
1.5 The development of multi-agency courses
1.6 Summary.

1.1 REASONS FOR ATTENDANCE AND PERCEIVED AIMS

Initially, participants were asked how they came to attend the course. Most had become aware of the course through information sent either directly to them, or to their line manager. Reasons given for attending the course included, in rank order:

- course content (17);
- agency representation (7);
- the cluster aspect (2);
- the multi-agency aspect (2); and
- the speaker (1).

The content of the course thus appeared to be the strongest factor in the decision being made to attend the course. It was seen as '*relevant*' to current work, or, in the words of one secondary teacher on the conflict management course, '*the title sounded intriguing*'. The course content rationale was particularly evident in the responses from teachers on the drug-related incidents course – these teachers tended to have responsibility for health education or child protection in their school, and wanted specific information on dealing with potential incidents:

> *I think our main aim was to look at managing drug-related incidents which occurred within the school* (secondary teacher).
>
> *It was another thing that I wanted to keep up to date with* (primary teacher).
>
> *I needed more input on drugs, to be able to go into my schools and actually talk about it to the children* (school nurse).

Some participants on both courses stated that their attendance was due to the perceived need to have a representative from their agency, particularly where some form of cascade training operated. These participants were positive about their course attendance, but admitted that the main factor determining their presence was to represent their organisation:

> *I wasn't a volunteer, I was told to go because it would be interesting for me, and we have what we call cascade training ... come back and cascade the information down to people on your team to save everybody attending* (police representative).

> [The course] *didn't really mean an awful lot, but we wanted someone to go from the office because we wanted to see what it was like, and we're wanting to work more with multi-agency groups* (Careers Service representative).

A number of those participants who reported that their main rationale for course attendance was to represent their agency found it difficult to describe positive outcomes from the course. However, interestingly, these participants often had previous experience of the content area, and it may be that it was this, rather than the rationale for attendance, that inhibited impact. However, most were positive about the chance to meet other people on the courses:

> *I don't think there was really anything for me to pick up from the course itself, with already having the training in the past anyway. And, I suppose it was just like a refresher (sic) course for me. And, as I say, the opportunity to meet the other people – that was what the course was to me really* (police representative).

> *I had heard these things before ... there was nothing new offered* (youth worker).

In comparison, two interviewees, who had attended as agency representatives, were positive about the course and able to articulate ways in which the course had had an impact on them. As one said, '*it wasn't my choice whether I went on it or not ... but when I was on it, I was pleased that I was put forward for it*' (Social Service representative).

Significantly, only a few participants mentioned the cluster aspect (of the drugs course) as a rationale for attendance: '*We were part of the pyramid group*' (secondary teacher), and '*it was useful for me to go to, like, network with some of the other people there, and also find out about the actual issues that were being raised*' (Careers Service representative). Similarly, few provided the multi-agency aspect as a factor in being interested in the course: '*It was a multi-agency course, which I always find interesting*' (secondary teacher).

Finally, prior experience of the speaker was a factor in attendance for one participant on the conflict management course: '*I must admit, I was also attracted by the speaker ... because a few years ago I had gone to a course related to abuse of children, and he had been very good.*'

The above rationales were not mutually exclusive, with some attendees mentioning more than one of these reasons, for example, stating that they went as a representative from their agency or service, but also had an interest in the area. For most attendees, however, it seems as if the primary focus for the course was its content, and the multi-agency aspect was either immaterial, or a secondary factor.

Consistent with this rationale, when participants were asked for their understanding of the aims of the course, nearly all identified aims related to the content, for example, to gain a better understanding of drugs, to make people aware of incidents they might come across, and to have a greater knowledge of how to manage conflict situations.

Most felt that the aims were met, at least to some degree, taking time constraints into consideration. On the evaluation forms completed on the day of the course, course attendees were asked to respond on a five-point scale, to what extent they felt the course objectives were achieved. The modal score for each course was '4'; that is, the vast majority of course attendees rated the achievement of aims highly.

Interestingly, one respondent identified the multi-agency aspect as an aim of the course, and did not feel that this aim was met:

> *I felt that the number of people present was so small that it was difficult to see what could come out of the course, other than a few contacts being made between people from different agencies. And again, on a fairly* ad hoc *basis ... if people were lucky enough to have struck up a relationship which would help work later on ... it did seem a strange mix really and I couldn't really see what progress that particular course would make towards a multi-agency approach to the problem* (secondary teacher).

When asked for their perspective on the aims of the course, providers' responses were consistent with the aims identified in Figure 1.1. They also described their 'brief' from the authority: all identified the multi-agency course attendance as part of this, with one provider describing the multi-agency approach as '*very much part of the brief*'. Providers were confident that these aims had been achieved, although one recognised the constraints of time, and responded that aims were met '*about 70 per cent ... I think there's so much to do, and it opens so many avenues for people that you can never really meet*'.

Participants were also asked about their previous experience of multi-agency courses. Whilst some had no experience of this aspect, some interviewees had attended the earlier LEA-organised one-day multi-agency conference, and many mentioned having participated in child protection training which was run on a multi-agency basis, or having interaction with other agencies within their work. Experience of previous courses in the areas of conflict or drugs was also variable.

In some cases, as alluded to earlier, a high level of previous experience appeared to influence perspectives on the value of the course. The two police officers, for example, attended to represent their agency and were already knowledgeable about dealing with conflict situations and drug-related incidents. Thus, when asked about outcomes, one said: '*I don't think there was really anything for me to pick up from the course itself, with already having the training in the past.*' However, he recognised the value of meeting other people and was positive about his attendance. Both he and his colleague attending the drug-related incidents course had been able to share their experiences with other course participants.

Others who had had previous experience, however, were sometimes frustrated by information being repeated. One Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) went on to describe outcomes related to the multi-agency aspect ('*contacts*', '*the networking that you do*') rather than new information, awareness, or changes in practice:

I remembered thinking during the morning 'Gosh, we have heard all this lot before' ... we had only got one day, so I felt like, 'Come on. Let's get on with it' (EWO).

The following comments from two participants, who found the course reinforced things rather than had any new outcomes, indicated how the impact was diminished if the participant was not learning anything new. The training officer had valued the chance to meet others working in the same area, and was also positive about the course notes as a resource, but otherwise, the course had minimal impact:

I am struggling to remember too much about it. I find sometimes when I sit in on courses and things, that I get the feeling of 'I have learnt this before', 'I know this' or 'I have done this somewhere'. So, it doesn't lose its interest but it loses its effect. Because often I come away thinking 'Well we are already doing that', or 'It's common sense' ... so I wouldn't say I come away thinking 'Oh that's really good, I am going to put it into practice' ... I wouldn't say the course was a waste of time for me, though I would say, because perhaps of where I am coming from ... I am putting a lot of it into practice already (youth worker).

It was nice to actually get together with lots of different people, I suppose, from different areas of work, and get people's ideas. The session that we did in the morning, the group work, that was quite good, because of the different people that were involved in it. But, as I say, the theory side of it we covered in the afternoon. Basically, there was nothing new there for me anyway (training officer).

1.2 VIEWS ON FORMAT AND CONTENT

In part to serve as a memory device, but also to begin to explore the impact of the courses, participants were asked for their views on the structure and format of the course, and the content. Comments here reiterated the findings of previous research (Harland, *et al.*, 1999; Best, 1990; Gough and James, 1990) that aspects such as the inclusion of group work and the perceived quality of the course presenter are important aspects of the day for participants, and can be seen to be either facilitating or inhibiting the impact of the course.

Some comments about such aspects were collected on evaluation forms immediately after the course. However, the following provides an overview of comments made about the structure and format of the courses during interviews, particularly those that suggest an influence on impact. Interestingly, but perhaps unsurprisingly given the diverse backgrounds and experience of course participants, comments about these aspects were not uniform. Thus, for example, although some identified times when there was too much '*talk and chalk*', others on the same course were pleased with the balance of listening and interacting.

1.2.1 Format and structure

A summary of each day, providing an overview of both the format (such as group work or large-group discussion) and structure, is set out in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 The structure and format of the courses

Understanding and Managing Conflict

9:00	Participants arrived and took name badges. The chairs were arranged in a horseshoe. Coffee was available.
9:15	A member of the Youth Service welcomed participants and introduced the course provider.
9:20	The course provider began by pointing out the course notes that would be available later in the day. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves. Following this, the course provider asked them to bring up issues about conflict.
9:30	A participant arrived late. Discussion continued. The course provider frequently related anecdotes to illustrate points.
9:47	Participants were asked to form four groups to discuss issues about conflict (it appeared that these were formed by people sitting near each other). Two rooms were available for groups to work in.
10:17	The course provider spent some time writing on flipcharts before moving around the groups.
10:25	Coffee break.
10:50	Participants returned to the room. One group presented their list of issues on flipchart paper. This was greeted by applause. The course provider asked whether other groups had any comments, and discussion took place; dominated by one course participant.
11:05	The course provider led a discussion on systems for dealing with conflict, and main styles of responses to conflict. He used anecdotes, flipcharts and OHP transparencies for this.
11:30	Provider-led presentation continued, moving on to thinking skills and Glasser's theory. The course provider ran through this on OHP transparencies, elaborating on the points. At intervals, he checked that it was useful to participants; there were murmurs of assent.
11:52	A teacher asked a question and discussion followed.
12:03	The course provider checked that he could continue, and finished this section off before lunch.
12:15	The group broke for lunch. Participants collected course notes as they moved out of the room. Buffet lunch.
1:15	Participants moved back into the room of their own accord. The course provider asked that they sort themselves into groups of three, preferably with people they do not normally work with. Each person was then designated A, B or C. The 'C's left the room and were given instructions, before coming back in to observe 'A' and 'B' discussing a conflict situation.
1:32	The course provider talked about rapport and counselling, using a flipchart. He introduced the concepts of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic styles (VAK), and related this to conflict.
1:55	The 'C' of each group gave feedback about the style of the person observed. There was input from the course provider after each. Some participants asked questions.
2:10	The course provider moved on to talk about body language using flipchart and anecdotes. In pairs, participants were given instructions to try out different seating positions. There was discussion of how each felt, and why.
2:20	Comfort zones. Concentric circles were drawn on a flipchart. With the help of a course participant, the course provider demonstrated how to step back and out of a conflict situation. Discussion.
2:30	Return to the flipchart of VAK. The course provider talked about 'anchoring'. Discussion and questions. The course provider referred to a page in the course notes.
2:53	The course provider summed up this section and asked for any questions. There were two.
3:00	Break for coffee.
3:20	Participants returned from coffee break. The course provider handed out self-assessment exercises and checklists and talked about these. Another theorist was introduced.
3:55	The course provider flipped back through the flipchart pages and went over things he had presented earlier. He finished with one more point and there were positive murmurs from the participants.
4:00	Participants left, after completing evaluation forms.

Managing Drug-related Incidents

8:50	Participants began arriving and took name badges. The chairs were arranged in a horseshoe.
9:10	A course provider called everyone together and made introductions. The programme for the day was outlined, but was described as '*fluid*'.
9:20	The drugs directory was circulated. A course provider asked people to decide whom they would like to work with. Participants formed groups, and each group was given paper and asked to write down as many names of drugs as they could. Two groups moved into the adjoining room.
9:37	A course provider stopped the groups and asked them to categorise the drugs. They continued with the task. Next, another provider asked them to start marking drugs into two categories: acceptable and unacceptable.
9:55	The groups came back together, and their lists were displayed on the walls. A representative from each group was asked to summarise what they had decided in terms of acceptability. There was whole-group discussion of points that arose.
10:10	One of the course providers worked through the drugs directory, paraphrasing.
10:35	Coffee break. Before people dispersed, a course provider reinforced the importance of confidentiality.
11:05	Participants moved back into the main room and a course provider summarised the arrangements for lunch. Work continued on the drugs directory.
11:35	A handout was given out, one between three people. This was a flowchart of how to manage a drug-related incident. Again, a course provider worked through this.
11:44	Participants were now asked to get into multi-agency teams to map out some scenarios they would deal with after lunch. It was emphasised that situations should be as real as possible. They were encouraged to reorganise the furniture and use both rooms (it appeared that most people stayed sitting where they were and discussed scenarios with people sitting next to them).
12:00	Everyone reassembled and a course provider called a halt for lunch. The group was told that after lunch, the incidents which had been thought up would be randomly allocated. The afternoon activities were outlined. A vote was taken for the length of lunch (1 hour).
1:04	Everyone reconvened, and was spoken to by the coordinator of the Drugs Reference Group. Participants then had an opportunity to work through the scenarios devised before lunch. Participants were in groups of five. A course provider issued each with a card stating the incident they were to deal with. All had copies of the drugs directory and the flowchart handout. Groups were made up as follows: 1. Teacher, school nurse, EWO, FE liaison officer, headteacher. 2. Social worker, police, family support worker, school nurse, headteacher, teacher. 3. Youth worker, Careers Service representative, Health Promotion Service representative, headteacher, teacher. 4. Three teachers, EWO.
1:25	A course provider gave each group a slip of paper saying that the media had just been contacted about the incident. The group now had to deal with this as well.
1:39	The course providers walked around the groups. Some were given a new task.
1:50	Everyone reassembled as the speaker from 'Impact' arrived. Solutions to the incidents which people had been discussing were stuck on the wall.
2:05	A course provider explained the procedure for the rest of the afternoon (coffee break, followed by a presentation from 'Impact' and then a final session of group work). The groups were congratulated on how they had dealt with the incidents.
2:20	Coffee break.
2:30	Presentation by 'Impact', covering its history, philosophy and practice. The emphasis was on the importance of consistency across agencies.
3:25	Questions to the speaker. Participants were then given a few moments before beginning the final activity. Informal conversation took place. Some looked at the literature on display.
3:40	Everyone reconvened. Two OHP transparencies were put up, reinforcing the messages of the day. A flipchart displayed a pro forma for reporting incidents. A copy of this was to be sent to participants after the course. There was discussion of the usefulness of the drugs directory and a pack of information was given to each of the course participants. Participants were asked for questions, then were praised for their hard work.
3:50	Providers indicated they would be around to answer any questions for about half an hour. Participants filled in evaluation forms.

On the whole, participants were positive about the format and structure of each course, for example:

> *It was fine. It never got boring, there was enough activity* (teacher).

> *I think the day was structured as best it could be. I don't think I would have changed it at all* (police representative).

> *I thought the format of the day was relaxed, and I was quite happy with it ... it changed a lot* (Careers Service representative).

Interviewees commented on a number of elements of the format and structure, including the balance of group work with a more didactic approach; the time factor; the timing of the day; the speaker; and the venue. Comments on these elements have been collated and are displayed in Figure 1.3.

It would appear that areas of course design that could be considered further were:

- the amount of content in relation to available time; and
- the timetabling and use of time during the day.

In all cases, the calibre of the provider was nominated as a particularly positive feature of the courses.

1.2.2 Content

Interviewees were also given the opportunity to make some general comments about the content of the course. Many again were positive, such as this senior teacher who felt that the aims of the course were achieved. This had had a positive impact, as the information and processes had been adapted to suit the needs of the school:

> *We were guided and given good information which allowed us to ... in a little working party, go forth, produce our own flowchart. So yes, we actually got the bare bones from there, from their processes and adapted it to our own needs.*

Other positive comments included:

> *I found it very instructive. I found it useful ... I certainly found, from my point of view and my position, it was very useful* (EWO).

> *It's the first course of that type that I have attended, and I did think it was very well thought through, and quite informative really ... it made you aware* (headteacher).

However, others identified aspects of the content which were less positive. One participant who worked with young people beyond school felt that the conflict management course stayed too much with schools, and was therefore not so relevant to her situation. Another felt the course was unfocused and '*woolly*'. Others on this course felt that it was too theoretical, and this influenced the potential impact of the course for them, for example, a Careers Service representative noted that '*it was all too above the practical practitioner's level ... it was very interesting, but I didn't really think it gave me anything to go on as a practitioner*'.

Course providers, whilst reflective on their practice, were positive about the days and what had been achieved. However, one did suggest that more background knowledge for the course provider would have been useful, particularly because of the multi-agency composition:

> *In ideal circumstances, it would be better to have some indications of the level of conflict and aggression that people are actually dealing with ... what would help me is to know basically, what are people really dealing with and in what context? But, to be fair, they did give me a lot of information and a lot of strategy documents, so I know what the strategies were about and what their hopes were in terms of following those strategies. The difficulty with a strategy-led approach is that it's generalised and it's difficult then to respond to the real detail that people bring up, because you have got a mind to the strategy all the time.*

The above discussion of views on format, structure and content perhaps presents nothing unsurprising or new in terms of evaluating course provision. However, one issue that is specific to this evaluation is the importance of the structure and format of the day in ensuring the multi-agency aspects of the course are capitalised upon. It would appear that the inclusion of group discussion and activities was central to this, and that a more formal approach to group division could be beneficial. Responses from different interviewees point to the importance of maintaining a balance between ensuring members of different agencies communicate and share expertise, and that groups are not too diverse to be able to work collectively on the issue.

Equally, giving a greater profile to the multi-agency purposes of the day in pre-course publicity may be an area for development.

Figure 1.3 Views on the structure and format

Mode of delivery	*I think we should have had them* [groups] *in with people from different agencies, like having names and actually saying like, 'You, you and you' in that group, rather than splitting into people that we knew. So I think that would have been more beneficial, but then again that's probably my fault for actually going with people who I know* (youth worker). *I thought the group work was probably too long, but maybe that was just the group I was in. Possibly because we work from different perspectives, different agencies and people just thrown together ... I didn't think we had an awful lot in common in terms of managing conflict, necessarily* (secondary teacher). *There wasn't a lot of wasted time in terms of writing. What I call wasted time – writing conversations and sticking them on the wall with Blu-Tack and playing games and role play ... I thought when we worked in groups we actually worked, I thought, very beneficially* (secondary teacher). [Too much] *talk and chalk ... it was quite easy to sit back and tune in and out* (LEA agency representative). *There was too much input. Too much didactic approach* (secondary teacher).
Time	*Content squashed into that one day* (secondary teacher). *I think it probably could have been a two-day course ...* [I] *would have liked more time to reflect* (youth worker).
Timing/ timetabling	*Coffee on the go so that you can actually help yourself and carry on working rather than having breaks. I think sometimes it actually splits the continuity of what's going on, but that's just my personal opinion of how it goes* (youth worker). *Lunch could have been a lot shorter* (youth worker). *I felt that it would have been better the other way round ... directly after lunch we had the talk and then we had a practical exercise to do. I noticed quite a few people were literally nodding off during the talk, because ... he had a very calm, quiet voice and we had just had our lunch and the room was warm* (EWO).
Speaker	*His warmth. He made the day enjoyable. He made it fun as well* (Social Services representative). *Relaxed ... very approachable* (EWO). *He came across very well ...* [he] *knew what he was talking about ... I did think he was very good* (police representative). *I think if it had been facilitated by somebody different the whole day would have been completely different, you know, I think he made the day. If a course came up with his name on again, it would make a lot of difference; I would want to go on it* (Social Services representative). *It was very interesting to actually listen to* [the provider] *... he is a very clear and very exciting person to actually listen to* (youth worker).
Venue	*I think, in my experience, people are often unwilling to give very much of their own personal experience and thoughts in such a large unfamiliar setting and with unfamiliar people around them ... I think that's slightly inhibiting really ...* [moving] *down into smaller groups I think had a more relaxing effect. It seemed a more personal atmosphere and I found, particularly in the small group I worked with, that it seemed to loosen people up and found they were talking more freely* (youth worker).

1.3 IMPACT OF THE COURSES

Discussion turns now to the outcomes and impact of the course, the major focus of this evaluation. To explore the impact of the courses, participants were first asked, in an open question, to describe the main effects or outcomes the course had had for them. Following this, the typology of professional development outcomes (developed in previous research: Harland and Kinder, 1997; Kinder, Harland and Wootten, 1991) was used as a basis to explore impact more thoroughly. The typology contains eight potential outcomes, leading to the final aim of impact on practice, and interviewees were specifically asked if they felt such outcomes had occurred for them.

Within the typology, outcomes were formulated into a hierarchy, with third-order outcomes, e.g. material outcomes and new information, seen as least likely to impact on practice, unless other outcomes were also present. Higher (second- and first-order) outcomes, e.g. motivational outcomes, new knowledge and skills, were seen as more likely to have a substantial impact on practice. Whilst this framework has been useful as a tool for exploring the impact of these two multi-agency courses, it is worth questioning whether changes in individual practitioners' everyday practice were the ultimate aim, or whether, in this context of one-day, one-off courses, other lower-order outcomes (such as awareness-raising) may have been seen as more significant. To explore this, the perspectives of course providers, who were questioned using the same typology, have also been included.

This section discusses responses under each category within the typology, and also includes cameos of five course attendees, to illuminate how, in practice, the presence of these outcomes affects subsequent practice.

1.3.1 Initial views on impact

Views on the course and its immediate impact were gleaned from the evaluation forms completed by participants at the conclusion of the course. Differences were evident by course, as presented in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4 Initial views on impact

Conflict management course

For the item asking about the most useful parts of the training, eight participants made reference to aspects of the course content, e.g. '*discussions on matching*' and '*visual, auditory, kinaesthetic*'. Some general comments were not specific enough to be placed into either the informational outcomes or new awareness categories of the typology, but those that were, focused on new awareness. Four participants made mention of the course notes (i.e. material outcomes). Whilst there was no mention of intentions to change policy or practice within schools, four participants intended to disseminate information to others, and three to make changes in individual practice.

Drug-related incidents course

The most significant outcomes mentioned on evaluation forms for the drug-related incidents course were informational (eight participants mentioned this, as well as another five who commented less specifically on the usefulness of the content) and multi-agency outcomes, e.g. '*good to come into contact with members of other professions – gives different perspectives on a problem*' (commented on by six participants). Eight participants intended to share the material with colleagues and eight planned on implementing changes in policy and procedures as a result of course attendance.

Thus, analysis of these initial reactions suggests that the managing conflict course particularly provided new awareness and material outcomes, and was seen to have the potential to change individual practice. Participants on the drug-related incidents course felt they had gained informational outcomes and intended to broaden the impact of the course through sharing material with colleagues and implementing changes within their organisations.

1.3.2 Material and provisionary outcomes

Both courses provided participants with the third-order outcome of material resources (comprehensive course notes for the conflict management course, and a variety of handouts for the drug-related incidents course, including a list of local police contact numbers, and flowcharts for managing a drug-related incident). These were seen as an important aspect of the course by all providers, with one describing them as '*critical ... it reinforces what you have done. But, it's got other directions people want to go in. So, I think, yes, the course book is a big thing for me*'. When asked about these resources within the context of outcomes, a continuum of responses emerged from course participants:

- those who did not feel they had been provided with material resources (often because they perceived that they already had the information that was made available);
- those who had done nothing with the information provided;
- those who had filed the information for future reference but had not made use of it yet; and
- those for whom the material resources were an important outcome of the course.

Respondents who had not done anything with the materials provided did not give a rationale for this. Examples of their comments were as follows:

> *I did look at them when I came back and the next day but I haven't looked at them since, no. To be quite truthful, if we had conflict in the office, I don't think it would be my course notes I would go for first* (Careers Service representative).
>
> *I have not felt the need to look at it* (police representative).
>
> *I kept that. I haven't looked at it* (LEA agency representative).

Course attendees in the latter two categories mentioned the potential for resources to be used in dissemination with colleagues, and the way in which course notes could be

referred to as a reminder of the course, and also to move beyond what was covered in the course:

> *Yes, I thought that was marvellous. I thought that was great. I have looked through it on occasions for different things. I think it's a good book to have, there's a lot more in it than he covered in the course. It's something that you can look at any time if you feel uncomfortable in a situation. You can look to find information about how to handle it* (EWO).

> *Brilliant ... you can share it with the rest of your colleagues. It's there as a resource. You can take bits out of it for training* (Careers Service representative).

More than one participant on the drug-related incidents course particularly mentioned the usefulness of a list of local police. This was seen to make it easier to access the police, rather than phoning the main office with queries or issues related to drug use.

1.3.3 Informational outcomes

Informational outcomes were reported as a major outcome for the drug-related incidents course, recognised by both providers and attendees. Eight course attendees commented on the new facts and pieces of information they had learnt, for example, '*facts and figures*', '*I learnt how they actually sniffed the glue*', '*solid information*'.

Course providers recognised that the information would not be new for all participants, but saw it as an important outcome for those with less experience in the area of drugs:

> *I think whether it was new was dependent on where they were in their experience and learning about managing incidents ... some of them will have got some new information from that. Some of them, it would have been information they were aware of but maybe just formatted in a different way, or just put together in a different way.*

On the conflict management course, there was less evidence of specific examples of new information, although the course provider did identify this as an intended outcome from the course, and referred to eight participants who had contacted him subsequently for further information. A number of participants responded negatively when asked if they had learnt any new facts or information from this course. However, it may be that, as this course dealt more with concepts and models for understanding conflict, participants did not think about this as new information, but rather as new awareness or knowledge. This would be consistent with the initial responses presented on the evaluation forms. The new awareness outcome is discussed next.

1.3.4 New awareness

Participants were asked whether the course had given them a new awareness or insight into the topic, or strategies for dealing with it, and whether the course had changed their perceptions of the issue. Again, all providers identified new awareness as an intended outcome, although one emphasised, '*if they have already got good working practice, then there is less new awareness*'. One provider on the drugs course felt that the course had changed perceptions by making drug incidents '*less sensational ... it showed ways of sensible decision-making processes*'.

Linked with the new information gained about drugs, nearly all participants on the drug-related incidents course also spoke of new or increased awareness about drugs, drugs culture, and strategies to deal with drug-related incidents. For some, there was also a new awareness of the involvement of different agencies. An agency worker gained information about the procedures that are in place in schools for when a pupil is found to have drugs, and as a result of this information he had changed his perceptions: '*I had attended with preconceived ideas about what I thought would happen, and in some cases I was totally wrong.*'

Examples of changes in perceptions of conflict were also evident from about half of the participants interviewed on the conflict management course. For one interviewee in particular, this was a significant outcome:

> *I think it's important to every now and again to be refreshed and maybe look at it* [conflict] *from a slightly different angle. And, I think he came from a slightly different angle ... I think he was trying to teach you to think about things a bit more in conflict ... to step outside of it a little bit and be able to look at it, and then maybe you can manage it even better than what you already are. He tried to put that across, which was something that I have remembered* (Social Service representative).

This interviewee emphasised the change in his perceptions of conflict, describing the course as presenting '*quite an optimistic view of conflict, and I like that, I like that idea*'. However, although he came back thinking it had been a useful course, he had not actually incorporated it into practice '*at a conscious level*'.

Relevant comments about new awareness from participants on both courses are provided below.

> *... raising awareness of the situation and the possibilities* (headteacher).

> *Yes, I think it did. It brought it down to our level with our children a bit more. I tend to think of it being perhaps a teenage problem, so only relevant to the secondary schools. But the way things were explained and scenarios were thought through, you realised that it actually could apply to younger children* (headteacher).

> *... shattered some of my previously held ideas. Made me think* (EWO).

Looking at the new strategies, certainly about anchoring and things like that, that was very useful (youth worker).

Although I hadn't been specifically on a conflict management [course], *a lot of courses addressed some of the issues. He looked at in a different way. But, I think it built on what I understood already ... or it added to experiences I have had, so yes* (secondary teacher).

1.3.5 Value congruence outcomes

A first-order outcome from the typology is that of 'value congruence', i.e. how far the views, principles or beliefs of course participants coincide with those of the providers. Unless this congruence existed, impact on practice was usually negligible. The vast majority of course attendees did not report any feelings of mismatch between their own views about working with young people, and those of the course providers. One interviewee (who was particularly forthcoming in his praise for the course provider) described it as, '*he spoke the same language really*', but the following comments represent the more neutral views of others:

I must have agreed in some sort of way because I can't remember coming out being mad that he wasn't on my wavelength (Careers Service representative).

I think overall it was basically what I felt as well. I didn't sort of feel I had to argue with the guy who was doing the lectures, or anybody in the room (police representative).

It all seemed to be a very sensible approach (teacher).

Consistent with this reported pre-existing match of philosophies, participants did not provide examples of changes in their own philosophies as a result of course attendance. As one headteacher said, '*I am not going to change my views or change anything, because it did all fit in*'. This was mirrored in a comment from one provider: '*I don't think we were trying to take them anywhere they didn't want to go.*' An exception to this was this drugs course attendee: '*I think it might have made me a little less panicky about the question of drugs, and perhaps a little less judgmental.*' Another made the point that the catchphrases and messages about drugs had changed over time – from 'say no to drugs', to the more current way of thinking: '*Tell all these young people everything they want to know about drugs, and let them make their own mind up.*' He was not sure which was correct, but valued the '*chance to reflect ... to think about which is the best way forward, which is more likely to work for young people*'.

In contrast, a teacher on the drug-related incidents course found that the philosophy did not fit her own, because she felt the children she worked with were too young for that to be appropriate. However, she was positive about the course and found it had been '*a value*', as she had information about what to do if a parent was involved with drugs, or if children found something in the playground. Key outcomes for her were

new information about drugs and '*raising awareness of the situation ... which agency to involve*'. She had not initiated any changes in practice as a result of the course.

