



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

North East Inner City Multi-Disciplinary Team Annual Report 2022-2023



Contents

Acknowledgments.....	5
Abbreviations Glossary	1
Section 1.....	2
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Acknowledgments for the NEIC MDT 2022/2023.....	3
Irish Healthcare Centre Awards	3
Civil Service Excellence Award (CSEA).....	3
International School Psychology Association (ISPA)	4
Meeting with An Taoiseach’s office NEIC Projects - MDT and City Connects.....	4
1.3 Updates from NEIC MDT Working Group (NEIC MDT WG) 2022/2023	5
Publication of the previous MDT Annual Reports	5
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) Input.....	5
Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)	5
Research Tender	5
Principals/SET (Special Education Teacher) Focus Group with NEIC MDT WG.....	6
NEIC MDT WG Roadshow	6
Community of Practice with City Connects Coordinators	6
Staffing	7
Meeting with Department of An Taoiseach’s office NEIC Projects - MDT and City Connects.....	7
Section 2.....	8
2.1 What work has the MDT delivered in the NEIC 2022-2023	8
Support and Development Work of the MDT.....	8
Spotlight on Support and Development Work	9
2.3 Individual Casework service.....	11
Description of NEPS Casework.....	13
Description of HSE Casework.....	16
Summary of NEIC MDT Casework	17
Section 3.....	19
3.1 Reflection	19
3.2 English as an Additional Language.....	19
3.3 Interdisciplinary Work.....	19
3.4 Staffing	20
3.5 NEIC MDT Evaluation	21

3.6 Reflection summary	21
Appendices.....	23
Appendix 1 MOU between HSE and NEPS	23
North East Inner City Multi-Disciplinary Team	23
Memorandum of Understanding.....	23
Appendix 2: Principals and SET Focus Group Outcomes	29
Appendix 3 Support and Development 2022-2023	32
References	33

NEIC MDT Vision Statement

The vision of the MDT is to deliver a high quality, collaborative school-based service across the disciplines of Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Psychology to 10 primary schools in Dublin's North East inner city. The MDT supports all children with particular regard for those with additional needs.

Objectives of the NEIC MDT

- Commitment to developing academic, social, emotional, communication and independent living skills for all children
- Provide a professional school based and child-centred service in a timely manner
- Respond to the presenting needs in the school, home and wider community with evidence based assessment and intervention
- Provide consultation, assessment and therapeutic interventions through a tiered model of support
- Enable school staff to identify needs and intervene with appropriate teaching approaches, improving outcomes for all children
- Support the development of inclusive practices in schools and the promotion of wellbeing for all children, staff and families
- Align NEIC MDT practice with existing school structures as set out in the 'Guidelines for Support for Pupils with Special Education Needs', 2017
- Develop collaborative partnerships with schools, families and the wider community to ensure efficient, integrated service delivery.

Acknowledgments

This report acknowledges the tremendous work of the dedicated NEIC MDT 2022/2023 members:

- Sinéad Fahy NEPS, Department of Education (DE) Senior Psychologist
- Dr. Lorna Mc Dermott NEPS Psychologist
- Dr. Caoimhe McCarthy NEPS Psychologist
- Ciara Taaffe HSE Senior OT
- Aideen McKiernan HSE OT
- Jessie O Neill, HSE OT
- Dr. Jennifer Kelly HSE Psychologist
- Rachel Smeaton HSE SLT
- Shannon Gaughan HSE Senior SLT
- Aoife Scott, HSE SLT

The NEIC MDT acknowledge the support of Miriam Doherty, HSE Administrative support, Eilish O'Connor and Colm Carroll, NEPS Administrative Support.

The NEIC MDT team thank the schools for developing a strong working partnership and open communication that facilitates learning and improvement for the team and schools.

The NEIC MDT Working Group and Steering Committee acknowledge the work of the school principals and staff for supporting the development of the NEIC MDT and for the administrative and organisational work required to facilitate the additional professionals delivering a much-needed service in each of the schools.

The MDT acknowledge the collaboration of a broad range of community and health partners in delivering a collaborative and comprehensive service to schools and families in the NEIC community.

Thank you,

NEIC MDT, NEIC MDT WG and NEIC MDT Steering Group.

This report is compiled on behalf of the NEIC MDT Steering Group:

NEIC MDT Steering Committee 2022/2023

- Sharon Eustace - Regional Director NEPS, Dublin Region, Chairperson NEIC MDT Steering Group, June 2020-May 2023
- Brenda Lynch Regional Director, June 2023
- Sinéad Fahy- Senior Psychologist NEPS
- Catherine Treacy – DE District Inspector
- Karen Butler - Coordinator for HSE staff on NEIC MDT
- Claire Donohoe – Psychology Manager HSE Primary Care
- Michelle McKeivitt- Occupational Therapy Manager HSE Primary Care
- Iseult Macklin– Speech and Language Therapy Manager, HSE Primary Care
- Ciara Taaffe – Senior Occupational Therapist HSE

The NEIC MDT Annual Report 2022-2023 was written by the NEIC MDT Working Group:

MDT Working Group

- Sinéad Fahy, Senior Psychologist NEPS, Coordinator for NEPS staff on NEIC MDT
- Karen Butler, Coordinator for HSE staff on NEIC MDT
- Catherine Treacy, DE Inspector

*Please note, in this document the term parent includes parents, guardians and carers.

Abbreviations Glossary

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CC	City Connects
CCC	City Connects Coordinator
CDNT	Children's Disability Network Team
CoS	Continuum of Support
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DOE	Department of Education
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
EAL	English as an Additional Language
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison
HSE	Health Service Executive
IMISS	Integrated Model of In School Services
ISR	Individual Student Review
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
NEIC	North East Inner City
NEIC MDT	North East Inner City Multi-Disciplinary Team
NEIC MDT WG	North East Inner City Multi-Disciplinary Team Working Group
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
OT	Occupational Therapy/Therapist
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PsyMIS	Psychologist Management Information System
SCP	School Completion Programme
SET	Special Education Teacher/Teaching
SLT	Speech and Language Therapy/Therapist
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SSF	Student Support File
YPAR	Young People at Risk

Section 1

1.1 Introduction

The North East Inner City Multi-Disciplinary team (NEIC MDT) began as part of a whole government response to poverty and intergenerational disadvantage in the NEIC. The NEIC MDT was established to improve the academic, social, emotional, communication, independent living skills and wellbeing for children in ten primary DEIS* schools located in Dublin's northeast inner city.

The NEIC MDT is an interagency collaboration between Health Service Executive (HSE) Primary Care and the Department of Education's National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

The NEIC MDT deliver a high quality, child centred, school-based service across occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and psychology in 10 NEIC primary schools. The NEIC MDT responds to the needs of children, their families and their schools through targeted prevention work, assessment, and therapeutic interventions. The NEIC MDT also responds to presenting needs in schools and the wider community, providing advice and training to parents and school staff. This will increase their capacity to meet the needs of children in school, home and their wider community.

The NEIC MDT comprises of educational psychologists from the Department of Education NEPS and HSE Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational therapists and psychologist working across three clusters, in 10 DEIS Band 1 primary schools. Table 1 shows the grouping of the schools into three MDT clusters.

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Scoil Chaoimhín	St Laurence O'Toole's	Central Model Infant School
St Vincent's Infants' Boys School	National School	Central Model Senior School
St Vincent's Girls' National School	St Laurence O'Toole's CBS	Rutland National School
O'Connell Primary School	Gardiner Street Convent	

Table 1: NEIC MDT School Cluster Groupings

* DEIS is an acronym for Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools. The DEIS programme is the Department's main policy initiative to respond to educational disadvantage and social exclusion. The DEIS programme focuses on targeting additional resources to those schools included in the programme to ensure every child has an equal opportunity to achieve their potential.

1.2 Acknowledgments for the NEIC MDT 2022/2023



Figure 1. Pictured L-R Presenter, Shannen Gaughan, Senior SLT, Dr Genevieve Marren, Senior Psychologist, Ciara Taffe, Senior OT, Miriam Doherty, Clerical Administrator.

Irish Healthcare Centre Awards

The NEIC MDT submitted an application to the Healthcare Centre Awards 2022 in two categories and in May 2022. The team received an Honourable Mention Award in the category Healthcare Initiative/Project – Child Health & Wellbeing. They also submitted an application to the Health Service Executive Awards 2023 in two categories; Innovation in Service and Right Care, Right Place, Right Time.

Civil Service Excellence Award (CSEA)

NEIC MDT team received high praise from school principals and families for their work in the NEIC. In September 2022 the NEIC MDT were shortlisted for an award in the CSEA, and in March 2023, NEPS and the DE Inspectorate won a [Civil Service Excellence Award](#) for their innovative and collaborative work in establishing the NEIC MDT. This is the first Department of Education Civil Service Excellence Award. Following this, NEPS and the Inspectorate were invited to submit the NEIC MDT for a European Public Sector Award-. The European Public Sector Award (EPSA) is the only Europe-wide award for public sector innovation and reform. The awards showcase innovative solutions, inclusive policies and new sustainable practices, the NEIC MDT will make a submission in autumn 2023, details are available at [OPS.gov.ie](https://ops.gov.ie).



Figure 2. Pictured L-R: Catherine Treacy DE Inspector, Sharon Eustace NEPS Regional Director, Dr Lorna McDermott, Sinéad Fahy and Dr Caoimhe McCarthy NEPS.



