Completing the annual SENI reporting template: Guidelines for SENI centres

Introduction

The principal focus in the development of good practice in relation to the implementation of the SEN Initiative is on the *process* of identifying how best to support the learners in your centre. The report template has been designed with that process in mind. Filling in the report provides an opportunity for reviewing the success of the Initiative in the past year and thinking about how it will be implemented in the year ahead. The template structures the task of reflecting back by inviting you to think about how the resources that were available to the centre were deployed (including the staff training and support elements); the specific practices that you engaged in; the structural arrangements and outputs that were organised; and the outcomes for learners that were achieved.

1. Assessment of learner difficulties

> Under each of the three headings below, please describe three or four difficulties that you noticed in your learners during the year:
> *a) Education and training:*
> *b) Personal and social development:*
> *c) Barriers to participation and progress in the programme:*

Please list three or four of the most common kinds of difficulties that you observed in your learners during the year under the following headings:

a) Education and training
Education and training difficulties are those which **impact on the academic and vocational training aspects** of the programme and are usually related to learning problems of one kind or another.

b) Personal and social development
Personal and social development problems are to do with **emotional, social, mental or physical wellbeing issues** and usually arise as a result of individual experiences or circumstances.

c) Barriers to participation and progress in the programme
Barriers to participation and progress are those **factors relating to life outside the centre** which have the effect of creating barriers to good attendance and participation or to successful learning and progression.

2. Core SEN Initiative practices

a) How many learners attended your centre for any part of the last academic year?

For how many of these learners were the following measures put in place:

i) Assignment of a mentor
ii) Provision of regular mentoring sessions using the WebWheel process (at least once a fortnight)
iii) Development of an individual action plan with the learner
iv) Engagement in inter-agency work on behalf of the learner

Please say how many learners attended your centre for any part of the last academic year, even if they only stayed for a few weeks and/or attended very poorly.

It is expected that **all learners**, unless they left soon after arriving in the centre, will have been assigned a mentor and engaged in regular mentoring sessions using the Wheel, resulting in the drawing up of an individual action plan. Some learners will have required additional supports not available in the centre and in these cases their mentor will have located relevant agencies in the community and supported them in accessing their services.

b) Please say how many members of your staff were acting as mentors and how many learners each one was mentoring.

Please indicate the number of staff members who acted as mentors and indicate whether they were employed on a full- or part-time basis and the number of learners each one was mentoring.

c) Please describe how you timetabled mentoring sessions (in terms of length of session, frequency of sessions, etc.) and any other follow-on work that was related to mentoring.

Please describe exactly how the mentoring sessions were timetabled and the amount of time allocated for the actions that followed on directly from the mentoring session (e.g. writing up of an IAP, liaison with other staff in the centre, contact with outside services or parents).

d) Please describe the specific *teaching interventions* that occurred in small groups or one-to-one settings for particular learners and indicate the number of learners that received these.

Possible specific teaching interventions are:
o literacy and numeracy taught in a one-to-one or small group context
o life skills programmes (e.g. money management, communication, dealing with bureaucracies and services, self-awareness and hygiene, interpersonal skills, decision-making, assertiveness, anger and conflict management)
o SPHE programmes (e.g. nutrition, physical health and well-being, substance misuse, self-protection, mental health, suicide prevention, sexuality, identity, self-esteem, diversity, crime awareness, citizenship)
o other subjects to accommodate individual learners (e.g. guitar lessons, language learning, typing skills)

> e) Please describe the specific *support interventions* that occurred in small groups or one-to-one settings for particular learners and indicate the number of learners that received these.

Examples of possible support interventions, in addition to the mentoring, are
o one-to-one counselling for general or specific purposes (e.g. bereavement, addiction)
o group counselling
o peer support groups
o guidance or advocacy
o alternative therapies
o implementing a support intervention drawn up in collaboration with an outside service (e.g. medical, psychiatric, probationary)

> f) Please name the *local services and agencies* with whom centre staff liaised for information and advice and / or with whom you put collaborative actions in place for particular learners

Service providers in the region of the centre may include:
o education providers (including educational agencies e.g. NEWB, school-based services e.g. school completion programme, home school community liaison personnel)
o youth services (including neighbourhood youth projects and information centres)
o general health and specific health services (e.g. health centres, health promotion projects, services for STIs, crisis pregnancy, etc.)
o clinical / psychiatric services (including HSE child and family centres and local counselling services)
o addiction services (including local Drug Task Force projects)
o social services (including social workers and local projects such as Springboard)
o family support services (e.g. HSE family assistance, Barnardo's projects, Vincent de Paul)
o probation and welfare services (e.g. JLOs, garda diversion projects)
o local employment services (including job centres)

o   community development initiatives (e.g. area based partnership projects, Traveller development organisations, border area Peace and Reconciliation projects).