1.3.6 Affective outcomes

Participants' feelings and emotional experiences of the course tended to be evident in their general comments about the course, and in the level of enthusiasm with which they spoke about the day. However, when the category of affective outcomes was presented in the typology (with the additional question '*How did you feel after the course?*'), only some participants made specific reference to affective outcomes (five from the conflict management course and four from the drug-related incidents course). Most either had no response to give, or described feeling '*good*' or '*comfortable*'. Interestingly, this outcome was seen as a major outcome by providers of both courses, with one perceiving that attendees found the course '*empowering*':

> *... because it is a worrying emotive issue ... and some schools don't feel confident with it. And also the members of staff that are chosen to go on those days, often it's a question of 'Right* [name] *responsibility for drugs, OK'. And it's like 'Oh God, we have to have a policy, where do I start?' and some members of staff are like 'Oh God I don't know anything'. And so coming on something like that it's reassuring, they meet other people in the same boat as they are. And they are told that they don't have to go out single-handed and save the universe* (course provider).

> *You reinforce the competence that they have got, so you don't deskill them. So that, when you raise something, people say 'Yes, I can do that. I would like to do it better, but I can do it' ... start with what people can do and celebrate skills and that sort of thing, so you don't actually remove that confidence ... to really just make them feel that it's a good experience, because if you have a good experience, they tend to take it elsewhere,* (course provider).

One interviewee specifically mentioned feeling that their confidence had been enhanced as a result of the course:

> *I would feel more confident in going about my job ... if I do now get called to an incident at a school, I will feel more confident going into that incident with the knowledge that I have gained from the course* (police representative).

One participant on the conflict management course described feeling '*uplifted*' at the end of the day, although he stopped short of saying that this had facilitated changes in his practice: '*It's difficult to say how much of it I have retained and how much of it I have actually put into practice, but it was definitely a positive experience ... I can say that*' (Social Service representative).

For one participant, the course appeared to have had a negative affective outcome. This respondent had found the course demanding on a personal level, because of being involved in conflict at the time of attending the course. She found that the course had dealt with this '*heavy issue*' on an abstract level, which did not sit comfortably with

her personal response to current conflict situations. She also felt that it was difficult to work with a new trainer and people with whom she was not familiar. Whilst this participant nominated some positive lower-order outcomes from the course (material resources and new information), it may be that the lack of positive affective outcomes hindered the realisation of higher-order outcomes.

Interestingly, some participants on the drug-related incidents course related their feelings of sadness or pessimism following the course. However, this did not appear to make a difference to the outcomes of the course for them:

> *I suppose really it has a pessimistic demoralising effect on me. The fact that our standards and what are our kids doing, the standards of discipline and what they are doing in society. I find very disheartening, I suppose, on a personal level, I found it depressing* (teacher).

This second-order outcome has been identified in previous research (Harland and Kinder, 1997) as beneficial, or possibly even necessary, in the achievement of changes in practice. It is worth emphasising that the vast majority of interviewees referred to feeling neutral or happy with the course, and did not describe any negative feelings which could inhibit the potential for changes in practice.

1.3.7 Motivational and attitudinal outcomes

Related to affective or emotional outcomes is whether participants left the course motivated and keen to implement any new ideas. Whilst, consistent with responses throughout the evaluation, a range of responses meant that some reported no motivation to implement new ideas, many others responded positively. In particular, discussion of institutional outcomes and impact on practice later in this section (see 1.3.9 and 1.3.11) provides specific examples of situations where course participants were motivated to implement aspects of the courses.

Some participants described how they did not see the need to implement anything new as they already had things in place, but still were positive about the motivational outcome of the course, for example: '*It was a reinforcement of what we are doing. I suppose the motivation is to continue doing it*' (youth worker). Significantly, two participants from the drug-related incidents course spoke of feeling motivated to attend further courses in this area and expand on the knowledge gained from this course.

Course providers were positive about the motivational aspect and spoke of being aware of the need to have an enthusiastic style in their delivery. However, there was an awareness of the constraints of motivation leading to changes in practice, and a suggestion that the status of course attendees was important:

> *I think, in terms of that sort of high, it's probably short-lived, in a way. Because, once you get back into the grind ... it needs to be reinforced in the workplace and I am not there to do that, and that's a difficulty* (course provider).

Centrally based courses have always had the problem of motivating two or three people who go back and then think 'What on earth do I do now?' ... I think we were lucky that a lot of the people that came on that day were senior teachers ... very influential people who can make the changes. So, in that sense, I think that things will happen. I think they were already motivated to make changes anyway. I think that's partly why the day was there. They wanted to make changes, they just wanted to know how to do it, so I don't think we had a lot of work to do in that sense (course provider).

1.3.8 Knowledge and skills

Knowledge and skills within the typology refers to changes in levels of understanding, and the development of critical reflexivity. When asked about this outcome, course providers did not emphasise it as an intended outcome, and it is likely that to expect any one-day and one-off course to achieve this first-order outcome is unrealistic. It is thus not surprising that course attendees were generally not able to respond with ways in which the course had provided them with new knowledge or skills. Those that did tended to articulate outcomes which were more appropriately categorised as lower-order informational outcomes or new awareness (for example, new knowledge about drugs, or feeling '*more able to deal with a situation*').

1.3.9 Institutional outcomes

To explore any institutional outcomes, participants were asked whether the course had had any impact on the people they worked with (through either formal or informal dissemination), and whether the course had any impact on policy or thinking within their school or organisation. Course provider perspectives were mixed on whether this was an intended outcome of the course. However, for one in particular, it was the main outcome for school participants:

For a secondary school it's straightforward. They now have a way of monitoring and looking at their drug-related incidents. They now have a policy and a framework that they can use that's very straightforward. The primary schools, I think they were at a different phase and I think what we hope that will now do is trigger the policy development, looking at their curriculum and start them on that process, of which managing incidents will be part of (course provider).

However, this provider was not so clear about the impact on the agencies of non-school participants. The process of being interviewed as part of this evaluation had triggered this thought:

... as for the other agencies, it might be useful, actually thinking about it now, to actually go back, and just talk to some of the agencies, for example the Education Welfare Officer and the Social Services, to see what that might mean for their practice, for the work that they do ... they were invited by the school, so it was about how they supported the school and I think it did clarify

for them a little bit, and did make it easier for the school to identify how the support agencies could work with them. But we didn't think about what that would mean for some of the support agencies and whether that now means that they will change the way they do things. It might be worth looking at.

Dissemination

Some course participants (particularly those on the drug-related incidents course), commented that colleagues were already more knowledgeable than them in this area. For others, however, forms of informal dissemination included showing colleagues the course notes, informal discussion about the course, and encouraging a colleague to attend the same course. Interestingly, the latter was seen by one course provider as the only way in which he intended the course to have an impact on others. He focused very much on the impact for the course attendee themselves:

I think the course is about understanding the issue and one or two ways to deal with it, rather than impact on others. I don't think it does have an impact on others, I don't think people intend it to ... only in the sense perhaps that they would tell someone 'That was a good course. You ought to go on it'.

One interviewee also indicated that aspects of what she had learnt on the drug-related incidents course would be incorporated into staff development in September. An EWO who had attended the conflict management course related the work she had done to share an aspect of the course with the school she works in, and particularly with the staff working in the office there:

The main school that I work in I have shared it with them all, even the women in the office ... they have to meet the parents as they come in the door, and they sit them down. And sometimes, when a parent is asked to sit down they don't want to sit down, they want to speak to somebody now ... and, I'm saying 'Listen to what they're saying. They want to talk to somebody, so you say, I'll get somebody to ***talk*** *to you. They'll be happier if you say that than if you tell them to go and sit down. In other words, go and calm down'. So we've talked all that through at school.*

However, more typical of responses to the question about dissemination were those who had casually discussed the course with colleagues:

I think it had a passing mention in the staff meeting. I passed on some information about the course and drew people's attention to the directory. Other than that, very little, I think (youth worker).

I have obviously mentioned when I came back that it was a good course and the general things that you would say. But that's about as far as it has gone really, to be honest (Social Service representative).

Impact on policy

Impact on policy as an institutional outcome was evident in a few cases, and was described particularly by participants on the drug-related incidents course. The senior teacher at a secondary school was able to clearly describe changes in school policy and practice as a result of information gained on the course. He described the situation prior to the course as follows:

> *I think what happened before was that when we had a drug-related incident in school, nobody knew what to do with it, how to deal with it ... a lot of people passed the buck on to other people without anything being done.*

However, following the course, a flowchart had been developed, with this being commented on by a range of people (staff and one of the course providers), before being finalised. This interviewee described the clear procedures now in place:

> *We have got clear channels of communication when this happens, when something happens, and everyone knows their position, what to do. So that, eventually, if an incident comes along, then they will know how to deal with it. If it involves a person, they know how to deal with it. If it involved just a discovered drug, they know how to deal with a search situation if they are intoxicated. And they know how to deal with something if they think a person has got illegal substances on them. They also know, in all of these cases, who to contact, how to deal with the situation themselves, how to record the incident* (secondary teacher).

Examples from other contexts included a member of a social services team where they were now thinking about having a policy on handling parents '*if they turn up and there's a drugs problem*', and the intention to introduce drugs education into a primary school health policy: '*We have got to introduce drugs into our health policy and teaching of it ... we are working on that*' (headteacher). Another primary school had implemented a system where the caretaker kept a written log of any drug-related items found in the grounds. The teacher who had been on the course commented that this was:

> *... nothing drastic or mind shattering or anything like that, but it just gave me food for thought on who really should be involved more ... in the development of a policy. You tend to do it amongst the people that are at the staff meeting, but we tend to forget the caretakers and cleaners.*

Challenges and constraints

A number of challenges or constraints pertaining to achieving institutional outcomes were highlighted by both course participants and providers:

- insufficient knowledge;
- resistance to change; and
- time constraints.

This first – lack of knowledge – raised the issue of whether it was appropriate for course attendees to be passing information on to colleagues, or whether a course provider with 'expert knowledge' was the more appropriate person to do this:

> *I think there's a danger that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing as well. Because I wouldn't feel comfortable, as well, about imparting everything to staff, because, I mean, I could kind of misconstrue it. And I think you need to have somebody in to do that, into your school to be able to do that* (secondary teacher).

One interviewee was particularly forthcoming in her views that the conflict course contained information too complicated to be passed on to colleagues using the 'cascade' method:

> *I realised I probably didn't understand it enough to try and cascade the information and what I'd learned, anyway. I've told people that I've got the course notes, but if I was struggling to understand them, I think they probably would as well. I think he explained it clearly enough. It was just such a complicated way of dealing with conflict* (Careers Service representative).

A second challenge identified was resistance to change within an institution. Although one teacher had been asked to attend the course by her headteacher, when she wanted to implement an audit outlined in the course notes, the head was resistant:

> *There was an audit thing in it which I would have quite liked to try but the head said 'On no account do that'. I think he thinks I'll frighten most of his staff away. The problem with schools and teachers can be that people think you are judging them, or rather criticising them, rather than looking at performance in a constructive way to make it better.*

However, this same interviewee also held the view that it was impossible to implement everything that staff returned to school with:

> *I think policy in the school tends to go along those lines as far as it can anyway. People here always listen, but there is an obvious danger if you go flying off and trying everything new or everything that somebody comes back with. You have to justify what you want to do.*

One youth worker recognised that there had been some change in his part of the organisation, but that for the service as a whole to change, it would need '*staff to actually all come to the same conclusions ... and because everybody works in such different, diverse ways, I am not quite sure whether that's practicable*'. An EWO had shared some of the course with senior management in a school, but said: '*I can't say they are doing what I asked them to do. No, it hasn't changed them.*'

Finally, the issues of both 'timing' and 'time' were raised. One interviewee commented on the positioning of the conflict management course, just before Christmas. This had made it difficult to disseminate information to colleagues, as, by the time staff returned from holidays, other issues were more pressing. Others

commented on the lack of time for formal feedback from courses, particularly those not directly relevant to all staff. This teacher had attended the course as she was in charge of drugs awareness in the school, but did not feel there was time for the course to impact on others in the school:

> *In terms of impact on the school, again we are down to time. We are down to allowances of time, and there are so many pressures from other areas that it is difficult for that kind of course to have a whole-school impact. I am quite happy that we have our policy, we have procedures to implement if we have a crisis of some kind, and I have got to be happy with that, because of allowances of time.*

Implications to consider if institutional outcomes are to be sought might thus include the status of course attendees and clarification of the course's relevance to policy.

1.3.10 Multi-agency outcomes

In addition to the typology, when asked about the main effects or outcomes of the course for them, a number of participants on both courses focused on outcomes specifically related to multi-agency attendance:

- networking (the opportunity to meet people from other agencies, and develop links with them);
- gaining an awareness of how other agencies operate; and
- the opportunity to share knowledge with others.

Whilst aspects of these could, in some sense, be slotted into the existing typology (new information about the work of other agencies, new awareness of how they operate), the interpersonal, networking outcomes of the courses were given particular emphasis.

From the drug-related incidents course, an outcome mentioned by several non-school based interviewees was the opportunity to gain an awareness of how schools deal with drug-related incidents. One described this as '*knowing that the school are on the same wavelength*'.

For some interviewees, who did not feel they had gained much from the content, multi-agency outcomes were central to the experience of the course:

> *I think it was a good experience for me from the point of view that I met several members from other agencies that I hadn't met before and did have a chance to converse with the other people on the course. But, other than that, I didn't feel anything special afterwards at all* (police representative).

> *I suppose meeting all those people and discussing things is always extremely useful, because other people that I work with are in the Youth Service,*

Education Welfare Service, and other schools. And that was interesting, to hear what's going on everywhere else. Often I find that's a major outcome, because special needs people in schools get very isolated and you tend to be a one-off (secondary teacher).

Others articulated outcomes beyond those related to multi-agency attendance, but still saw this as an important outcome of the course for them:

> *... actually being able to put faces and names together. And it was how the schools organised or dealt with a drug-related incident ... I thought it was quite informative, but I thought the best part was actually the networking. Meeting the people and knowing how they handled the situations, and if we came up with one that a parent had told us about, we can contact the school and say this might be or may not be something that you could look at. And then they would look at it, or whatever, so it builds up the link between yourselves and the schools, the community, everybody* (Social Service representative).

One careers adviser had been able to make links with a youth centre and gave a clear example of the practical result of networking:

> *One of the other people on the course was from the Youth Service, and he was actually sat next to me ... it turns out he runs the youth centre that is connected to the school I work in ... we managed to set up from that ... well I and another colleague go in once a month to the youth centre. In fact, I am going tomorrow evening between 7.30 and 9.30, and that's when we get a chance to try and see some of the kids that are not attending school in Years 10 and 11, and hopefully bring them back into the fold.*

Two interviewees raised the issue that, although they may not have got as much from the course as others (they already had significant knowledge about drugs and policies related to drugs), it was useful to meet other people, and to be able to share their experiences and particularly their knowledge with others:

> *I mean, we are quite far ahead. We have got a drugs policy. We have got an incident-related policy. We have got everything in place and we have done for a number of years. But it was useful to me to meet other people who haven't got that set up, and, in fact, offer help to them as well, and say they could come in and look at our policy, and our policy for drug-related incidents. So, yes, that was useful* (teacher).

> *To have the opportunity to talk to people in other professions ... to be able to look at the drugs scene from their perspective ... and perhaps impart some of my knowledge over to them and take away some of their ideas as to what they think the police force can do to help them ... opportunity for discussion with the people in other agencies. That's the greatest thing that I was able to take away from the day* (police representative).

1.3.11 Impact on practice

The following section focuses on what could be seen to be the ultimate aim of professional development – impact on practice. However, it needs to be emphasised again that no course providers stated this as a main intended outcome of the course. More significant outcomes for them from these one-day, one-off courses were lower-order informational outcomes, new awareness and affective outcomes. For one, impact on the institution was highlighted, but not individual changes in practice. Another course provider aimed for changes in practice, but was '*realistic enough to know they have to change within the context they are in*'. He emphasised the difficulty in evaluating changes in practice, as change can occur a long time after the course:

> *My experience is that sometimes it's a long, long time afterwards, and then people suddenly come up and say 'I was using whatever you taught' ... and it could be years sometimes.*

Changes in practice at an individual level are discussed, but first there is recognition of comments made about the lack of impact on practice. A number of participants attempted to articulate reasons why the course had **not** impacted on their practice. These included:

- aspects of the course;
- work-related constraints; and
- the difficulty of changing established practice.

The first, aspects of the course, included comments related to both content and design. Some, like this respondent, found the course not practical enough:

> *So it was like a lot of theory, I guess, not a lot of practical hands on ... I know that often people just want tips and how to do and it's got to be a much deeper understanding of what the antecedents are and everything else. I mean, obviously, I recognise that, but I didn't really feel that it offered me anything that I could take away and think 'Yes', you know, this is something I can work with, adapt, utilise* (LEA agency representative).

A teacher felt that, if the course design had included a follow-up where participants were encouraged to return having tried out strategies, this would have supported a change in practice:

> *It's down to me really, I know, but perhaps the course could have built something in along those lines* [encouraging changes in practice]. *I don't think it did. I can't remember if it did. Perhaps it wasn't intended to ... it was full of strategies, but* [it could have encouraged you to] *pick on one aspect and try and develop it further and then we will come back in and have a half day in the summer or something and see how things have gone, kind of thing* (secondary teacher).

Another interviewee identified work-related constraints:

I suppose, like everyone else, I just ended up busy at work, and it's just something you forget then. And we don't have conflict here. We do have conflict here, but not very often and not often enough for me to actually practice these styles ... if I 'genned' up on some of the ideas that came up for the day, by the time we have conflict within the office I'd have forgotten them (Careers Service representative).

Finally, there was recognition of the difficulty in changing established practice, and a perception from two secondary teachers that any change would have been made '*unconsciously*':

I found I could latch on to lots of things on that course, because it was relevant to what I was doing in school. Unfortunately, I don't know how much further I have taken what we did on the day. I don't know how much I have applied it. I mean, I don't think I have consciously, but perhaps things at the back of your mind, you think of 'Yes that was ...' (secondary teacher).

Not consciously, I haven't ... it's been very kind of unplanned, if anything (secondary teacher).

Another teacher on the drugs course did not perceive the need for change, but described the course as corroborating or clarifying current practice: '*No, I wouldn't say it changed my practice. It just clarified things ... we can continue on the right lines.*' A youth worker expressed a similar perception, and believed he had not changed his practice, '*because I think my general style of working with conflict has been pretty much in place for quite a long period of time*'.

Although minimal examples of changes in individual practice were provided, it is interesting that, consistent with the comments made on evaluation forms, these were from the conflict management course rather than the drug-related incidents course. This is in contrast to institutional outcomes, where those on the drug-related incidents course appeared much more likely to have taken information back to their organisations and been able to implement some changes.

The clearest example of change in practice was from this EWO, who had focused on one aspect of the conflict management course, and had worked to integrate this with her current practice. When asked about whether the course had led to changes in practice, she replied, '*it has*'. Throughout the interview she brought up this issue:

I listen a lot more than I used to. Listen to what they say instead of me going in and saying 'You do this, this and this'. I listen to what they're saying and reflect what they're saying ... in school situations, sometimes you get a parent coming in really cross and wanting to see somebody, and maybe you'd have sat them down and say 'I'll get somebody to talk to you'. But now it's like 'I'll get somebody to **see** *you', because I reflect what they've said. And the fact is that they understand that you've understood what they've said. It calms things down more. Things like that, that in the past I never would have thought of in that way, thinking things out a bit more.*

Similarly, a youth worker talked about changes he had made to the timing of appointments, to allow for conflict situations to be resolved if necessary:

> *When there's been a conflict situation, it's actually dealing with it there and then, rather than letting things move on, which in the past we would have done because you don't have the time ... it's important to actually finish what's gone on here, and it's making sure that you have an overlap of time when the next person or next group comes in, to actually finish things off, and that's certainly one of the things ... I have changed and actually implemented in some of the work that goes on. An important change.*

One possibility is that opportunities to follow up on the course would facilitate impact and changes in practice. However, when asked about whether any form of follow-up would be useful, many said no, perceiving that the courses were 'one-off'. Examples of comments were:

> *I wouldn't have thought I would have got any advantage from a follow-up on it at all* (police representative).

> *I think I have gone on as many courses as I can on the subject. The subject is health education. We have got all the important addresses so I don't quite know what more I would want at this stage* (teacher).

For one participant on the conflict management course, the diversity of experience due to the multi-agency aspect would have made a follow-up course difficult:

> *For the nature of the course I don't think so, no. Because we will all have gone away and taken it away completely differently. Because of all the different levels of conflict that we have, we wouldn't have all have gone away and done the same thing, because we're all from such different backgrounds with different levels of conflict ... We wouldn't be able to get back and have a cohesive group where we all said 'Oh yes, I've done that and I've done that'* (Careers Service representative).

However, there was some suggestion that, if the conflict management course had been designed as a long-term course, with material spread over several sessions, this would have facilitated greater impact:

> *I can't really see the mileage of having the same people for one more day, just to refresh on what you was doing. Unless it was like something that was going to be sustained over a long period of time and you would be meeting every six months with a set objective* (Social Service representative).

From the drug-related incidents course, when asked about follow-up, one headteacher commented that she would like the course to be more available to all staff, including non-teaching assistants:

Even though we have a good communication system here and we do pass on relevant information from courses and that, but there's nothing like first-hand experience and I think that's essential.

From the same course, a police officer was interested in having a 'debrief', possibly in a year or two, to find out if procedures and policies had been implemented, and another participant thought it would be useful to have later sessions to '*continually inform us of any changes ... keep up to date with it*'. Two participants on this course also planned on attending further courses related to drugs education.

A nursery teacher would have found it beneficial to have a drugs course directed more at infant and primary schools:

I don't know whether it might be possible, or beneficial, to perhaps arrange something more for infant and primary schools, because I think staff are sometimes bewildered when you talk about drug-related incidents. They don't relate to the children that we're working with, and yet we're bound to have policies on that topic ... how to cope with it if you feel that there is a drugs problem within the family situation ... I think that would be a nice follow-up. But again, there's funding implications.

When asked about follow-up, the suggestion came from a youth worker that work needed to be done '*internally*' before getting back together as a multi-agency group, as otherwise change was slow:

Once you know how you are going forward internally ... then think about getting the agencies back together again at some stage to actually look at how they have actually changed things, changed policies or moved forward ... I think until you have done your own department, they are all looking at each other to say 'What are you doing?', and if you are doing nothing, then nothing moves.

Opportunities for follow-up activity may thus be a useful, and possibly, for some, an essential addition to course planning.

1.3.12 Differential impact by course

Although all outcomes (apart from knowledge and skills) were noted by respondents from both courses, there was some difference in the number of participants stating that a particular outcome had been achieved. The impact by course, with a rank order of outcomes, is presented in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5 A summary of outcomes, by course

Conflict management course, n = 12	*Drug-related incidents course, n = 13*
Material outcomes (12)	New awareness (10)
Multi-agency outcomes (7)	Informational outcomes (8)
Value congruence (7)	Value congruence (8)
New awareness (6)	Material outcomes (7)
Institutional outcomes (6)	Motivational outcomes (6)
Affective outcomes (5)	Institutional outcomes (5)
Motivational outcomes (4)	Multi-agency outcomes (4)
Informational outcomes (4)	Affective outcomes (4)

Of note from this ranking is the prevalence of material outcomes and multi-agency outcomes for participants on the conflict management course, compared with the new awareness and informational outcomes which particularly emerged for participants on the drug-related incidents course. Value congruence occurred in the same rank position for both courses, with motivational and affective outcomes appearing further down the rankings. It is important to note that the institutional outcomes for the conflict management course emphasised dissemination and discussing the course with colleagues, whereas the institutional outcomes for the drug-related incidents course tended to refer to changes in policy and practice.

1.3.13 Cameos: illuminating the individual

Although patterns and themes emerged in the responses of the 25 course participants interviewed, it was clear that each had experienced the course in a distinct way, with a unique set of outcomes and overall impact. In order to illuminate this, cameos of five individuals have been developed. These provide an illustration across the spectrum of impact, moving through a continuum from minimal impact, through to examples where greater impact had occurred.

Cameo 1: youth worker (conflict management course)

This youth worker attended the course because s/he thought it would be of interest, and relevant to his/her work. When asked to recall the course, s/he found it difficult, stating that s/he had got the feeling that '*I have learnt this before*'. Although there was a sense that this had inhibited the impact of the course, s/he did not feel that the course had been a '*waste of time*'. The course had been useful as a refresher, and had reinforced current practice (s/he articulated value congruence with the philosophies presented by the course provider).

The main outcome from the course was meeting others and sharing experiences: '*Some of the best learning comes from being with other people in similar or different types of situations, dealing with their conflicts.*' S/he did not report any outcomes related to new information or new awareness, and although motivated to continue with current practice, there was no implementation of new ideas or changes in practice. The course notes were described as useful, and aspects may be added into staff training within his/her own agency.

Thus, although the impact of the course was minimal, this participant was positive about the experience overall and it had reinforced current practice. S/he was particularly positive about multi-agency training.

Cameo 2: teacher, secondary (conflict management course)

This teacher had attended the conflict management course because it was recommended by his/her headteacher, and s/he had found the title '*intriguing*'. S/he had not been aware of the multi-agency angle before attending the course. This teacher remembered a lot about the content of the course and described aspects as '*striking a chord*'. Overall, s/he described feeling '*positive*' about the course, felt that it had contributed to professional development, and was relevant to things s/he was doing in school. On the evaluation form, s/he commented on the amount of material to be absorbed in one day, but indicated that s/he would discuss the course with other staff and would try and make observations of pupils. However, in interview, the main outcomes to emerge were 'third-order': material (s/he described the course notes as '*useful*'), informational and new awareness (looking at the issue '*in a different way*'). Although value congruence was reported, the lack of higher-order outcomes and impact on practice appeared attributable to:

- the large amount of content covered in one day;
- lack of motivational outcomes (he did not report feeling motivated to implement new ideas); and
- change in practice not being built into the course, i.e. no follow-up course or encouragement to '*pick on one aspect*' to implement.

In terms of dissemination, informal discussion had taken place over coffee in the staffroom, but this teacher did not feel confident about imparting the course information to others.

Interestingly, the multi-agency aspect did not feature at all as an outcome of the course for this teacher.

Cameo 3: teacher, primary (drug-related incidents course)

This class teacher had attended the drug-related incidents course, as the teacher responsible for health education within his/her school. Although s/he had experienced aspects of the course before, this course had ensured s/he was up to date with current thinking (s/he described this as the main outcome of the course). This teacher did not articulate any other outcomes of the course, and had not changed any aspects of his/her own practice as a result of attendance. However, s/he did now perceive the police to be more approachable and had put a list of police contact numbers up in his/her classroom.

Some changes had also occurred within the school as a result of course attendance, although these were seen to be quite small and '*additions to the policy*' already in place: clarification and discussion of the policy on smoking and consumption of alcohol within the school, and the caretaker had started keeping a log of any drug-related items found in the school grounds.

Although the multi-agency aspect was not volunteered as an outcome of the course, when asked about its contribution, this teacher was positive about the chance to talk to people from different agencies, and to have it brought to his/her attention who was available to help.

Cameo 4: careers adviser (drug-related incidents course)

This careers adviser attended the drug-related incidents course predominantly because s/he worked in the cluster around which the course was focused. S/he was also interested in the drugs element because s/he worked with clients where this could be an issue. His/her evaluation form was positive about the course, commenting that it was 'informative' and indicating that s/he would disseminate information to colleagues and use it in situations if they arose. Consistent with his/her rationale for attendance, this participant articulated outcomes related to both the content area of drugs, and to the multi-agency and cluster aspect of the course. New to working with the cluster comprehensive, s/he had been able to meet the headteacher with a '*chat over lunch*'. S/he had also linked with a youth worker and arranged to visit a local youth club on a regular basis. Thus, s/he described the multi-agency aspect – '*making contacts with people for the first time*' – as the main outcome from the course.

From the typology, a number of outcomes were evident: material, informational (information about drugs culture, the names of drugs, and how 'Impact' works) and new awareness (a change in perception of what drugs are). S/he felt motivated to find out more, by attending another course, but had not implemented any new ideas as a result of the course. Although the course had had an impact on his thinking, and s/he felt the flowchart idea '*could be useful to work on*', s/he had not utilised this.

Changes or developments in practice with regard to working with other agencies were evident, rather than changes related to an understanding of drugs and drug-related incidents.

Cameo 5: EWO (conflict management course)

This EWO had not attended any other training on conflict before attending this course. Throughout the interview, s/he was able to articulate new awareness and ways in which the course had impacted on his/her practice as an EWO. However, s/he commented that the morning had been '*deep*' and found the afternoon sessions more enjoyable, because it was something s/he could '*use*'. On the initial evaluation form, s/he described the course as '*very interesting and worthwhile*'.

The wide range of outcomes expressed by this participant were:

- multi-agency (meeting people from different jobs; sharing experiences);
- material (s/he had used the course notes and described them as '*marvellous*');
- new awareness (a new awareness of conflict situations; '*it has helped to look at situations more deeply*');
- motivational ('*Yes ... I went in and shared it all*');
- value congruence ('*I would agree with him ... I'm interested in doing it the right way*');
- impact on others (s/he had shared the work with others in a school); and
- changes in practice (listens more to people; thinks about body language and reflects language back).