Figure 3. Pictured L-R: Dr Jennifer Kelly HSE Psychologist, Ciara Taffe, OT, Dr Caoimhe McCarthy NEPS Psychologist and Dr Lorna Mc Dermott NEPS Psychologist

International School Psychology Association (ISPA)

In April 2023, NEPS psychologists on the NEIC MDT presented an abstract on the work of the NEIC MDT at the [International School Psychology Association Conference \(ISPA\)](#), 'School psychology in a changing world: Challenges to promote the well-being of school communities', in Italy. The NEPS psychologists co-presented with their HSE colleagues.

The NEIC MDT presentation was greeted with great interest from other countries, who commented on the elevated level of integration of the NEIC MDT within the schools' structures and how the team promote a collaborative and consultative approach to examine the multiple and often complex interplay of factors that impact a child.

Meeting with An Taoiseach's office NEIC Projects - MDT and City Connects

In April 2023, the NEIC MDT Working Group presented to a number of staff from An Taoiseach's office, including the assistant secretary general, head of social policy and chair of the NEIC Initiative, NEIC Lead and Child Poverty Unit Lead. The meeting was organised by the Social Inclusion Unit to present on the work of the two new initiatives in the North East Inner City, City Connects and NEIC MDT. The 10 school principals also contributed to the presentation with direct feedback on the impact of the two projects in their schools and the wider community. Feedback from members of the Department of An Taoiseach's office noted the value of the NEIC MDT in their universal, capacity building work for school staff and parents, alongside the targeted casework and interventions for those with the most persistent and significant needs. School principals commented that they could not imagine their schools without access to the team and added that teachers felt very supported when managing difficult cases.

1.3 Updates from NEIC MDT Working Group (NEIC MDT WG) 2022/2023

Publication of the previous MDT Annual Reports

The NEIC MDT is active since September 2020. The MDT WG produced two previous [NEIC MDT Annual Reports](#). The reports outline the development of the NEIC MDT collaboration between the DE and the HSE. They also share the range of work undertaken in the schools and the community across psychology, speech and language and occupational therapy. They include detailed case studies and feedback from principals, teachers, SNAs, children, parents and community partners on their engagement with the NEIC MDT.

The purpose of the Integrated Model of In School Services (IMISS) is to ensure provision of highly effective and efficient services to schools which avoid repetition and overlap amongst the services. IMISS promotes integration of new and existing services within school systems. These include school implementation of the Continuum of Support and the DEIS planning process. This model enables pupils requiring supplementary support to receive the appropriate support at the right time. NEPS and the Inspectorate have initiated the annual review of the IMISS document. The updated document will be presented and discussed as part of the next IMISS Working Group meeting in October 2023. The updated document will be available on the [NEIC Website](#).

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) Input

Meeting with school principals, City Connects and the Social Inclusion Unit in DE highlighted that the 10 schools in the NEIC will have a high percentage of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in September 2023. To support these new staff, the NEIC MDT are working with other in-school services and the social inclusion unit to deliver information workshops with NQTs throughout the first and second school term.

Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

The NEIC MDT WG prepared two separate Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). These established a framework for cooperation and information sharing about those aspects of responsibilities that fall within the respective remit of the parties involved and to establish effective procedures to ensure:

- both parties are aware and committed to the expectations of the partnerships
- appropriate standards and procedures are adhered to
- service delivery continues to be delivered to the service users (children their families and school staff) in the most effective, efficient, evidenced based ways possible.

The first of these memoranda is an MOU between NEPS and HSE, detailing the interagency partnership agreement that enables the effective functioning of the NEIC MDT. The NEPS and HSE MOU is presented in Appendix 1.

The second memoranda is an MOU between the NEIC MDT and the 10 schools that are served by this team. This document outlines roles and responsibilities for the team members and school staff to enable efficient functioning of the team. This memorandum is presented in Appendix 2. The MOU's have been finalised and signed by the MDT and school principals.

Research Tender

The NEIC MDT Working Group is preparing a research tender. The research aims to document and evaluate the:

- Development process of NEIC MDT
- Implementation of the NEIC MDT
- NEIC MDT impact in achieving its stated objectives
- Key lessons learned on design, implementation and impact of the NEIC MDT

The successful tenderer will be required to prepare a policy-focused briefing paper identifying lessons learnt in the establishment and running of the NEIC MDT. NEIC MDT Steering Committee will sign off the research tender in October 2023, with research commencing in early 2024.

Principals/SET (Special Education Teacher) Focus Group with NEIC MDT WG

The NEIC MDT Working Group (WG) met on the 10 May 2023 with the principals of the 10 schools along with four SET coordinators. The purpose of the meeting was to further advance how the NEIC MDT, and schools can best work together to ensure the best outcomes for all the children in the schools. The discussions informed further development of the IMISS document. This is the blueprint for services working in the schools. Arising from this discussion the NEIC WG drafted a MOU between the schools and the NEIC MDT. The following topics were discussed at the meeting:

- addressing principal feedback on the recent survey issued through social inclusion (DE)
- review of communication systems between MDT and schools (all levels; within school, with MDT Working Group)
- reflection on the Continuum of Support tiers in schools and for the MDT
- referral process and how it is functioning in schools and for the MDT
- August inputs to schools.

Appendix 2 details the agreements to address issues discussed at the Principals and Set Focus Group. Agreements were made across a number of areas:

- a) Scheduling and on-site presence
- b) Recording MDT casework
- c) Referrals and the Continuum of Support (CoS)
- d) Communication systems.

NEIC MDT WG Roadshow

It was agreed at the Principals and NEIC MDT WG meeting that each school would benefit from a whole staff presentation on the NEIC MDT. This will outline the roles and responsibilities of the team members and school staff in optimising the service in line with the CoS. The whole school sessions took place in late August and early September 2023.

Community of Practice with City Connects Coordinators

The City Connects and the NEIC MDT established a forum for the members of the MDT and the City Connects Coordinators. A community of practice structure was agreed to discuss operational issues, opportunities for collaboration and alignment of these two projects. Ideas for supporting alignment of services included:

- a. school master list of all referrals made to the NEIC MDT to be shared with City Connects Coordinators (CCC)
- b. MDT attendance at Individual Student Reviews (ISRs) when appropriate
- c. student support files will be reviewed by CCC to update actions of MDT on My Connects
- d. annual CC and NEIC MDT Forum for Community of Practice.

Staffing

This is an area of critical concern for the MDT due to the shortage of professionals in all disciplines. Recruitment of staff in psychology, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy is a national and international challenge for the health and education sectors. . They continue to engage in work force planning and retention. NEPS and HSE acknowledge the huge benefit of retaining experienced staff in the NEIC MDT, who are familiar with the area and the innovative work of the NEIC MDT. Both services are working to maintain stability in staffing and to recruit new staff as vacancies arise through maternity leave and staff taking up other roles in NEPS and HSE.

Meeting with Department of An Taoiseach's office NEIC Projects - MDT and City Connects

The assistant secretary general of the Department of An Taoiseach's Office expressed interest in identifying what factors had facilitated the establishment and efficient running of the NEIC MDT, with questions about how the Government could replicate it in other areas of severe disadvantage. In response to the request for information on lessons learned in establishing and running the NEIC MDT, the NEIC MDT WG set out the steps taken by the HSE and DE to establish the team and operational practices at school level. The NEIC MDT WG devised Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and a tender for research into the establishment, running and impact of the NEIC MDT. The MOUs, the research and the NEIC MDT annual reports, provide detailed information that will inform decision making and policy development in relation to establishing additional interagency MDTs in schools.

Section 2

2.1 What work has the MDT delivered in the NEIC 2022-2023

MDT work is delivered in two ways:

<p>1. Support & Development Service Applying psychological, SLT and OT theory through training, workshops and advice to build the capacity of school staff and parents to respond to the wellbeing, academic, developmental, social and emotional needs of all children. Working with the supporting adults to develop best practice in schools and homes.</p>
<p>2. Individual Casework Service Consultation, assessment and delivery of intervention across the three disciplines of Psychology, SLT and OT at an individual pupil level.</p>

Figure 4: The Work of the MDT

Support and Development Work of the MDT

The MDT make a sustainable impact on the teaching and learning in the 10 NEIC schools. Helping school staff and parents to develop their skills to support children across a range of issues:

- learning difficulties
- speech, language and communication difficulties
- sensory, regulation and co-ordination difficulties
- fine and gross motor skills
- independence skills
- social, emotional and behavioural difficulties both at home and in school.

Support and development work is agreed between the NEIC MDT and school principals at planning and review meetings. The training topics are selected based on the schools DEIS Plan targets and on the needs identified by the NEIC MDT. When topics are selected and dates agreed the team plan and deliver bespoke training for school staff and parents. The strategies are modelled in the classroom and workshops are run on evidence-based programmes and interventions. The goal is to help the key adults in the child's life to support the transfer of learning from therapeutic SLT, OT and psychology interventions to home and to school. This provides a generalisation of skills. Parents, and school staff have increased knowledge and skills to address current needs. Support and development work promotes best practice in schools and at home and enables self-sustaining change across whole school systems and the wider community.

During 2022-2023 the NEIC MDT delivered training, workshops and advice clinics on 21 different topics. The full list of support and development work is presented in Appendix 3. The training and capacity building work was completed over 85 sessions between September 22 and June 2023, supporting 459 school staff (principals, teachers, SET, HSCL (Home School Liaisons), Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), City Connects Coordinators) and 44 parents.

