A comparative analysis of the attitudes of key stakeholder groups to the Welsh Government’s school-based counselling strategy

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The success of schools’ counselling services often depends on the support of various key stakeholder groups. This study reports on the attitudes of key stakeholders working within the Welsh Government school-based counselling strategy. Using a survey methodology, the opinions of local authority leads/service managers (n = 25), school management (n = 158) and school counsellors (n = 106) were compared and contrasted. Questions related to the accessibility of services to pupils, the balance between confidentiality and safeguarding procedures, whether services are adequately resourced and the training and supervision available to counsellors. Results indicated a high level of agreement and overall satisfaction between groups. Areas of disagreement tended to be restricted to practical issues, such as resources and accommodation.

Keywords: counselling; young people; school; satisfaction; evaluation

Introduction

This study reports on three surveys conducted as part of an evaluation of the Welsh Government’s national strategy for school-based counselling. The history of school-based counselling in Wales began with a recommendation from the Children’s Commissioner for Wales’s Clywch Inquiry Report. The Clywch Report suggested that all young people in schools should have a trusted adult to talk to about their concerns. This recommendation was accepted by the Welsh Government, and in 2007 they commissioned a research team led by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) to evaluate counselling in schools across the UK (Pattison et al., 2007) and to make recommendations for developing school-based counselling in Wales. School-based counselling as practised in the UK tends to be person centred and is a relatively non-directive form of therapy (Cooper, 2009), in contrast to other countries such as the United States where the most widely used style of therapeutic intervention is predominantly group based, of a cognitive-behavioural or relatively directive nature (Baskin et al., 2010).

It is estimated that, at any one time in the UK, 10% of children under 16 years of age have a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder (Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford, & Goodman, 2004) and that mental health problems among young people are becoming increasingly prevalent (Collishaw, Maughan, Goodman, & Pickles, 2004). The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Children
(NSPCC) has reported that a third of children are worried about something and need someone to talk to (Featherstone & Evans, 2004) and it has been suggested that early intervention makes a lasting difference to the lives of children experiencing mental health problems (Gosline, 2008). In response to this scenario, school-based counselling has been identified as an easily accessed and non-stigmatising intervention, effective in reducing levels of distress among children and young people (Cooper, 2009).

In England and Wales, three-quarters of schools claim to provide ‘therapeutic individual counselling’ (Jenkins & Polat, 2006). However, the way in which provision is implemented varies across schools, with the majority employing an external counsellor on a sessional basis and other schools providing counselling via a member of teaching staff or via an external agency.

There are preliminary indications that school-based counselling is effective, with recovery rates of just under 50% and a weighted mean effect size of 0.81 (Cooper, 2009). This growing evidence as to the effectiveness of school-based counselling has led to an increase in the prevalence of services in some parts of the UK, with counselling services now rolled out across secondary schools in Wales and Northern Ireland. Although this evidence of effectiveness and dissemination is encouraging, the success or failure of a school-based counselling strategy or service is likely to depend on the attitudes and behaviours of key stakeholders who are responsible for implementation, service delivery and service support. This may include local authority leads (LA leads), school managers, teachers and the counsellors themselves.

Across schools, Jenkins and Polat (2006) found that counselling was generally seen as being of most benefit to the individual pupil, with further advantages for the school being recognised, in terms of behavioural and social issues. Disadvantages related to managerial and professional issues such as conflicts with the ethos of the school, inappropriate use or even misuse of the service by pupils, resourcing issues and communicating and co-ordinating confidential information.

Research has also closely examined the views of teachers (e.g., Baginsky, 2003; Burnison, 2003; Cooper, Hough, & Loynd, 2005; Fox & Butler, 2003; Montgomery, 2003) towards school-based counselling. Studies have suggested that school teachers are generally positive in their attitudes towards school counselling services (Cooper et al., 2005) with only a small number of cases indicating negative attitudes or concerns (Montgomery, 2003). However, negative attitudes tend to be prevalent in schools that do not have a counselling service, suggesting such attitudes towards school counselling services may result from poor understanding (Lang, 1999). When asked about their opinions, teachers from schools without counselling services raised issues around children abusing the service in order to miss lessons, and there being a stigma attached to using school counselling services (Baginsky, 2003; Fox & Butler, 2003). In comparison, teachers from schools with counselling services scored a mean rating of 7.47 out of 10 on how important the counselling service was to the school (score of 10 = ‘essential’) (Cooper et al., 2005). When asked to provide further information on their attitudes, 13% of those in this study suggested school counselling was a much needed resource. There were concerns, however, about how the service would operate and the relationship between pastoral care and the counselling service.