It is clear that the courses had greater impact on certain participants more than on others, and this was in some sense down to individual needs, status, preferences and expectations. However, using the above cameos, as well as analysis of responses to the typology of professional development outcomes, the following points emerged. Impact was facilitated by:

- participants feeling that overall the course had been a positive experience (aspects of format and structure, such as the speaker and the inclusion of group work, influenced this);

- the course providers (both in terms of their style and whether there was value congruence between their views and those of the participants);

- clear aims, with the course remaining focused on these;

- a balance of group work with other modes of delivery – the composition of groups was recognised as being important, particularly for achieving multi-agency outcomes;

- content being perceived to be relevant – a clear example of this was schools where the need for a drugs policy was immediate, and thus changes in practice at an institutional level were more likely to occur;

- the provision of course notes which could be referred to after the course – however, not all participants were motivated to look at these; and

- participants' awareness of the multi-agency intent – this usually coincided with viewing this as a positive outcome of the course.

Alternatively, factors seen to inhibit impact on practice and policy were:

- prior knowledge and experience (some participants expressed the view that they had 'heard it all before');

- changes in practice not being incorporated or explicitly encouraged within the course – some felt that there could have been a follow-up, where participants shared any changes they had made;

- participants feeling they had insufficient knowledge or status to disseminate information, resistance to change within organisations and time constraints;

- work-related constraints, such as time, and the perceived difficulty of changing established practice;

- too much content being covered in one day and the order of the day – participants found it difficult to listen to a speaker immediately after lunch; and

- content that was perceived as '*deep*' and was therefore not so easily recognised as relevant and transferable into practice beyond the course.

1.4 THE MULTI-AGENCY DIMENSION

1.4.1 Contribution to the course

This section summarises responses when course attendees and providers were asked whether, and in what ways, the multi-agency approach contributed to the course. Some respondents found it difficult to articulate ways in which the multi-agency attendance had contributed to the course, and focused more on the multi-agency approach generally. These comments are addressed in a subsequent section.

Multi-agency attendance was seen to have made a distinct contribution to the course in the following ways:

- sharing information;
- gaining understanding of different perspectives;
- 'networking'; and
- ensuring consistency.

Sharing information

Respondents commented on the opportunity to share information and learn from participants working in different agencies. The information that course providers (from different agencies themselves) were able to impart on the drug-related incidents course was seen as particularly beneficial, as was the opportunity for those on the course to impart agency-specific information to other course attendees:

> *It was very obvious to me that the police and social workers involved had far more information about what was going on out there than I would ever dream of, because they are actually out there dealing with incidents of drugs with young people, with children, every day of the week* (school nurse).

> *You can actually talk to people from different training environments, different working environments, particularly in the exercise in the morning where we did the team work, breaking up into groups, brain storming. Then yes, it was definitely useful in that respect* (training officer).

The following comment suggests that, for this headteacher, an important aspect of the multi-agency attendance was the information she acquired about the best person to contact in a particular situation:

> *I think sometimes when you're faced with a problem, as a teacher you think you know who you can contact and who the right person is to contact. But then, perhaps with a bit more insight, you probably find there were other people who could have helped you better. I think having a course like this, where you can meet all these other people, it just gives you that wider vision* (headteacher).

Gaining understanding

A further aspect was gaining an understanding of different perspectives. This was described by one interviewee as '*widening the scope*':

> *I suppose it gave input from all different directions really, in different services, so it widened the scope of what was being said and everything really. So it gave you a bigger picture. You are drawing from different experiences, so yes, I suppose it did. Yes, when I think of it like that. Yes, instead of it just being like a residential group or a Social Services group, it enabled you to see and*

listen to experiences from a lot wider sector really (Social Service representative).

It appeared that this opportunity to break out of professional insularity was particularly valued by teachers:

> *I love working with people who aren't teachers ... you get closed into a tiny little micro-system, and unless you get feedback from what's going on in your society, outside the hours of eight 'til four, then you really are looking at things from a very narrow perspective. I think these people fill in the gaps for you, and it's also interesting to look at their line of work and how they deal with it and how it influences them too. So you get a much more rounded picture of the child, of the incident and of the availability of the problem, the drug. So, if it had been a course just for teachers, we would only have been coming from one area, our own experiences in an enclosed environment. So working with various other representatives from different societies, different fields, is going to benefit us all really* (secondary teacher).

> *I enjoyed talking to the school nurse at dinner times to find out ... what her job involved ... and it was quite interesting to hear any problems that they might have at the college, any drug-related things, so all of that really I thought was an excellent opportunity to talk to people outside your profession. To get a different view on things really* (primary teacher).

One participant identified that working in groups, where different points of view were acknowledged, discussed and challenged, was an important factor in the process of change:

> *... because, when we were working within the groups, different points of view came out. And other professions would probably challenge that view, because they viewed it from the way that they undertook their role. And it's only with discussion and perhaps challenging certain opinions that you are likely to ever change your own or view something differently. If it's all 'Oh yes, great' and we all do it this way and that's the only way, it's no answer is it, to an ever-changing problem* (EWO).

'*Networking*'

Some participants also spoke about the opportunities offered by these courses to 'network' and make links with people from other agencies:

> *I think it was a good experience for me from the point of view that I met several members from other agencies that I hadn't met before and did have a chance to converse with the other people on the course* (police representative).

> *I think the networking is really important because you don't often, like the teachers I've worked with them for years and I've never actually had the chance to spend a day with them. We had so much time at lunch and break to actually talk about things; we weren't just running past each other in the*

corridor, which was brilliant. So the networking is really good (Careers Service representative).

I think it's good for networking. Sometimes you're speaking to people on the phone and it's only a voice. You can put a face to the voice. It's nice to move in circles, so you can actually share things and learn together (EWO).

Ensuring consistency

Finally, course providers on the drug-related incidents course focused on the way that a multi-agency course was able to bring cohesion and ensure consistency in the responses of adults working with young people and drugs: '*If you have everybody working together with the same set of guidelines, it actually works a lot better than people not knowing what's going on.*' The process of working together in multi-agency groups was seen to be crucial:

They are working in a multi-agency group to do the problem solving that we did with them ... they are together – in a classroom environment, admittedly – but they are working with school nurses and education welfare officers and governors and teachers and police officers, and doing what we are talking about ... it illustrates what part each has got to play in decision making, problem solving.

Interestingly, the course provider on the conflict management course had mixed views about the contribution of the multi-agency approach. Whilst he felt there was a general benefit in that people recognised there were others involved, he also felt there was an element of dilution. This is discussed further later in this section (see 1.4.3).

Some participants appreciated the advantages of having people from other agencies together on a course, but also suggested ways in which this could have been improved. For example, a teacher attending the conflict course commented that it was useful to meet people from other agencies, and that this did make the course different from if it had just been for teachers, but that it would have been more helpful if it had been agencies the school worked with (this course was not organised around a school cluster). A youth worker attending the same course suggested that a more structured method of dividing people into groups could have been beneficial to assure a spread of agencies within each group:

... it's certainly more thought provoking. It certainly gave it a different focus. The only difficulty I found in the first group exercise, was the majority of the groups were youth workers who I already work with.

Other interviewees, whilst not negative about the multi-agency attendance, did not feel that it had enhanced the course:

To be honest, I don't think it did, because, I mean, the natural inclination, certainly of teachers anyway, you talk to teachers and you talk about school and you talk about kids, you know. We had coffee and so on. We had the odd exchange, but really it didn't make any difference to me, teachers or outside

agencies or whatever. Because obviously with it being a local course you tend to know the teachers and you feel comfortable speaking to the teachers really ... it didn't detract from the course at all, but I don't know in what way it benefited the course (secondary teacher).

Some participants were actually more negative about the multi-agency aspect, and did not feel that it contributed to the course. These people often made positive comments about the general principle of multi-agency work, but were critical of the use of these two courses operating within this framework:

> [It] *gave me the opportunity to work with some members of staff from one of the schools I work in ... I thought that was really good in one way,* [but] *I didn't think it was right for the nature of the course because we all have such different views and ideas ... and levels* ...[to deal with]. *I did think it was a really good idea to get people together* (Careers Service representative).

Another liked the chance to network, but did not feel that the content of the course could be adequately covered in a multi-agency setting, as people's needs were too diverse. She was positive about the chance to talk to teachers from the school she worked in, but again, felt that more would have been gained from the course if it had been run for a single agency, where '*we'd all be able to hone down exactly what we wanted for* [our situation and experience]':

> *The networking is really good. But I still think it needs to have a purpose. It needs to have a purpose that's at the same sort of level between you all. I've seen those teachers since and we haven't said anything about the course. It wasn't something where we've gone back into the school and said 'Have you tried this or have you done this, or what's happened?' I don't think it was the course that had an effect on our work together* (Careers Service representative).

Hence, it would appear that the multi-agency aspect increases the problem of differentiation according to individual needs.

1.4.2 Advantages of multi-agency courses

Interviewees were also asked for their general views on the advantages and disadvantages or challenges of multi-agency courses. Whilst some disadvantages were raised, overall interviewees were very positive about the opportunity to come together with colleagues from other agencies in shared forms of training.

With regard to the typology of outcomes discussed earlier in this section, three types of professional development outcomes emerged as key advantages of multi-agency course attendance: informational outcomes, new awareness and affective outcomes. Whilst informational and new awareness outcomes are categorised as lower-order (and therefore less likely to impact on practice), they can also be regarded as important preconditions for professional development impact:

informational outcomes (learning who to contact for specific information, gaining new information from each other, gaining information about each agency's structure and legal framework)

new awareness (moving beyond a single-service ethos, shifting views and perspectives on the issues, developing an understanding of different viewpoints and perspectives)

affective outcomes (sharing problems, feeling less isolated)

Specific comments about the advantages of multi-agency courses have been collated in Figure 1.6. Advantages identified included the chance to move beyond a single-service perspective through broadening understanding and hearing different viewpoints. Related to this was the aspect of learning from each other. Consistent with comments made about ways in which the multi-agency approach had contributed to the course (see 1.4.1), the opportunity to 'network' was also seen as an advantage of multi-agency work.

A couple of interviewees also felt that the multi-agency approach reduced feelings of isolation, and the issue of cost was raised by one interviewee, who commented on the cost-effectiveness of running a course that could be attended by delegates from a range of agencies. Finally, a few respondents specifically mentioned that multi-agency courses could enable the needs of young people to be more easily and effectively met.

Reiterating some of these points, course providers commented that by having multi-agency attendance, it ensured that all agencies could make a contribution; combated 'compartmentalisation'; and brought cohesion, for example:

> *You can share information. You can have up-to-date information which is real. It's based on what's going on out there, and that if we've all got a common way of working it makes life so much easier. It gives you a clear view of where everybody wants to go, what everybody's contribution can be. It just makes everything much more cohesive and more balanced, both for those involved in the actual training and for those who are receiving. You can actually work together and see all the perspectives and come out with an answer, rather than everybody doing there own little bit in their own way and then coming together and finding you're probably working on something completely different. So I think there is that huge advantage* (course provider).

Figure 1.6 The advantages of multi-agency course attendance

Moving beyond a single-service perspective	*Broaden your own understanding of issues ... getting out of the ethos of Social Services' thinking ... getting a broader picture of everything else* (Social Service representative). *It always helps to have a different viewpoint, to put a different light on things. Even if it doesn't change what you are thinking, it is good to have different viewpoints* (EWO). *Acknowledge and understand the problems other people have, and where they are coming from, and why they are coming from there* (LEA agency representative). *I love working with people who aren't teachers ... you get closed into a tiny little micro-system* (teacher).
Learning from each other	*I think we can all learn a lot from each other ... so I think multi-agency work is the way forward. Multi-agency training is the way forward, definitely* (youth worker). *We all have our weak areas and strengths and we can help each other, because someone else's strength is my weakness, and my strength is their weakness and together we form a good team* (school nurse).
Networking	*Renew links* (LEA agency representative). *Useful contacts* (youth worker). *You're speaking to people on the phone ... you can put a face to the voice* (EWO). *They can ring you. You can ring them. I find that very helpful* (Social Service representative).
Reducing isolationism	*Don't feel so isolated ... you get to talk to people who are dealing with the same problems that you are dealing with on a daily basis* (Careers Service representative). *You realise that it's not just you ... we are all trying to work for the best of young people* (headteacher).
Meeting the needs of young people	*Draw together all the different strands of the agencies that can offer help and meet the needs of those young people more effectively* (secondary teacher). *We are all part of the cake ... and you never know what their part is unless you sit down and listen to them* (teacher). *We are all supposed to be working, in my job, for the child. And surely, if we get our heads together to do that, that must be better than all doing our own bits.*
Cost	*It's probably cheaper as well. There's a resource issue there. Instead of setting the course up for Social Services and setting one up for them, they have delegates* [from other agencies] (Social Service representative).

1.4.3 The challenges of multi-agency courses

Some disadvantages or challenges of multi-agency course attendance were also raised. In many cases, suggestions were made about ways in which these could be addressed.

These are discussed in the subsequent section on the development of multi-agency courses.

Challenges raised were as follows (again comments have been collated, see Figure 1.7):

- dilution and meeting diverse needs;
- content choice;
- side tracking; and,
- lack of understanding about agency roles.

One issue raised was that of dilution, where content is '*spread thinly*' in an attempt to be relevant to all agencies. A course provider, whilst recognising the advantage of the people from different agencies meeting and 'networking', was particularly aware of the issue of dilution:

> *I think the feeling I had at the end was it sounds a great idea to have this multi-disciplinary group, but actually you really don't deliver what people want because it's not specific enough for them ... like today* [a repeat of the course] *we have had a police officer who has got himself into quite a big project ... he wants all my time really to deal with this problem and in a sense he realised he was going to have to hog the scene so he didn't ask ... I think that's one of the problems about the multi-disciplinary bit. It sounds like a good idea, but I am not sure that it always delivers.*

He felt that to ensure greater impact, '*you now need to go and work with those specific groups related to what they do*'. However, he did also suggest a way in which the multi-agency aspect could have worked better:

> *What would work well would be if we had what I have just done, in a sense: a general course about the issues and some general principles about how to respond to it, but also to use a kind of case-study format, so that we have some composite cases that would relate to what they do. And they could each make their contribution to how you might manage it, and that way you would exchange techniques, method, philosophy and ... also for people to be encouraged to prepare for the course ... I am now asking for the ideal here, but some kind of project or reflective practice element that you could check on subsequently. So a general course, some specific work with case format and then a review of that in terms of people going away and using effective practice methods to check it through.*

Figure 1.7 The challenges of multi-agency course attendance

Dilution and meeting diverse needs	*It* [multi-agency attendance] *might hold you back. If one person was talking a lot and they were from a different agency from you. For instance, if the chap had been speaking quite a bit from* [agency] *... I wouldn't have been that interested. I'd have probably switched off because I'm not involved in that sort of set-up* (EWO). *If you are working with everybody who comes from the same field, you can assume really that they will have a certain baseline knowledge and work from that. Whereas, when you have got people from various agencies and various levels within those agencies, then it's very difficult to know where your baseline is* (LEA agency representative). *I mean, obviously you recognise that everybody is at different levels and you have got to try and attune to everyone, but I don't think ... perhaps not focused enough ... if it had been purely for* [agency] *then they may have come in at a different level, which could have been beneficial* (LEA agency representative). *We know that some people have done a lot of training, some people have done none, and there are bits in between. The big disadvantage is in the different levels of experience people have* (course provider).
Choice of attendees and content	*I think they have got to have really strong aims and purposes and there's got to be a really good reason why you would go there ... I think just general ones are very nice to network and to get to know people, but whether they are very productive I don't know* (FE representative). *Are they aimed at senior managers or are they aimed at the practitioners who actually do the work? Because often you get a mixture and that doesn't work, because on the one hand, people are in a position to make decisions, and we are not* (FE representative).
Sidetracking	*I think sometimes other issues can come up that aren't part of the courses ... because you are there and other things happen, they can cloud it sometimes. I mean it didn't happen there but it can do on other courses* (FE representative).
Lack of understanding about agency roles	*I suppose there's always an element of professional jealousy with multi-agency working ... I don't know whether it's wanting to keep the way in which professionals work, keep it to themselves. They don't always want to share with others who they may see as rivals, if you like* (youth worker). *The only disadvantage I can see can be where you have people fighting for the same thing, but from two different angles ... it could be that you are dealing with crime, drugs work. Some groups actually target young people, some target the pushers, some target the dealers and it's when they all turn round and say ... 'One of us should be doing the whole lot'. And I think that's where the conflicts have occurred in the past, because they have therefore stopped listening to what other people are saying ... I think it's important that each agency knows what their boundaries are and what their remits are* (youth worker). *I suppose it might be difficult if people are sort of entrenched in their own views, from their own discipline. I think people have got to be willing to look at things differently. I suppose it's a challenge that it does question what you think from your discipline, and are you prepared to accept that there are different ways of looking at things* (EWO).

Related to this issue is the diversity of needs and contexts within which people work. One participant on the conflict management course found it difficult that people came from such diverse starting points, and stated that if it had been for a single agency, this would have been minimised. Another felt that it could '*hold you back*' if one person was talking a lot and they were from an agency which you were not involved with.

A course provider on the other course also raised this issue. S/he had worked hard to cater for divergent background experience and had been '*happy, generally*' with the outcome. However, later, this provider raised the issue as '*the biggest difficulty*' in multi-agency work:

> *I think for us as trainers the biggest difficulty is about what we said earlier about the mismatch: about knowing where you're starting from and trying to find a starting point which will allow everybody at least to have got into the issue.*

A key issue raised was the importance of choosing a content area that could be appropriately delivered through a multi-agency course, and was relevant to all agencies. One participant commented that although '*general ones are very nice to network and to get to know people*', they may not be as productive as more focused courses. Related to this, the same participant also felt that it was important that the group of people the course was aimed at was taken into consideration, as this could have an influence on the type of content chosen, depending on whether course attendees were in a position to implement changes in their agencies.

Whilst many participants valued the chance to talk to colleagues from other agencies about matters of mutual concern, one did raise the issue that course participants can become absorbed in work-related issues of current concern which are extraneous to the content of the course. Things get brought up in group discussions, which then shifts the focus from the content of the course.

Finally, a few interviewees raised concerns about working with other agencies related to '*professional jealousy*', and lack of understanding about each other's roles. One youth worker had felt that his/her role was not understood, and that others on the course had expectations that s/he could not meet:

> *I think sometimes when colleagues around me found out that I was a youth worker, they made the assumption that we deal with this as a daily thing, which is not true. They made the assumption that because I worked in a youth centre that it was all we had to deal with, which seemed to get in the way somewhat, because I think everybody was looking for my experiences and for me to share a lot more than I did.*

1.4.4 Cluster attendance

Participants on the drug-related incidents course were also asked for their views on the attendance by people comprising a cluster around a comprehensive school. Generally, there were positive responses to this, as it was seen to enhance

understanding of what happened in other sectors, and give the opportunity to meet colleagues:

> *Yes, you can see what the progression is for the way the situation is tackled in the different elements of education. And you don't always have the opportunity to meet colleagues from the different sections of education* (headteacher).

A secondary teacher, who attended the course with his headteacher, was pleased that they had been able to work together on issues, and also to work with the school's EWO. S/he particularly valued the chance to work with those aware of the school context:

> *... that way you are not sort of talking in the dark. People know what sort of kids you have got, what sort of backgrounds they have come from and what sort of culture they are in ... it's much better meeting people like that and working with people that you have got some affiliation with, rather than somebody who comes from a different town who you meet and may have an idea or two, but doesn't apply to your situation.*

However, s/he also identified some difficulties with the idea of a 'cluster', in an area where secondary schools have a large number of feeder schools:

> *I can see the advantages if you have your cluster there. That would work if you had one comprehensive school and you have got its feeder schools attending. But, we have such a crazy mixed-up bag of schools in this particular education authority. It's impossible to work. We pull in from 23 different junior schools, and to have a course for 23 junior schools and two comprehensives ... it's very difficult to have your own cluster, your own pyramid. We have been designated four junior schools as being part of our pyramid. If I tell you that we take 280 students in each year, and those four schools in that pyramid will only contribute perhaps 60 kids out of the whole catchment that we get.*

Other disadvantages, highlighted by primary teachers, were the tendency for primary and secondary colleagues to '*stick together*', and the divergent experiences of those teaching in different sectors:

> *Infant and senior, it's just a completely different league ... it is not relevant to each other how we tackle the same problems because of the different ages involved within the same situation* (primary teacher).

1.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-AGENCY COURSES

The four 'C's: continuation, coordination, content, communication

Interviewees' views on the ways in which multi-agency courses could be developed within North East Lincolnshire can be summarised in four ways: continuation, coordination, content and communication.

1.5.1 Continuation

Many interviewees took the opportunity to request that multi-agency courses continue. One such typical comment was:

> *... continue to get people together from the different agencies ... I mean, that is tremendously beneficial when Social Services and people from education get together, because you get to appreciate each other's difficulties. So I think multi-agency courses are really good and should be supported in every way* (teacher).

Others, both course attendees and providers, drew attention to the short-term and discontinuous nature of many current initiatives, which diminished their potential to impact:

> *There's no continuity these days in those activities and that's one of the drawbacks, I think* (youth worker).

> *It felt like they had a spate of two or three events that went on locally – this being one of them – and then there has been nothing since. So, it feels sometimes that 'We will chuck a pot of money at it that month and that will solve its problems'. But nothing seems to be ongoing* (youth worker).

1.5.2 Coordination

A number of interviewees raised the issue of coordination. It was felt that a coordinating role or body would be beneficial in ensuring the development of multi-agency work:

> *It may be that we could perhaps develop a team that is responsible for inter-agency training. I don't know whether that's a possibility or not* (youth worker).

> *There needs to be some coordinating body to actually link the agencies together ... somebody to actually coordinate an inter-agency corporation group or training group ... that's the cooperation that's actually missing. It needs somebody to actually – centrally – to coordinate training; whether it's an outside body that comes in to actually coordinate it or internally, I am not sure* (youth worker).

However, not all were sure that courses were the right way to go. Some suggested that informal forums and meetings would be successful, but would require coordination:

I think there needs to be opportunities for people from the different agencies to get together ... it needs somebody to coordinate all of that; otherwise we are all just scratching around looking for something to give us some support.

It feels like there needs to be more regular meetings/training. And I think I would put the meeting first, because that element of it is as important, if not more important than the training: days, mornings, afternoons, whatever – days ideally, where people can just share experiences and thoughts ... what's going to help [disaffected young people] *is a substantial relationship with an adult. That's not going to happen unless 'multi-agency-wise' we can get together and say 'Who is that going to be? How are they best supported?' and 'Where is that young person going to go to get that support?'* (youth worker).

1.5.3 Content

Others referred to the content of multi-agency courses, and emphasised the importance of this being appropriate for a multi-agency forum; that is, that the '*identified training is the same for every sector*'. One teacher was critical of the focus on conflict management, and felt that the same outcomes would have been achieved if the participants had been left in a room to discuss their own issues:

I couldn't see why it was on conflict management. It just seemed plucked out of the air somehow. Conflict management is not necessarily the thing that is foremost in everybody's mind when we are talking about a multi-agency approach.

1.5.4 Communication

Finally, interviewees focused on the problem of poor communication between agencies, and felt that improving this would help in the development of multi-agency work:

[There needs to be] *better understanding of why we are doing what we are doing, and the way we are doing it. And the only way that can happen is to get together ... I would like to see better communication really ... wherever you go, they are always talking about networking, multi-disciplinary working, but in practice I don't think it's as strong as it should be* (LEA agency representative).

The issue was also raised that, if people from different agencies had opportunities to meet and get to know each other, trust would be developed, in turn enhancing the potential for agencies to work together:

... unless you actually know them, you are going to be sceptical of it because you haven't built a relationship ... so, there needs to be two things: one, I think, the continual meeting together, large group training; and then the smaller specific issues, specific to young people ... and it will work, because

over the years I have built up very good links with schools, with education support units and education welfare officers, and it's done through a high degree of trust. But you can't just make people do that. That takes time and it takes a degree of working together, meeting together, sharing ideas and thoughts (youth worker).

Related to this, two course providers addressed the issue of courses being run by providers from different agencies. They were positive about the benefits of this, but emphasised the importance of communication and time:

One of the reasons we've been so successful is that all of the contributing agencies and all the partners in this were well aware that unless you give those people time to work together and to get a grip on where everybody's coming from, and what contributions they can make and get rid of that mistrust ... unless you give people time to do that, it doesn't work ... the agencies were really willing to sit down for six months, and not have a great deal of outcomes, but to have meetings ... they were about letting people say 'Look, this is where my agency's coming from, this is what I have to contribute to this, this is what my agency expects to get out of it' (course provider).

1.6 SUMMARY

This section has addressed aims (i) and (ii) of this evaluation ('to examine the impact of the courses on teachers, schools and other professionals' and 'to examine the relationship between CPD outcomes and the forms of CPD and support provided') by discussing participants' views on a typology of professional development outcomes.

Key points to emerge are summarised below.

- For most participants, the initial focus for and interest in the course was issue-based, related to either drugs or conflict. Few participants recognised multi-agency aims prior to attending the course. However, multi-agency outcomes, e.g. sharing information and gaining an awareness of how other agencies operate, did emerge as a main effect for many participants, and making this aspect of the course explicit could raise participants' expectations of the course and in turn have an effect on impact.

- Some course providers appeared to have considered potential impact only from the perspective of teachers and schools (rather than other agencies). It may be that for a course to be truly multi-agency, outcomes need to be aimed at all agencies sending representatives.

- The inclusion of group discussion and group activities, with an approach to group division that ensures multi-agency composition, would appear to be central to ensuring that the benefits of multi-agency attendance are realised.

- Participants identified an extensive range of CPD outcomes. Whilst it would appear that there was a predominance towards lower-order outcomes (material,

informational and new awareness), motivational outcomes, affective outcomes and value congruence were also present. The drug-related incidents course appeared in particular to provide attendees with informational outcomes and new awareness, whereas for the conflict management course, material and multi-agency outcomes were frequently mentioned, as well as new awareness.

- The only outcome entirely absent was 'new knowledge and skills'. This first-order outcome refers to deeper levels of understanding and critical reflexivity: an outcome not intended by any course providers. However, the absence of this outcome from the agenda for the courses may have inhibited changes in practice.

- Although changes in practice were evident for some attendees (particularly in the form of institutional changes as a result of the drugs course), for many participants the course produced only third- or second-order outcomes, and did not facilitate changes in practice.

- Key inhibiting factors appeared to be levels of prior experience, lack of motivation to change, changes in practice not being incorporated into course design, too much material being covered in one day and work-related constraints.

This section also went on to outline perspectives on the advantages and challenges of multi-agency courses, and the identification of future development issues (aim (iii): 'to examine what multi-agency support offers in terms of additional benefits'):

- A key contribution of multi-agency attendance (identified by a course provider) was the opportunity to model the process of working together in multi-agency groups. Participants tended to focus on the chance to network and share ideas.

- 'Dilution' and the difficulty of meeting diverse needs through differentiation were seen to be important challenges to the success of multi-agency courses. It may be that areas where it is seen as desirable for agencies to deal with young people in a consistent manner (such as handling drugs incidents) may be more appropriate for a multi-agency course than broader 'issues-based' courses where diverse agency contexts may make it more difficult for attendees to find common ground (such as understanding conflict).

- The vast majority of interviewees, whilst often able to identify some disadvantages and challenges to multi-agency work, were adamant about its continuation. Key areas for development focused on the need for coordination (perhaps by an independent body or individual) and communication (with more opportunities to meet and better communication between agencies). One issue raised was whether forums and opportunities to meet would be more beneficial than structured content-based courses.

PART TWO: AN EVALUATION OF MAST ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS

2.0 BACKGROUND

In April 1998, a Multi-Agency Support Team (that became known as 'MAST') was set up in North East Lincolnshire in order to provide support to primary schools. This had originated from a Standards Fund bid (under the category 'Improving Attendance and Behaviour'). Thus, short-term funding was made available to develop multi-agency work within the authority, including finances from the local authority. The successful bid was originally drafted by a senior education officer who did not remain with the authority. The multi-agency strategy group, focusing on the authority-wide strategy 'Raising Achievement through Positive Behaviour', was the forum to identify the schools and coordinate the service. Sixteen primary schools were targeted for this resource. They were selected on the basis of their referrals for outreach behaviour support and their location within Education Action Zones. Overall, the targeted schools included four primary, seven junior and five infant schools.

2.0.1 Aims of MAST

The MAST project was devised as part of a whole-authority behaviour strategy aimed at social inclusion and addressing inclusion targets, and, as such, was very much at the forefront of the Government's current agenda. The aims of MAST were outlined particularly clearly in LEA documentation, as illustrated below.

North East Lincolnshire Behaviour Strategy

Overall Purpose

To develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of teachers in order that they can more effectively manage the difficult behaviour of pupils.

Project Objectives

The Project team will work with schools to identify, implement and evaluate action plans:

1. To improve attendance rates
2. To reduce the incidence of disruptive behaviour
3. To reduce the number of exclusions.

The Project team will also

4. Demonstrate the benefits of a multi-disciplinary approach.

Source: North East Lincolnshire Multi-Agency Support Team information pack, 29 April 1999

Responses from the interviews with LEA staff at strategic-level all confirmed the general remit of the team was to improve behaviour and attendance and to reduce

exclusions. In addition, an LEA officer highlighted that teachers in schools had expressed concern that children were not always seen quickly enough when they were referred to various agencies, and that the MAST strategy would enable all youngsters' difficulties to be addressed *in situ* and prevent cases being passed from one agency to another.