Spotlight on Support and Development Work

- The 10 NEIC schools were offered places for school staff to complete certified training in FRIENDS For Life. This is an anxiety prevention programme that promotes resilience and wellbeing. This online training was delivered by NEPS over three sessions after school hours.
- The 10 NEIC school principals were invited to attend an online session to introduce 'The Stress Factor' resource developed by NEPS. This online modular training takes a trauma informed approach to support school staff to address social, emotional and behavioural issues.
- SET Cluster is attended by the Special Education Teachers in the 10 primary schools. They attended cluster meetings three times a year since the project began. NEPS run the SET cluster and this year they were joined by HSE colleagues from SLT to deliver workshops on topics of need identified by school staff. The cluster sessions this year were:
 - workshop on the Student Support Files (SSF) and the Continuum of Support, with a demonstration from one school on how they created a digitalized shared SSF system
 - training for staff on the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III for Teachers (WIAT III) examining word reading, reading comprehension and spelling.
 - workshop on the Language Experience Approach
- The EAL cluster was established by NEIC MDT in 2022 to meet the needs of the diverse multi-cultural population in the NEIC. The EAL Cluster is an opportunity for staff to come together to review relevant topics, share resources and practice in schools, with a view to promoting a community of best practice in supporting EAL students across the NEIC. When a review of emerging needs was completed with school staff it was clear the most urgent needs were in establishing learning support plans and accessing support materials assessment tools to monitor language development. Teachers also needed support to learn how to build engagement for pupils with EAL in the initial months after their arrival. As the needs were specifically related to teaching and learning support issues, NEPS contacted the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and accessed support from the PDST Advisor for Primary EAL.
 - Three sessions were facilitated by the PDST EAL advisor over the school year 2022-2023. These were attended by 25-30 staff members including SET and Principals from all 10 schools. Some topics discussed were structuring of EAL groups and content, assessment tools available and how to get a baseline measure and monitor progress, and ways to support new EAL learners in your school.
 - Teachers reported the value in having protected time to share learning with support staff from other schools as well as discuss challenges which are unique to teaching.
 - EAL cluster feedback included 100% of respondents said that the EAL cluster was very relevant to their role in EAL in school and said that the EAL cluster was very or extremely helpful in developing best practice. Several teachers shared this learning with their colleagues during school Continued Professional Development (CPD) opportunities by giving a presentation about the PDST EAL Padlet, assistive technologies and additional supports available for EAL teaching.

- The EAL Cluster will continue to support a community of practice amongst EAL teachers across the 10 NEIC schools, with staff having identified assessment and literacy development as key areas for ongoing support.
- HSE staff members of the NEIC MDT offered a range of support to school and parents, including support for staff to identify speech, language and communication needs, sensory, fine and gross motor needs. The following are some examples:
 - Zones of Regulation teaches children strategies to help them cope with these feelings so they can get back to feeling calm and ready to learn. These coping strategies are called 'self-regulation'. Its implementation is typically supported by the occupational therapist who support incorporation into the daily classroom schedule and who also support the schools to work trauma informed care into its roll out. Schools that have embraced the Zones of Regulation intervention and schools have noted that the pupils are often more emotionally aware of themselves and others and have better problem-solving skills. Teachers support children on a pathway to classroom regulation.
 - HSE Psychology offered a Sleep Workshop on sleep difficulties on the 13 October 2022. 10 parents attended this workshop. 80% found the workshop worthwhile. Parents commented that they received new information to implement at home and that they found it useful to talk to other parents about their issues. Parents expressed interest in further workshops on parenting issues such as anxiety, behaviour and managing big feelings.
- In May 2023 both anxiety and managing big feelings workshops were offered to parents, with six parents attending two sessions.
- Circle of Security is an 8-week parent reflection programme which introduces attachment theory in an accessible manner. The programme is based on decades of research about how secure parent-child relationships will be supported and strengthened. In February 2023, using the COSP™ model developed by the Circle of Security originators, trained facilitators on the NEIC MDT worked with parents and caregivers to help them to:
 - understand their child's emotional world by learning to read emotional needs
 - support their child's ability to successfully manage emotions
 - enhance the development of their child's self esteem
 - honour the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure

Reported outcomes included increased self-awareness, self- regulation for parents, greater understanding of child's needs and learning strategies for building attachment.

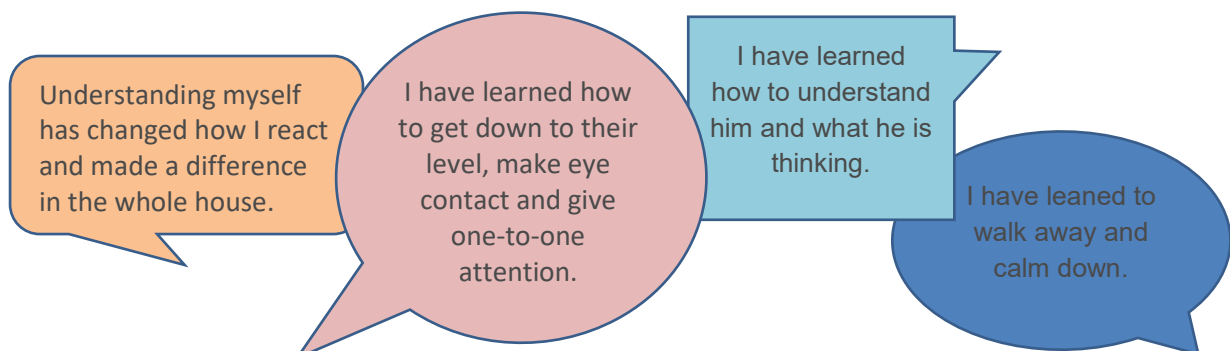


Figure 5: Comments from parents upon completion of Circle of Security training

- Talk Time is a methodology and a package of resources and activities. It is developed by a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) in collaboration with teachers. It supports the use of rich vocabulary instruction in primary school classes from junior infants to 6th class. Talk Time supports the implementation of the recently published Primary Language Curriculum (NCCA, 2015). This places a renewed focus on language development through its oral language element. Due to the high level of need in relation to vocabulary and oral language development within the NEIC, Talk Time Training is offered to NEIC schools. In- person training was held on-site in schools, followed by lesson planning sessions between teachers and SLTs. Following this, teachers were offered co-facilitation, modelling and observation sessions with the SLT. Resources were shared with schools and teachers were encouraged to link in with SLTs for support and guidance around implementation throughout the school year.

Appendix 3 details the full range of support and development work delivered by the NEIC MDT in 2022- 2023.

2.3 Individual Casework service

School staff work with parents to address emerging needs. They use the Department of Education's [Student Support File](#) to record the presenting needs of pupils and to set out targets and strategies to develop their skills. A period of class/school/home-based intervention is undertaken to evaluate if the presenting needs can be addressed. If a child requires additional support and/or the interventions at home and at school have not resulted in the expected progress, the class teacher liaises with parents and with SET to decide on the next steps. They may decide to request the involvement of the NEIC MDT.

The SET or school principal will consult with the NEIC MDT as to the appropriateness of the referral. With written parental consent, a referral to the NEIC MDT will be made. The team analyses the referral information and identifies the next steps to support the child, family and school. This involves a range of actions, including consultation with key stakeholders (child/school staff/parent/relevant services), observations of the child, assessment and delivery of intervention.

The way that data on casework is recorded in NEPS and in the HSE is not aligned, with each service gathering their respective data sets on different systems. There is no shared referral or casework database to extract information, therefore the data cannot be easily combined and must be reported separately. NEIC MDT recommends prioritising the development of a shared system for recording NEIC MDT casework referrals. This would support the efficient operation of the NEIC MDT and reporting of annual data on casework.

The figures for new requests for involvement of NEPS and work on active cases for the academic year 2022 – 2023, are presented in figure 5.

Between September 2022 and June 2023, 82 new requests for involvement (referrals) for individual casework were received by NEPS. Casework was carried out on cases opened in previous years.

42 referrals from schools requested NEPS support. 146 cases were worked on collaboratively between NEPS and the HSE.

In total, NEPS psychologists worked on 188 individual cases in 2022-2023. At the end of the school year, 60 cases were closed. Cases are closed in consultation with schools and parents. The reason for closure include:

- completion of casework
- onward referral to a more appropriate service
- transition to post primary school
- change of school