Children and young people have been found to hold typically positive views (Fox & Butler, 2007; Cooper, 2004). Fox and Butler (2007) surveyed the opinions of
415 secondary school pupils, across five schools. Despite the majority (92%) of those participating in the study not having accessed their school counselling service, when asked whether they were aware of the existence of the school counselling service, 79% of participants indicated that they were. However, responses varied between schools: while only 15% of respondents in one school answered ‘yes’ to this question, awareness levels across the other four schools were high at 95%, 83%, 71% and 75%. Schools that had the highest levels of awareness had been implementing services for a number of years. Additionally, when asked how the service could be improved, the second most frequent response (18% of responders) was to increase the availability of school counselling. For some pupils this was related to increasing accessibility, whereas for others it was related to having a choice of counsellor.

In a survey of 457 pupils across three schools in Glasgow, in which participants rated the importance of school counselling (0 = Not at all important, to 10 = Essential), Cooper (2004) found a mean score of 6.08 and median score of 7, with females giving a significantly higher score than males (female mean = 6.59, male mean = 5.65). A more positive attitude was also associated with greater awareness of counselling (r = 0.16, p < 0.01), knowledge of counselling (r = 0.23, p < 0.01) and willingness to use the service (r = 0.30, p < 0.01). Across 117 young people who had used the counselling service, the mean rating of the importance of the service increased to 8.64, with a median rating of 9. While such ratings of school-based counselling are generally positive, they tend to be limited to just two stakeholder groups – teachers and pupils. The views of other key stakeholder groups, such as LA leads, school management and school counsellors, seem to be much less widely known.

Local authority leads, school management and school counsellors each have specific roles and responsibilities to secure the successful implementation of school counselling services. Local authority leads have responsibility for ensuring equality of access, providing funding, training opportunities and guidance on setting up services, along with assuring the quality of services via annual reports and audit and evaluation data. Further considerations are that resources meet demand and services work closely with other mental health services and wellbeing initiatives. Similarly, school management have a key role with regard to staffing, resources, policies and procedures. To function effectively, services need to be appropriately staffed and have suitable accommodation. Likewise, robust systems of referral and policies on confidentiality and risk need to be put in place and adhered to by all school staff. School management are also responsible for integrating counselling services into school life, raising levels of awareness of the service and ensuring staff are supportive of the initiative. A final level of implementation involves school counsellors who are responsible for working therapeutically with pupils, liaising with other professionals, raising the profile of services, ensuring ease of access for pupils and keeping appropriate records of service usage. These three groups are likely to have different perspectives as to what makes a successful school counselling service, resulting from their various roles and the levels of implementation at which they function. For school-based counselling to be effective, it is crucial that such stakeholder groups share similar positive attitudes towards school counselling (Freely, 2002) and that the groups work collaboratively to produce good outcomes for children and young people. Despite school counsellors indicating that an initial meeting with school management prior to implementation of services would be an important
contribution to the establishment of a successful counselling service (Cromarty & Richards, 2009), there is little research exploring the attitudes of such key stakeholders towards school counselling.

This study reports on three surveys conducted as part of an evaluation of the Welsh Government’s national strategy for school-based counselling. The aim of the surveys was to explore the overall opinions towards school-based counselling and report on differences and similarities across stakeholder groups, with particular regard to the implementation of the school-based counselling strategy. The data gathered would help to assess the feasibility of rolling out school-based counselling across a large geographical area within a limited timeframe.

Methods

Design and procedure

To gain the most representative indication of attitudes towards school counselling, a census approach was taken across these three stakeholder groups, and so all local authority leads, school managers and school counsellors were provided with the opportunity to take part in the surveys. A survey incorporates any research method that involves asking questions of participants and can be conducted using questionnaires, interviews or observation (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Strazia, 2003).