Other senior strategic-level staff's accounts of the aims of MAST also consistently highlighted objectives which focused on:

- supporting and empowering schools and teachers in dealing with their more difficult pupils;
- establishing preventative approaches;
- dealing with youngsters *in situ*, and in the context of their school, family and community location;
- enhancing cooperation and understanding between schools and each of the support services; and
- changing schools' and teachers' value positions on behaviour.

In this way, the description of intended activity for MAST appeared to relate as much to altering teacher and school approaches as it did to making a difference to the behaviour of an individual youngster. This duality is important to note from the outset, as indicators of impact clearly needed to reflect the specific focus on school cultures and teacher skills.

2.0.2 The MAST activity overall

A range of work was undertaken by the MAST team within the 16 targeted primary schools and, commensurate with the dual focus, this included work with individual pupils, small groups and full classes, as well as with teachers and at whole-school level. Overall, the MAST activity was described by the team as covering the following areas of work:

1.	Individual pupil support work.
2.	Group work.
3.	Circle Time.
4.	Behaviour policies.
5.	The development of parenting skills and home–school liaison.
6.	Sharing good practice within a school e.g. classroom management techniques.
7.	Pupil mentoring.
8.	Surgery time for parents and pupils.
9.	Playground organisation.
10.	Audits of practice.
11.	Exclusions.

Source: North East Lincolnshire Multi-Agency Support Team information pack, 29 April 1999

2.0.3 The sample for the evaluation

Six primary schools were selected for the main focus of the evaluation, which was to address the issues raised by the MAST activity, its impact on those involved, and areas for future development. Schools were chosen primarily to reflect the different kinds of age range among the 16 MAST schools, as well as the range of activity undertaken by the MAST team. As outlined in the previous section, the team had undertaken numerous types of activity in different schools and were involved with schools for different periods of time during the autumn and spring terms. Within the sample, whilst most categories of work described above were evident, surgery time for parents and pupils did not form part of the MAST activity. The range of activities actually covered is described in detail at the end of this section.

As part of this evaluation, a wide range of perspectives was garnered. These included personnel at strategic level (LEA officers and the line managers of the MAST team members); at an operational level, all team members; and, within schools, headteachers, teachers and pupils (a total of 19 teachers and 21 pupils were interviewed). A group discussion also took place with the members of the team regarding general issues to do with the work of the team, as well as the processes and activities that took place in each of the six primary schools. In individual interviews, team members also had the opportunity to raise issues related to their work in the other schools not involved in the evaluation. In addition, figures of attendance and exclusions for all of the 16 schools involved in the MAST activity were obtained for the terms autumn 1997 to summer 1998 (i.e. the three terms prior to MAST activity) and for autumn 1998 and spring 1999 (two terms during and post-MAST).

Throughout the interviews, where relevant, interviewees were asked questions around five main areas. These areas form the basis of this section of the report. They are:

- a description of the processes and components of MAST activity (including a description of the team and its operation and the sample schools' backgrounds);
- issues raised by the general working of the team and the activity within schools;
- the impact of the activity on those involved and the factors considered to have facilitated or inhibited impact;
- appropriate areas for future development of multi-agency work; and
- the contribution that the multi-agency aspect of the team had made to the activity, its advantages and challenges.

2.1 MAST ACTIVITY: PROCESSES AND COMPONENTS

This section of the report reviews the MAST team's ways of working, and also describes the activities and involvement in the sample schools.

2.1.1 The team

The composition of the team was as follows:

- one fte PRU teacher, divided between two teachers (one for two days and one for three days per week);
- 0.5 fte education welfare officer;
- 0.5 fte educational psychologist; and
- 0.5 fte social worker.

The team, however, began in April 1998 with only the two PRU teachers in place and the full team was not active until mid-October. This meant that they had only been together as a team for about four months prior to the evaluation. In reality, because of difficulties in recruiting, the educational psychologist was only able to offer nine hours a week and, because of the postponed start times of the education welfare officer and the social worker, they were able to offer a full-time or nearly full-time commitment once appointed.

Team members and their line managers were asked questions about the following areas:

- agency involvement;
- management;
- staff background and experience;
- roles within the team;
- the introduction of the team to headteachers;
- the operation of the team; and
- evaluation.

Agency involvement

Agencies contributing staff to the MAST team became involved through the Behaviour Management Strategy Group (of which senior personnel from a range of agencies and services were members). Two of the team's line managers (those of the educational psychologist and the teachers from the PRU) saw their agencies as key players in the field of behaviour, advice to schools and multi-agency working. Another line manager saw the MAST activity as in keeping with their agency's '*putting people first*' philosophy when applying for Government grants, and expressed a keen interest in multi-agency approaches. The line manager of the final contributing service reported having had involvement in a multi-agency conference, including giving a presentation about multi-agency strategy.

Management

The head of the PRU was appointed the manager for the team and a few meetings were held with her initially. Having many other commitments, her role was primarily one of having an overview rather than managing, with the team updating her on their progress. It should be noted there was no funding allocation for this management role. The role was described as '*light management*', providing a framework, direction, planning and exploring issues raised, including offering advice about

individual pupils. Regular meetings with this manager were reported. Members of the team were also individually professionally managed through their own line manager, which entailed professional responsibility, supervision, discussion and advice on specific working practices. In addition, a management group attended by some, but not all, line managers did meet with the MAST team on a number of occasions.

Staff background and experience

Three of the team members had previous experience of advisory and teacher-support work in primary schools, whilst two had no such experience. Although all of the team had some experience of working with other agencies, none had any specific experience of working within a multi-agency team. Three of the team had worked a lot with behavioural problems, and one had attended a course on emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) following their appointment. One team member was newly appointed within their agency. Other relevant experience included that of residential social work, a long term non-teaching assistant role, child protection training and higher degree research in education. Accounts referred to training days, once all the team were in place.

Roles within the team

Whilst two of the team worked largely with individuals and groups of pupils, another was described as having a role more as '*consultant*', with a focus on whole-school issues, largely because of extensive previous experience and limited time available to the team. The two team members with the greatest time allocation undertook a lot of the organisation and writing up.

Introduction of the team to headteachers

On March 31st 1998, on the announcement of the success of the bid, a meeting was held for all the 16 headteachers and their Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) to raise their awareness of this new resource. The aims of the project were outlined and they were asked to go away and think about how they might use the team and follow-up contact was then made.

The operation of the team

Team meetings took place every Monday morning, when they discussed the previous week's work and the week ahead, although there were other times when they met '*informally*'. Tasks were allocated through a process of discussion and negotiation amongst the team. The team mentioned availability and convenience for the school timetable as one overriding factor in the allocation of team members, but negotiation with some schools meant that they were allocated members of their choice for particular tasks. Consideration was also given to familiarity with the school. This process is illustrated by the following comments:

> *Well, it's been quite democratic and we negotiate, I suppose, amongst ourselves as to what is appropriate for each one. For example,* [school X] *was thought to be something that I should do because it's my outreach*

school, and if it's your own outreach school obviously you know a lot more about it, so you probably have a bigger impact (team member).

Yes, it has simply been a very practical decision, because if the school feel 'Right, the children will be least inconvenienced, the school curriculum will be least inconvenienced by the delivery of it if you see us on a Tuesday or a Thursday', then there has been no contest, it has had to be [X] *and* [X] *because the other three of us don't work on those days. Sometimes the school has said 'Oh, we would particularly like a teacher because you are focusing in on that aspect, plus a social worker because we are looking at the home background'. Or they might say 'Well, we really want to try and delve inside the problem here, so we would particularly like the educational psychologist'. So it hasn't simply been us thinking 'We feel, as a team of experts, that this would be the way forward', although, I have to say, that it's not been in every school that that has happened. In fact, that's the minority* (team member).

The two members of the team with most time on the project worked closely together, because of their availability.

Evaluation

An interim report outlining work undertaken in each of the 16 schools was produced in November 1998 and MAST team members have been encouraged to evaluate specific input as they have gone along. Line managers have informally evaluated the work through discussion with team members and with others within their agencies working within schools. Some of the agencies involved have also looked at the implications for their caseloads.

2.1.1 The MAST activity in the sample schools

Activities within the six schools varied in both their quantity and their nature. Broadly, however, the activities undertaken focused on most of the areas of work identified in the accounts of MAST's activities in all 16 schools. Activities are provided in rank order with the number of schools within which the type of activity took place highlighted in brackets:

- Circle Time (3);
- group work (2);
- pupil mentoring/playground organisation (2);
- audits of practice, i.e. whole-school observation (2);
- behaviour policies (2);
- home–school liaison (1);
- sharing good practice: classroom management techniques (1);
- individualised pupil support work (1); and
- exclusions (1).

Where a pupil mentoring approach was adopted, in both cases, it involved training other pupils for the introduction of games activities into the playground and this has

therefore been categorised under both headings. The two examples of whole-school observation have been grouped into the category 'audits of practice'.

Activities were decided in discussion and negotiation with senior management within the school and sometimes through whole-staff meetings. In two schools, activities were preceded by whole-school observation. The process of negotiation raised a number of issues for both the team members and the schools and these are discussed further in the next section. Some schools received a range of interventions, with a number of team members being involved, whereas others received a smaller input through a few members of the team. A more detailed description of the activities undertaken in each school is presented below, including details of school backgrounds; the rationale for the choice of MAST activities; the actual activities conducted; and the team members, the school staff, the pupils and others involved.

Description of the MAST activity in the six schools

SCHOOL A

School background

Created after reorganisation in 1990, this is a mixed junior school with nearly 300 pupils on roll aged seven to 11 years. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds: '*Socially, we have got everything from one extreme to another. Academically we have got the same.*' Thirty-four per cent of pupils have special educational needs. The headteacher described the ethos as '*one of pushing for high standards in every way*' and, according to staff, '*children are fairly well organised, disciplined, behaved*' in an '*academic setting*'. However, a small percentage of pupils were said to cause problems, mainly at playtimes. The headteacher felt this was exacerbated by the size of the playground. Staff stated that there was a clearly defined behaviour policy ('*we have got a really detailed reward and sanctions system in place*') and some of the less experienced teachers have had training in behaviour management.

Choice of activities

The headteacher was concerned that some pupils were being excluded at lunchtimes because of their behaviour and saw MAST as an opportunity to '*become involved with some of the families who have had children either excluded from school, or banned from lunchtimes*'. In negotiation with the team, it was decided that parents of incoming Year 3 pupils who might cause problems would be targeted and that the initial step would be parent workshops conducted by teachers. Four workshops were run. However, these were not attended by the parents they wished to target: '*It was a bit of a disappointment really. Some were attended better than others, and the staff felt demoralised.*' It was then decided by '*mutual agreement*' that one of the team would visit the parents of 20 selected pupils who had been excluded or banned from lunchtimes. Following this, the headteacher suggested that a member of the team might spend time with this group of pupils: '... *an opportunity for the group of children ... to actually speak their minds with more confidence... and see whether or not we could get some feedback that we could work from*'. However, this did not occur (possibly due to time constraints for the team), and the focus at this point changed to the school behaviour policy and the introduction of more rewards into the system. This involved the whole staff initially, and then a subgroup of staff.

Activities	Team	School staff involvement	Pupil involvement	Involvement of others
Workshops for parents of Year 3 pupils		Teachers ran specific workshops		Parents of Year 3 pupils
One of the team visited parents of identified pupils (either excluded from school or from lunchtimes only)	Teacher			Six or seven parents of Year 3 pupils
Discussion and meetings focusing on the extension of the reward system within the behaviour policy	Educational psychologist and teacher	Whole staff, then two experienced and one new teacher		

SCHOOL B

School background

A mixed infant and nursery school with a recently appointed headteacher, with under 200 pupils on roll aged five to seven years, plus a nursery. As this headteacher was very new to the school at the time of the evaluation, s/he was not interviewed. However, some background details were available from a recent OFSTED report. The school is situated in an area with high levels of unemployment and social deprivation. Forty per cent of pupils are on the special needs register. A teacher described the school as having some '*boisterous*' children, one or two of whom were having more serious difficulties that required outside-agency intervention. There is an established framework of positive reinforcement, and it was reported, by the team, that the staff worked to provide a '*nurturing environment*'.

Choice of activities

Following some playground observation, it was agreed with the previous headteacher that the team might introduce playground mentors from the neighbouring junior school. The junior school pupils were taught games, but this did not get fully put into place as it was felt that other issues needed greater priority. The reception class, some of whom were having difficulties working cooperatively within the class, were targeted and it was agreed that the team would conduct some sessions involving cooperative games activities with them.

Activities	Team	School staff involvement	Pupil involvement	Involvement of others
Playground observation led to pupils from the junior school being taught games to do with infants in the playground	Two teachers			Juniors from a nearby school
Games sessions with the reception class, aimed at sharing, listening and taking turns	EWO and social worker		Reception pupils	

SCHOOL C

School background

A mixed junior school with a relatively new headteacher, with approximately 250 pupils on roll aged seven to 11 years. The school has a '*mixed catchment*' and has '*good links between home and school*'. There are '*a large number of special needs children*'. The majority of children were said to be '*well behaved* ... [and] *their parents supportive*', but a small minority have behaviour described by the head as '*extremely difficult*'. The staff have undertaken a lot of training in behaviour management and have implemented an assertive discipline policy. The ethos was described by staff as '*caring and supportive, both to the adults and the children*' and '*positive*'.

Choice of activities

The headteacher had been interested in Circle Time and wanted to introduce it into the school as '*a good way of encouraging children to vocalise their problems and support each other*'. It was decided that the team would work with Year 4 pupils rather than pupils higher up the school who would not be at the school for much longer. Two classes, including the teachers and support staff, were involved in Circle Time for one afternoon a week.

Activities	Team	School staff involvement	Pupil involvement	Involvement of others
Circle Time once a week for 40 minutes, aimed at providing pupils with the opportunity to talk and to feel valued, sharing problems and allowing them to develop their own solutions	Two teachers	Year 4 teachers and support assistants in Year 4	All Year 4 pupils	

SCHOOL D

School background

A mixed infant school, with around 300 pupils on roll, in an area of high social deprivation. The headteacher has been at the school for 11 years. A large number of pupils have special educational needs and the headteacher also stated that the school was '*renowned*' for its work with child protection. The school was described by its staff as having '*a welcoming and caring ethos*', and the behaviour of the pupils was felt to reflect this. However, staff have to deal with '*a large number of behaviour incidents*' and there is a support system in place for pupils with particular difficulties. Staff have a '*positive, but firm*' attitude to behaviour and there was one teacher within the school specially trained in emotional and behavioural difficulties, to whom other teachers could go for advice and support. The school has strong links with parents.

Choice of activities

From discussions with the MAST team it was agreed that a group of 'transient' children having trouble settling into school would be the focus of the work. A group of 12 pupils was identified and the team worked with two groups of six, aiming for these pupils to become integrated more within their peer group. However, even in small groups, some pupils found this difficult and the focus changed to working with them in pairs to provide more '*quality time*' for pupils to talk. Some work was also done with pupils on an individual basis.

Activities	Team	School staff involvement	Pupil involvement	Involvement of others
Small group work, then pairs of 'transient' pupils once a fortnight for 20 minutes, aimed at providing a place to talk and social skills. Some individual work	EWO and SW		Twelve 'transient' pupils in Years 1 and 2	

SCHOOL E

School background

A mixed primary school with about 300 pupils on roll aged three to 11 years. The headteacher was appointed in September 1997. The school serves pupils with '*a high incidence of Social Services involvement*', and there is '*quite a lot of poverty*'. The headteacher reported that '*between a third and a half of the children in the school*' were on the special educational needs register. Two teachers take responsibility for special educational needs within the school. It was reported that some pupils exhibit '*challenging*' behaviour with '*very serious behaviour difficulties*', particularly in one year group and especially at playtimes. The staff have been trained in Assertive Discipline and pupils with behavioural problems are addressed through individual educational plans (IEP).

Choice of activities

Addressing lunchtime behaviour was a key issue identified by the headteacher, with a particular focus on the Year 3 pupils, in order to encourage better social behaviour. It was also hoped that by looking at the systems operating in the school with a '*fresh set of eyes*', areas where they could improve the structure and procedures within the school to improve behaviour would be identified. It was therefore agreed that college students would be approached to train pupils in Year 6 as play leaders to support the dinner ladies and to encourage play. However, although this began, it did not continue beyond a couple of sessions, due to logistical problems. In addition, Circle Time was introduced into Years 3 and 4, first with whole classes and then with smaller groups of 12 pupils. These groups were comprised of children whom it was felt '*needed the input*', as well as children with more appropriate behaviour to be '*role models*'. Thirdly, the team undertook observations around the school to inform areas for improvement within the structure and the procedures adopted. Suggestions were made to improve movement around the school and to support the Assertive Discipline policy, as well as discussion with individual teachers.

Activities	Team	School staff involvement	Pupil involvement	Involvement of others
Whole-school observation by members of the team. Procedural Changes to do with movement around the school. Discussion with Individual staff about class management.	Educational psychologist and EWO	Whole staff		
Circle Time with whole classes, then smaller groups once a week for half an hour to address behaviour and build self-esteem.	Teacher	Class teachers and support assistants in Years 3 and 4	Pupils in Years 3 and 4	
Play leader/mentoring system	Teacher		Year 6 pupils as play leaders	College students

SCHOOL F

School background

A mixed infant and junior school with over 400 pupils on roll, aged three to 11 years. The school is located close to the town centre, so '[We] *have our fair share of children with social and behavioural and emotional difficulties*'. The catchment area has '*one of the highest unemployment rates in the area*'. The headteacher described pupil behaviour as '*generally OK*'. S/he also noted that they had '*a structured behaviour policy which has structured rewards, and rewards come ahead of sanctions*'. However, the school was having a particular problem with some pupils in Year 5 exhibiting '*quite extreme behaviour patterns*'. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are used to support pupils with behaviour difficulties. There is a large staff group, some of whom are very experienced and some newly qualified.

Choice of activities

The headteacher saw the MAST team as an opportunity to get all the agencies working together for a particular group of pupils in one year group that were already being dealt with by a lot of different agencies. S/he was keen to have help with these Year 5 pupils to '*give them some strategies to manage their anger, to manage their frustrations, to improve their social skills*'. The team had offered to set up playground activities and train dinner staff, but the school was very keen to have the team working with Year 5 pupils. First, however, the team carried out observations within the school, although the headteacher was not particularly in favour of this. Following this observation, discussion with staff about their behaviour policy took place and the team agreed to conduct Circle Time with the whole classes in Year 5 and then went on to work with smaller groups of pupils.

Activities	Team	School staff involvement	Pupil involvement	Involvement of others
Whole-school observation led to discussion with the whole staff about their behaviour policy	Whole team	Whole-school staff		
Circle Time with two classes once a week for 40 minutes, then smaller groups	EWO and social worker, and two teachers	Year 5 teachers and a non-teaching assistant	Pupils in Year 5	

Having described the team and the activities conducted within the case-study schools, we now go on to explore the issues raised by interviewees concerning the MAST activity.

However, as an overall comment, it is worth noting that, in a number of instances, the case-study schools did not receive their initial requested activity (especially where the focus was on pupils). Two initiatives, which utilised other institutions (college students and junior school pupils), both appeared to have problems with their intended execution. Equally, targeting parents seemed to prove difficult to achieve in the available time-frame. However, it should be noted that, elsewhere, parent surgery time, i.e. a more responsive mode, was said to be a great success. The sensitivity of MAST observation of teachers also surfaced in a number of instances.

These six 'stories' of MAST activity thus already raise issues about the clarity of understanding of a professional development role, and how to accommodate schools' views on desirable activity within that teacher development agenda. The stories may also signal how 'managing change' in teacher practice, school values and home–school relationships is a complex agenda to address in any short-term funded project.

2.2 ISSUES RAISED BY MAST ACTIVITY

Despite the generally positive view that the MAST team was held in, its working processes and origins raised a number of important issues, some of which might have implications for practice and future development of multi-agency work. Issues related to the following areas:

- the team (e.g. staffing allocation and management);
- the focus of the work;
- coordination with the work of other agencies;
- school perspectives on the role of the team; and
- resources and funding.

Undoubtedly, overarching many of these issues are the themes of developing innovative practice in the climate of short-term funding arrangements and in local authority culture and systems not always geared to multi-agency approaches.

2.2.1 Issues relating to the team

The issues raised, mainly by the team members themselves, but also by their line managers, related to staffing of the team, role definition and management of the team.

Staffing of the team

Differences amongst the team members in terms of their **staggered start times, time allocation** and **personal background** and experiences were felt to have had an adverse impact on the functioning of the team as a cohesive unit, at least in the early stages of its development.

As indicated by the interviewees, **the staggered start times** of members meant it took time to gel as a team, with implications for cohesion, working to strengths and team equivalencies:

> *I think, if you are going to work effectively as a team you have got to have a working rapport and that can only come through time. You develop a trust in that working relationship in your colleagues, and that did take time. That was one of the practical problems: the fact that not everybody was in place and it took ... in fact, it was staggered almost, the timings. We had* [X] *and* [X], *later September, but then* [X] *didn't effectively start for six or seven weeks, and that was difficult because it's just silly practical problems. If you are going to work to everybody's strengths, if you want to help minimise any individual's tendency to take charge or steamroller through and minimise that by careful planning, you have got to know what you are working with* (team member).

Inevitably, the team underwent significant changes as new staff were added and, overall, at the time this evaluation took place, there appeared to be a general feeling that they were only just starting to work as an effective team – a point well illustrated by the following comment:

> *I think that the value of MAST and how MAST could be effective is only just beginning to start to make any sort of progress at all. We have heard of a lot of things that are going on, but considering that this has run for a year, I think it's only just becoming clear how people can actually work, bringing their original ideas and feeding them in and sharing with each other and learning from each other and all that sort of thing. It takes a long time to do* (team member).

One line manager also highlighted the effect of the staggered start times on schools' expectations:

> *And, indeed, I think there were expectations out there in schools that there would be a multi-agency support team. The reality was that the only people on the team were the outreach teachers from* [the PRU]. *So, there was, if you like, a difference, I think, between what the schools had expected. I think they had expected the hard start to be in April, when in fact it didn't happen until September.*

Partly because of the staggered start times, one team member also felt that the role of the team was initially seen by schools as an extension of outreach work from the PRU and this might limit, or even undermine, what they were able to achieve from a multi-agency aspect. Some schools, it was suggested, used MAST as a way to access outreach-type support.

Together with the staggered start times, **the difference in staff's allocation of time** to the team meant that the time for them to get together was limited, again with implications for initial team cohesion. This was also recognised by their line managers.

The different time allocations also had implications for the role team members were able to adopt within the team. For example, the educational psychologist, working only nine hours, tended to take a more consultative role rather than a 'hands on' role, whilst the two team members with most time allocation undertook all the organisation and paperwork. One team member felt that the lack of time together seriously limited the way in which they functioned as a multi-agency team:

> *If you are going to be multi-agency, you have to meet as a staff, you have to talk as a team, you have to talk together, you have to share your ideas, and part of it, I think, is doing that. That a problem comes along, and my vision would have been you all go into the school, you all see what the problem is, you come back, you discuss it, you decide on a strategy, you tell the school what you feel you can do and you go back and do it, but because people are half time ...* (team member).

For those team members with additional roles in schools, there was sometimes a difficulty separating the work of the MAST team from other aspects of their job. There were also times when their other work encroached on the work of the MAST team and, in a few incidences, this led to the work of the team being interrupted in order for team members to fulfil commitments elsewhere.

Both the LEA officer and one of the line managers advocated the view that not having an educational psychologist on board for 0.5 fte might be a serious limitation to the work from a multi-agency point of view. The difficulty in recruiting an educational psychologist had meant, in practice, this expertise had been less available to the team. Indeed, a further issue, raised by some line managers, was one of recruitment generally and replacement of team members and the implications for their agency as a whole. Appointment of team members from within the agency was perceived, in one case, to reduce the flexibility of staffing for that agency. Another agency had difficulty appointing an experienced agency worker as a replacement. As a result of this, they had chosen to appoint especially for the team. Thus, the person appointed to the team had the skills, but no previous experience of working within the agency. One team member also raised the issue of being replaced by a less experienced worker.

Another factor raised by team members, with implications for the formation of a multi-agency team in which each member had an equal part to play, was that of **previous experience**. Some of the team were established and experienced at working within schools, whilst others required time to develop skills and confidence in this particular school-based remit. It was also suggested by one of the team that some MAST members had more authority in schools, because of their experience, professional role and status. Domination by one agency was an issue also raised by one of the line managers, who felt that it would be both important and a challenge for any of those within the team who had vast experience in working within schools not to become '*the expert*'. This issue had emerged in schools as well. An example where personnel within the school always deferred to one member of the team was cited. Equality within the team ('*working as equals*'), however, was expressed by the team.

Finally, the issue of **role definition** emerged. Some team members admitted they felt unclear about their roles at the beginning, with some lack of clarity about what team members could and could not do. For example, whether they had individual caseloads was an issue highlighted by one of the line managers. Another line manager's perception was that line manager colleagues had interpreted team roles differently. Ultimately, the team felt that they had defined their own roles and indeed one felt that the lack of clarity initially had been advantageous, as they had tried hard not to cast people into specific roles, and these had therefore become interchangeable. Given the pioneering work they were developing, such inchoate beginnings may also have been an inevitable and even necessary process of development.

Management of the team

No extra time or funding was allocated to fulfil the MAST manager's role. In practice, this meant that management took place '*at arms length*', because of the other commitments of the appointed manager and also because '*it is multi-agency, it is almost self-governing*' (line manager).

A number of issues were raised by line managers and the LEA officer, although little by the team, with regard to management of the team. The absence of an autonomous manager and a possible sense of alignment with one agency meant that, in one instance, its multi-agency nature was questioned. As one team member put it: '*I don't*

see how you can call it multi-agency and attach it to one of the agencies'. One line manager volunteered management as the main challenge for multi-agency work: '*It can be a problem if it's not managed properly ... with four or five different professionals it needs direction and targets agreed by all.*' Another acknowledged the need for '*a management team focused more clearly on that team*', particularly where MAST members might be encountering unwillingness or difficulties in schools.

One line manager described a '*disparateness*' and a '*lack of cohesiveness*' about the managers from the different agencies which '*set the tone of the MAST work from the beginning*'. This meant that decisions made about overall issues to do with the MAST team (e.g. its continuation) were not shared amongst line-manager colleagues. It was also highlighted that the code of practice of some of the agencies meant they should not be managed by those from other professions; therefore it had to be made clear that this would be purely administrative management. This was raised by the LEA officer as well, who highlighted the importance of continuing agency supervision in order to maintain the professional expertise of team members essential for multi-agency working:

> *From what I see, it is the unique professional input that they are making together that makes it happen. So they have got to, if you like, be in touch with their professional homes for training, for keeping up to date with what's happening within their professional home, if you like, and operationally. It's how they are deployed and things like that* (LEA officer).

Hence, clarification of and investment in the management role was seen as one area for consideration in future developments.

2.2.2 Issues relating to the focus of the work

Given the remit of the team, with a wide range of aims and objectives, incorporating making a difference to pupils and also to teacher behaviour, a number of issues emerged about the focus of MAST activity. The main issues related to:

- the clarity of a pre-determined focus;
- individual pupil versus a whole-school focus; and
- selection/choice of the activities undertaken.

Clarity of focus

There appeared to be a viewpoint at strategic level that more clarity at the beginning might have been beneficial. One line manager referred to a lack of clarity at the start about how '*the theoretical bid should be translated into practice and how to coordinate it and put it into schools in an acceptable way*'. Another referred to the need for a '*sharper focus*'. However, the LEA officer involved was also concerned that '*over-planning*' might '*close down the possibilities of the work they might do*', and he was anxious to avoid being prescriptive '*because MAST was actually conceived out of a vision, rather than a particular form of practice or way of working*':

I didn't want to put constraints or too many steers on the group. I wanted the group themselves to find out what it was that needed to be done. I didn't know. It was that innovative that it needed the people on the ground to determine the territory which was most productive and the ways of working and the, sort of, interrelationships (LEA officer).

Thus, once again a pioneering exploration and experimentation surfaced as a rationale underpinning MAST activity. The question of how far all agencies and schools involved were aware of, and shared, this principle may be worth some consideration.

Individual pupil versus a whole-school focus

There was some difference amongst the team between those who felt that the focus of activity should be on the whole school, and concerned with structure and philosophy, and those who felt that it should be on individual or groups of pupils. This no doubt reflected the philosophies and skill base of different agencies and it was said to have promoted much valuable discussion amongst the team. The following statements illustrate the polarity:

> W*e are very strongly of the opinion, and I mean that's backed up by research, that in actual fact you can't take a child, change them and put them back into an environment. The whole thing is very clearly interlinked. So you have to work in a systemic way* (line manager).

> *Some of the team is much more structured than I am. I want to be 'hands on' and I want to roll my sleeves up and get in there with the children and work individually with them. That is what I started* [agency] *work for, that I wanted to work with children* (team member).

One team member expressed the view that work on structure might be irrelevant for some pupils:

> *I think, for some people, it doesn't matter what structure you have got in place, they are still going to be round pegs in square holes, but they do need someone else to talk to ... they do need to come to terms with some of the things they are feeling and they do need some of these things challenging for them, and even some time can make a considerable difference* (team member).

One line manager suggested that it might be important for the team to undertake individual work, which many schools appeared to want, at least initially, in order to establish their credibility.

> *Some schools only wanted direct work with pupils and, although the team aimed to move away from the view of the child as the problem, they had to take that on, so* [the school] *would listen to them about whole-school issues. In the end, they have achieved a balance* (line manager).