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g) Please describe the ***work experience*** preparation, practice and review sessions that were carried out and indicate the number of learners that engaged in work experience.

How was the work experience organised and prepared? To what extent was it possible to arrange work experience that related to your learners' specific vocational and career goals?

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h) What staff training courses or sessions did your staff attend during this period
i) as a whole team
ii) as a sub-group of your staff
iii) as an individual member on behalf of the centre or for their own professional development

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Please confine your answer to the training that was funded under the SEN Initiative budget.

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i) Please describe ***how many*** staff support sessions took place during the year

i) for case supervision (i.e. to discuss students' needs or difficulties only)
- *Group sessions*
- *One-to-one sessions*

ii) to support staff (i.e. with a specific focus on staff members' needs or difficulties)
- *Group sessions*
- *One-to-one sessions*

*iii) for both case supervision **and** staff support within the same session (i.e. focusing on either or both learner and staff member difficulties)*
- *Group sessions*
- *One-to-one sessions*

iv) to build and maintain the staff team (i.e. with a focus on centre organisational development)

v) to support the coordinator in their role as centre manager

vi)What qualifications did the person(s) providing case supervision and/or staff support have?
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Please note the distinctions in the question applying to the various ways in which staff support and supervision could have been organised in your centre during the year. **Only count a session once** – for example, don't include the same session/s under more than one category (e.g. if support and supervision were always covered together in the same session ignore i and ii in favour of iii, if always done separately ignore iii). The sum of the number of sessions specified in your answer should represent the total number of sessions of any kind that took place over the course of the year.

The **function of *case supervision*** is to provide a protective mechanism for learners in a context where mentors are not being required to have any formal training in special educational needs. Case supervision creates an opportunity for increasing mentors' professional understanding and expertise in relation to learner difficulties and support processes. It can be particularly effective for building the centre team's capacity if it is done as a group exercise. Case supervision also defines the limits of the mentors' role and places clear boundaries around their responsibilities, identifying when cases should be referred to professional services outside the centre.

The **function of *staff support*** is to provide staff with the care they need to be able to work closely with young people and not be overwhelmed by what may be very serious issues. Staff support recognises that mentors are drawing on their own personal resources when they engage in this kind of work and may have difficulties in their own lives which impact on their ability to be comfortable listening to and dealing with particular issues.

Both case supervision and staff support may be provided through group or individual sessions, or through a combination of both, perhaps with individual sessions being available to staff on a needs basis. As they are linked processes both can be done within the one session.

Professional supervision (i.e. both the case supervision and staff support elements) **must be provided by suitably qualified personnel**. This means a psychotherapist or psychologist with the relevant qualifications and experience. In addition, they need to be a member of their appropriate professional body (e.g. the Psychological Society of Ireland or British Psychological Society, the Irish Council for Psychotherapy, the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, the Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy). Ideally supervisors would also have had a minimum of three years supervised clinical practice themselves, have experience of supervising others, have a relevant third level qualification in health, education or social care (e.g. psychology, social studies, youth work, teaching) and have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the youth and community sectors.

3. SEN Initiative outcomes

a) Please describe the formal accreditation (the Junior Cert, Leaving Cert, FETAC and other awards) that was achieved by your learners during the year.

List all qualifications achieved during this period whether by learners still in the centre or those who have moved on. For minor FETAC awards please list the **number of your *learners* who received these awards**, and **not the number of *awards* that were achieved.**

b) How many learners in total attended the centre for any part of the 12 month period?

How many of these learners:
o   Returned after the summer?
o   Progressed successfully to further training?
o   Progressed successfully to employment?
o   Completed the programme but have not yet progressed to further training or employment?
o   Left the centre for a practical reason like moving away, having a baby, going to prison?
o   Dropped out of the centre by their own choice?
o   Left as a result of being asked to leave by the board of management or ETB?

Please include all learners who attended your centre during the academic year, even those who never fully engaged with the programme and those who left after a few weeks. **The sum of the numbers recorded in each section should be the same as the total number of learners who attended for any part of the year**.

c) By the end of the year for how many of your learners was some kind of contact made between the centre and an outside agency or service (e.g. a referral organised, a collaborative arrangement made, a joint initiative put in place)?