Local authority leads and school counsellors were approached face-to-face to complete the questionnaire survey, whereas school management were asked to complete the survey over the telephone. These different approaches were taken to maximise response rates. Local authority leads and school counsellors hold regular meetings, which provided an appropriate arena to distribute the questionnaire. For school management a telephone survey was used as response rates to self-completion surveys in schools can be rather low (Kelley et al., 2003), leading to large non-response bias and limiting the scope for sub-group analysis.

Participants

Participants were local authority leads responsible for school counselling, school managers and school counsellors, all working as part of the Welsh Government national strategy for school-based counselling.

Local authority leads

Local authority leads and/or service managers responsible for school counselling were invited to attend a meeting organised by the Welsh Government (n = 30) and all those in attendance were provided with an opportunity to complete a paper-based questionnaire. A total of 25 questionnaires (completed by 13 local authority leads, 10 service managers and 2 school counselling coordinators) were returned for inclusion in the study, resulting in a high response rate of 83.3%.

School managers

School management (head/link teachers responsible for school counselling) of all secondary schools in Wales were invited to participate in a telephone census. In total,
158 school managers participated (19 head teachers, 83 deputy/assistant head teachers, 42 senior management, 1 class teacher, 3 pastoral care managers and 10 other), resulting in a 66% response rate. The sample included English medium (n = 92), Welsh medium (n = 26) and bilingual schools (n = 21). The majority of schools were community based (state funded) (n = 122) and a small number of faith schools were included (three Church of England, six Roman Catholic). Over half (55%) of the schools had provided a school-based counselling service prior to operating as part of the Welsh Government national strategy.

School counsellors
All school counsellors in Wales working within the national strategy (n = 132) were invited to attend an ‘All Wales’ conference where they had the opportunity to complete a paper-based questionnaire. A total of 106 school counsellors (age range 18–69, 72% of which were aged 30–49; 15 male, 89 female, 2 data missing) returned completed questionnaires. Ninety per cent were White British; 88% were members of a professional body (91% of those were members of BACP); 73% were qualified to at least post-graduate diploma level; and 93% had prior experience of working with children and young people. Therapeutic orientation varied with the majority (58%) being integrative and 26% being humanistic/person centred.

Questionnaires/interviews
The surveys were conducted as part of a wider evaluation of the Welsh Government school-based counselling strategy. Survey items were developed based on 10 recommendations for good practice made in a report used to inform the implementation of the Welsh counselling strategy (Pattison et al., 2007). This report included recommendations that school counselling services should have sustainable funding, be non-stigmatising, employ professional qualified counsellors, be evaluated and monitored, be accessible and work alongside other services and agencies. Results presented here focus on the different stakeholder groups’ responses to particular aspects of service implementation. Each stakeholder group was presented with a series of statements including: accessibility (‘The service is located in a position on site which is easy for pupils to access’); confidentiality (‘The service’s approach to confidentiality strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of parents, children and safeguarding procedures’); resources (‘The counselling service in which I work is adequately resourced’); implementation (‘The process of setting up the counselling service has been efficient and unproblematic’); and supervision (‘I am happy with arrangements provided for clinical supervision’). Using a 5-point Likert scale, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement, ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. A separate response was allowed for ‘don’t know’.

Method of analysis
For each group the total number of participants who either ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ with a statement was calculated and subtracted from the total number who either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with the statement, resulting in a percentage net agreement score for each item. Inferential tests were conducted using Analysis of
Variance (ANOVA) to determine whether significant differences in agreement existed between groups, followed by post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons to further explore significant differences.

Results

Agreement between stakeholder groups

Overall, positive attitudes towards school-based counselling in Wales were observed across all three stakeholder groups, with similar patterns of net agreement across groups for the majority of items (Table 1). The highest levels of agreement were observed for the following statements: ‘the service’s approach to confidentiality strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of parents, children and safeguarding procedures’ (LA leads/service managers = 100%, M = 3.5, SD = 0.51; school management = 93%, M = 3.69, SD = 0.62; school counsellors = 90.4%, M = 3.37, SD = 0.70); ‘the counselling service is sensitive to the needs of different communities and ethnic groups’ (LA leads/service managers = 100%, M = 3.33, SD = 0.49; school management = 93%, M = 3.68, SD = 0.56; school counsellors = 80.8%, M = 3.20, SD = 0.77); and ‘the service is located in a position which is easy for pupils to access’ (LA leads/service managers = 92%, M = 3.24, SD = 0.59; school management = 95%, M = 3.63, SD = 0.64; school counsellors = 80%, M = 3.22, SD = 0.83).