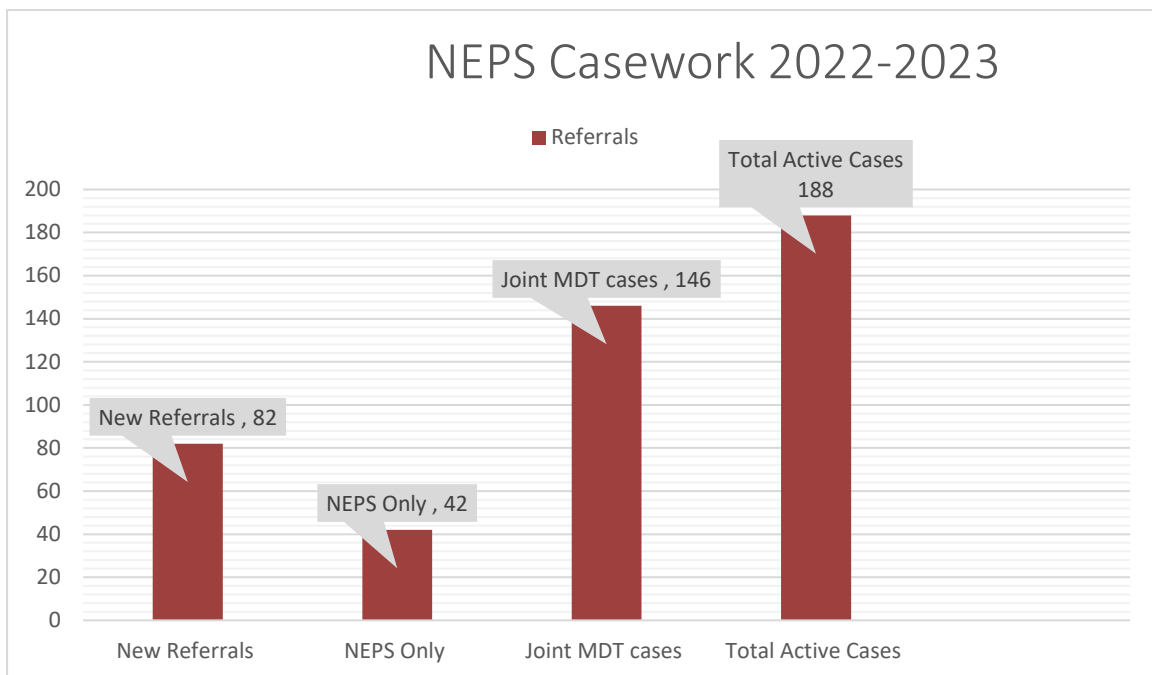


Figure 5: NEPS Casework data 2022-2023

HSE staff on the NEIC MDT received 132 referrals for two or more disciplines between September 2022 and June 2023. Referrals for individual disciplines were recorded and are presented on Figure 6. There were 98 individual referrals for SLT, 85 for OT and 31 for HSE psychology. The HSE and NEPS worked collaboratively on 146 cases, giving an overall case load of 360 active cases on the HSE database. 86 cases were closed during this period.

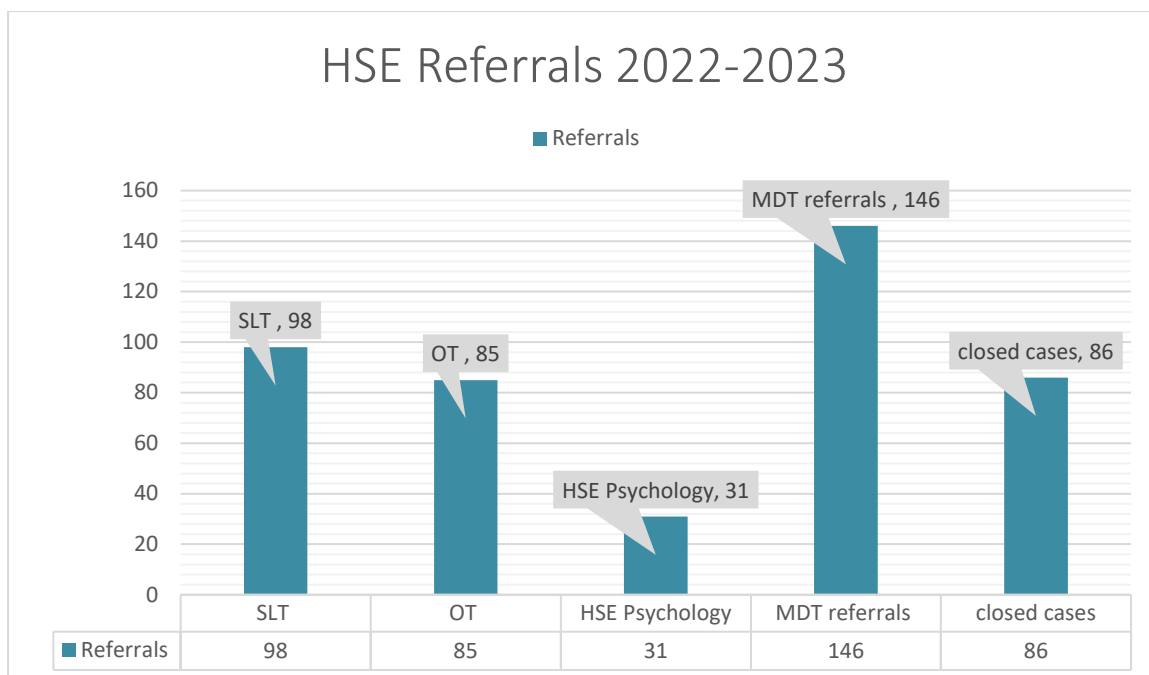


Figure 6: HSE Casework 2022-2023

Description of NEPS Casework

NEPS staff record all actions and time spent on each aspect of casework on the Psychologist Management Information System (PsyMIS). There are three main categories of casework reported are consultations, assessments, and interventions.

There was an overall total of 1,255 actions undertaken by NEPS psychologists for casework between September 2022 and June 2023. This totalled 1,002 hours of work. The summary of NEPS casework actions for 2022-2023 is presented in Figure 7. The main categories of casework include:

1. Consultations

These are held by psychologists with a range of people to gather further information about a child and their environment. Information is shared about assessment results, strategies and interventions undertaken in school. Consultations include:

- parents/guardians
- teachers, SNA's, SET, School Principal, HSCL and CCC
- HSE members of the NEIC MDT on joint cases
- TUSLA Social Workers
- other linked services e.g., CAMHS, CDNT, Bardnados, YPAR
- case conferences and Child Protection Conferences

2. Assessments

Between September 2022 and June 2023 there were a total of 272 assessments undertaken by NEPS. Some children underwent multiple assessments. The assessments included:

- Cognitive Assessments to observe and test the child to ascertain their cognitive profile or IQ in order to develop a plan to support their learning and development
- Attainment Assessments observe and test the child to ascertain their current performance in key areas of literacy development, numeracy skills and oral language

skills. The profile of strengths and needs are used to devise a support plan for the child. Attainment assessments help identify the presence of specific learning difficulties.

- Adaptive Functioning Assessments involve observation and questionnaires with people who know the child well. Working with the psychologist, parents and teachers/SNAs complete detailed evaluations of the child's functioning in relation to daily living skills of self care, such as toileting, gross and fine motor skills, independence skills and social skills. This allows the psychologist to identify areas of strength and areas in need of development. Intervention plans are developed based on the profile.
- Social, Emotional and Behavioural Assessments are completed through observation, interview and questionnaires with the child, parent and school staff. Assessment enables the psychologist to identify areas of strength and need. It enables the psychologist to identify the level of difficulty the child experiences that are typical for their age or elevated. If there are mild to moderate difficulties the child can be supported by the school and the NEIC MDT, where a difficulty is more severe and not responding to school-based interventions a referral to more specialised service for further assessment or intervention is made.

3. Interventions

Arising from consultations and assessments, interventions are offered by NEPS to individual children, groups of children and whole classes to support development of new skills. Individualised input is devised for school staff with a specific focus on supporting the identified needs of a child/children and this training is delivered by NEPS in small groups of one to one with school staff. Where appropriate parents/guardians are also offered this input.

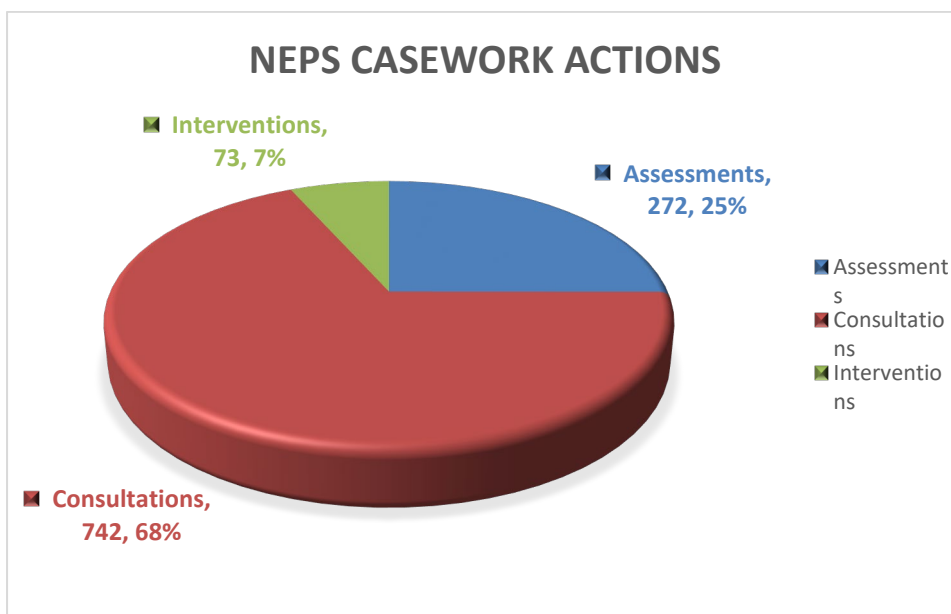


Figure 7: NEPS Breakdown of NEPS Casework Actions for 2022-2023

NEPS works in partnership with school staff as co-professionals collaborating and implementing agreed school-based interventions. The majority of NEPS casework involves consultation with stakeholders, predominantly school staff and parents, with a total of over 480 hours dedicated to consulting with others.

The NEPS psychologist uses the information gathered in consultations and assessments to devise intervention plans that are generally delivered by class teachers, Special Education and support staff. Consultation involves providing feedback and guidance on how assessments can be interpreted, how interventions can be set up, monitored and reviewed. NEPS psychologists will consult with school staff and parents to review the pupil's response to intervention and to adjust intervention depending on the pupil response.

Working with teachers as co-professionals means that NEPS psychologists support development of in-class and SET approaches that address the needs of individual pupils and promote best practice at whole school level. The majority of interventions that are devised by NEPS are implemented by school staff and consequently delivery of interventions account the smallest portion of the NEPS psychologist's time spent in casework. When required, NEPS psychologists deliver a targeted number of one to one and small group and whole class interventions directly with pupils. 54 hours were dedicated to psychologist delivered interventions. The NEPS psychologist will provide these interventions when the nature of the need requires additional psychological support to build on existing teaching and SET approaches.