Please restrict your answer to learners that you know definitely attended services **outside the centre** (whether as a result of referrals by the centre or through their own initiative or someone else's), even if on only one occasion.

The information being sought here is the number of individual learners who made improvements in various areas over the course of the year. To assess this you will need to make use of a range of methodologies. Some will involve **direct evidence** such as formal accreditation, test results and portfolios; observed actions, behaviours and performances; knowledge from consultation with the learners themselves; and knowledge from consultation with reliable others. Sometimes the assessment will be based on evaluative judgements by staff. In all cases you are being asked to decide on whether the improvement in question is sufficient to be considered to constitute *significant* progress.

What you consider to be 'significant' will clearly require a **judgement call** on your part. To make this judgement less subjective you should discuss with your staff team what your centre will define as the standard of significant progress for each item. In order to arrive at a decision on the areas of significant improvement made by each learner it is strongly recommended that as many members of the staff team as possible contribute to this section.

i.   The development of basic skills

By basic skills is meant the communication skills of oral language, literacy, numeracy and IT.

ii.   The development of life skills

Life skills are the kind of practical knowledge and competencies that are needed to live in Ireland in the 21st century. Practical knowledge and skills in relation to accessing public facilities and services might include sourcing information, filling in forms and opening a bank account. Presenting appropriately refers to issues of practical competence, reliability and appearance. Engagement in the world would be demonstrated, for example, by participating in community events and travelling outside the locality. Budgeting, planning and saving are involved in the effective management of money and being at ease eating in public refers to being comfortable eating in the presence of others and having the table skills to be relaxed eating in a restaurant.

iii.   The acquisition of formal accreditation in academic and vocational subjects

By formal accreditation is meant FETAC, Junior Cert and Leaving Cert / LCA.

iv.   The acquisition of vocational skills

While vocational skills are also accredited through FETAC and state exams the focus of this section is on the actual acquisition of vocationally-related skills, whether formally accredited or not.

v.   Development of effectiveness in work and learning settings

Effectiveness in work and learning settings requires a range of soft skills, such as study skills, time management and ability to work collaboratively. A career path plan may be in relation to work, further education or family life.

vi.   Socio-emotional development

This section deals with awareness of emotions, ability to deal with them effectively, sensitivity to others and ability to manage relationships.

vii. Resilience and mental health

This section is about ability to cope with one's life and to be able to be reasonably happy and confident.

viii. Ability to acknowledge difficulties and to seek out and benefit from available support services within and outside the centre

When life is not going well for a learner can they recognise what their problems are and act to try to resolve them? Acknowledging difficulties may well mean an increase in the reporting by learners of serious difficulties (including suicidal thoughts, risk-taking activities, self-harming behaviours, drug and alcohol misuse, involvement in abusive relationships).

e) Of all the learners who attended your centre during the last academic year what percentage, in your view, benefited significantly and what percentage did not benefit significantly from their participation in the Youthreach programme.

As in section d) above, what you consider to be 'significant' will require a judgement call on your part.

f) Learner case studies Please identify a learner who you consider benefited significantly … and a learner who did *not* benefit to any significant extent from their attendance in your centre in the last year.

Please identify two learners, one who, in your view, benefited significantly from their attendance in your centre in the last year and one who did not. Please describe how you supported them, any interventions you tried out with them and the impact of those interventions, if any, on them and outline their current situation.

4. Evaluation and plan for the next academic year

a) Please discuss your experience of implementing the SEN Initiative in your centre in the last academic year:

Some time needs to be set aside to **review** the implementation of the SEN Initiative in the past year and to evaluate how well you think your SEN resources were used to meet the needs of your learners.

b) What changes will you make to your plan for next year?

In **preparing your plan** for next year you will need to be clear about what decisions are a matter for the ETB or need to be made in consultation with the ETB, what decisions are a matter for the coordinator and what decisions need to be made by the staff team.

You will also need to consider the practical options you have in relation to the subjects and accreditation routes you can make available to your learners and the choices they can realistically have in the subjects or modules they study. While the plan will be developed primarily by the staff team in association with the ETB it is recommended that the plan be informed by the learners and their parents through a process of information-sharing and consultation.