Similarly, there was strong net agreement that school counselling in Wales is an integral part of school provision (LA leads/service managers = 88%, M = 3.12, SD = 0.60; school management = 89%, M = 3.54, SD = 0.75; school counsellors = 87.2%, M = 3.27, SD = 0.75); that the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the counselling service are satisfactory (LA leads/service managers = 80%, M = 3.12, SD = 0.78; school management = 78%, M = 3.24, SD = 0.87; school counsellors = 82.1%, M = 3.14, SD = 0.79) and that the counselling service is recognised and valued by school staff (LA leads/service managers = 88%, M = 3.24, SD = 0.66; school management = 95%, M = 3.63, SD = 0.60; school counsellors = 78.1%, M = 3.49, SD = 0.61).

Finally there was agreement that the counselling service is well publicised within school (LA leads/service managers = 72%, M = 3.0, SD = 0.76; school management = 87%, M = 3.35, SD = 0.78; school counsellors = 77.1%, M = 3.09, SD = 0.84); that counselling is delivered in an appropriately private but safe setting within the school vicinity (LA leads = 96%, M = 3.32, SD = 0.57; school management = 99%, M = 3.84, SD = 0.38; school counsellors = 76%, M = 3.13, SD = 0.88); that the counselling service works closely with other initiatives to support health and wellbeing in schools (LA leads/service managers = 70%, M = 3.08, SD = 0.70; school management = 72%, M = 3.25, SD = 0.97; school counsellors = 72%, M = 3.08, SD = 0.84); and that the counselling service has good administrative support (LA leads/service managers = 84%, M = 3.28, SD = 0.79; school management = 73%, M = 3.21, SD = 0.83; school counsellors = 69.6%, M = 3.00, SD = 0.98).

Disagreement between stakeholder groups

There were four areas in which there was less agreement between groups. First, when asked if counselling services are adequately resourced, there was strong net agreement amongst school management (68% net agree, M = 3.07, SD = 1.07) and
LA leads/service managers (75% net agree, M = 2.92, SD = 0.65), whereas there was lower agreement among school counsellors (55.2% net agree, M = 2.82, SD = 1.04). An independent samples ANOVA found a significant difference in the level of agreement between the three stakeholder groups (F(2, 277) = 4.99, p = .007). However, post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons indicated the significant difference was between school counsellors and school management (p = .002). In contrast, no significant difference was observed between LA leads/service managers and either school counsellors (p = 1.00) or school management (p = .514).

Similarly, when asked if the accommodation for the counselling service was adequate, school counsellors showed less agreement (54.3% net agree, M = 2.8,
than school management (86% net agree, $M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.79$) and LA leads/service managers (72% net agree, $M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.79$). An independent samples ANOVA found a significant difference in the level of agreement between the three stakeholder groups ($F (2, 283) = 20.04$, $p < .001$). Post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons confirmed school managers to agree with this statement more than either school counsellors ($p < .001$) or LA leads/service managers ($p = .018$).

The same pattern was observed when asked whether the process of setting up counselling services had been efficient and unproblematic (school counsellors, 25.5% net agree, $M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.02$; school management, 80% net agree, $M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.91$; LA leads/service managers, 64% net agree, $M = 2.8$, $SD = 0.82$). An independent samples ANOVA found a significant difference in the level of agreement between the three stakeholder groups ($F (2, 278) = 38.52$, $p < .001$) and post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons indicated the level of net agreement amongst school management was significantly higher than either school counsellors ($p < .001$) or LA leads/service managers ($p = .016$).

Specific to the Welsh context, when asked whether the counselling service is sensitive to the needs of Welsh speakers, it was observed that there was lower agreement amongst school management (27% net agree, $M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.22$), than either school counsellors (47.4% net agree, $M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.07$), or LA leads/service managers (56% net agree, $M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.08$). However, an independent samples ANOVA found no significant difference in the level of agreement between the three stakeholder groups ($F (2, 230) = 1.27$, $p = .28$).