NEPS recording of casework also allows examination of the time spent on each aspect of casework. Figure 8 shows how NEPS psychologist's time is spent in four main types of work, review, case formulation and documentation of casework, delivering interventions, completing assessments and engaging in consultations. Examining the NEPS figures for 2022-2023, it can be seen that the majority of casework time involves the psychologists engaging in consultation with and about the child. In the majority of cases NEPS psychologists, support school staff to deliver in-school interventions for target areas, and consequently psychologist spent the least amount of time directly delivering interventions with children. Figure 8 shows that for each hour in schools completing assessments, NEPS psychologists spent equivalent time on case formulation and report writing.

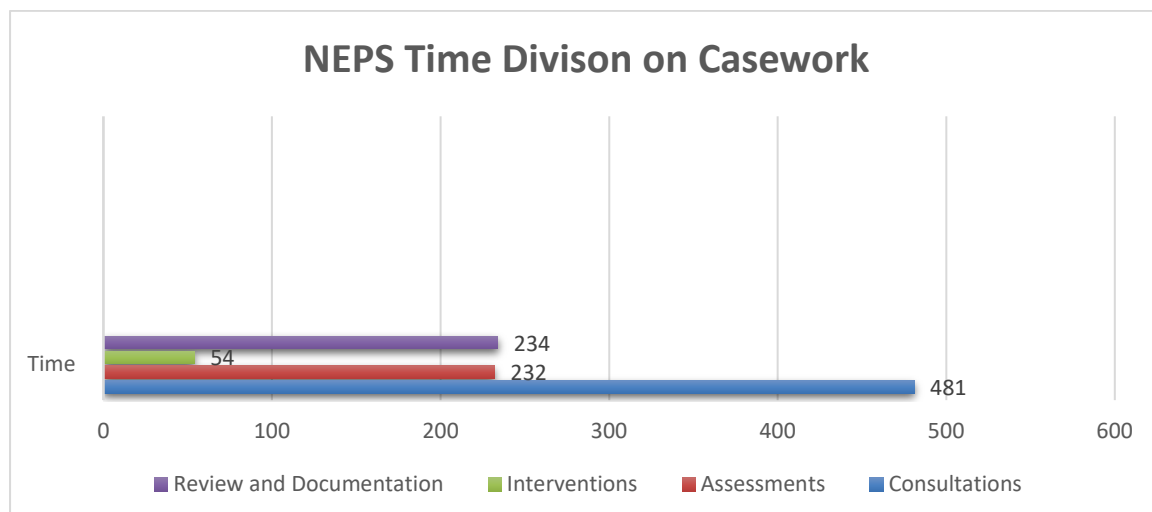


Figure 8: NEPS Casework Time Allocation

Description of HSE Casework

The three main categories of casework reported by the NEIC MDT are consultations, assessments and interventions. The HSE casework actions are presented in Figure 9.

1. Consultation

As with NEPS, HSE staff engage in a wide range of consultations with the parents, teaching staff, NEPS and all other relevant services as listed by NEPS. The purpose of any consultation being for the same reasons outlined above. There were 791 consultation sessions held in the period and this accounted for 49% of the work carried out.

2. Assessment

HSE team members review the presenting need of each child, including case history, observation, interviews with parents and relevant school staff and use of informal and formal assessment tools.

174 children had an initial assessment. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the HSE are counted differently to how they are counted by NEPS. While an assessment of a child may require a number of sessions to complete, a count of one is used. Therefore, while 174 children had an assessment there may have been multiple sessions to complete that assessment. In addition to initial assessment, the HSE carry out review assessments. This is when a child requires an update assessment to determine how they are progressing. They may have engaged in a period of direct/group intervention or had an opportunity to be supported by SET or other teaching staff in school. In the period September 2022 to September 2023, 153 children underwent review assessments. As with initial assessments, this review may take different forms and occur over a period of time.

3. Intervention

The nature of an intervention offered is also dependent on the needs of the child and can involve supporting school staff to incorporate specific strategies in to their teaching practice, supporting parents to support their child in the home, direct intervention with the child where the nature of the presenting need cannot be met by parent or teaching staff and requires specialist input. Figure 9 highlights this with a 40% rate of indirect intervention being carried out by the HSE OTs, SLTs & psychologist.

The individual clinician involved in the assessment will determine the best course of action for any child taking into account many different variables. Where there is multidisciplinary involvement as to the nature of the intervention, it is made jointly and is determined by the most pressing need of that child.

498 individual therapy sessions across the disciplines of OT, SLT & Psychology and 137 SLT/OT group intervention sessions were delivered. 254 children attended SLT/OT group interventions.

There were also 67 targeted teacher/parent sessions. There were 88 SLT/OT whole class intervention sessions with an estimated reach of 785 children. 26 in class coaching sessions were delivered to support teachers teaching practice.

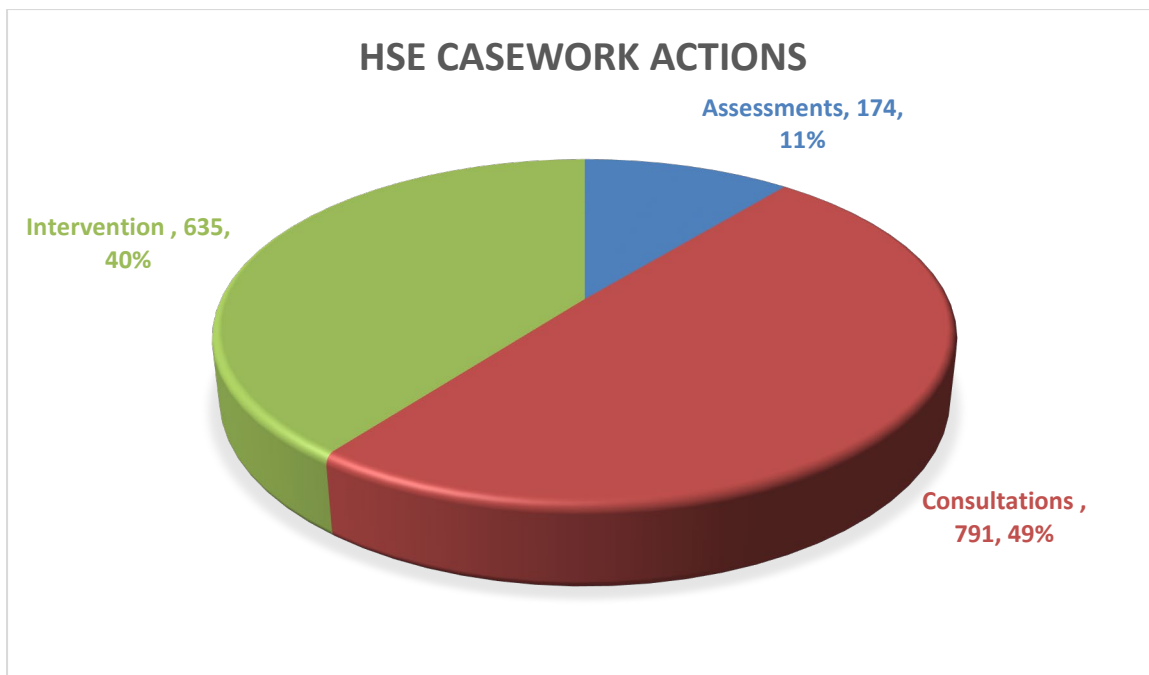


Figure 9: HSE Casework Actions

Summary of NEIC MDT Casework

Figure 10 shows the trends in NEIC MDT casework (NEPS and HSE) over the 3- years of the project, including details on consultations, assessments, and interventions. In 2020 to 2021 data was not gathered on the number of consultations. Data is presented for assessments and intervention only. In the first year of the project there were 292 assessments completed by the NEIC MDT and 868 interventions were run. In 2021 to 2022, the second year of the project, there were 1,035 consultations held by the NEIC MDT, 301 assessments completed and 848 interventions. In 2022 to 2023, there were 1,537 consultations. This was an increase of 500 from the previous year, indicating more meetings with key stakeholders in relation to casework. This includes meetings about the child with parents, schools' staff and other professionals. In 2022 to 2023 the third year of the project, there were 446 assessments* completed by the NEIC MDT across Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Psychology. This is an increase of 145 from the previous year and indicates the crucial importance that assessment plays in driving information led intervention planning and delivery.

In 2022 to 2023 there were 726 interventions delivered by the NEIC MDT, individually, and in small groups. This is a reduction of 122 from the previous year. It was noted that this year a range of interventions were run at whole class level to have greater reach and to reduce the time children are removed from their classes. This results in fewer sessions but with greater reach for the NEIC MDT, which is in line with the Continuum of Support.