For one team member, it was also a question of credibility:

> *I can't go into any school and say 'You are doing it wrong and I know better than you do', because I have not taught in a school and I don't think I would have any credibility if I did. But I can say 'I spent time working with this child, and perhaps you need to try this and I need to try that'. And I suppose that's my way forward* (team member).

In this way, the exploration of roles and focuses appears to be an inevitable and necessary feature of multi-agency working.

Selection/choice of activities undertaken

The approach taken with schools at the beginning to decide what activities were to be undertaken was also felt to be an important aspect of multi-agency work. One team member emphasised the need to go into schools and get an overview first for multi-agency work to be effective:

> *It may be to do with children, it may be to do with classroom management, it may be to do with policies, it may be to do with any of these or it might be a combination of them, and by bringing these ideas together ... but you can't do that unless you get an overview. If you just go in and a school says 'What I want is Circle Time for Year 4', that really doesn't tap into the value of multi-agency* [work]. *That maybe taps into the value of one aspect of it, but it may not be all of it. So, those are things that concern me about it: that I think it's beginning to make inroads, but I think it's been quite difficult to persuade the schools that perhaps there are things to look at, within the set up, which they did not identify as a problem in the first place* (team member).

Another concern, raised by only one line manager, was that the team was not necessarily conducting activities that either required a multi-agency input or were innovative, and even duplicated previous work within the authority (e.g. Circle Time). This line manager felt that there was a need to develop work with a focus over and above and different to the services which EWOs, social workers, psychologists and outreach teachers already offered.

Another line manager gave greater recognition to the piloting nature of the work as a factor affecting choice of activity. It was noted that the staggered start times meant the first appointees' work needed continuing recognition:

> *The disadvantage was that when* [the full team] *did get off to its hard start in September ... with everyone saying 'Right, we'll do this ... that' ... I was aware it might demean what had already happened by the two* [MAST appointees] *who'd been doing it all the time* (line manager).

Other line managers reflected how some schools' lack of acceptance or understanding of MAST affected the multi-agency activity also. Thus, the delicacy of working in innovative ways with schools may have had a particular influence on the activities selected and undertaken.

2.2.3 Issues relating to the coordination with the work of other agencies

Team members were clear that they should not be undertaking the work of other agencies, but this comment from one team member illustrated the dilemma this might create:

> *And I suppose one of the things that we have done is that, because there is so much need, that the thresholds of other agencies have gone up so high, that a lot of these children aren't receiving a service from anywhere else, and I think we are plugging the holes a bit. Now, I think that's a good thing, but I know there are other people in the team who think we shouldn't be doing that. It's not our role to plug the gaps in other agencies, but it always means that some of these children won't be seen,* [but] *I have worked with young adults who are parents and seen what happens if their issues aren't dealt with* (team member).

One line manager suggested that liaison could be improved and the hard-core cases should be left to individual agencies, as there was a danger of too many people being involved in individual cases and causing more chaos in already chaotic lives.

The possibility of duplication of referrals and also that parents might be unclear about the respective roles of the team and other agencies was also raised. Another line manager highlighted the lack of clarity about how the work of the team fitted with the work of other services and agencies within the system. This raised the issue of more formalised liaison with other established inter-agency activity and a suggestion of more joint training for agency workers. Team members equally recognised and expressed concern with regard to not wanting to '*tread on the toes*' of agency workers already practising within the schools.

2.2.4 The school perspective on the role of the team

Related to this, team members felt that schools sometimes saw them within the remit and role of their agency and used them for issues/problems that were more appropriately addressed by individual agencies, a point also raised by one of the line managers, although not by those in schools themselves. One team member expressed the opinion that it may be more helpful for schools not to know which agency team members were from:

> *In an ideal world you would merely be part of a multi-agency team and your expertise would be fed in for the team's sake and for the benefit of the work you did and not for schools to try and get something out of you that they are not getting out of you in an agency* (team member).

Schools' perspectives on the role of the team were also felt to influence the team's ability to perform in a multi-agency way. Although team members felt that many schools used the expertise of the team effectively and did not think of team members as being from separate agencies, in other schools, they were just seen as extra people rather than members of a multi-agency team:

I think some schools have tried to use the expertise of the team. Some schools have just looked on it as whoever arrived. They were like extra people to do something that had been agreed in advance. ... I don't think that they specifically think 'Oh, it's an EWO, social worker, psychologist, teacher'. Only one thought in that way, I think. I think the others have thought of it as 'These are people from the MAST team. This is what we have agreed to do, we will get on and do it'. So, I don't think the multi agency thing ... I just think the extra people thing is a factor rather than the multi-agency. With some schools it is, but I wouldn't say the majority (team member).

A comment from a headteacher also reflects this:

I would have liked more involvement. This is where it was good with the MAST team, because they were bodies. It wasn't that they particularly had any more expertise than anybody else, but they were bodies that enabled us to do it (headteacher).

The sensitive nature of working with schools was highlighted by team members and line managers. It was felt by team members that the nature of OFSTED inspections had made teachers feel that they are under observation all the time and this sometimes had implications for the work of the team. Classroom observation particularly and audits of practice could be perceived as threatening. The problems that this could cause schools were illustrated by the following comment:

So, one school in particular [X school] *were very upset by the fact that I had gone in and made some notes while I was in a classroom and all the rest of it* (team member).

Clearly, there are implications about such examples of lack of trust or understanding surrounding the team's role and remit. Some of the line managers also made comments on this. One referred to '*certain school resistance and suspicion*' and another commented:

It can be difficult with some schools ... understanding what the MAST team is about or maybe understanding but not accepting it.

One implication may be to ensure a more formal clarity of purpose between the team and a school – a 'contract' arrangement and/or schools electing to take part voluntarily, rather than being designated by dint of criteria which do not relate in any way to their '*readiness to change and innovate*'.

2.2.5 Issues relating to resources and funding

Limited resources (e.g. lack of a suitable base, equipment, secretarial facilities and clerical support) and funding were felt to have an impact on the team's credibility and sense of security, as illustrated by the following comments:

When you're saying to schools 'If you've got a problem, contact us'. 'What's the phone number then?' 'Haven't got one.' 'Well, where can we write to you?' 'Well, care of [the PRU] *I suppose.' I suppose it was a blow to my*

professional credibility, that I didn't have a base, that I didn't have a phone, we didn't even have any paper (team member).

But I suppose it's like children who don't have firm roots: you feel you're on dodgy ground and it just doesn't help (team member).

Funding was short-term and this meant that staff could only be appointed on limited timescales and hence it was difficult to plan ahead long-term. The LEA officer, the headteachers and team members all raised this issue. Whilst this might create some personal instability for team staff, their main concern was for the children and the financial constraints placed on activities undertaken, as they were unable to commit themselves to anything long-term:

Yes, it would have been nice to have had a guarantee of three years' funding. We could have had a proper lead-in time, and that actually would have meant a more orderly start, a more structured start, and I think that would have helped the project at the very beginning and we wouldn't be in the position we are now, saying 'Well, what can we do this year now we have got a different set of funding or more money?' and all the rest of it. So it would have helped in the planning, most certainly (LEA officer).

What we don't want is to give a lot of support for these children – this is what MAST are suggesting and I agree 100 per cent – get 100 per cent support for these children and then suddenly, when the money stops or when the project stops, chop. Where do you leave these children? (headteacher).

One headteacher, whilst very pleased with work done, stated that this was '*only the tip of the iceberg*' and both she and the team members involved were '*frustrated by financial constraints*' as they would like to be able to plan that the activity could continue for three years. The view of the LEA officer was made explicit:

Social inclusion, education inclusion are long-term goals. It's perverse that the Government feels they can be achieved through short-term funding (LEA officer).

2.3 IMPACT OF THE MAST ACTIVITY

In this section, the impact of the work of the MAST team on various participants will be explored from a range of different perspectives. Although the main focus of the intended impact of the MAST activity was on schools, teachers and pupils, it was evident that the work had a major impact on team members themselves, especially in terms of developing their own professional skills and expertise. The importance of this professional development should not be undervalued. It also had some impact at a more strategic level on the authority and the agencies involved in the venture, and these will be discussed first.

2.3.1 Strategic level impact

The significance of MAST at strategic level was emphasised, particularly by the LEA officer. First, it was said to exemplify – and indeed symbolise – the present era of inter-agency working: '*... the strategic agenda for working in common areas ... where complex problems can be solved by joint working*'. Equally, its existence had usefully opened up issues about how the existing administrative systems and structures of local authorities could cope with innovative practice of this kind. MAST was noted as a particular challenge to those '*less flexible structures*', such as salaries, status, appointment procedures, which in turn may have had impact on the starting time and availability of team members.

Nevertheless, it was felt that MAST was part of the creation of '*... a better understanding of the different agencies; more collaboration at director, driver and delivery level*' which was evident across the authority. Reference was made to MAST's contribution to '*beginning to move people's thinking away from structure to actual strategy*'.

However, it was also suggested that the viability of multi-agency relations at the delivery end could not be determined by those at strategic level: '*It's got to come from the bottom, where operationally, people are saying 'This is a better way of working that delivers those targets.*' Hence, the pilot nature of MAST, and the '*light touch*' in its strategic management, was meant to assist this exploration.

Views on the strategic level implications of MAST were sought from each of the individual agencies. Most of the line managers indicated that enhanced expertise would accrue from their MAST members' involvement in the initiative. In two instances, it was stated this new skill and knowledge base would in time be fed back to colleagues within the agency.

Another viewpoint suggested that referrals to the service would be reduced by schools using their MAST member in an advisory capacity, and one line manager felt that the '*level of work*' in primary schools had already been '*reduced marginally*'. Better networking with schools was also mentioned.

Notwithstanding this, a counter view did surface – that the MAST activity had had little impact in one agency – and indeed '*frustration*' at the perceived lack of innovativeness in the MAST work was cited. Rather than any reduction of caseloads, some '*stirring up of old referrals*' was given as an outcome of MAST. Nevertheless, '*some discussion*' within the agency about the initiative was acknowledged.

Thus, attitudes at strategic level certainly appeared to influence perceived outcomes and benefits. Ultimately, the importance of consensus at strategic level about the approaches employed by multi-agency operational staff might thus be an issue to be addressed within the authority.

2.3.2 The impact on team members

The team members, their line managers and the LEA officers were asked for their perceptions of the impact of MAST on those appointed as members of the team.

There was a general view that the team members had benefited enormously from working within the team: '*extension of professional expertise*' was cited in the majority of cases. Most had undergone what could only be described as a significant learning process or '*steep learning curve*', as one line manager put it. Indeed, even in the case where impact was said to be less extensive, there was an acknowledgement that the process of close working with other agency professionals had resulted in '*becoming more broadminded, seeing solutions coming through all sorts of different ways*'.

Closer analysis of the kinds of impact specified included references to new informational outcomes. Team members felt that they had learnt about the roles and working of other agencies, a view supported by the LEA officer. For those with more limited experience of working in an educational context, there were gains in terms of becoming conversant with educational jargon and a whole new '*teaching language*'. One team member referred to a range of areas in which s/he had gained knowledge, including behaviour problems, psychological problems and child protection.

Beyond new information, references were also made to the new insights and awareness which had accrued from being part of a multi-agency team. One line manager described the experience of working within two different systems (the school and the family) for one team member as '*enlightening*', a view supported by the team member in question. S/he referred to the ability to work from a completely different perspective from the usual agency role and, very importantly, felt s/he was able to cast aside a '*negative image*' about the service which some schools held. Other team members recounted '*seeing kids in a different light*', '*seeing the problem from a different angle*' and learning the perspective of other agencies.

All except one of the team members indicated that they had gained much from working within the team and had enjoyed the experience and hence 'affective outcomes' were evident. For most team members, this had knock-on effects of developing their confidence, their flexibility to work effectively as part of a team and to try out new ideas. One team member, for example, described it as a '*novel experience*' to be able to raise concerns and find out what others were thinking. In contrast, one member of the team expressed disappointment at the lack of innovative work being undertaken and had expected something '*more vibrant*' and '*more innovative*' from the work of the team.

In addition, there was evidence to suggest that some team members had gained much in the way of knowledge and skills. One team member described how working with another team member had provided a rationale for her/his own way of working and also stressed the value of the immediacy of exchange amongst the team:

> *I go along to* [team member] *and I say 'I think this, why is it?' and s/he will give me* [a rationale] *as to why I think like that, and that's useful. It does help you to focus. And, equally, having the other agencies on hand and you can tap into their experience, their advice, their observations immediately* (team member).

Some team members were quite specific about the knowledge and skills they had gained. For example, one gained an important insight into how group work might be threatening for certain vulnerable pupils. One team member indicated that the MAST activity had promoted a deeper level of understanding about children and referred to an increased capacity to intervene in problems in a more positive way:

> *I think it's made me a lot more understanding about the very real problems that some of the families that we have been involved with have to live with on a day-to-day basis, you know. I always thought that I was fairly sympathetic to them, but I now know that I am an awful lot more sympathetic to their problems, and I think from that understanding comes increased ability to be able to, from that empathy if you like, puts me in a better position to actually move a problem along because I can offer more realistic, not solutions, because sometimes I feel there hasn't been a solution, but certainly a way forward, a route along which people feel they are making progress – the pupil, the family and the school* (team member).

An important part of the learning experience for one team member was that s/he alone couldn't be expected to have all the answers.

Some team members indicated that this increased knowledge and awareness had impacted on their practice and changed the way they worked quite considerably. The following illustrates a specific example of the way in which this had affected practice for one of the team. At the same time, it intimates an important 'unlearning' and adaptation of previous approaches implicit in changed practice:

> *Something very simple, like when I had finished a group, I would sort of say 'OK, we will see you next week', and the kids would get up any old how and they would be running over each other as they got out the door, an absolute mess. And now I will say 'Can you all stand up, please? Can you turn this way?' Or, what I do in some schools is that I will say to individual children 'Can you go and line up at the door for me?', and then I let them go that way. So, being more structured about some of the things I wasn't structured about and being more flexible about some of the things I was perhaps too structured about* (team member).

Other comments from team members indicated they '*had learnt a lot about observing children*', or, simply, to '*reflect*' on their practice. Opportunities for extended one-to-one interaction with youngsters had honed skills which were not so readily utilisable in normal agency activity.

2.3.3 Impact on attendance and exclusions

When members of the MAST team were asked about the aims and general remit of the team, the three-pronged remit of improving attendance, reducing exclusions and reducing behavioural incidents was evident. This also emerged when they were discussing aspects of the work and what had been achieved:

I suppose we've tried to work with some of the teachers on how they behave around the pupils ... we've tried to stop some exclusions, we've tried to suggest different approaches (team member).

I think we've changed slightly some of the schools' conceptions of exclusions ... once upon time they would have thought 'We can't cope with this child, we are going to exclude him'. Because it's usually a him. Whereas now, you know, we're talking to them ... the problem is, his behaviour is a direct result of his home life ... now a lot of schools are trying to think of alternative strategies, such as isolation within the school. We've been able to sort of give advice about that ... you know, like making a small area that a child can sit at and work, which is a better idea than packing them off home (team member).

However, one team member felt that the team could have worked more with schools on the issue of reducing exclusions, particularly targeting pupils on the brink of exclusion.

Bearing this three-pronged remit in mind, attendance and exclusion data for the 16 schools involved in MAST were collected. Headteachers interviewed in the case-study schools were also asked to describe their school context with regard to attendance and exclusions, and their comments are presented along with available statistical data.

The impact on attendance

When asked to describe the current situation in their schools regarding attendance, none of the case-study headteachers identified attendance as being a major problem area:

We don't have a massive attendance problem. We do have a slight attendance problem, and it is usually the children are trying to teach their parents to become more involved in the school, and actually get up in the morning so that they can help the children get off to school (headteacher).

Attendance is quite good at this school. We don't have a big problem. I would say I have two or three families that have attendance problems, and those are being dealt with by the school with the involvement of the education welfare officer (headteacher).

In actual fact, our children attend very well. Attendance levels are not a problem and I don't have unauthorised absence, or very, very rarely. I think, in a year and a half, I have maybe only had something like two unauthorised absences that you would call a truancy (headteacher).

Attendance is very good. We manage a minimum of 94 per cent attendance and less than 0.2 per cent unauthorised absence, so attendance is satisfactory ... we have got a computer system that writes letters immediately if people are off (headteacher).

The attendance figures referred to by these headteachers are presented below (Tables 2.1–2.2). MAST work in schools began in the autumn term of 1998, with the majority of activity taking place during the spring term 1999. Thus, to allow for any seasonal trends in school attendance, spring 1999 figures have been compared with the corresponding figures for the previous year (i.e. spring 1998). In viewing these figures, the following caveats must be noted:

- transient populations and movement through the school would mean that the pupil population for each term is different;
- other factors, such as a change in headteacher, and implementation of other policies and practices regarding attendance may have affected attendance;
- MAST work took place during the latter part of autumn 1998 and spring 1999, and it is therefore questionable whether any significant changes in attendance resulting from this would have been evident in this data. Hence, the causality of any shifts in attendance rates is impossible to determine in the context of this evaluation.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 display authorised and unauthorised absence data for the six case-study schools.

Table 2.1 Authorised absence in case-study schools in percentages, rounded to one decimal point

	Autumn 97	Spring 98	Summer 98	Autumn 98	Spring 99	Difference in % points (Spr 98 – Spr 99)
School A	7.0	**8.4**	9.1	6.2	**6.5**	⇓ 1.9
School B	7.3	**6.7**	7.5	7.4	**7.2**	⇑ 0.5
School C	5.6	**5.9**	5.8	5.4	**6.1**	⇑ 0.2
School D	5.0	**5.8**	7.0	5.8	**6.9**	⇑ 1.1
School E	5.2	**7.1**	6.0	5.6	**5.8**	⇓ 1.3
School F	5.3	**5.9**	6.2	5.9	**6.4**	⇑ 0.5

Source: North East Lincolnshire, Education Welfare Service attendance data

Comparing attendance figures for spring 1999 with the spring term of the previous year, the following points emerged:

- for two of the case-study schools, authorised absences had fallen (School A had reduced by nearly two per cent, and School E by 1.3 per cent); and
- for the other four schools, absence figures had risen slightly, between 0.2 and 1.1 per cent.

Table 2.2 Unauthorised absence in case-study schools in percentages, rounded to one decimal point

	Autumn 97	Spring 98	Summer 98	Autumn 98	Spring 99	Difference in % points (Spr 98–Spr 99)
School A	0.4	**0.5**	0.7	0.4	**0.3**	⇓ 0.2
School B	0.1	**0.2**	0.1	0.0	**0.0**	⇓ 0.2
School C	0.0	**0.1**	0.7	0.1	**0.0**	⇓ 0.1
School D	0.5	**1.3**	0.9	0.8	**1.7**	⇑ 0.4
School E	1.0	**0.1**	0.3	0.2	**0.1**	=
School F	1.2	**0.0**	0.3	0.2	**0.7**	⇑ 0.7

Source: North East Lincolnshire, Education Welfare Service attendance data

Unauthorised absences had either decreased marginally or remained static between spring 1998 and spring 1999, for four of the case-study schools (School E remained static and Schools A, B and C had figures either 0.1 or 0.2 per cent lower). In the other two schools, unauthorised absences had slightly increased across the two terms.

It is important to note that those schools with reduced authorised/unauthorised absence rates (i.e. improved levels of attendance) were not necessarily schools where MAST appeared to have had significant impact. Whilst this may be a finding in itself, the inclusion of this attendance data serves predominantly to contextualise the work and provide a fuller picture of the situation in each case-study school.

Attendance figures for the remaining, non case-study schools are presented in Table 2.3. Again, changes from spring 1998 to spring 1999 were variable.

Table 2.3 Attendance figures for the remaining MAST schools in percentages, rounded to one decimal point

	Authorised			Unauthorised		
	Spring 98	Spring 99	Difference in % points (Spr 98–Spr 99)	Spring 98	Spring 99	Difference in % points (Spr 98–Spr 99)
1	4.3	4.8	⇑ 0.5	4.7*	2.2	⇓ 2.5
2	7.5	5.8	⇓ 1.7	0.0	0.0	=
3	7.1	8.3	⇑ 1.2	0.3	0.1	⇓ 0.2
4	7.0	5.4	⇓ 1.6	0.0	0.1	⇑ 0.1
5	7.1	7.6	⇑ 0.5	1.4	1.9	⇑ 0.5
6	8.6	6.0	⇓ 2.6	0.8	3.2*	⇑ 2.4
7	8.3	8.6	⇑ 0.3	0.2	0.3	⇑ 0.1
8	7.3	6.9	⇓ 0.4	0.0	0.6	⇑ 0.6
9	0.2*	4.7	⇑ 4.5	0.2	3.4*	⇑ 3.2
10	5.7	5.7	=	0.1	0.4	⇑ 0.3

Source: North East Lincolnshire, Education Welfare Service attendance data
* *These figures appear to be particularly high or low. However, they are as provided in the data.*

Looking at attendance figures for the other ten MAST schools not included in this evaluation, the following points emerged:

- Five schools had either reduced or static authorised absence figures for spring 1999 (compared with spring 1998). Three of these five schools had reductions of over one per cent.

- For unauthorised absence, two schools had a reduction across the two spring terms (School 1 was 2.5 per cent lower, and School 3 was down by 0.2 per cent). In seven of the schools, unauthorised absence figures rose (between 0.3 and 3.2 per cent).

Impact on exclusions

Headteachers in the case-study schools were also asked to talk about the situation in their school regarding exclusions. Three heads discussed their use of fixed-term exclusions, and had wanted to work with children exhibiting behavioural difficulties with the MAST team. This appeared as a more significant issue for them than attendance:

> *I use temporary exclusions from time to time with children where the behaviour has reached a pitch where letters home to parents, parental involvement, working with the child has not succeeded, and we feel that perhaps two to three days' reflection at home would be a good idea* (headteacher).

> *We do exclude. We are very loath to exclude, but there comes a time when, just for a couple of days, you have got to get a child to calm down* (headteacher).

> *This year, if anything, it's increased on other years. This academic year I have excluded, so far, six on a short-term exclusion, one on a permanent exclusion. That's a little bit unusual, so I can't say that it's reducing at the moment ... but most of those incidents stem from activity within the free time ... very rarely does an exclusion come from a lesson time, which is maybe interesting* (headteacher).

This latter school, which was having problems with pupil behaviour during 'free' time, wanted to address this in work with the MAST team, through working with the parents of these children. However, although there had been some positive outcomes from the MAST work, this element had not been as successful as hoped. The headteacher described feeling '*disappointed*'.

Data on permanent exclusions was also collected from the local authority. The data for the current year (1998–99) included exclusions up to 17th May 1999. Four of the case-study schools had made no permanent exclusions for the past two academic years (1997–98 and 1998–99). Thus, only two of the case-study schools had made any recent permanent exclusions: School F had made one last year and two this year, and School A had had none last year, but two this year.

Overall, data from the 16 schools showed that:

- nine had no permanent exclusions in either 1997–98 or 1998–99;

- three had reduced the number of permanent exclusions (each had two permanent exclusions in the year 1997–98, but had no permanent exclusions in the current year); and

- four of the schools had more permanent exclusions this year (1998–99) than they had last year (1997–98). Three of these had excluded one child this year, compared with none last year. One school had permanently excluded two pupils this year, compared with one last year.

Fixed-term exclusions

Some headteachers indicated that, through MAST activity, they were wanting to work with children with behavioural difficulties who may be seen to be at risk of fixed-term exclusion. Therefore, the data on these temporary exclusions may prove to be more illuminating than that of permanent exclusions and in October 1999, North East Lincolnshire's records of fixed-term exclusions for all MAST schools were supplied to the research team. These included all available figures for the three previous academic years (1996–7; 1997–8; and 1998–9) and hence included the period in which the MAST team worked with their 16 selected schools.

It is important to note from the outset that these figures span a period in which reporting arrangements for fixed-term exclusions have changed quite markedly. No doubt, recent requirements for more rigorous records to be collected have affected the figures presented here, and indeed this was stressed by the LEA staff who provided the data. Hence, precise comparison between years was felt to be problematic, and considerable caution should be applied when interpreting the figures. It is clear that, given the uncertainty about the accuracy and comparability of the data supplied to the LEA, any trends may not really be ascribed directly to MAST activity, and that some patterns of increase could perhaps be attributed to these changed reporting procedures.

However, the figures – and particularly those for 1998–9 – can be reviewed as useful baseline data that both school staff and LEA personnel might reflect on in order to inform future policy and practice.

The first notable trend in the data is the steady increase in fixed-term exclusions being reported over the three years. Table 2.4 shows the total number of pupils recorded being excluded for a fixed term (and concomitantly, the number of such exclusions) has virtually doubled since 1996–7.

Table 2.4 Totals relating to fixed-term exclusions: 1996–1999

	1996–7	1997–8	1998–9	TOTAL over 3 years
No. of pupils excluded	57	79	101	**237**
No. of exclusions	103	170	220	**493**
No. of days out	223	267	387	**877**

Source: North East Lincolnshire, exclusions data

Equally, the figures show how, throughout the three years, there is the phenomenon of 'multiple exclusion' (i.e. there are certain pupils who are being excluded for a fixed-term period more than once in an academic year). Indeed, careful study of the data presented in Table 2.5 (overleaf) shows that, in 1998–9, the number of MAST schools reporting these multiple exclusions also rose. In this academic year, nine of the 16 schools (five junior, two primary and two infant) operated multiple exclusions, compared to a total of five schools recording this in each of the previous two years.

Table 2.5 presents the full details of the 16 MAST schools, in rank order of total days out of school, over the three-year period. It also shows the ranking of each school by days out using only 1998–9 data. With a few exceptions, the same schools have remained high-excluding institutions throughout that period.

Table 2.5 Rank order of MAST schools by total of days out of school (1996–1999)

Type and size of school	1996–1997	1997–1998	1998–1999	Totals	Ranking in year 1998–9
School 1 Junior (400)	17 pupils excluded 44 exclusions 48 DAYS out of school	49 pupils excluded 123 exclusions 143 DAYS out of school	56 pupils excluded 139 exclusions 152 DAYS out of school	122 306 **343**	1
School 2* Primary (420)	6 pupils excluded 8 exclusions 47 DAYS out of school	6 pupils excluded 7 exclusions 28 DAYS out of school	7 pupils excluded 10 exclusions	19 25 **129**	2
School 3* Junior (400)	6 pupils excluded 6 exclusions 25 DAYS out of school	7 pupils excluded 10 exclusions 35 DAYS out of school	9 pupils excluded 14 exclusions 40 DAYS out of school	24 30 **100**	3
School 4 Infant (310)	12 pupils excluded 34 exclusions 26.5 DAYS out of school	3 pupils excluded 15 exclusions 26 DAYS out of school	4 pupils excluded 15 exclusions 21 DAYS out of school	19 54 **73.5**	6
School 5* Infant	2 pupils excluded 2 exclusions 25 DAYS out of school	4 pupils excluded 4 exclusions 10 DAYS out of school	2 pupils excluded 10 exclusions 37 DAYS out of school	8 16 **72**	4
School 6 Junior (205)	8 pupils excluded 12 exclusions 43.5 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	8 12 **43.5**	Joint 13
School 7* Junior	1 pupil excluded 1 exclusion 3 DAYS out of school	2 pupils excluded 3 exclusions 11 DAYS out of school	1 pupil excluded 2 exclusions 10 DAYS out of school	4 6 **24**	10
School 8 Primary (420)	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	4 pupils excluded 4 exclusions 24 DAYS out of school	4 4 **24**	5
School 9 Junior (280)	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	4 pupils excluded 4 exclusions 5.5 DAYS out of school	5 pupils excluded 6 exclusions 12 DAYS out of school	9 10 **17.5**	8
School 10 Junior (182)	3 pupils excluded 4 exclusions 4 DAYS out of school	2 pupils excluded 2 exclusions 2 DAYS out of school	5 pupils excluded 11 exclusions 11 DAYS out of school	10 17 **17**	9
School 11 Junior (380)	1 pupil excluded 1 exclusion *Missing Data*	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	6 pupils excluded 6 exclusions 16 DAYS out of school	7 6 **16**	7
School 12* Primary (230)	1 pupil excluded 1 exclusion 1 DAY out of school	1 pupil excluded 1 exclusion 5 DAYS out of school	1 pupil excluded 1 exclusion 3 DAYS out of school	3 3 **9**	12
School 13 Primary (315)	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	1 pupil excluded 2 exclusions 7 DAYS out of school	1 2 **7**	11
School 14 Infant (200)	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	1 pupil excluded 1 exclusions 2 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	1 1 **2**	Joint 13
School 15 Infant (175)	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 0 **0**	Joint 13
School 16* Infant (285)	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 pupils excluded 0 exclusions 0 DAYS out of school	0 0 **0**	Joint 13

* A MAST case-study school

Taking the LEA view that 1998–9 represents the most valid baseline data, analysis of these figures for the sample shows a number of interesting results. Perhaps most notable is the finding that, in this year, School 1 appears to have accounted for over half of all the pupils excluded by the MAST sample as a whole (55 per cent); nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of all reported incidences of exclusion and about two-fifths (39 per cent) of all days out of school. Another way to demonstrate the scale of this exclusion rate is to note that, during 1998–9, the school, in effect, temporarily removed about one in seven of its pupils. However, the records for the previous year do show School 1 claiming an even higher proportion of the MAST sample's exclusion rates: in 1997–8, 62 per cent of all pupils excluded for a fixed term came from that school; it accounted for nearly three-quarters of all incidences of fixed-term exclusion (72 per cent) and over half of all days out of school (54 per cent). This recent reduction may in part relate to the evidence of a marked general increase in reported fixed-term exclusions in 1998–9: in this year, several schools (see Schools 13, 11 and 8) moved from a 'no pupils excluded' tally to their records showing figures of seven, 16 and even 24 days of exclusion. Could this trend actually be connected to a significant cultural shift in some schools? Does it signify more general attitudinal change about the use and value of fixed-term exclusion in the primary sector? Does it also reflect a cohort of pupils with particular problems currently in these schools? Does it perhaps intimate how much 'hidden' exclusion might have existed under previous recording procedures? These interpretations can, of course, be no more than speculation, but the trend clearly needs to be reflected upon.