**Group-specific concerns**
Along with generic items addressed to all stakeholder groups, a number of questions specific to each individual stakeholder group were asked.

**Local authority leads/service managers**
We found positive agreement amongst local authority leads/service managers that counselling services had good relations with other services such as NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (96%, $M = 1.08$, $SD = .40$). In addition there was strong net agreement that local authorities provided appropriate opportunities for the supervision of counsellors (100%, $M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.37$), provided training opportunities for counsellors (52%, $M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.18$) and ensured that resources were available to meet demand (56%, $M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.16$) (Figure 1).

**School management**
Head/link teachers were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from ‘1 = improved a lot’ to ‘7 = deteriorated a lot’, the perceived impact on attendance, attainment, behaviour and whether the service meets the needs of pupils. There was strong net agreement amongst school management that school counselling meets the needs of pupils (91%) and is perceived to have an impact on attendance (69%, $M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.09$), attainment (65%, $M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.98$) and behaviour (80%, $M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.96$). In addition, when asked on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from ‘1 = increased a lot’ to ‘7 = decreased a lot’, school management
indicated the counselling service had had little impact on staff workload (M = 4.39, SD = 1.40) (Figure 2).

School counsellors

School counsellors displayed satisfaction with regard to arrangements for supervision (net agree 89.4%, M = 3.47, SD = 0.77), collaboration with other services (net agree 84%, M = 3.22, SD = 0.74), support received in their role (net agree 82.1%, M = 3.32, SD = 0.85) and opportunities for continuing professional development (net agree 62.9%, M = 3.08, SD = 1.06) (Figure 3). However, one area of low satisfaction was in relation to whether staffing levels within services are adequate, with less than 50% net agreement amongst counsellors (M = 2.69, SD = 1.11).

Discussion

Agreement between stakeholder groups

Results indicated strong support for school counselling services from all three stakeholder groups surveyed and generally high levels of satisfaction with service...
implementation. Local authority leads, school management and school counsellors all viewed counselling services as an integral part of school provision. There were no indications of counselling being viewed as an activity external to or ‘bolted onto’ mainstream school life and each group showed agreement that the service is recognised and valued by school staff. This suggests these groups would value school counselling on a par with other areas of important provision for pupils, such as attendance and academic achievement.

Where previous research has highlighted concerns around school counselling, particularly in relation to issues of confidentiality (Montgomery, 2003), results reported here indicate groups are generally satisfied with their school counselling service’s approach to confidentiality, striking a balance between the needs of parents, children and safeguarding procedures. The potential conflict between head teachers’ responsibility for the wellbeing of their pupils and counsellors’ need to provide confidentiality for clients has not emerged in the findings of this study. It may be that such concerns result from a poor understanding of school-based counselling (Lang, 1999), and are soon alleviated as heads and staff become familiar with how services work. Although previous research has indicated that pupils have typically positive attitudes towards school counselling services (Cooper, 2004; Fox & Butler, 2007), it would be useful to explore satisfaction with confidentiality among service users, to compare and contrast with the perceptions of school management. However, previous research has indicated conflict here: for example, Pettitt (2003) reported that a key issue raised amongst CAMHS services in relation to working with schools was the sharing of information about an individual case. This study reported that it was felt sharing of information facilitated better service provision. However, health, social and education services differ in their approaches to sharing and confidentiality and some parents and children did not wish information to be shared across services.

Collaborative working across services is important in order to provide comprehensive mental health services for children and young people. This survey found the three stakeholder groups to be satisfied with service implementation, in relation to the administrative support provided, collaborative working with other agencies such as NHS CAMHS and the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the service. In contrast, previous research has indicated collaborative working can be problematic. For example, in one survey only 44% of CAMHS staff interviewed
reported working with the Local Education Authority (Pettitt, 2003). The same report indicated the importance of a joint location, shared offices and joint training in order to facilitate joint working. Similarly, Kennedy (2010) highlights collaboration between CAMHS services and other agencies as being potentially problematic. He states that although the need for collaboration is documented explicitly, the performance measures against which primary care trusts are currently judged gives little incentive to collaborate.