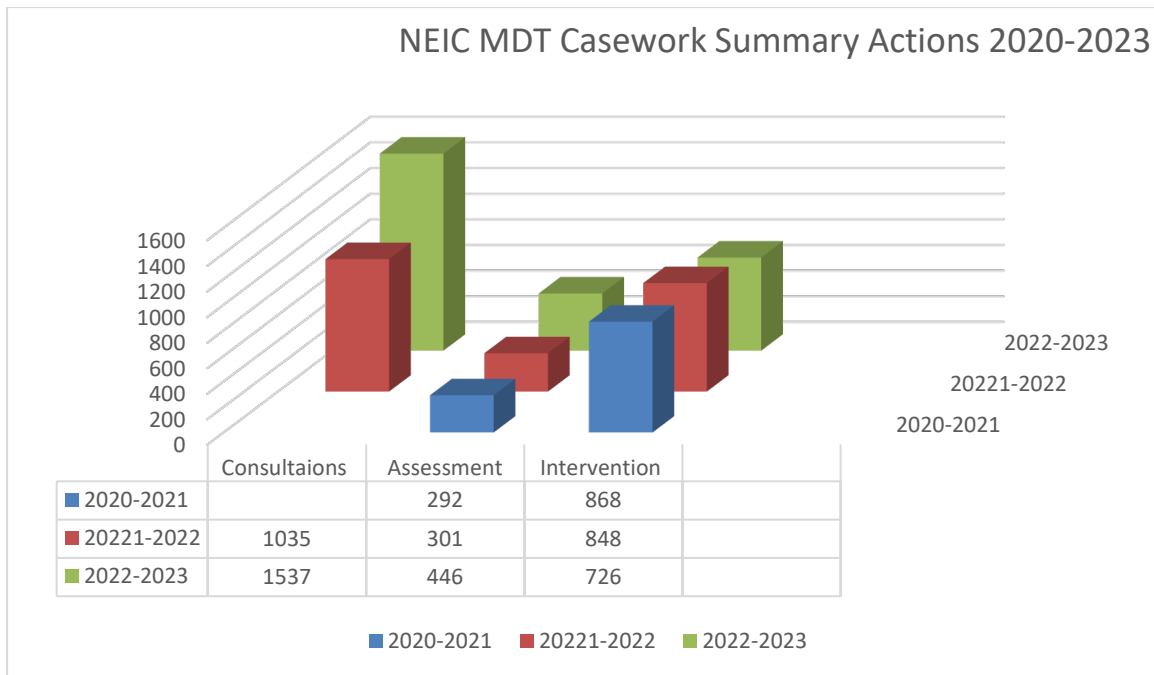


Figure 10: NEIC MDT Casework Summary Actions 2020-2023

* Assessments refers to the number of assessments undertaken. Some children underwent multiple assessments.

Section 3

3.1 Reflection

As the academic year ends the staff of the NEIC MDT reflect upon the delivery of service in 2022 and 2023, reviewing the facilitators and barriers that impacted the work of the team in schools. The NEIC MDT are actively working to address emerging issues such as EAL and NQTs, to support external evaluation and strengthening collaboration within the NEIC MDT and between the team and school staff.

3.2 English as an Additional Language

In the NEIC MDT Annual Report of 2021 to 2022, the highest priority was responding to local needs of the NEIC community. The NEIC is a very multi-cultural area, and this brings a richness and diversity to the local environment and to the schools, it also presents challenges. There was an identified need to support school staff with promoting language development for children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL). During this year NEPS and the HSE worked collaboratively to plan and deliver a cluster group for teachers working with EAL pupils. With support from the PDST Advisor for Primary EAL, the EAL Cluster enabled staff to come together to review relevant topics, share resources and practice in schools, with a view of promoting a community of best practice in supporting EAL students across the NEIC. This training was very well received and many of the schools subsequently arranged for individual PDST EAL training for their schools. Liaising with existing services and leveraging support is a key role of the NEIC MDT and is supported by the IMISS document, to improve alignment and avoid duplication of services. The partnership with the PDST EAL Advisor was a very impactful development. The NEIC MDT will continue to foster links with other services and to access relevant expertise to support capacity building within schools and families.

3.3 Interdisciplinary Work

When examining the casework and support and development work undertaken by the NEIC MDT there are growing examples of collaboration between NEPS and the HSE. Both are working on joint cases, and on preparing and delivering joint clusters, advice clinics and training sessions. This way of working is showing a natural evolution in the way the NEIC MDT operate and collaborate with one another. As the team becomes more established there are more examples of interdisciplinary work. While many researchers and practitioners use the terms multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary interchangeably the distinction between multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teamwork is important. There is a clear difference between the two approaches. As Jessup, 2007 outlines, the fundamental difference lies in the collaborative work and intervention plan that is only developed in interdisciplinary teams, as multidisciplinary care does not emphasise an integrated approach to a child support. Interdisciplinary teams function in a non-hierarchical manner so that consultations, assessments, and intervention plans are shared by all members. It promotes a collaborative and consultative approach to examine multiple and often complex interplay of factors that are impacting a child in school and/or in their home.

Within a multidisciplinary team each discipline/specialist may provide effective intervention or targets within their domain, but there may be a lack of coordination and integration in the overall intervention plan if the various disciplines do not work collectively. Ferguson, 2023, sets out how interdisciplinary care is increasingly recognised as a critical approach to systems of care/support due to its numerous benefits, one of the key advantages of interdisciplinary care is its ability to address the complex needs of children; their social, emotional, academic, communication and

daily living skills. By bringing together experts from various disciplines, interdisciplinary teams can develop comprehensive intervention plans that consider a wider range of factors that impact a child's development. It is noteworthy that the individual Student Support File, managed by the class teacher/SET is a central tool in supporting the creation of a holistic and integrated intervention plan for a pupil. The SS File is the unifying document, where the recommendations from each of the MDT disciplines are combined into a single cohesive intervention plan.

Multidisciplinary teams work in a team; whereas interdisciplinary teams engage in teamwork. The NEIC MDT uses both multidisciplinary and increasingly interdisciplinary approaches to address the needs of the pupils, schools and parents. When a child is referred to two or more disciplines within the NEIC MDT, the team members meet to review referral information and consider a range of questions to develop an interdisciplinary support plan. These questions include:

1. What are the issues?
2. Who will be involved?
3. What will the interventions be?
4. What are the goals of the intervention?
5. When will re-evaluation occur?

This collaborative decision-making ensures that the child remains at the centre of care, leading to improved engagement and outcomes. International evidence indicates that interdisciplinary care must occur to bring about improved outcomes such as, more efficient practice, child-centred approaches, and improved quality of care. If professionals focus on shared goals, the support offered to the child is more impactful.

Interdisciplinary care bridges gaps by facilitating communication and collaboration among specialists, ensuring a more integrated and seamless service to children's schools and families. Looking forward to 2023 and 2024 the NEIC MDT will promote and enhance interdisciplinary care within the team and with parents and our co-professionals in schools. NEPS and HSE staff maintain individual files on each pupil referred and there are no electronic systems or shared drives for collaborative work. Interdisciplinary work is hindered by this communication issue.

A range of actions will be taken to improve NEIC MDT interdisciplinary work next year:

- Development of a GDPR compliant system for sharing information on joint HSE and NEPS cases
- NEPS and HSE review and professional supervision of joint cases
- NEPS and HSE joint feedback to schools/parents
- Gathering joint background and developmental history form parents and school.

3.4 Staffing

Within the NEIC MDT and in schools, staffing is in an ongoing issue that impacts the capacity of the team to work efficiently. There have been significant periods of time when positions for one or more of the HSE disciplines within the MDT have remained unfilled. This impacts the capacity of the team to deliver a comprehensive service and particularly to develop and interdisciplinary approach to joint casework and support and development work. HSE and NEPS continue to work on retention and recruitment of staff for the NEIC MDT. It was noted in meetings with the Office of An Taoiseach, NEPS and Inspectorate senior management that staffing is one of the most challenging aspects of establishing further in-school MDTs.

There is the challenge of school staff turn-over, there is a high level of teachers leaving the city for a range of reasons. This has a negative impact on implementation of change in whole school practices, expertise and skills are transferred to other schools outside of the NEIC. Arising from the meetings with school principals, City Connects and the Social Inclusion Unity in DE it is clear that the 10 schools in the NEIC will have a high percentage of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in September 2023. In order to support these new staff, the NEIC MDT are working with other in-school services and Social Inclusion to deliver information workshops with NQTs through the first and second school term.

3.5 NEIC MDT Evaluation

To gather information on the impact of the NEIC MDT, an independent evaluation of the NEIC MDT is being funded by the HSE and DE to gather qualitative and quantitative data from key stakeholders. This will provide insights in to what impact the NEIC MDT has had in relation to supporting the development of academic, social, emotional, communication and independent living skills for all children through the provision of a professional, child-centred service. Research will examine MDT membership and make recommendations about additional or alternative MDT composition. Information will be gathered to examine how the NEIC MDT responds to the presenting needs in schools, homes and the wider community in a timely manner, with evidence-based assessment and intervention.

The NEIC MDT will also be evaluated as to how it supports the development of inclusive practices in schools and the promotion of wellbeing for all children, staff and families through advice and training. The external evaluation will assess how NEIC MDT practice aligns with existing school structures as set out in the 'Guidelines for Support for Pupils with Special Education Needs', 2017 and how the team develop collaborative partnerships with schools, families and the wider community to ensure efficient, integrated service delivery.

The impact data will be shared with key shareholders and when published it will inform the continued work of the NEIC MDT and inform Government decisions in relation to creation of additional in-school MDTs.

3.6 Reflection summary

The NEIC MDT Clusters in school, the NEIC MDT Working Group and Steering Committee worked collaboratively with schools, parents and community services to achieve the objectives of the NEIC MDT across the three categories of:

- casework, support and development work
- alignment with and enhancement of school systems
- interagency/partnership work

This annual report outlines some of the achievements and acknowledgements of the team. It details the work delivered by the team in 2022 and 2023. The annual report outlines the efforts made by the NEIC MDT WG to establish protocols (MOUs) for engagement between the HSE and NEPS and between the team and the school they work in. Significant work is completed to prepare a research tender that will assess the process of establishment of the NEIC MDT and its impact over its first 3- years.