At the opposite extreme, two infant schools in the MAST sample recorded no fixed-term exclusions throughout the three-year period. They were in essence 'nil-excluding' schools. However, in keeping with the trend for increased recordings of fixed-term exclusion, only four of the 16 original MAST schools (three infant and one junior) were nil-excluding in 1998–9, compared to a total of six the previous year, and five in 1996–7. Nevertheless, one junior school (School 6) showed a dramatic decline in exclusions (to become a nil-excluding school for two consecutive years) after their 1996–7 recording of 43.5 days; and one infant school (School 4) reduced its number of pupils reported excluded from 12 pupils in 1996–7 to three and then four pupils in subsequent years.

Table 2.5 also shows that, over the three years, just two of the five infant schools in the MAST sample (Schools 4 and 5) accounted for some 145.5 days out of school between them. Only one other infant school among the 16 original MAST schools excluded a single child for two days. Schools 4 and 5 therefore rate among the highest-excluding schools and the figures show that their exclusion pattern is one of often repeated and lengthy exclusion periods for small number of pupils. Thus, in 1996–7, School 5 excluded two pupils twice and for a total of 25 days, while in 1998–9, two pupils accounted for ten exclusions and 37 days out of school. In 1997–8, School 4 excluded a total of three pupils who accounted for 26 days out of school and 15 exclusions between them.

Such vast differences in the use of exclusion may suggest the benefit of more specific targeting of certain schools by LEA agency support. There certainly appears to be a wide continuum from a vigorous 'exclusion culture' through to the practice of non-exclusion among the MAST schools, and this diversity perhaps needs to be openly acknowledged. These differences may, of course, also reflect some distinct variation

in the 'micro' socio-economic conditions and/or community outlook of each school's catchment areas, and that too could have implications for the focus of multi-agency activity. Equally, the common incidence of 'multiple' fixed-term exclusion, occurring particularly at infant level, may help agency workers to identify specific 'at risk' pupils and target more of their work to support these youngsters. Finally, the further study of fixed-term exclusion data itself seems to be a valuable source of insight and information about the authority's schools.

Overall, looking at trends in whole-school figures for attendance and exclusions may seem a little inconclusive. An alternative approach may be for schools and the authority to utilise or keep careful longitudinal records of the attendance and behaviour of individual pupils who have encountered MAST support and activity.

2.3.4 Impact on schools as a whole

Headteachers, when asked about the impact on the school as a whole, responded in a variety of ways. Whilst one felt that '*nothing much has changed*', the others were more positive. One headteacher indicated that, whilst the MAST input had been focused on individual pupils, '*there's been a marked improvement in playground behaviour and playtime behaviour as well*'. Another responded that:

> *It is giving us food for thought with the idea of taking on Circle Time and I am able to say to teachers that something is being done for these children; that is helpful in itself* (headteacher).

The deputy head in this school outlined how they were looking at staff training for Circle Time being built into their three-year plan. Three headteachers, although positive about the MAST experience, felt that it had not been going long enough and that it was too early to have an impact on the school overall:

> *I really think that it's things that are life skills and that, but it is just chip, chip chipping away at the stone. It's very, very early days to have any effect* (headteacher).

One headteacher saw the team as a '*very valuable resource*' and praised them for being '*excellent*' and '*very professional*'. S/he, however, felt that the work had been the '*tip of the iceberg*' and would like to plan a three-year programme with the team members involved. Another, in addition to feeling that it was too early for any overall impact, when asked the effect on general pupil behaviour, commented that '*Well, the MAST team has had no effect on that. I mean, that's just silly*', and later suggested that alternative input would be required for such an impact:

> *If we are looking at a team that's going to actually effectively help me reduce behaviour problems, exclusions, then Circle Time in one or two classes is not the thing. That's just a help and we hope long-term it will have an effect on the attitudes within the school, but it's not going to help specific children* (headteacher).

When asked about any changes in relation to philosophy and ethos concerning behaviour management within the school, two headteachers stated that it had enabled

them to extend their own philosophy and another that it had '*refocused*' them on the school's ethos and philosophy. In one school, where a group of teachers had learnt the technique of Circle Time, the headteacher felt unable to say that the MAST activity alone had had an impact on the school as a whole, but that it had contributed to the '*humanising process of the school*'.

One team member felt that they had made schools think about the way they responded to children who have problems and another described one school as '*more positive*' and '*more confident*'. However, most of the team were reluctant to comment on overall school impact, stating that it was difficult to know, because they did not have an overview beforehand and that it was hard for them to evaluate, as they usually would not see the children outside of their input.

2.3.5 Impact on teachers

The focus of MAST activity on teachers' professional development is now discussed. When teachers were asked to volunteer main outcomes of MAST activity, a range of responses emerged. MAST was thought to make a difference to:

- motivation;
- self-esteem and confidence;
- relationships with pupils and other agencies;
- understanding and insight into pupils' difficulties;
- the development of new strategies and skills;
- discussion and sharing of ideas; and
- provision of resources.

Line managers commented generally on the impact on teachers from their perspective, indicating that, in many cases, teachers had '*taken on board*' the MAST activity and that input from the team had provided teachers with the opportunity for discussion of their work. For some teachers, one suggested, there had been a big impact. One line manager was able to relate anecdotal evidence of impact on teachers' practice, where there had been a change in the way a teacher responded to a child. In this way, there does seem to be evidence that MAST had begun to affect the way some teachers were relating to their pupils, and to their sense of being enskilled in and inspired by strategies to address behaviour and relationships.

As a way of further exploring outcomes, the interview schedules also asked interviewees to consider the outcomes of MAST activity on teachers' practice, by reference to the typology of outcomes previously presented in Part One.

The following account reports the findings from this inquiry.

Material and provisionary outcomes

Although the team had limited access to resources, there were times when some of the team felt they were able to provide teachers with resources that were useful. One, for example, referred to '*several checklists*' that teaching staff could use and another referred to '*homemade*' resources and books recommended:

> *Most of the things we have done have either been things that we have done ourselves or things that we have adapted or used just straight from books. Quite a lot of books that we have used have been purchased by schools because they thought it was useful* (team member).

Most teachers in the case-study schools felt that they had gained little in terms of physical resources from the MAST activity, although resources for one headteacher had been useful: '*Actually, I had the input of some literature there, which was quite helpful for us to use, which I hadn't seen before.*' In addition, the team had, in one case, instigated the use of resources already available within a school:

> *The school already had a video and booklets on Circle Time, which the staff have now looked at. It's gone through the school* (teacher).

Informational outcomes

Team members felt that they had provided teachers with information on certain issues, including exclusions. However, teachers' responses to being asked if there had been any informational outcomes supported the point also made by some of the team, that they had been provided with new techniques rather than factual information. One example was presented where provision of information had enabled staff to consider an issue from an alternative viewpoint:

> *Like,* [X school] *wanted to set up this parenting group for parents with children with specific difficulties, and we said 'If you just invite those they won't come' and they said, 'Why?', and we said 'Because you'll be scapegoating them, and that their self-esteem is probably low anyway and that it won't work'. And it hasn't worked in these different situations* (team member).

New awareness

Highlighted by both team members and teachers, one of the major outcomes of the MAST activity was that teachers gained insight about pupils and their difficulties. This was particularly the case where Circle Time had been introduced by the team with teachers as observers. Some teachers described this as '*an invaluable opportunity*'. It was suggested by some of the team and some headteachers that teachers had gained a different perspective on pupils through this process and it had enabled them to gain further understanding of and insights into pupils' needs. Teachers, too, highlighted how the MAST activity, in some cases, had heightened their awareness, particularly with regard to widening their perspective on how strategies could be valuably utilised and how difficult some of the activities might be for some pupils. The enormity of what pupils were being asked to do was brought home to one teacher through her own direct experience in Circle Time and this provided a very valuable insight:

> *The first few sessions we took with the whole class and the staff joined in and were just as much a part of the Circle Time as the children, which was very valuable. It made you appreciate that some of the questions weren't as easy. I*

mean, some of the children passed the shell. We used a shell in our group. They only spoke when they had the shell and quite a lot of the children passed it straight on, and having had that experience as well, you know that you don't always think of something straightaway, but you may come back to it later when you have heard other people give a suggestion. So it was nice to be sort of put in the position of the children really (teacher).

Another teacher indicated that she had changed her perception of the approach to use with children with problems, that it was important to '*stress the positive*' with these pupils and to '*approach issues from sideways rather than head on*'.

One team member cited an example of using a questionnaire to raise teachers' awareness of exclusions in order to make them think about the use of this strategy, thus directly linking to the aims of the MAST activity:

You know, we've sort of gone into schools and gone through the questionnaire and hopefully made them think about 'Why are we using exclusion? Is there a different way? Are there any other strategies that we could use?' (team member).

From the six case-study schools, however, such outcomes regarding exclusion were not mentioned.

Value congruence outcomes

In some cases, headteachers and teachers felt that the MAST activity had contributed to, extended or '*fitted in*' with their own philosophy. For example, the introduction of Circle Time into one school was commensurate with their philosophy of a positive attitude towards the children and making them feel valued. The teachers involved felt that the experience of being valued by other adults from outside the school environment was important for youngsters because '*they are not used to other adults in their life valuing them*'. This was also illustrated by the following:

Well, [the MAST team's] *approach is a positive approach, which I would hope ours is, and is supposed to be, and it is remembering that at the heart of the school is the child and the child is very precious. You only get one go at it. I mean, our philosophy is about making children feel secure and happy, and able to talk to each other and adults. So, yes, it fits in* (deputy head).

However, evidence from the team's perspective of effecting any changes in philosophy were small and few. One of the team described a regime that they felt had '*softened a bit*' and another described a school that are '*certainly more positive and more confident*'. At the same time, some of the team were reluctant to make any claims, acknowledging that '*actually changing what you believe in is quite a long-term process*' and one difficult to gauge:

You never know. Like last week I was working with [X school] *which I know all of the teachers there. There was a little boy at the end of one of the sessions who, when he went back to the classroom, he walked back perfectly all right. When he went in, he obviously thought it was the end of the day, he*

was sitting on the table, rolling around, writhing around. So, I called him over and spoke to him again about what had just happened for the last half an hour or so, talked to him. His teacher was standing next to me. Now, I don't know whether that would have any ... the way in which I spoke to him, I don't know whether that would have any impact [on the teacher]. *You don't know do you? Until perhaps, even months later, you might find out* (team member).

They felt that the problem of achieving value congruence, in certain instances, was compounded by the relatively short time they had been working in schools, and, as one team member suggested, such an impact might only become evident at a later date. It may be, however, that by not focusing on this outcome specifically, subsequent impact was reduced.

Affective outcomes

There were examples of affective outcomes that were both positive and negative. On the positive side, hearing pupils express their opinion in Circle Time was clearly an emotional experience for some teachers:

So, it was wonderful to see the development of that, the confidence and the belief that 'Yes, I want to say this and it's right that I say this'. So, that alone was worth it (teacher).

For one teacher, also involved in trying out some new ideas within Circle Time seeing the children using what they had learnt and being able to share these successes with the team was something that s/he '*valued and enjoyed.*'

Pupils, too, suggested affective outcomes in their teachers. One pupil interviewee noted of his teacher: '*... he is always smiling in Circle Time*'.

Whilst the involvement of one team member in supporting a member of the teaching staff having particular difficulties was identified as having had an immediate positive impact, the same team member was also able to identify a possible negative emotional effect on another:

Undoubtedly, my involvement made a difference, had an impact, and she actually wrote a card to me and thanked me for it. So, yes, I mean, there is some evidence that that did happen. On the negative side, it's reported to me that my most final conversation with a member of staff at [X school] *is they have now gone off long-term sick and have been replaced* (team member).

Others, too, another team member suggested, were '*far from pleased*' with observations made about the structure of their school.

Motivational and attitudinal outcomes

Where teachers had been directly involved in the MAST work and were able, therefore, to follow up the activity themselves, there was evidence of increased motivation to try out new ideas. Responses, when asked about motivational outcomes, included, for example:

I felt motivated to continue and develop the process introduced (teacher).

Oh, yes, yes, I was looking forward to [trying Circle Time out], *because they were giving me new ideas and it was very interesting to watch the children relating to other adults in a different way, so that was good* (teacher).

Headteachers also identified teachers who were keen to continue with the work initiated by the team. Referring to the teachers involved in Circle Time, one stated that '*they are both very enthusiastic and have seen the benefit*'.

Even a comment from one of the pupils supported this view, referring to the impact on his/her teacher: '*Now we have done that, he wants to do it on his own now with us*' (pupil).

One headteacher indicated that such teacher motivation might have a knock-on effect for other teachers within the school:

> *... they are both very enthusiastic now. They have seen the benefits, and because they are enthusiastic, obviously other members of staff are starting to say 'We would like to find out about this'* (headteacher).

Comments from some teachers suggested that they had gained confidence as well as enjoyment from taking part in the MAST activity. For one teacher, this resulted in an attitudinal change, which, interestingly, as she recognised, reflected changes in the pupils who also took part in the activity:

> *It has given me a new tool with which to develop the esteem and confidence of the children, which has developed my own esteem* (teacher)

As one headteacher suggested, changes in attitude might involve a subtle shift:

> *Nothing has dramatically changed* [the staff's] *attitude because their attitude wasn't that bad to begin with. They are now – I don't know if they always were – but they are now, a staff who are ready to embrace ideas, which may help them to have a more pleasant time here* (headteacher).

The MAST team felt that the impact, in terms of motivational and attitudinal outcomes, varied greatly between schools and between different teachers. The variety of responses encountered were summarised by one team member:

> *Some* [teachers] *have changed because pressure has been put on them that they must. Some have changed because they think it's a good thing to do and they have done it. Some have been totally disinterested and didn't want to know* (team member).

The team described some teachers as enthusiastic, particularly with regard to Circle Time, and keen to continue with the activity or extend it post-MAST. Further examples were also presented by team members where teachers had been responsive to the introduction of new ideas with regard to behaviour policies. In contrast,

however, two of the team felt that they had become '*unpopular*' with some teachers because of some of the ideas they had proposed and this lack of motivation had clear implications for the overall impact of any work undertaken. This is discussed further in a later section.

Knowledge and skills

Where teachers had been able to observe the team in action, mainly through Circle Time, they indicated they had learnt new skills and new approaches. One teacher highlighted the benefits of seeing Circle Time in action:

> *If somebody had explained it to me, or I had seen it written in a book, or done it on a course, I probably wouldn't have gone about it the way that they did. So, I, as a class teacher, learnt new skills and new approaches because of being there with them. So, that was useful as well* (teacher).

Another cited an example of learning the skills of guiding Circle Time to solve problems and as a result was quite confident in running the sessions herself. One team member also felt that teachers had learnt general strategies for handling pupils with behaviour problems, thus giving them more confidence to deal with issues themselves, rather than having to call in outside agencies:

> *By and large, the staff have felt skilled-up and therefore more positive about being able to, as it were, cope with problem behaviours and manage them successfully, resolve problems, rather than feel they always need to call in the experts* (team member).

Institutional outcomes

When asked whether they felt that the MAST activity had any impact collectively on the staff or school as a whole, most teachers felt that there was either no impact at all or that it was very limited. Where Circle Time had been introduced within a couple of year groups, this was felt to be where it had had its impact, rather than on the whole school. The potential, however, for further extension of Circle Time in order to provide a built-in, whole-school forum for discussion of pupils' problems was alluded to by some of the teachers in schools where it had been introduced:

> *The idea was that they would work with the Year 5s because they had been identified as this problem year, and as a result of the work that they did then, they, or we, as Year 5 teachers, and the other people involved, would be able to pass that information on to other year groups, where, of course, there are other problem children. Just as an extra string to the bow for handling behaviour* (teacher).

One teacher, in a school where work had been done with individual children by the MAST team, was very clear that by altering the behaviour of one pupil, even this could impact on the school as a whole:

> *It has to have an impact on the school as a whole, doesn't it? I mean, an impact on an individual does, as a naughty child does have an impact on the*

school and on the class and the teacher. So, yes, it does, but it's indirectly, it's through those children (teacher).

Impact on practice

The impact of the MAST activity on teachers' practice was discussed by both MAST team members and teachers. Outcomes, in terms of the impact on teachers' practice, fell into a number of different categories:

- no impact on practice;
- implementation of techniques introduced by the MAST team;
- adaptation of techniques introduced by the MAST team;
- extension of techniques introduced by the MAST team;
- changes in teachers' general approach to pupils; and
- changes in teachers' classroom management and organisation.

No impact on practice

In four out of the six case-study schools, there were no accounts of direct changes to teachers' practice, although there were accounts of other outcomes. In two schools, intervention was targeted at individual pupils or parents and this meant that impact on teachers' practice was not an intended effect. In one, lack of involvement of the teacher in the activity meant that there was no outcome for him/her in terms of his/her own professional development (see Teacher Cameo 1 on p. 96). In one of the schools, however, where Circle Time had been introduced, the headteacher planned in the long term to train teachers in the use of this technique, having observed the benefits to pupils through the MAST activity. One of the teachers involved, in particular, was interested in continuing to use it with her class. The headteacher suggested, however, that it was difficult to extend the activity because it required staff with '*particular talents*', because of sensitive issues that may arise, commenting that: '*We were very worried that inexperienced class teachers wouldn't be able to handle that*' and '*Circle Time is not something for an amateur.*'

One of the team emphasised that the important factor in impacting on teachers' practice was their involvement in activities:

> *I think the key factor to me is, if schools see this as an add-on to what they can do, it may change their practice, but it's got to be something that we do in conjunction. Where we have tried to do something* ***for*** *them it will fail. It must fail really, because once we go, nobody will continue it* (team member).

Another implied that it was important for the teachers to recognise the personal benefits for their own practice and pedagogy:

> *Yes, because at the nitty-gritty level they could see that, if they managed the situation differently, the outcome for the child was obviously beneficial, but for them as teachers, the less time you have to spend on a problem, the more time you have to spent on actively teaching, and the less time on a problem, the more positive and pleasant the atmosphere within the working environment* (team member).

Implementation of techniques

There was evidence in two out of the three schools in which Circle Time had been introduced by the MAST team that this had become incorporated into teachers' practice and used on a regular basis (as indicated earlier in the section on motivational outcomes). As one headteacher stated, '*Those class teachers now use Circle Time*'. Pupils, too, indicated that Circle Time was continuing, although, in their view, it may not take quite the same form as previously with the MAST team: '*We have little time to say what are our views, so we don't get to say all of it sometimes*' (pupil).

Some teachers, however, highlighted the need for more follow-up and support for activities to become more fully established within their practice and this might, therefore, be given future consideration by the team. One of the teachers, for example, suggested, when asked for advice to other teachers working with MAST:

> *Try and arrange at the end to pin down a once-every-half-term meeting with the agency to review what's been done, to ensure that it doesn't drift, fizzle out, for encouragement, fresh ideas, a bit of feedback, their response to the things they have done. Because you can try out different things and you think to yourself 'Is that a relevant thing to do?', and then if you have got a meeting with the agency once every half term, you can discuss that, to really ensure that you keep progressing and keep the momentum going* (teacher).

Adaptation of techniques

In one school, teachers had adapted Circle Time techniques to suit their needs and those of the pupils in their care. In this way it had provided them with a technique which could be used flexibly and this was noted by the headteacher and the teachers, who gave examples of how they were utilising the approach:

> *Shorter lengths of time, perhaps at the beginning of an afternoon or at the end of an afternoon or whenever they feel that the situation is needed. For instance, we find here children often come into school very tense after the lunchtime, very high, 'hyper', after running around in the playground, even though we have shortened the dinner hour to an hour. Some children still find it very difficult to come back down again into work mode and Circle Time settles things down and both those teachers have used it. Not every day by any means, but if it's particularly they feel that that's the way things are, they will settle the children into a circle and go on like that* (headteacher).

> *I don't have a set timetable. I use it if I need to, and we like to do it in my class, as I say, as they come in after lunch. We do 'tell a good tale', something good that's happened to us either throughout the day or at night. It's trying to get them to forget any hassles they have had at lunchtime. Also, on a Friday afternoon before we go home, we talk about what we hope for the weekend. Just try and set it, you know. A nice end to the week really* (teacher).

One teacher emphasised, since becoming familiar and confident with using Circle Time: '*I am putting my slant on it. I know what I am wanting to get out of it.*'

Extension of techniques

There was also evidence in one school of activities being extended to other teachers and, therefore, other year groups, using the teachers who had learnt the technique from the team. This form of professional development cascading had been specifically planned from the outset:

> *Yes. I mean the actual MAST involvement was for, I don't know how many weeks, a few weeks, and then I didn't want to lose it, so I have tried to involve it on a Wednesday afternoon when I have a regular supply teacher to relieve staff for non-contact time. What I have tried to do is arrange for her to relieve first one of the teachers and then the next one, to go to Year 5 classes to introduce Circle Time to Year 5* (headteacher).

Although other schools did not appear to have extended the activities in any way, two headteachers indicated that they were considering this. One suggested more involvement of the teaching staff so that they could extend the activity themselves, and another planned further training for his/her staff.

In a different form of extension, where pupils had been seen in small groups or individually by the MAST team, two teachers had been able to follow work done through into the classroom setting. However, they suggested that more feedback from the team might have increased the opportunity to do so, for example:

> *When the children have come back and told us what they have been doing, we have looked at what they have been doing and we have talked to the class about it and things and followed it up that way. So, it's been good for the rest of the class to see what they have been doing. It's been good for them to talk about what they have been doing and we followed it up that way. And it might link it to what we are doing about caring about plants and caring about other members of our family and caring about things, and it fits in that way, if you see what I mean. So the follow-up gets done that way* (teacher).

General approach to pupils

Some teachers interviewed also identified how Circle-Time techniques had become part of their general approach to pupils:

> *I use the ideas in my approach to the children and encourage circle listening* (teacher).

> *It has given me a new tool with which to develop the esteem and confidence of the children* (teacher).

> *It's been an extra tool or an extra strategy that we have been able to use, particularly in certain situations, to help resolve friction between children* (teacher).

You always relate back to it. You relate back to your own class Circle Time ... so it becomes part and parcel of every day (teacher).

The school, I understand, perhaps are adapting a slightly more discursive type of approach to children (team member).

One teacher, introduced to Circle Time indirectly through a colleague who had observed the MAST team, clearly described how s/he had used it successfully in a preventative way within the classroom situation:

Well, I have used Circle Time. I have referred back to discussion, if I can see an incident starting to occur in the classroom. Only this morning, I referred back to one of the subjects we were talking about on Wednesday, about how other people feel if they are left out of group work. That did work, actually, which was good (teacher).

The headteacher in one school where Circle Time had been introduced supported this view, indicating how teachers' approach towards the children may have had a beneficial effect:

I think, giving the staff another way of working, because then it's had a knock-on effect with their relationship with their class. It all improves relationships (headteacher).

Classroom management and organisation.

Examples of teachers who had changed their practice in terms of classroom management and organisation, in particular, were cited by the team. They outlined strategies which had been discussed with the teacher, implemented and had become incorporated into their everyday practice. For example:

I have done a couple of observations in the class and I have talked ... briefly to the class teacher, and very much to the head, about basic classroom management skills ... she has been back and has implemented and we have monitored it, and, yes, there have been changes ... the member of staff may not realise all that's happened, but there has been some improvement (team member).

She has modified her voice, and everybody says they no longer hear her screaming down the corridor. So, little things like that (team member).

The headteacher of one school also described how a teacher had reorganised her classroom layout following observations conducted by the team.

Having offered an overview of the impact of MAST activity on teachers, five individual teacher cameos, which further illustrate the points made in the text, are now presented. These represent the different degrees of impact outlined earlier, and, above all, reveal how addressing 'value congruence' remains a crucial part of professional

development activity. The adaptation of MAST techniques by teachers emerged as another aspect of impact on practice.

Teacher Cameo 1

This teacher was the only teacher in her/his school involved with MAST activity, and the team members worked with her/his class for one afternoon a week, during Personal and Social Education (PSE) time. S/he was positive about the way they had accommodated the timetable, and was also positive about the enjoyment the children had shown for the activities.

However, this teacher did not perceive that the MAST work had had any impact on herself/himself. S/he responded negatively when asked about the range of professional development outcomes, including impact on practice. This teacher had always done circle games as '*an ongoing thing in our PSE times*', and expressed the expectation that a multi-agency team would be able to come in with new and different ideas. S/he reiterated that s/he had '*already been doing it*'.

In this teacher's view about how the MAST activity could have been developed, there was some evidence of a mismatch of outlooks and philosophies between the team members and the teacher. In other words, 'value congruence' was not achieved or pre-existing in this instance. S/he would have liked '*quieter activities, less movement ... my children are quite boisterous*', and also felt that some of the more disruptive children should have been removed from the group working with the team. This latter issue was recognised by members of the MAST team, who acknowledged that '*we are learning as well*'.

S/he saw the MAST work as a '*planned programme*' with minimal discussion between her/him and the team. Her/his understanding of her/his own role was that s/he was there as an observer, able to get on with other tasks in the classroom whilst the team worked with the pupils: '*The impression that was passed on to me, by the then acting headteacher, was "They are coming to do your PSE" ... which is slightly different from "They are coming to do it, and involve you"*.' It was evident that more initial discussion about the nature of the activity and the role of the teacher could well have facilitated impact and made the work a more positive experience for this teacher: '*I think if I had been involved more in the planning, I would have veered them on to quieter games and quieter activities.*' S/he also felt that there could have been more opportunities for discussion, for example, time to talk after each session:

> *They came for about a 20-minute session one lunchtime. And then they used to be here when we came in from playtime, ready to start. And then, of course, after school, I was seeing the two of them out, and that was more or less it. Very little discussion time.*

A further suggestion from this teacher was that the team could know more about the children they were working with:

> *They don't know the children. I think possibly in the future, it would help if they came and observed the class beforehand, or observed the children beforehand, so they knew a little bit about the children they were working with.*

Impact would therefore have been facilitated by:

- joint planning and discussion of any differences in philosophies and ways of working;
- the teacher being clear about her role in relation to the team; and
- ongoing discussion about the activity, and the youngsters involved.

Teacher Cameo 2

This teacher was positive about the impact on the children in her/his class, but did not feel that there had been any changes in her/his own practice as a result of the MAST activity. S/he had found it *'fascinating'* to observe her class with the MAST team, talking about issues that might not be discussed normally, and felt that there were elements of Circle Time that s/he would like to use within her/his own classroom, but recognised constraints to this. The most significant of these was the difficulty of organising whole-class Circle Time alone (with the MAST team there was more than one adult in the room):

> *Although the children enjoy it, and I could see the value of it, I don't see that it is something that I, as an individual, could take away with a whole class ... so in that sense, I don't think it has changed my practice.*

Although overall, this teacher was pleased with the work done with the pupils, and felt that the philosophies of the team fitted in well with the school, a number of ways in which impact could have been facilitated were raised:

- being given notes on the strategies used by the MAST team in Circle Time (s/he said s/he had asked for this, but had not received them);
- written feedback and time for discussion with the team;
- having a clearer idea about the aims of the activity; and
- teachers having the opportunity, and possibly support, to carry on the activity in smaller groups.

Teacher Cameo 3

The main outcome of the MAST activity for this teacher was the significant effects it had had on pupils. S/he was less able to articulate ways in which it had served as professional development, possibly because s/he had already been using Circle Time in her/his teaching: *'Circle Time has always been part of my classroom strategy anyway. I think it's more of an effect on the children using it this time.'* However, s/he did feel that other teachers and staff in the school who had not been aware of the strategy had gained a lot from working with the MAST team.

Although this teacher had not initiated major changes in practice, s/he had extended the activity by referring to what had happened in Circle Time as a way of focusing pupils on issues: *'I would say in assembly "We have been through this in Circle Time" or "You have done this in Circle Time". So you are always reflecting back on its uses.'* S/he was positive about the opportunity to be involved with the initial sessions of Circle Time, and had seen ways of organising children in different groupings that s/he had not used before.

S/he very much saw the activity continuing once the MAST team work had ended:

> *Absolutely, because once it's established as part of the learning environment and the learning process, then it becomes part and parcel. You use it constantly: for the lunchtime, breaktimes, assembly, and then class. You always relate back to it. You relate back to your own class Circle Time, the Circle Time you have with* [MAST team members] *... so it becomes part and parcel of every day.*

Although this teacher was very positive about the work of the team, s/he felt that impact would have been facilitated by:

- feedback being built into the process: *'Feedback on how it went ... if there were any strategies that worked really well that I could use in class, in playtimes and lunchtimes.'*
- the input being longer term; and
- teachers being involved in the planning so that they could see any resources that the team used.