The routine collection of outcome data using measures such as the Young Person’s Clinical Outcomes for Routine Evaluation (YP-CORE) or Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is an important means of assessing the effectiveness of services. Measures such as these enable assessment to be made as to whether the level of distress pre-intervention is significantly reduced post-intervention. Results indicated significant agreement across all three groups that the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the counselling service are satisfactory, indicating support for this type of routine outcome measurement. This perhaps indicates a growing awareness of the need to gather evidence of the effectiveness of school-based counselling in order to influence policy, secure funding and improve outcomes for pupils through rigorous service evaluation.

**Disagreement between stakeholder groups**

The areas in which stakeholder groups’ perceptions differed related to practical issues surrounding service implementation, rather than to general attitudes towards school counselling. As already stated, despite their individual concerns, roles and responsibilities, it is essential that LA leads, school management and school counsellors work collaboratively to develop effective school counselling services (Cromarty & Richards, 2009; Freely, 2002). The results of this study indicate that areas of disagreement tended to be restricted to resources, accommodation, the ease with which services were set up and the availability of Welsh-speaking counsellors.

The availability of Welsh-speaking counsellors is clearly relevant only within the Welsh context. However it highlights the awareness of factors that require consideration to ensure services are accessible to all and sensitive to the needs of the particular communities they serve.

School counsellors were less satisfied with the accommodation in which counselling takes place, as compared with school heads and LA leads. Concerns around accommodation specifically relate to the counsellors’ needs to ensure a confidential, welcoming, secure and accessible environment to work with their clients. This is not necessarily something that is easily provided within a typical school and it may be the case that counsellors are expected to work in a variety of multi-purpose rooms, some of which may lack privacy and ease of access. The importance of this is that problems with accommodation may impact on the effectiveness of services and so undermine the implementation of school-based counselling.

There was less agreement amongst school counsellors that staffing levels within counselling services were adequate. Long waiting lists would indicate the need for increased resources to meet the needs of pupils, hence it is important that services are monitored regularly to ensure that the level of staffing resources available meets demand. Although funding resources are limited, it ought to be a priority of school
counselling services to ensure the needs of those requiring support are met in a
timely manner, particularly as the need for increased resources has also been
highlighted by service users (Fox & Butler, 2007). Previous research with school
counsellors has indicated that regular meetings with school management may lead to
better implementation of services (Cromarty & Richards, 2009), and it is possible
that the need for increased staffing resources could be brought to the attention of
school management through such meetings. The findings of this study also indi-
cate a fairly widespread concern about resources among those delivering the
interventions.

Disagreement between the three groups that the implementation of school
counselling had been efficient and unproblematic is noteworthy. Of the three, there is
a greater tendency for school managers to view the implementation process as
unproblematic, followed by LA leads and finally counsellors. This suggests more
problems are likely to be experienced at the service delivery end of the implemen-
tation process, i.e. at the point where sessions of therapy are conducted with service
users.

**Group-specific concerns**

Amongst local authority leads there was positive agreement on all group-specific
issues, including how the service relates to other services (such as NHS CAMHS),
opportunities provided for training and supervision of counsellors, and ensuring
resources available meet demand. Similarly, school management were in agreement
that school counselling meets the needs of pupils, and viewed the service as having a
positive impact on attendance, attainment and the behaviour of pupils, without
significantly increasing staff workload.

School counsellors were satisfied with provision for training and supervision, but
less content about resourcing issues, particularly staffing, with less than half of those
surveyed agreeing that staffing levels within services are adequate. Implicit here may
be a concern as to whether services are able to meet the levels of demand within
schools. Associated with this is the issue of access for particular communities and
language speakers; in this case Welsh language speakers.

**Conclusion**

Significant agreement and overall satisfaction was observed within and across
each of these three stakeholder groups. Whereas it may be expected that
counsellors would be widely supportive of school counselling, the level of
enthusiasm among head teachers is quite a striking finding. This would suggest
that the implementation of school-based counselling is not only feasible but there
is great enthusiasm among key stakeholders for this type of service to be
introduced in schools. Findings indicate that where school-based counselling
strategies are being implemented, particular attention should be paid to the point
of service delivery to ensure that resources, accommodation and staffing are
adequate to meet demand, and are attuned to the needs of service users. In
addition, national school counselling strategies need to be sensitive to the needs
of local communities.
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Note

1. A significant F ratio, determined by p < .05, tells us that the level of agreement between groups varies.

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