In conjunction with the previous annual reports, the IMISS document, the MOUs provide essential information on how the NEIC MDT was established, its objectives and the partnership that has been forged between the HSE, NEPS, the Inspectorate, Social Inclusion and the 10 NEIC Schools. The proposed external evaluation of the NEIC MDT will provide guidance to the NEIC, HSE, DE and the Office of An Taoiseach, on the lessons learned and will provide a framework for implementing interagency MDTs.

The NEIC MDT looks forward to another great year in 2023/24.

Appendices

Appendix 1 MOU between HSE and NEPS



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais
National Educational Psychological Service

North East Inner City Multi-Disciplinary Team

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a formal agreement that sets out a framework for coordination of service arrangements, co-operation and data/information exchange in the provision of the North East Inner City Multi-Disciplinary Team (NEIC MDT):

Between

The Health Service Executive (HSE) Primary Care Service and

The Department of Education (DE), National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

Background

The North East Inner City Multi-Disciplinary Team (NEIC MDT) comprises of Educational Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education (DE), and Health Service Executive (HSE) Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Psychologist. This project is an interagency collaboration between the HSE and DE, which provides an in-school multidisciplinary team to ten NEIC primary schools. HSE psychology provide a service to families outside of the school setting, Referrals to HSE psychology are made through the NEIC MDT when support for parents & families is specifically required.

Role

The NEIC MDT provide school staff, children and families quick access to on-site Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Psychologists (NEPS and HSE). They provide a wraparound service including preventative work, early intervention, assessment, therapeutic intervention, advice and training, to support all children, school staff and families. The NEIC MDT has been operational in ten NEIC primary schools since 2020.

Purpose

This MOU will guide the work of the NEIC MDT and record agreements to facilitate the effective delivery of an in-school NEIC MDT between NEPS and the HSE. The MOU will outline the lines of accountability and the reporting relationships from a professional and clinical perspective between NEPS and the HSE. These include the partners outlined below. It applies to all members of the NEIC MDT and management/coordinators of the NEIC MDT:

HSE Staff	DE Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupational Therapists HSE Primary Care• Speech and Language Therapists HSE Primary Care• Psychologist, HSE Primary Care• HSE Discipline Managers (OT/SLT and Psychology)• NEIC MDT HSE coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEPS Psychologists• Dublin Regional Director, NEPS• NEIC MDT NEPS coordinator• DE Inspectorate

Arrangements will be agreed and documented between DE, NEPS and HSE in relation to the NEIC MDT service model, governance, its structure and processes. These will include:

- governance, accountability and the reporting relationships
- communication pathways
- model of service
- school and NEIC MDT work
- referral procedures and casework
- planning and delivery of support and development work
- logistical and administrative responsibilities
- development and annual review of the Integrated Model of In-School Services (IMISS).

Services beyond and above what is agreed in this MOU require discussion and further agreement with NEPS, National Director and the HSE, general manager for primary care.

The NEIC MDT delivers all aspects of service within the legislative and regulatory framework of the HSE and DE. All team members follow best practice and ethical guidelines of their respective regulatory bodies, including CORU for OT and SLT (multi-profession health regulator responsible for regulating health and social care professionals) and the Psychological Society of Ireland for psychologists.

Governance, Accountability, Reporting Relationships

Each school has a dedicated SLT, OT and NEPS psychologist. The HSE psychologist works predominantly with parents across all ten schools. Details on clusters are in Section 1.3 of the [NEIC MDT Annual Report 21/22](#)

The MDT have managers for each discipline (OT, SLT and psychology). The MDT also have a NEIC MDT coordinator, one for HSE staff and one for NEPS staff. If issues arise at school level, the first point of contact is with team members directly, if this is not appropriate, then the NEIC MDT coordinator for NEPS or HSE should be contacted.

The MDT coordinators, along with the DE Inspector, make up the NEIC MDT Working Group, who are responsible for operational aspects of the NEIC MDT. This group meet regularly and provide upward feedback to the MDT Steering Committee. THE NEIC MDT Steering Committee, chaired by NEPS, is responsible for overall governance and decision making for the NEIC MDT. Details on MDT structures are outlined in Section 1.6 of the [NEIC MDT Annual Report 21/22](#)

Communication Pathways

Schools and the NEIC MDT place immense importance on open communication, and constructive feedback that is used to improve and develop the partnership between schools and the NEIC MDT. Individual NEIC MDT clusters have established communication pathways, including in person, online meetings, and phone and email correspondence. NEIC MDT Cluster members meet for a range of work, including:

- to review new referrals
- to plan and carry out collaborative casework
- to plan and delivery collaborative support and development work
- to complete Casework Summary Documents
- community of practice meetings with all three clusters
- community of practice with City Connects Coordinators.

The NEIC MDT meet/consult with the NEIC MDT Coordinators regularly and provide feedback on work in the schools. Relevant information is shared with the NEIC MDT Steering Group, who have overall responsibility for governance of the NEIC MDT. As part of the partnership approach with schools, the NEIC MDT Working group with representatives from HSE, NEPS and the DE Inspectorate, meet with school principals formally during the academic year and at specific principal consultation days. The NEIC MDT Working Group provide written updates to the NEIC Principals Network, every six weeks on support and development work, upcoming events and casework data. The NEIC MDT Working Group also attend the Principals Network, upon request of the DE Social Inclusion Unit.

The NEIC MDT Working Group also complete the NEIC MDT annual reports, in collaboration with school staff. The annual reports are a record of the work undertaken by the NEIC MDT with pupils, school staff, parents and other services. Anonymised data for the NEIC MDT Annual Reports is extracted from the NEPS PsyMIS system and from the HSE database. Follow the link for published [NEIC MDT Annual Reports](#)

Model of Service

The Continuum of Support (CoS) is the model which schools use to deploy their Special Education Teacher (SET) allocation. The work of the NEIC MDT is aligned with the CoS to ensure that schools maximise the range of resources available to them and to ensure that the right pupils get the right service at the right time. Details on the CoS are outlined in Section 1.4 of the [NEIC MDT Annual Report 21/22](#) .

The NEIC MDT delivers all aspects of service within the legislative and regulatory framework of the HSE and DE. All team members follow best practice and ethical guidelines established by their respective regulatory bodies, including CORU (multi-profession health regulator responsible for regulating health and social care professionals) for OT and SLT (and the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) for psychologists).

School and NEIC MDT Work Practices

NEIC MDT work (casework and support and development work) is carried out in person/online and predominantly in schools. The NEIC MDT have significant administrative, case formulation, reflective supervision and report writing responsibilities (office-based work). These tasks are completed in their base offices in Summerhill Primary Care Centre and NEPS, James Joyce Street Office. It is understood that allocated time for each school is divided between front line service delivery and office-based work.

The NEIC MDT meet with school principals and SET at the beginning of each academic year to set out priorities for support and development work and also to review pupils' needs and make referrals to the team for individual casework. Appendix 1 in the [NEIC MDT Annual Report 21/22](#) outlines the practice of the NEIC MDT in schools. The NEIC MDT engage in significant work with key stakeholders in schools and the wider community. Appendix 1 in the [NEIC MDT Annual Report 21/22](#) outlines the practice of the MDT in schools and details some of the points of interaction with other support staff and services, such as City Connects. The NEIC MDT develop strong working relationships with other services to ensure wraparound support and appropriate onward referral pathways, CAMHS, CDNT, YPAR, and TUSLA (Meitheal).

Referral Procedures and Casework

Principals make referrals to the NEIC MDT via two separate sets of documents:

- NEPS Requests for involvement forms
- HSE Primary Care Referral Form (OT/SLT and/or psychology)

If schools are referring to both NEPS and HSE, schools are required to copy all documents to both services. Schools are required to maintain an up-to-date master list of referrals made to the NEIC MDT, and it is advisable to categorise these by discipline. Class teachers and City Connects Coordinators can then access this school master list to ensure that their records for NEIC MDT involvement are accurate.

Each NEIC MDT discipline will keep a record of dates when completed referrals are received from schools. Incomplete referral/requests for involvement forms will be returned to schools and may result in a delay in accessing NEIC MDT services. When there is a joint referral to NEPS and HSE, information on the child/family/school can be shared, with written parental consent (NEPS 'Liaison with Other Services' form and providing consent on the HSE referral forms).

All NEIC MDT actions taken on cases will be detailed on the case file, NEPS and HSE hold independent files in line with GDPR and service guidelines. Casework actions will be noted by

the NEIC MDT on the Casework Summary Document. This information is set out class by class, for each school, and it is updated by the NEIC MDT and shared with schools three times a year;

- initial September planning meeting
- mid-year review in January and
- the end of the school year in June.

A sample casework summary document is outlined in Appendix 6 of the [NEIC MDT Annual Report 21/22](#). Referrals for NEIC MDT casework are completed in the initial school planning meeting each year, in September and again in January. However, it is possible for the school principals to make referrals on an ongoing basis, in line, with the CoS Model of Service.

School referrals are reviewed by the NEIC MDT and where there is a joint referral to NEPS and HSE, information is shared (with signed parental consent). Case formulation is undertaken and the NEIC MDT use referral information, from school and home, to decide on the necessary assessments and/or interventions, determining the appropriate service at the appropriate time. Written and/or verbal feedback on all cases is given to home and school. The Student Support File (SSF) is the key document used by school staff to record agreed NEIC MDT targets and interventions for a child. A current SSF is required with all referrals to the NEIC MDT (copy to NEPS and HSE). Appendix 2 in the [NEIC MDT Annual Report 21/22](#) has detail on how schools and the NEIC MDT engage with the SS File.