Teacher Cameo 4

This teacher was very positive about the impact of the activity on her/his professional development, as well as on the pupils involved. S/he spoke often about the new skills and strategies gained from the experience of working with the team on Circle Time, and had implemented the process within her/his own classroom:

> *I think the thing that probably has changed most is the way that we approach our Circle Time. I have always done Circle Time ... about more general things, but I think the thing that has helped me most from MAST ... has been the way they use the Circle Time to try and sort out problems that are occurring with particular children ... or particular issues ... it has brought it more home to me how we can actually solve those issues more in a Circle Time atmosphere, rather than me trying to do it with small groups of children away from the classroom. So, that has been really helpful to me.*
>
> *It has given me new strategies as a class teacher for dealing with problems within my group, because the children are quite happy now to use the Circle Time format to discuss problems that we have as a class.*

S/he appreciated that the team had a similar approach to her/his own, particularly in the way they valued children and their opinions.

Impact was facilitated by:

- value congruence between the beliefs and practices of the team and the teacher; and
- staff having the opportunity to join in with Circle Time and gain a sense of what it felt like for children.

This teacher felt that further impact could have been facilitated by more time for feedback and discussion with the MAST team.

Teacher Cameo 5

As well as being very positive about the impact of the MAST activity on pupils (including raising self-esteem, feeling valued, increased confidence), this teacher was also able to articulate ways in which the activity had had professional development outcomes for herself/himself as a teacher. Particularly evident from her/his discourse were the following outcomes:

- new awareness

'*Stress the positive. Approach issues from sideways rather than head on.*'
'*A new tool.*'

- affective outcomes

'A *positive experience.*'
'*I feel quite confident about it. I am quite happy about it ... the whole thing worked well because it's given me the confidence to do it. I mean, I could have read it in books, but actually seeing it in action. And, also thinking "Well, maybe I would do that a little bit differently".*'

- motivational outcomes

'*I felt motivated to continue and develop the process introduced.*'

- impact on practice

A number of changes in practice were evident, including the implementation of Circle Time, its adaptation and flexible use, and extension of Circle Time to other classes in the school. This teacher described how observing the MAST team '*provided me with the skill of running a Circle Time and guiding it to solve problems*'. The following comments illustrate the adaptation that this teacher had made to the activity, something s/he felt was important:

> *The way I do my Circle Time is built on what they have done, but I have adapted it because I have got my way of looking at it, and what I feel comfortable with. I don't think anybody can just mimic what somebody else has done. You have got to feel comfortable with it.*
>
> *I start the afternoon with, sort of, five minutes Circle Time now, to try and place the children in a nice forward-thinking attitude for the afternoon ... I use it if I need to.*

A further impact on practice was in this teacher's approach to children: '*I use the ideas in my approach to the children – encourage circle listening.*'

Impact was facilitated by:

- value congruence between the beliefs and practices of the team and the teacher;
- the positive affective experience;
- discussion between the team and the teacher: '*After every session we had a discussion as to how it had gone, and where we should take it on to*'; and
- the multi-agency aspect of the work: '*They show you other avenues, don't they? They show you the options that maybe you don't see ... perhaps just another eye gives you the way of looking at it differently.*'

2.3.6 Impact on pupils

Although the overarching aims of the MAST activity were concerned with reducing exclusions, improving attendance and reducing the number of behaviour incidents in schools, the impact on pupils was described in terms of a range of outcomes which might in turn impact on these overarching factors. The outcomes were categorised in the following way:

- affective outcomes;
- self-esteem and confidence building;

- awareness of self and others;
- sharing and solving problems;
- the development of social skills;
- receiving attention;
- changes in behaviour; and
- learning.

Affective outcomes

There was general agreement amongst all those involved that the MAST activity had been a positive experience for pupils. Headteachers, teachers and the team indicated that pupils were keen to be involved and this was supported by all the pupils interviewed, who stated that they had enjoyed taking part. This was illustrated by the following selection of comments:

> *Whenever you meet a child who has enjoyed a positive experience like that, you know it's going to benefit them as individuals and therefore they are more receptive to anything else that the school is going to do* (team member).

> *I think they responded very well. They seemed to look forward to it. They often asked me if they saw me: 'Are we doing it this week?'* (teacher).

> *It's really good for me and my friends since the first time I saw* [team member] *and the other one. If I do Circle Time I really enjoy myself* (pupil, male, aged 9).

In group work, even where teachers had not been directly involved, they referred to evidence that the pupils had valued the experience:

> *The children come and bring photographs and things and pictures that they have been doing with them and the children seemed really pleased. 'Look what I have done', and 'I have been doing this and this'* (teacher).

Involvement in the MAST activity was perceived to have been a deeper emotional experience for some pupils, exemplified by the following:

> *One girl was just overwhelmed by the whole thing* [Circle Time] *and withdrew herself from it, but s/he still, by the end of the session, came and sat down. But, at that time, another boy reacted – 'They are all coming out at me' – and he started to react and I was a bit worried, thinking I am going to lose this, but he actually sat down by the end of the Circle Time and was back in, and everybody was back in it. So, it was quite a positive thing actually* (teacher).

Self-esteem/confidence

Evidence that the self-esteem of pupils was raised and their confidence improved was highlighted by headteachers, teachers and team members. Many examples were provided, with one teacher particularly highlighting the benefits for pupils who are '*quiet, withdrawn and disaffected*' in this respect. Comments to a large extent

referred to where Circle Time had been introduced, but also where group work and individualised work had been implemented with selected pupils:

> *They have made strides in their emotional development. They are a little more self-assured, their self-esteem has risen, their feelings of self-worth have grown, so that even when life sends us little knocks – because we all appreciate life isn't perfect, things are going to happen – they are a little bit more resilient, they can cope with it. So, that for me has been one of the cornerstones of the MAST team, the impact that we have* (team member).

In one school, group work with a small minority of pupils had proved to be too threatening, and the team had successfully adapted their approach by working with pairs of pupils. In another, where individual work was undertaken, the following comment from a headteacher illustrates clearly the perceived benefits to pupils of involvement in individual work with some of the team:

> *The fact that they have had the opportunity to talk and make a relationship with three excellent staff, who are well trained in talking to children and communication with children and eliciting from them how they actually feel, has helped those children gain tremendous self-esteem, tremendous confidence and the ability to be able to talk quite freely with their peer group and with adults and to learn to trust. To know that it's OK to talk about your feelings, even when you feel sad or you feel angry or you feel frustrated.* [It has] *really helped them, in my opinion and in the staff's opinion, become more inducted into school life and to get more benefits from school life* (headteacher).

The way in which confidence developed in one particular pupil was described by a teacher involved in Circle Time:

> *I found afterwards when we did it in class, this one particular girl 'wouldn't say boo to a goose' at Circle Time at one time and it got to the end, where she was wanting to say her bit. In class, she really got ... she had something to say and she wanted to say it and she actually stood up at one point and she was pointing her finger and she was saying it* (teacher).

One team member felt that confidence in some pupils developed to the extent that they were able to share personal views towards the end of the intervention. The fact that Circle Time provided the opportunity for pupils to express their own opinions was described as one of most useful outcomes by one headteacher. This was reiterated by team members and also noted by some of the Year 4 and 5 pupils who were involved, who stated that it gave them the opportunity to give their views on things like rules. One pupil felt that this had provided his/her friend with a particular opportunity: '*It gived* (*sic*) *my friend a bit of a chance because she was blind and it gave her a chance.*'

One Year 6 pupil, who was a playground leader, implied that s/he was proud of her/his role, if only because s/he was able to teach her/his siblings the games and '*by the time that they are my age, they will still know them, because I will have taught them*'.

Awareness of self and others

One teacher involved in Circle Time felt that participation in the circle had given pupils a greater awareness of other pupils' problems, and a headteacher highlighted that one of the main aims of the introduction of circle was to provide pupils with an opportunity to '*speak positively about each other*'. S/he felt that this had been achieved. Another teacher suggested that pupils had shown maturity in lots of their responses and cited an example of a Year 5 pupil inviting another pupil to re-enter the circle, thus demonstrating a degree of empathy with them. Although understanding the problems of others was not specifically raised by the pupils involved, they did acknowledge that Circle Time had enabled them to learn more about others in their group/class. When one pupil was asked the sorts of things they had been talking about in Circle Time, for example, he responded:

> *How we can stop people from fighting and how we can play nice with one another and if someone hasn't got a friend to play with you can play with them* (pupil, male, aged 9).

One team member indicated that they felt that Circle Time had enabled pupils to learn a lot about themselves, as well as others.

Sharing and solving problems

Both group work and Circle Time had an impact for pupils in terms of providing them with an opportunity to share, explore and resolve problems that otherwise might remain unaddressed. This was one of the main aims of introducing Circle Time into one school and its ability to achieve this was reflected on by some of the teachers:

> *I think it was brought in as another way of bringing problems out into the open in a civilised manner, where children are given the chance to think and come up with their own solution and to look at problems in a different way, in quite an interesting way, which is novel. And I think that has worked with a lot of children* (teacher).

> *Yes, we feel it's not a magic cure, but yes, it's been an aid ... for some children it's definitely been a help, giving them the opportunities to talk through things that are bothering them, and also to hear good things said about them* (headteacher).

There was also evidence in some of the comments from the pupils that supported this effect, for example:

> *If I have got something on my mind really bad, it* [Circle Time] *just takes it away from me* (pupil, male, aged 9).

Another pupil, seen individually by one of the team, indicated that he had become aware of new strategies for dealing with situations:

> *It just tells you not to chase after them and not to listen to them. Or walk off* (pupil, male, aged 10).

When asked if he had tried this new strategy, he said that he would, although he described one incident where he had difficulty putting this into practice, saying that he couldn't leave because '*he kept winding me up and he spat on her* [his sister]'.

Social skills

One line manager felt that the MAST activity had been particularly successful in giving pupils skills to play effectively. One headteacher, too, where pupils had done small group and individual work with MAST team members, felt that the pupils' social skills had developed and s/he stressed just how much of a step forward this had been for some pupils:

> *Yes, there's a tremendous difference in how they are interacting in the classroom and how they are actually joining in play or work activities, which is then carried through into the playground. Two of the children were basically electing to be mute, in the reception area; four of the children were very aggressive, very frustrated about their relationships and couldn't verbalise their feelings and they actually hit out, which then damaged their relationship with the whole school community, but particularly with their peer group. So, the fact that they are actually integrated into the classroom and if you actually came in now you would not pick them out as having these difficulties is wonderful* (headteacher).

A team member involved in introducing games activities into a reception class felt that some pupils' ability to take turns had improved and that there was less jealousy amongst the children, but the teacher involved felt that the intervention had had little impact on the social skills developed by the pupils: '*They thoroughly enjoyed the games, especially the moving around ones, but as to listening skills, it didn't really do any good.*'

Receiving attention

Teachers at one school, where selected pupils had undertaken group work with team members, identified one outcome as the individual attention the pupils, the '*most needy*', had received, as this was time that they felt they might otherwise not have had. It was suggested that some pupils regarded this as their '*special time*'. One teacher felt that this was important and that this alone would yield positive results for some of the pupils involved:

> *I think, with these children, this communication time that they have had is vital, and I don't always think it matters what goes on; it's just that they have had some time from somebody to just help them and talk to them and talk out problems, because other people don't have the time. So, I think it's worthwhile anyway* (teacher).

Behaviour

Teachers gave some specific examples of pupils who had changed their behaviour and this was particularly the case where pupils with behavioural difficulties had been involved in small-group work or individual work with the team:

> *I mean, I have got one child who used to be very aggressive and he is playing games now and it's probably a mixture of what* [the MAST team] *are doing and what I am doing in class* (teacher).

> *I mean, I have got one child particularly,* [X], *and he wasn't transient, he did leave in the middle and he had a terrible time and he was very disturbed because he had been to stay with mum. Mum couldn't take care of him. He was trying to set fire to the flat and she sent him back to dad so he doesn't see mum any more and he was all over the place. So, having time with them helped. Having time again with me and settling down helped, and, of course, it does have an impact because now ... I was just thinking about him this morning ... he was sat listening. He had a wonderful time at playtime, he played games, great time, he came in, sat down and worked and listened* (teacher).

In addition, one of the team cited an example where a pupil behaved differently when confronted about their behaviour, acknowledging the progress that this pupil had made:

> *The punchline is that, having been admonished by the dinner lady and brought to task, and said 'Right you know what the sanction is; we then have to bring you in and you have to stay in the corridor for the rest of the play', he accepted that and he said to me 'I said to the dinner lady "Right, I have got to come in and talk about this now. I have got to stop and think"'* (team member).

Some of the Year 4 and 5 pupils corroborated this type of impact and were able to identify a pupil in their class whose behaviour had changed. Although they were unable to say how, they felt that this was because he had the opportunity '*to express himself*' and '*to get attention*' and now enjoyed school more. They also made reference to a pupil in a higher class who had Circle Time at the same time:

> *I think it's made a bit of a difference to* [X], *because he used to be a bit cheekier, but he is very good now.* [When asked why?] *I think it's because he expressed what he thinks* (pupil, female, aged 9).

One Year 6 pupil, who had been a playground leader, felt that this had been valuable for some pupils '*because if they are playing games they have got something to do, and do not mess around*'.

Other pupils interviewed referred to the impact of Circle Time on their friends and classmates:

Well, it's made a difference to him because he was in a lot of trouble. He does everything, but now he is slowing down and things. He is doing good things. He is getting good reports about him and everything (pupil, male, aged 9).

They were every single day naughty, but they are only sometimes naughty now (pupil, male, aged 9).

Others were able to recognise changes in their own behaviour as a result of participation in Circle Time:

Before Circle Time I was naughty all the time and now I am sometimes good nearly all the time (pupil, male, aged 9).

When asked about any other differences it had made to him, this pupil responded: '*It makes me come to school because I think every day it's* [Circle Time] *always there'*, and he acknowledged that he looked forward to it.

One pupil, in a school where Circle Time and playground activities had been introduced, stated that this had helped him to avoid getting into fights as he now played football at lunchtimes and was '*keeping out of trouble*'. He also indicated that this had impacted on his friends:

My friends used to fight with me and all and since then we haven't been fighting, because I used to have a gang and we used to fight a lot but we are not fighting now (pupil, male, aged 9).

Less positively, a concern was expressed by one team member that, where the work of the MAST team did not fit with the philosophy of the school, this may have had a negative effect on some children's behaviour:

In fact, for some of the children I worry that it's actually caused more problems because they think 'Right, here we have adults in an authority-figure role; we have to accept what they say', but some of the children are now questioning, sometimes with validity, 'What's been said to us isn't right. This isn't fair' and that may then cause the children to ... I don't know, be less compliant. But, in other schools, I think the impact on the children has been to empower them to feel more capable (team member).

One teacher highlighted the inherent problem with gauging the impact of an intervention on the behaviour of any pupil:

Yes, I mean you can see a change and I assume there's been an impact; there must have been, and certainly with him it has been. But, yes it is, it's hard to pinpoint where that impact has come from ... I mean there are so many influences on their lives, you can't, can you? It might be something at home that's happened; it might be something I have done; it might be something that's been said in assembly; it might be something that's happened in the playground that's changed. You don't know, but that doesn't mean it's not worthwhile doing, does it? It just means that you can't always pinpoint it (teacher).

Learning

In one school, in which pupils had been seen individually and in small groups, the headteacher perceived that there had been an impact on pupils' learning:

> *For example, in group discussions, because their self-esteem is much greater, they feel able and confident to join in, so, therefore, there is an impact on their learning* (headteacher)

In another, a teacher strongly believed that Circle Time might have a role in improving the quality of learning and raising standards:

> *I believe what it does is focus the children. It focuses them on how they tackle their work and even the quality of their work. It raises their self-esteem and their self-respect and with that you have got a sort of higher level of awareness that they are part of a group, whether they are doing maths or English or any of the curriculum areas, that the work is valued and that other children will value it as well. Because at Circle Time everyone is valued, and that is carried through on to the work, which I think is quite important. It's quite important also for raising standards, that the children feel that the work is valued by themselves, by the teacher, and especially by their other peer groups. So in many ways, it has an impact on the quality of the work, which is part and parcel of raising standards and expectations* (teacher).

Drawing together these multiple outcomes for pupils, the impact of the MAST activity on five individuals is presented in the following cameos. These are based entirely on interviews with the pupils, and reference is made to the impact in terms of the categories outlined above.

Pupil Cameo 1: male, aged 9

This pupil enjoys '*playing football, learning and doing activities in the hall*'.

MAST activity
This pupil's class had taken part in Circle Time conducted by MAST team members. When asked what activities they had done, he noted that they had talked about different things and played games '*like spy in the camp*'. He did comment, however, that he might have preferred different games because he got bored, as it took a long time to get round the whole class when they took turns. When asked how the activities with the MAST team were different to ordinary lessons, he commented that '*it's enjoyable*'. He did not like writing because '*I get a really bad headache*'. He later referred to having a choice of what to talk about, something that would not normally happen in lessons.

Impact
Referring to the MAST team members, who '*came in to help us with* [Circle Time]', he stated that '*the first time I went I felt a bit nervous about them*'. He highlighted how participation in Circle Time with the team had provided him with the opportunity to share things that were on his mind and, when asked what he liked best about Circle Time, he responded: '*If I have got something on my mind really bad, it just takes it away from me.*' He also felt that it had helped her/his friends, who have '*really big problems*' and who '*just feel all right after a bit, when they get used to it* [Circle Time]'. He also agreed with another pupil that there had been some impact on the class next door (who had also done Circle Time). The class chattered more, although he had mixed feelings about whether this was a good or bad thing.

There was an impact on this pupil in terms of:
- an affective outcome;
- sharing and solving problems; and
- awareness of others.

Pupil Cameo 2: female, aged 8

This pupil enjoys '*climbing and playing with friends*'.

MAST activity
This pupil's class had taken part in Circle Time conducted by MAST team members. She described Circle Time, which took place in the music room: '*We all sat in a circle and* [a team member] *asked us a question and we could speak when the microphone came round* [and we] *spoke about things we liked doing.*' She highlighted the opportunity pupils had to select the topics of discussion. When asked how the Circle Time had been different to ordinary lessons, she responded: '*You didn't actually work. You just answered the questions.*' There was nothing that she did not like about the activities. She felt that having people come from outside was '*really good*', although she was nervous to begin with: '*The second time you went you wasn't that nervous because you had been with them before.*'

Impact
She indicated that the opportunity to say what she thought, not normally possible in class, was helpful: '*You get a good chance of explaining things to them.*' When asked what she liked doing best, she responded: '*Talking ... and other people could talk as well.*' This was reiterated in her response to the question 'What difference has it made to you?', as she highlighted learning about others in the class: '*You know about other people.*' She felt that it had given one of her friends, in particular, an opportunity: '*It gived (sic) my friend a bit of a chance because she was blind and it gave her a chance.*' She also felt that it must have made a difference to her teacher because '*now we have done that, she wants to do it on his own now with us*'.

Impact on this pupil was evident in terms of:
- an affective outcome; and
- awareness of self and others.

Pupil Cameo 3: male, aged 9

This pupil enjoys '*doing maths and English sets ... I like doing times tables and I like doing maths bingo*'.

MAST activity
This pupil had been involved in Circle Time with the MAST team. When asked about the activities they had done with the MAST team, he said: '*We do some games called "paint box" and we do something about what we like doing and we do work about what other people like doing.*' He felt that it was different from what they usually did in class because you could walk around the room and because you did games. He described in detail one of the games that he liked the best. On the other hand, he did not like it in Circle Time when he did not understand what was expected: '*Sometimes I don't understand if they tell me again because they say like the words what I don't understand.*' He said that this made him feel sad because of '*being left out*'.

Impact
When asked what difference it had made to him, he responded:

> *Yes, a little bit about my behaviour. Sometimes I don't behave in class but in Circle Time it's quite fun so I do behave sometimes, because I like doing that murder game and that paint box. I like doing that, so I would be quiet.*

He also felt that this extended to the classroom situation: '*Circle Time makes you behave good and all in class.*' He highlighted a friend who had been in a lot of trouble previously and the impact that Circle Time had had on him: '*He does everything, but now he is slowing down and things. He is doing good things. He is getting good reports about him and everything.*' He felt that Circle Time had made a significant difference to his teacher too: '*He is always smiling in Circle Time ... a lot of difference. It makes him happy.*' When asked if he had anything further to say about Circle Time, this pupil concluded his interview with: '*I would like to say thank you to* [team member] *and the rest of the staff members of Circle Time, because it's good fun.*'

Impact was evident in terms of:
- an affective outcome; and
- a change in behaviour.

Pupil Cameo 4: male, aged 9

This pupil enjoys '*art, drawing, playing on the computers and English and maths*'.

MAST activity
He had participated in Circle Time conducted by MAST team members. When asked about the activities undertaken with the MAST team, he stated that '*we played a game. We asked people what was their favourite sport*'. He saw this as different to ordinary lessons and nominated 'paint box' as his favourite game, describing it in detail.

Impact
When asked if taking part in Circle Time had made any difference to him, he said that it had, '*because, before it was Circle Time, I was naughty all the time, and now I am sometimes good, nearly all the time*'. He described how previously he had punched a girl and had sworn at her. He also highlighted how Circle Time was an incentive to come to school '*because, I think every day it's always there*' and how he looked forward to it. He also identified an impact on his friends: '*They were every single day naughty and are only naughty sometimes now.*'

Impact was evident in terms of:
- an affective outcome; and
- a change in behaviour.

Pupil Cameo 5: female, aged 9

This pupil enjoys reading.

MAST activity
When asked what activities she had done with the MAST team, this pupil said: '*We played the games, as* [X pupil] *said and, at the end, we often chose what we was (sic) going to do the next week.*' She indicated that the class had been doing Circle Time a lot since the MAST team had left, but that it was different to the way in which they had done it: '*We have little time to say what are our views, so we don't get to say all of it sometimes.*'

Impact
She felt that Circle Time was different to ordinary lessons because '*I could talk to a different person*', although she then stated that she did not find this easy. She agreed that she might have been a bit nervous to begin with '*but after a couple of weeks I was fine*'. She felt that pupils had the opportunity to share their views in Circle Time '*because in an ordinary lesson you wouldn't get to say your view of it and everyone's view*'. She identified one pupil within the class whose behaviour had improved: '*He used to be a bit cheeky sometimes, but he is not*' and, when asked what she thought had changed, responded: '*I think it's because he expressed what he thinks.*' She also referred to a pupil in another class, also involved in Circle Time, who '*used to be a bit cheeky, but is very good now*'.

Impact was evident in terms of:
- an affective outcome;
- awareness of self and others;
- a change in behaviour; and
- sharing and solving problems.

2.3.7 The impact on parents

Parents, as a group, were only directly targeted in one of the case-study schools within the evaluation. The team, however, did identify activities conducted in other schools where intervention was aimed at parents, from which they had benefited a lot and for whom it was reported to have a big impact. A parental surgery, which offered support and allowed them to have informal discussion about the home situation and whom they could refer to for help was set up in one school. The team felt this was a particularly notable practice and one that they wanted to develop.

In the case-study school where parents were involved in workshops conducted by the teachers, the impact was felt to be disappointing, as the parents of pupils with difficult behaviour (those which the school hoped to target) did not attend.

2.3.8 The impact on non-teaching assistants (NTAs)

Non-teaching assistants had been introduced to Circle Time in two schools as part of the MAST activity, with, in one case, the identified aim of boosting the self-esteem of the NTAs as well as that of the pupils. There was evidence that this had been achieved, as the headteacher described them as '*empowered*' and '*able to use what they had learnt in small-group situations*'. One of the team described them as '*really enthusiastic. They took it up and went running with it*'. Another school was also considering involving NTAs in Circle Time following MAST involvement.

2.3.9 Factors that have facilitated impact

When asked what factors might have inhibited or facilitated the impact of the MAST activity, or the key factors contributing to the success of the MAST activity, the major factors identified were where:

- there was an openness to new ideas;
- there was an open-minded approach to problem solving;
- there was a shared responsibility for the activities between the team and the school;
- school staff were involved in planning;
- aims were negotiated and clear to all those involved;
- opportunities for feedback and review were built in; and
- the work was continued or extended in some way post-MAST, with activities incorporated into the structure of the school.

Team members tended to focus on a shared responsibility, an openness to new ideas and incorporating the activities into the structure of the school, whereas teachers tended to focus on communication about the aims, involvement in planning and opportunities for feedback and review. Other aspects, identified mainly by team members, were:

- the influence of the senior managers within the school;
- the credibility of the team, which might be enhanced in a number of ways (for example, where they were able to demonstrate that intervention was effective, or where they were able to offer support when it was most needed);
- the fact that it was a positive experience for those involved; and
- the team being new to the pupils.

Team members also commented on inhibiting practicalities, such as having to work around the curriculum (particularly, the Literacy Hour), lack of resources and lack of time to spend with individual pupils.

Line managers identified other factors that might have influenced impact, including the newness of the concept, links with professionals already working in schools and the ability of the team to negotiate and work with the management in schools. Each of the major influences identified above will now be elaborated on further.

An openness to new ideas

The differences in school responses to the work of the MAST team, i.e. between those that were welcoming and those that were resistant, had implications for the impact of the work. Line managers, as well as team members, highlighted this as an important influence on impact. One line manager highlighted the different cultures and different values that some schools had and that some were very positive, open to change and welcomed it, whereas others exhibited '*resistance*' and '*suspicion*'. In the former, the presence of a supportive environment facilitated impact, as indicated by this team member:

> *Certainly, in the schools that have been willing to look beyond their own ideologies and look for their own professional development, there's been more success, more impact on the children ... where the teachers have agreed with that and work collaboratively on that basis, then yes, I think there are signs that there will be an impact on the children. But where, as we mentioned in* [X school], *that's been lacking, well then, no, I don't think there has been a huge impact on the children* (team member).

Referring to one school that had reached a crisis point during MAST involvement and which went on to implement some ideas from the team, one team member stated: '*It's probably when people are at their most receptive*' and there is recognition that '*something has to change*'. Another of the team members also highlighted that, where schools were vulnerable and defensive, they were less likely to be able to accept new ideas as these were seen as criticism.

An open-minded approach to problem solving

One of the major contributions of the multi-agency team approach identified was in encouraging an open-minded approach to problem solving. Where the team were able to work together to develop solutions and where the school staff were open-minded about the solution to the problem, this was thought by some of the team to facilitate impact:

> *The majority of schools it's been 'This is our problem, please could you, as the team, come and give us your thoughts on it and work with us in resolving it?' And that's been the most successful, because you are not precluding anything which might shut out a solution or an answer* (team member).

In one of the schools, where there appeared to be the most impact, this was supported by a comment from a teacher who stated that: '*the staff have been quite open-minded about it* [Circle Time]' and '*flexible*'.

A shared responsibility and a willingness to be involved

There was a strong feeling amongst the team that a shared responsibility between the team and the school was vital for success, as indicated by comments that '*the most effective schools will always be those schools who've come to those conclusions for themselves*', and, '*if you do everything for them then they won't do anything for themselves*'. Line managers also identified the need for joint responsibility: '*Some schools want the team to take the child away and do not see it as the school's problem.*' One described it as '*a stumbling block*' with some schools. This point was summed up by one of the team:

> *It was very much 'You have these skills; come and work with our children, then hand our children back to us so that they will fit into our normal routine'. But, I have to say, that was the exception. In the other schools, it was 'You have certain skills and a knowledge which we would like you to share with us and teach us how to develop this with our children'. And that was when my own perception is that, ultimately, we had more impact on the children* (team member).

In order to promote a shared responsibility it was recognised as important by one of the team for them to work collaboratively and to allow the teachers to share their own ideas:

> *It's not exactly ownership of problems, but everybody feeling that they are a valued member, not of the MAST team, I mean of schools. Every person in the school believes it's a valued member and every member of staff's views are taken into consideration and decisions are made in joint consultation, and such like. Now, if we can in any way facilitate that, say in* [X school], *then maybe we will have an impact* (team member).

Involvement in planning

Coupled with the requirement for accepting responsibility, where teachers were more involved in the planning of the activities and in setting the agenda, there was evidence that the work had been more effective. This was a point identified both by the team and the teachers involved:

> *The attitude of staff, I would say, has been extremely positive, because we identified the need ourselves and the children were put in a learning situation with Circle Time, and so were the staff. So, in that sense, it has been really positive: a) we wanted it, and b) we were willing to participate and be part of it ourselves* (teacher).

Negotiated and clear aims

Comments from teachers and headteachers indicated that good communication and negotiation, particularly in clarifying the aims of the activities, was essential to gain teachers' support and involvement. For one school, the discrepancy between what they wanted and what they received was a major issue, highlighted by both the headteacher and the teachers involved. The activity conducted involved a lot of some teachers' time, but had not fulfilled their original aims, because the parents the school wished to work with had not attended activity evenings. As one teacher reflected, '*in the actual aim of the activity, it was a waste of time*'. Other examples provided illustrated the importance of communicating what is expected with all those directly involved, where possible. This teacher had not been aware that she could be involved when the team was working with his/her class. This inhibited any impact on this teacher's professional development:

> *Yes, I mean the impression that was passed on to me by the then acting head teacher was 'They are coming to do your PSE', which is slightly different from 'They are coming to do it and involve you'. 'It's fine for you. You can just be there and do other things', which was my information from the headteacher. So, obviously, that's how I looked at it, that they were doing it and I was sitting observing and doing other things* (teacher).