Planning for next year will benefit from a variety of processes engaged in by the staff team, including reflecting, estimating, brainstorming, imagining, goal-setting, planning, timetabling and budgeting. It is not possible to prescribe the perfect plan, as what is most appropriate for any centre will depend on the needs of its own particular learners, the skills and competencies of its staff team, the support provided by the ETB and the social and physical context of the centre. The task of drawing up a centre implementation plan involves a number of steps: listing the resources that are available to the centre; thinking about how they might be best deployed to benefit the learners; identifying the needs of staff in terms of both training and support; deciding on the specific practices that will be engaged in; organising and timetabling interventions and administrative functions; and clarifying the outcomes for learners that the centre will be consciously working towards.

All work done under the SEN Initiative should accord with Department, ETB and centre policies and procedures. If necessary these should be amended or augmented in order to provide an appropriate backdrop and context for Initiative interventions (e.g. in relation to child protection, to parental involvement for learners under 18 years or to staff health and safety). Signed parental consent should be obtained for learners under 18 years for interventions such as mentoring that involve one-to-one working. It is important that the centre SEN support measures be fully explained to the learners and that they contract to their plan formally by signing and dating it. This is to ensure both that the learners are giving their informed consent and that they are committing themselves to the processes involved.

Specifically with regard to child protection, it is essential that the centre follow Department and ETB guidelines on this issue and be clear about its responsibilities in relation to the reporting of neglect and of emotional, physical or sexual abuse. These include knowing when and how such reports will be made, the limits to confidentiality that will apply in such cases and the appointment of a designated liaison person. In addition, staff should be monitoring children they consider to be at risk, be providing suitable curricular interventions to aid in the prevention of abuse and have procedures for liaison with relevant agencies such as the local duty social worker service and gardaí. In developing child protection procedures to apply specifically under the SEN provision, staff will need to define clearly the roles and responsibilities of the coordinator, designated liaison person, mentors, tutors and counsellor. Because of the possibility of disclosures being made during mentoring sessions it is advisable for the staff to discuss as a team the kinds of issues that may arise and to rehearse how they will deal with them.

Appendix: Use of SEN budget in the past year

a) What, if any, was the total surplus €_____ or deficit €_____
from the previous year that you had at the beginning of this academic year?

Please record the surplus or deficit that you had at the beginning of the year.

b) What is the total SEN Initiative budget due to your centre per year?

€_____

This amount is based on the number of learner places you have in your centre. The amount per unit of 25 places is €58,500. You can work out what you are due by dividing this figure by 25 and multiplying by the official number of places that you have.

c) What was the total amount you had to spend on SEN for this academic year[1]?

€_____

This total is the amount you were due plus your surplus or minus your deficit from the previous year if either of these applies.

d) Spending details

Mentoring provision
Mentoring provision covers all the staffing costs associated with the timetabling of mentoring sessions. This may include the employment of staff specifically to engage in mentoring and individual action planning work; the buying in of additional hours for part-time staff so that they can engage in mentoring; or the employment of other staff on a part-time basis to teach so as to free up staff to engage in mentoring.

Teaching interventions
These are tailored t*eaching interventions* that are identified through mentoring as being desirable and are provided to small groups of learners or in one-to-one settings as appropriate.   Examples of such interventions would be additional literacy or numeracy support and SPHE-type programmes focusing on areas such as personal and social development, resilience and mental health.

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[1] Add the previous year's surplus or subtract the previous year's deficit from the amount you received for this academic year if either applies.

Support interventions

These are tailored support interventions identified through mentoring as being desirable and provided in small group or in one-to-one settings as appropriate. They could include psychotherapy, counselling, guidance, psychological assessment, addiction support, alternative therapies and group process work.

Physical health activities

These are any activities that focus primarily on physical health and wellbeing. Examples of such interventions would be health education programmes, catering to develop healthy eating habits, fitness activities, sports, leisure and travel.

Administration or co-ordination

Envisaged here are the administrative tasks required to co-ordinate the SEN Initiative in the centre, including follow-up work arising from the mentoring sessions, liaison with local services and agencies and the costs of ensuring that staff can attend staff meetings where learner IAPs are being discussed.

Other interventions or activities

This category covers any other actions not already covered.

Staff training

This includes all SEN Initiative-related staff training whether for the whole staff team, a subset of the staff team (e.g. the mentors) or for an individual member of staff.

Staff support and case supervision

This relates to the required provision of staff support and case supervision for all mentors and may also include support for all members of staff and for the coordinator in order to increase the centre's general capacity to provide for the learners' needs.

e) What, if any, was your total underspend €_____ or overspend €_____ at the end of this academic year?

This is the difference between what you had to spend and what you actually spent. An estimate is acceptable if you do not have the final figures available to you.