Planning and Delivery of Support and Development Work

The NEIC MDT offer a range of advice, training and support sessions from each discipline, and options for joint NEIC MDT training. The interventions and training support offered are based on needs identified by the principals, teaching staff, SNAs and the NEIC MDT. Details are outlined in the Support and Development Service Delivery Plan, in Appendix 3, of the [NEIC MDT Annual Report 21/22F](#). Schools are required to consider their priority needs, in light of their DEIS Plan priorities and attend and participate in relevant NEIC MDT training and advice sessions. The NEIC MDT plan training times in conjunction with schools to minimise time away from teaching and classroom responsibilities.

Operational Agreements

GDPR Guidelines are adhered to in all work undertaken by the team, specifically with regard to Request for Involvement, Referrals and sharing of information.

Adhering to GDPR guidelines The NEIC MDT share written reports with School Principals and parents/guardians.

- joint documents where sharing of information is anonymised i.e., Casework Summary Document, joint updates are shared and agreed.
- referrals discussed and who does what first – determination made about the most appropriate service to take initial action
- jointly attend planning meetings
- regular MDT cluster meetings to review case work and support and dev work
- timetabling support and development work – access to staff etc.
- casework summary doc to collate actions class by class for each discipline
- agreed communication protocols within clusters – i.e., phone, email, text what's app, Face to face meetings

- joint NEIC MDT communication documents to update the Principals Network, City Connects and NEIC Policy Implementation Board (PIB) and other requested updates
- agreed that NEIC MDT working group would have representatives from HSE, Inspectorate and NEPS
- agreed Steering committee membership includes: NEPS Regional Director as Chair, HSE NEIC MDT Coordinator, Co-Chair, with representation from HSE therapy managers, NEPS Management, HSE and NEPS NEIC MDT Coordinators, and representatives from the team (NEPS and HSE)
- TOR have been drafted for the NEIC MDT Steering Committee

Integration of In- School Services

Significant work has been undertaken with school principals and all in-school services to support alignment and avoid duplication of work. This work has been directed by NEPS and the Inspectorate, with the NEIC MDT HSE Coordinator, DE Social Inclusion Unit, and members of the Integrated Model of In-School Services Working Group (IMISS WG), with representation from school principals, City Connects Implementation Lead, SCP and HSCL management. The Integrated Model of In-School Services (IMISS) document outlines the detail of each services work on the Continuum of Support (CoS) and sets out key points for effective communication and efficient service delivery. It is updated annually with input from all relevant stakeholders. School principals and all in-school services, including NEIC MDT staff, are required to familiarise themselves with the roles and responsibilities of each service and the protocols for liaison between each.

Review, Modification or Termination of the MOU

This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the authorised partners and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. This MOU may be modified by mutual consent of the NEPS, National Director and the HSE, General Manager for Primary Care.

Signatories and contact details:

Appendix 2: Principals and SET Focus Group Outcomes

Clarifications and agreements to address issues discussed at the Principals and SET Focus Group are outlined across four categories.

1. Scheduling and On-site presence:

MDT to share plan for school meetings on the Thurs/Fri of previous week. It is understood that this will not always be possible.

When a child/parent/teacher is unavailable to meet or absent for a scheduled appointment with MDT, the MDT will continue with alternate work, this may be in the same school/alternate school, or off site, as required.

MDT to consult with schools regarding possibly arranging a MDT coffee morning or the MDT attending the infant welcome morning or school's open day. This is to further develop parent awareness of the MDT and be able to see and meet with MDT.

The MDT use all school time efficiently and if there are cancellations, the MDT may contact alternative schools, at short notice, to arrange an appointment. This allows for responsiveness to arising needs and effective management of the school day.

Schools can inform MDT of unavailability of teachers/child and/or space for meetings and an alternate time/date will be organised.

The MDT will make direct contact with parents, when feasible, to organise school meetings, and cc school principal/SEN Coordinator with dates and times. If there is any difficulty contacting a parent, the MDT will inform the school and the school will support the MDT to arrange meetings etc.

MDT work between the hours of 8.30 and 6pm and will prioritise in-school work between the hours of 9 to 3pm.

In- school, face to face work with children, teachers, parents and other professionals is one aspect MDT work. It is understood that case work and support and development work also require significant background research, planning, case formulation, record keeping and report writing. This background work is relevant to all cases and training, and will generally take place off-site, due to access to computers, paperwork, and other resources.

2. Recording MDT casework:

Planning Meetings (September and January) will have the updated NEIC MDT casework document with all actions for MDT casework, class by class.

SEN Coordinators to manage a master sheet of all referrals sent to NEPS/OT/SLT/HSE Psychology, (noting date Referral form was received and returned to MDT), which can be shared with class teachers to update SS files.

SET and class teacher to use MDT reports and notes from MDT consultations to update SS files with current targets, and actions for each child open to the MDT

MDT maintain an electronic log of actions for each child referred to the team, which allows for review and planning of service delivery.

MDT complete the MDT casework summary document x2 yearly with full school updates

Option for principals to request a review with MDT or single disciplines to review current casework and to speak to MDT regarding any individual case for updates as required.

3. Referrals and the CoS

School and MDT recognise the importance of the CoS and the evidence base for delivering the MDT service and school supports, as a tiered model, all, some and few.

School principals, SETs and class teachers will be mindful to identify and use the range on in-school supports available them before escalating a case for an individual referral to the MDT. This includes schools using the MDT universal supports, for example training, cluster groups, and advice clinics for teacher capacity building.

During planning meetings in September and January, the MDT will support schools to prioritise cases for referral to the MDT.

During planning meeting common issues will be themed (by school and MDT) to identify opportunities to offer group work, in-class capacity building, etc., rather than an over-reliance on individual referrals.

Schools will endeavour to get referrals returned to the MDT promptly, following the planning meetings in September and January. This allows the MDT to plan a schedule of case work for the term and also to plan support and development needs for each school.

The majority of individual referrals to the MDT, will arise from the September and January Planning Meetings.

Ongoing referrals will be accepted throughout the school year, to account for emerging needs, new pupils and escalation in needs or poor response to intervention.

OT/SLT and NEPS advice clinics can be used by class teachers/SNA's and SETs to discuss issues arising in their practice. Guidance for individual children cannot be given during 'Advice Clinics', as there is no parental consent to discuss a child. Advice Clinics can support school staff with capacity building, exploring options for environmental adaptations, trying new intervention programmes/resources, pedagogical approaches, or classroom management strategies that can support inclusion for children with SEN/additional needs.

4. Communication

MDT will present to each school during Croke Park days in August regarding the referral process and importance of the integrity of the Continuum of Support in each school.

MDT have management structures and guidelines for delivery of service in schools and if there are any concerns/issues arising in school, that cannot be addressed locally, issues are to be raised with the NEIC MDT Working Group Representatives from NEPS, Sinéad Fahy and HSE, Karen Butler.

Note: Principals raised their concerns regarding the lengthy wait-times for CDNT and the limited CDNT capacity to support pupils with complex needs. MDT re-iterated that all pupils can be referred to NEPS and that all pupils can access MDT support at universal level. Principals and

SENCOs present spoke very highly and shared examples of how they are engaging with the MDT to support these pupils. MDT WG also reported that they would raise this concern with MDT Steering at next committee meeting and liaise with the CDNT manager, Laura O Connell with a view to meeting the principals again in September with The CDNT Manager, NEPS & HSE represented at this meeting.

Appendix 3 Support and Development 2022-2023

Title of S&D delivered by the NEIC MDT	School Staff/Parents in attendance	Schools
EAL Cluster –meeting the needs of the diverse multi-cultural population	80 teachers over three sessions	Multi school
SET Cluster – supporting special education teachers	65 teachers over three sessions	Multi school
Words their Way – Literacy Programme	20 teachers	Multi school
Literacy Training – Interventions to Support Struggling Readers	25 teachers	Multi school
Executive Functioning and Regulation	8 SNAs	Single School
Emotion Coaching and Regulation	30 teachers and SNAs	Single school
Target Setting for Student Support Files	15 teachers	Single school
Managing Big Feelings Workshop	4 parents	Multi school
Sleep Workshop 5	5 parents	Multi school
Managing Anxiety	2 parents	Multi school
Circle of Security Parent Programme	8 parents x 16 sessions	Multi school
Zones of Regulation Staff Training	123 teachers over 14 sessions	Multi school
Talk Time Teacher Training	70	Multi school
Developing Movement breaks for regulation	32 teachers	Multi school
Fine Motor Stations offered across 10 schools with whole class sessions focusing on specific classes with identified need.	69 teachers	Multi school
Autism Support	8 teachers and SNAs	Multi school
Friendships and play	8 teachers	Single school
Teacher practice consultation/Advice Clinic	50 teachers	Multi school
Parent advice clinic	25 parents	Multi school
Introduction to the MDT	15 teachers and SNAs	Single school
Resilient Classrooms	2 teachers	Single school
Blank Levels – Language Programme	6 teachers	Multi school

References

1. [Ferguson](#), M., 2023 in [Elder Care](#), [Social Work](#)
<https://swhelper.org/2014/01/14/multidisciplinary-vs-interdisciplinary-teamwork-becoming-effective-practitioner/>
2. Jessup, R, 2007, Interdisciplinary versus multidisciplinary care teams: do we understand the difference? Manager of Allied Health & Chronic Disease Services Allied Health, Craigieburn Health Service, Northern Health, Melbourne, VIC.