Sometimes, where the team was unable to follow through work and gave little explanation for this, there were implications for the school, such as having to explain to parents what was happening. Another headteacher felt that more time might have

been well spent deliberating about the activities to be conducted, thus enabling greater exploration of the options.

Feedback and review

The opportunity for feedback and reflection on the activities undertaken was felt by teachers to be important and the lack of time built into the programme for this was a major issue for many. In one of the schools, where there was thought to be most impact, one of the teachers highlighted the opportunity for feedback as the key factor in making it a success:

> *Being able to discuss and being able to say 'Well I like this' or 'What about this?' or 'If you had done this differently', both ways. It's a two-way thing. You are not just there to listen to them, and they are not just there just to tell you. They are there to help, but I think it has to be a two-way thing* (teacher).

Problems in getting feedback time meant that this tended, in many cases, to be done on an *ad hoc* basis rather than through planned time. Where teachers were unable to follow up with pupils because of lack of feedback, they felt that the professional development element had been lost. Comments similar to the following were common:

> *It is important, especially a group with problems, how they react in Circle Time. And I can use it. If there were any strategies that worked really well, then I could use that in class, in playtimes and lunchtime. So, the feedback situation needs working on, but again that's an allocation of time and money and resources* (teacher).

> *If I know they had been working on sharing and cooperation and I think they have, I am sure they have, then I could say definitely 'Yes'. I could link it back and then I could then play on that with him* [pupil] *and say 'Yes, that's wonderful, well done'. But, I can't, because I don't know so much about what they have been doing* (teacher).

One suggested that this might also extend the impact in some way to the rest of the class:

> *The things like the personal and social, when the children have come back and told us what they have been doing, we have looked at what they have been doing and we have talked to the class about it and things and followed it up that way. So, it's been good for the rest of the class to see what they have been doing* (teacher).

Another felt that written communication of the aims and outcomes of intervention would be helpful.

Thus, time for both short-term (i.e. immediately after the activity) and long-term review was an issue, as some teachers felt that, where they were continuing with activities that the team had introduced, they needed continuing support to build up their confidence and skills and to introduce new ideas and developments. Where

regular review and feedback sessions were in evidence and incorporated as part of the activity, it was considered to be vital for success of the activity and for teachers to gain from the experience.

Extension and incorporation of activities into the structure of the school
Two of the team stressed that it was important to introduce activities that teachers were able to follow up themselves and continue post-MAST, and in the schools in which this had been achieved there appeared to be greater impact. Extension of Circle Time in one school, for example, to teachers and pupils in other year groups had extended the impact of the original work. Conversely, there was less impact where the work of the team was seen as a 'bolt on' activity and one not able to be continued post-MAST. In addition, where the team had worked with both teachers and pupils, they also perceived there to be a greater impact:

> *Where the schools have incorporated the existing teaching staff and the structure with that, so we have worked with the children and the staff, that's been most beneficial. And where they have then said 'Right, let's look at our own structure. Is there anything within the structure that we can modify to accommodate this new knowledge?', that's sealed the process if you like. Or, conversely, schools who have not been prepared to do that, if you like, it's sealed the fact that our input has failed or not achieved what was wanted* (team member).

> *It may change their practice, but it's got to be something that we do in conjunction. Where we have tried to do something for them, it will fail. It must fail really, because once we go nobody will continue it* (team member).

2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE MAST ACTIVITY

All interviewees were asked for their opinion on how the MAST activity could be developed. Many, teachers especially, responded to this question with suggestions for improvement already raised in the section on facilitating impact of the MAST work. However, others, particularly line managers and the team members, articulated their responses in terms of extension of the work that could be categorised under five main headings:

- continuing areas of work already implemented;
- diversifying into new areas of work;
- expanding;
- coordination; and
- consistency.

2.4.1 Continuing areas of work already implemented

Some interviewees highlighted areas of work, already touched on by the MAST team, that they felt were worthy of greater attention in the future. These areas included specific types of intervention, such as parent support groups, parents' surgeries, peer mentoring, and the development of Circle Time, for example, throughout a school.

In addition, one team member highlighted how they felt that the use of the '*two-pronged approach*', having a focus on work with both individual pupils and with the whole school, had been beneficial and that this might perhaps be taken forward in any form of development.

2.4.2 Diversifying into new areas of work

A number of ways in which the MAST activity could be diversified were suggested. These included a more specific role in, or a greater focus on, the following areas:

- a multi-agency forum to discuss specific cases;
- crisis intervention;
- preventing exclusions;
- early intervention and prevention;
- INSET on behaviour management strategies;
- work with parents; and
- an action research approach.

The first four of these responses highlighted a conflict of priorities between those who felt that the focus of the work might best be directed towards early intervention and prevention, and those who felt that the multi-agency team might best be utilised to address the needs of pupils that were deemed the most challenging and difficult to work with. Those working at an operational level, such as team members and school personnel, tended to focus on this latter aspect.

A forum for discussion of specific cases was an important area of development for one headteacher, who felt that this was one way in which the team might have greater impact, particularly on exclusions, and could offer a more valuable contribution to schools:

> *I want to be able to sit down with people from Social Services, from the Education Welfare Service, from* [the PRU] *and say 'Look, I have got this child here, these are the problems, this is happening at home, these are the attitudes at home. I have tried to reach that, but there's a limit to what I can do. I can't go and sit in everybody's home. This is what I think, if we are to avoid this child being excluded and certainly, when he gets to secondary school, being excluded, this is what I feel we need now'* (headteacher).

One of the team reiterated this and suggested that the team were not providing schools with enough of what they wanted in dealing with children with complex needs, i.e. the most difficult and most challenging children. This was illustrated with a specific example:

> *The boy I work with at* [X school], *he's in trouble every single day. He spends time out of the classroom or being sent to another classroom because he's opted out. And I could go in there every day of the week, I'm not sure I could make the changes that they want. They're pleased I'm going in. Anything is better than nothing, but I don't think they feel that it's enough for them* (team member).

One team member also felt that they might have a clearer role in helping schools to prevent exclusion and they suggested that this would also reflect a national desire to reduce exclusions.

2.4.3 Expanding

Line managers and team members highlighted a number of ways in which the work of the team could be expanded, including:

- focusing on '*geographical hot spots*';
- introduction into secondary schools;
- extension into a greater number of schools;
- having more teams;
- having full-time team members;
- greater psychological input; and
- having more material resources.

There was concern expressed by some members of the team that redirection, rather than expansion, may be a more appropriate option, as expansion may lead to a watering down of the multi-agency approach to the extent that the team became ineffective. It was suggested, for example, that if they tried to service all schools, the multi-agency aspect would die. One of the team felt that consideration must be given to the relationship between the number of people on the team and the number of schools they were servicing. Most of the team were cautious about expansion and suggested that this required careful thought, illustrated by the following comment:

> *I think that if schools think they have got a chance for some extra work, they will take it whether they feel they want it or not. If we had worked in fewer schools, but more of the time, we may have had more impact, and then once you have got that expertise, if you like, then extend it* (team member).

Adequate resources, in terms of staff time, money and facilities, for any further development were also considered by some of the team to be an important factor:

> *As the team supposedly is getting bigger, it's going to be essential for them to have a good base, for them to have secretarial facilities* (team member).

2.4.4 Coordination

Coordination was also an issue in developing the work of MAST, for the team, their line managers and headteachers. The need for someone to have an overview of multi-agency work, for the work to be coordinated with the work of other agencies and for the service to schools to be standardised in some way was raised. One team member, for example, highlighted how it was unclear how the work of the team fitted with the work of other agencies and identified areas of overlap in other fields:

> *It feels like you are out on a limb because* [X] *does a lot about behaviour in his work and there is an EWO who works in certain schools, and she does a*

lot of the crossovers in terms of absenteeism and things like that. If [the EWO] *were part of us, which she might be in the future, we would kind of know what she was doing and not trample on her toes. And there are other projects that we don't hear about. The Education Action Zone, we don't know what's involved with them. There may be things we could share with each other and do differently and I suppose standardise the service that schools are getting* (team member).

One headteacher, too, called for a more cohesive approach and described the present situation as '*bitty*'. S/he suggested that '*it would be sensible to try and draw up an agreed agenda and for us all to have a clearer picture of what we can expect as heads*'. The need for a regular meeting with the team in individual schools to look at their needs was also highlighted by this headteacher. Clearer management was another issue raised within development by two of the line managers of the team. They suggested that this, too, might lead to better coordination of the work.

2.4.5 Consistency

The issue of consistency, should new team members be appointed, was also raised. One team member clearly outlined the difficulties they thought that a lack of consistency in the members of the team might cause:

So it would be a pity for the team, if, as it looks like it's going to be, different people after Easter, because they would presumably have to go through that same learning process, and I think one thing that's proved itself time and time again is the value of consistency and stability. You are working within the field of relationships. Therefore, if you withdraw key personnel, you have to, as a team, build up again and it's not simply that it's the children that you are working with; they become familiar with a person and it isn't the role alone – it's you as a person (team member).

A headteacher emphasised the difficulties that a change of personnel within the team might create for the pupils, a concern also raised by one of the teachers within this school:

One of the things that I am concerned about the project, and I know it's a function of the funding, the yearly funding, is that I think it's very important that the staff who work in the project actually remain in the project for three year. Otherwise there's a danger (although these children have had this intensive impact for a six-week period) that this is another set of adults who are walking into someone's life and walking out, and I think the project is valuable. I would like to see it continue ad infinitum *really and be absorbed into good policy and good practice, but I think we have to be conscious of the fact that these are vulnerable children that we are working with, and the most important thing they need is stability. They need to make relationships and know that quality relationships last* (headteacher).

2.5 THE MULTI-AGENCY CONTRIBUTION

Interviewees were asked, in a general section within the interview, about multi-agency working, the distinctive features of this approach, and its advantages and challenges. This section focuses mainly on their responses to these questions.

2.5.1 The distinctive features of a multi-agency approach

The distinctive features that were highlighted centred around:

- offering a range of perspectives;
- pooling ideas;
- offering a wide range of expertise; and
- more effective inter-agency liaison and a speedy response for pupils with problems.

A range of perspectives

Multi-agency work was thought to offer a range of different perspectives by both the team members and the teachers. Many felt that it offered something over and above a more singular approach, a view supported by one of the line managers, who felt that it facilitated a balanced discussion and one that would help schools move forward. One team member noted that having this multi-perspective enabled complacency to be challenged:

> *It gives different perspectives and comes from different backgrounds and it's not all one-sided. Because, I think, if things are all one-sided, you can get into complacency: 'We are all right, it's them over there that's letting us down. It's the Child and Family Unit, it's Social Services, it's health', or you can go the other way: 'Nobody has it as bad as we do. It's worse for us'. Sort of a siege mentality almost and, I think, having different perspectives, somebody can actually challenge that and say 'Hang on a minute, that's not right', or 'Have you tried seeing it from this point of view?'* (team member).

Team members outlined clearly the value that having different perspectives brought to the approach, particularly where the team was able to conduct observations within the school before discussing their input with the rest of the team. This was thought to be one of the '*most invaluable*' contributions, and one that allowed problems to be understood in a more holistic way. Teachers, too, felt that this facilitated working with the whole child and family issues and led to a deeper insight into and a '*better overall picture*' of children's problems. The recognition of home-based problems for some pupils was also highlighted by one of the line managers.

One teacher also felt that access to a range of perspectives sometimes provided reassurance, in addition to alternative approaches:

> *Sometimes it's quite possible to get bogged down with what you are seeing, and sometimes you think 'Oh, God, these children are awful', and they can come along and say 'Well, actually, this happens at so and so and they are not*

as bad as you think. We take this approach, or have you thought about this?' (teacher).

The fact that multi-agency work was able to offer a totally different perspective from that of teachers was thought to be a distinctive feature, not surprisingly, raised by headteachers and teachers. One teacher felt that having someone not involved in education bringing a completely different viewpoint was important because others were '*too immersed in it*'. It was suggested by a number of teachers that other agencies were able to focus on different aspects than teachers, such as personal, social and emotional development:

> *When I go in to see children, I go in as a teacher and I can't ever step back from that. As a social worker, you would have a completely different outlook and view. So you speak to them differently and you have different skills that I couldn't bring ... I would always be going for the learning aspect and they would probably be more able to give the cooperation and the sharing and know how to talk to them, because they have been in those situations a lot of times before* (teacher).

One headteacher described how useful it was to have the social worker perspective and referred to '*expert questioning of children*' that has '*borne out concerns*' that enabled the school to act appropriately in response to children's difficulties.

Pooling ideas

Teachers felt that a multi-agency approach facilitated the pooling of a wide range of ideas in helping to solve problems and that this was valuable in moving cases forward. As one teacher stated, if one person is not able to give feedback on something, one of the team can and '*you can go so much further if you discuss cases together*'. The team members supported this view, emphasising that sharing ideas together before implementing any strategies within schools had been an important feature of the work. The team indicated that, where this had been achieved, this enabled an open-minded approach to problems and this was an important factor in facilitating impact, as discussed previously.

Diverse expertise

Teachers highlighted the wide range of expertise that became available in multi-agency working, with access to the combined skills, knowledge and experience of the professionals involved. As one teacher stated:

> *They have all got their own different specialities. Somebody might be particularly good with behaviour, somebody might be particularly good with emotional difficulties, somebody might be particularly good with the learning side. So, they can combine all the skills and knowledge and put it into place that way* (teacher).

Whilst one line manager reiterated the value of the wide range of expertise accessed through multi-agency working, s/he added that these could then be put together in '*a constructive way*' and '*in the best interests of the child*'.

More effective inter-agency liaison and a speedy response

One headteacher indicated that multi-agency working facilitated greater collaboration between the different agencies, rather than passing referrals from one to another and '*passing bits of paper round*', implying a more effective use of resources and limiting duplication. Line managers supported this view and took this point further, suggesting that the practical knowledge of the different systems obtained meant that professionals would know what was realistically available and possible through other agencies, thus eradicating the mythology often surrounding these issues:

> *Well, it gets rid of the mythology of what can or cannot be done, because people sort of saying 'Oh, that's Social Services' problem. They should do this', you know. When, in actual fact, people need to know what people actually can do and what can be achieved. It needs to be realistic. So, multi-agency working should be reality. It shouldn't be opportunities for passing the parcel round, because passing the parcel round in actual fact is no help to anybody* (line manager).

Quicker, planned action, particularly if the multi-agency work was in-house, was highlighted by one teacher and this was also reiterated by one of the team. Prevention of the time lag for pupils with problems receiving appropriate help and support was raised as an important advantage. One of the team referred to a case in question, where an intensive multi-agency assessment was undertaken with a child by the team:

> *Now, within the normal state of affairs, what we accomplished in half of a morning would normally have taken the better part of a term to try and collaborate together, and the time lag that all that involves* (team member).

2.5.2 The advantages of multi-agency working

When asked what the advantages of multi-agency working were, many respondents reiterated the features described above. In addition, some team members stressed the open-minded aspect of the approach, as opposed to pre-empting the solution to a problem, as an important advantage to schools:

> *Whereas previously, heads sat there, thought they had a problem and said 'Do I go to Social Services' door, go to the PRU, the disaffected unit? Do I go to SENSS, do I go to the School Psychological Service?' This that and the other, and they predetermine the direction in which they hope the solution will come, but, if it was genuinely multi-agency, they wouldn't do that, they would say 'We have a problem and pool your ideas to help us'* (team member).

Team members also highlighted other advantages. Some felt that one of the advantages might be for the professionals and the agencies involved, for their own professional development (a point also raised by one of the line managers, who stated that it '*broadens their skills*') and motivation. This 'learning experience' was also highlighted by some teachers, especially with regard to behaviour management.

Other advantages, raised by line managers, included the breaking down of '*preciousness*' with regard to budgets, preventing territorialism, allowing access to a wide range of methods of working and enabling a closer look at the problem and

therefore being able to target resources better. The high profile of multi-agency working in relation to social inclusion and the fact that this attracts funding was an advantage highlighted by the LEA officer. He described it as '*the cutting edge*'.

2.5.3 The challenges of multi-agency working

The main challenges identified concerning multi-agency work centred around the areas of:

- challenging perceptions;
- dilution of expertise; and
- understanding.

Other challenges raised included the lack of systems in place to support multi-agency working, highlighted by the LEA officer involved, and practical issues, mainly raised by teachers, such as finding the time for regular contact, and agency rules and regulations. One teacher felt that multi-agency working was a learning challenge, and described it as '*frightening at first, but not threatening*'. One line manager thought that the management of a multi-agency team might be a challenge, and stressed the importance of clear direction and targets agreed by all.

Challenging perceptions

For some of the team, multi-agency working challenged personal views and they felt that this might be a particular problem if people had become '*entrenched*' in their own particular perceptions and, as one stated, '*You have to sort of hold it in the back of your head, but not be too precious about it*'.

With regard to multi-agency work in schools, one team member felt that there was a need to reassure teachers that non-educational professionals know what they are doing:

> *There was certainly the question mooted to me 'Will they know what they are doing, because they are not teachers? How will they cope with a group of children?'* (team member).

For some team members, a further challenge was coping with the difference between schools' expectations and the reality, as to some schools, multi-agency working might suggest that they were getting a full-time psychologist, social worker, etc.

Dilution

'*Watering down*' and eventual loss of professional expertise were thought to be a particular challenge, mainly raised by the team themselves, although also recognised by their line managers:

> *I think eventually it would water down your expertise and that might be a problem. Because initially one of the advantages of MAST is that you are pooling together people with this long experience, this good experience from*

all these different agencies. If it went on for a long time, you would lose this experience (team member).

In relation to dilution, one line manager suggested that the professionals involved needed regular contact with personnel from their own profession for ideas and information and to maintain their expertise.

The issue of dilution, although in a different sense, was also raised by one headteacher who felt that this might occur through having too many people involved in one case, thereby diluting the impact of any work undertaken.

Understanding

One headteacher emphasised the need for understanding how professionals from different agencies work, the limitations in what they could offer and respecting each other's ability as professionals. The complexity of multi-agency work, and the lack of understanding around this concept, was emphasised by one line manager who felt that multi-agency working was '*really, very difficult, and it actually requires a highly committed approach*' because:

> *It requires people to rid themselves of the mythology of what other people do and I think people have run with the words, but not appreciated the difficulties* (line manager).

One headteacher recognised a need to '*break down barriers*' and '*preciousness*' and the need to be '*singing from the same song sheet*'. This was reiterated by one of the line managers, who suggested that some people were not prepared to share their knowledge and expertise, thus preserving their 'expert' status and, whilst this prevailed, multi-agency working would be a difficult and complex process. Another also highlighted the need for time to be invested in order to break down the barriers in any multi-agency endeavour, although s/he recognised that '*a lot of regular discussion means less action*'. In addition, as the LEA officer also stated, '*it is much harder work*'.

2.6 SUMMARY

Key findings: processes and components

The schools' experience of MAST team intervention overall was described as a positive one. However, given the experimental, innovative and complex nature of this endeavour, not surprisingly, the experience also raised a number of issues for those involved. The main issues about MAST activity centred around the initial recruitment of members, the composition and cohesion of the team, the focus of the work undertaken in schools and coordination with the work of other agencies.

- Delays in appointing staff to the team undoubtedly affected the work undertaken and the team's reception in some schools.

- The time devoted by agency staff to the team had implications for team cohesion and the role they adopted within the team, and, for some, there was a clash of roles when working in schools.

- Some of the professionals involved felt that there was a greater need for the focus of the work to be on individual pupils, particularly the more challenging pupils, whilst others felt that the focus of the work could be at whole-school level. However, disparate views were resolved through discussion and collaboration, and a balanced approach was said to be ultimately achieved.

- Some professionals identified the need for greater clarity with regard to how the work of the team fitted with the work of other agencies and with other projects and strategies within the authority.

Key findings: impact

Although impact on attendance and exclusion figures was difficult to comment on at this stage of the MAST team's development, there were indications of a positive impact on schools as a whole. The impact of MAST activity on the participants involved was widespread, although varying in degree for different individuals. Involvement in MAST appeared to have a major impact on the team members, whilst for teachers, impact varied depending on their degree of involvement with the team and their willingness to take on board new ideas. For pupils who participated in the MAST activity, impact was described in terms of a wide range of outcomes.

- Involvement in the MAST team had a major impact on the professional development of team members, particularly those new to working in schools, and specifically with regard to the development of 'knowledge and skills', which refers to deeper levels of understanding and critical reflexivity, a first-order professional development outcome.

- One of the major outcomes for teachers was in the development of 'new awareness' about children. This was particularly evident where teachers had the opportunity to observe the MAST team in action.

- Impact on teachers in terms of 'motivational and attitudinal' outcomes varied. Where teachers had been directly involved with the MAST work and had witnessed the benefits to pupils, they were motivated to try out new ideas that had been introduced.

- Changes in teachers' practice were evident, particularly where they had been able to observe the team in action, had access to feedback and review time with the team and where the activity had been incorporated within the structure of the school and extended or adapted in some way to suit their own and their pupils' needs.

- Impact on pupils was described in terms of a range of outcomes. Improved self-esteem and the opportunity to share and resolve problems were the major outcomes identified, with the former also affecting pupils' learning. However,

impact on behaviour was more likely where intervention involved direct work of the MAST team with individuals targeted because of their behavioural difficulties.

The key factors that facilitated impact of the MAST activity were identified as teachers' openness to new ideas, a shared responsibility between the team and the school personnel involved, aims that were negotiated and clear and where there were opportunities for teachers to gain feedback and review the activities with the team.

The key contribution of the multi-agency aspect of the team for teachers was the ability to see the problem from a range of different perspectives and the wide range of expertise available. This facilitated a focus on the problem from a non-teaching viewpoint and enabled personal and social development issues to be addressed.

Implications for development of future MAST activity

The professionals involved highlighted a number of areas and ways in which future MAST work could be developed, as well as raising some concerns. In addition to these suggestions, the key findings from this evaluation might be utilised to build on previous examples of effective practice and to guide further development of the MAST work. The key findings suggest that further consideration might be given to:

- the **importance of coordination** with other agencies working in schools and other projects within the authority;
- **the consistency of the team members**, their time allocation to the team and the implications of short-term secondments/appointments for work with young people and their school;
- **the management of the team**, the autonomy of this team manager role and where it might lie within the authority;
- the value of **strategic-level service line managers being in agreement** about the approaches adopted by a multi-agency team;
- **more resources** and a viable working base for the team;
- **raising the awareness of heads and teachers** about the value and impact of multi-agency approaches;
- **the balance between whole-school and individual pupil intervention** and whether and how the latter focus has an effect on teacher attitudes, and approaches to young people;
- **the balance between prevention and working with most difficult cases**, as findings might suggest that more direct input with individuals identified as having behavioural difficulties might result in a greater or, at least faster, impact on exclusion figures and the number of behavioural incidents;

- **voluntary involvement of schools**, and the process of negotiation with the host school, with the possible use of 'contracts' to ensure a clearly understood focus for the team's work;

- **built-in opportunities for teachers to be given feedback** and to review the activities with the team;

- **support for teachers following the MAST input** in order to achieve the most impact on their continuing practice; and

- **maintaining records on the attendance and behaviour of individual pupils** who have encountered MAST activity.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The two aspects of multi-agency activity which North East Lincolnshire has undertaken clearly raise a wide number of issues and implications for both operational practitioners/deliverers and their strategic-level managers/drivers. It is hoped that the evaluation has aided the highly complex process of developing inter-agency collaboration or 'joining up', which undoubtedly presents fundamental challenges to existing authority-wide structures and systems, as well as to the cultures of individual agencies. In this context, the enormity of the brief for those practitioners involved at the delivery end (namely the MAST team and the multi-agency course organisers) needs to be recognised and their dedication to such a pioneering task applauded. The early and sustained commitment of senior personnel from the contributing services to the concept of multi-agency activity also needs recognition. 'Success' in terms of impact was perhaps bound to be a tentative and hazy concept, because the tasks and roles were themselves, by definition, inchoate, unprecedented and exploratory, and indeed, the evidence does suggest impact varied considerably between schools and individuals.

Above all, the experimentation in North East Lincolnshire has highlighted a number of issues which have national implications. Most significantly, the difficulty of developing and sustaining innovative multi-agency practice in a climate of short-term funding has been evidenced by the North East Lincolnshire experience of MAST. Not only were the processes involved in creating multi-agency activity affected by its limited lifespan (e.g. initial recruitment and retention of staff, limits to physical resources and project management time), but so also were the subsequent activities and impact on client schools, individual teachers and pupils undoubtedly constrained by finite annual funding.

Beyond that, the North East Lincolnshire experience has perhaps also raised issues about how far the concept – and import – of multi-agency approaches is being communicated, particularly to schools, and how far they are being included as equal partners in the development and direction of such activity. For this to happen, the merit and worth of multi-agency support need clear extrapolation. The tensions involved in schools having to simultaneously address national targets of achievement and inclusion are evident and again exemplified by MAST. Problems of fitting multi-agency support work around literacy and numeracy imperatives were mentioned on more than one occasion. It may be that external teams of support by definition cannot address some examples of non-value congruence between teachers and agency staff unless and until managing behaviour and inclusion have the same national imperative and status as achievement.

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APPENDIX

From: Kinder, Harland and Wootten (1991)

1. **Material and provisionary outcomes** are 'the physical resources which result from participation in INSET activities'. The report indicates such outcomes can have a positive and substantial influence on teachers' classroom practice. However, it suggests that ensuring an impact on practice usually requires other intermediary outcomes such as motivation and new knowledge and skills.

2. **Informational outcomes** are defined as 'the state of being briefed or cognisant of background facts and news about curriculum and management developments, including their implications for practice'. They are distinct from new **knowledge and skills**, which are intended to imply more critical and deeper understanding. The report raises the issue of the timing and neutrality of any INSET delivering informational outcomes, as well as its likely minimal impact on classroom practice.

3. **New awareness** (a term used often by teachers themselves) is defined as a perceptual or conceptual shift from previous assumptions of what constitutes the appropriate content and delivery of a particular curriculum area. However, the report corroborates teachers' own assertions that changed awareness is no guarantee of changed practice. It generally required the presence of the fourth outcome – defined as **value congruence**.

4. **Value congruence outcomes** refer to the personalised versions of curriculum and classroom management which inform a practitioner's teaching, and how far these 'individuated codes of practice' come to coincide with INSET messages about 'good practice'. Value congruence with the INSET message became a crucial factor in the manner of subsequent classroom implementation.

5. **Affective outcomes** acknowledge there is an emotional experience inherent in any learning situation. It was found that initial positive affective outcomes could sometimes be short-lived without a sense of accompanying enhanced expertise. Such outcomes may be a useful, or necessary, precursor for changing practice.

6. **Motivational and attitudinal outcomes** refer to enhanced enthusiasm and motivation to implement the ideas received during INSET experiences. Like affective outcomes they may function as particularly important precursors in impacting on practice.

7. **Knowledge and skills** denote deeper levels of understanding critical reflexivity and theoretical rationales, with regard to both curriculum content and teaching/learning processes.

8. **Institutional outcomes** acknowledge that INSET can have an important collective impact on groups of teachers and their practice.

9. **Impact on practice** recognises the ultimate intention to bring about changes in practice, either directly (e.g. by supporting the transfer of new skills to the teacher's repertoire in the classroom) or through the indirect route of other outcomes mentioned above.

The report also attempts to formulate the nine constituents of the typology into a tentative sequence of hierarchy of outcomes. Assuming that influencing classroom practice is the intended INSET goal, the following exploratory 'ordering of outcomes' is proposed:

INSET				CHANGED PRACTICE
	3rd Order	2nd Order	1st Order	
	INFORMATION	MOTIVATION	KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	
	NEW AWARNESS	AFFECTIVE	VALUE CONGRUENCE	
	PROVISIONARY	INSTITUTIONAL		

	3rd order outcomes	2nd order outcomes	1st order outcomes	
I	INFORMATION outcomes can achieve:	MOTIVATIONAL outcomes can achieve:	VALUE CONGRUENCE outcomes can achieve:	C
N				H
S	* updates on policy at school, LEA or National level	* increased enthusiasm	* INSET provider and consumer committed to same values, with regard to	A
E		* stimulus to develop practice		N
T	* clarification of policy implications for practice		- teaching style	G
			- curriculum content	E
	PROVISIONARY outcomes can achieve:	AFFECTIVE outcomes can achieve:	- curriculum design	D
I	* new equipment	* increased confidence		
N	* additional pupils resources	* reassurance and reduced anxiety	NEW KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS outcomes can achieve:	P R
P				
U	* teacher materials		* enhancement of subject understanding	A
T				C
	NEW AWARENESS outcomes can achieve:	INSTITUTIONAL outcomes can achieve:	* new expertise in teaching processes	T
				I
	* redefinition of curriculum content	* whole-school policy change		C
	* new images of teaching/learning approaches	* team building		E
		* mutual support for practice change		

Starting to Join

During the 1999 academic year, North East Lincolnshire LEA and NFER co-funded an evaluation of multi-agency activity within the authority. Two initiatives were studied:

- a multi-agency support team (known as 'MAST') which worked with 16 of the LEA's primary schools; and
- two examples of courses from a newly instituted multi-agency INSET programme.

Using a case-study approach and relevant LEA data, the report presents detailed findings about the impact of these activities. It also discusses many key issues emerging from the early stages of this important development in local authority provision.

The report should be relevant to schools and local authority personnel at both strategic and operational level.

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