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Provision Mapping in Post Primary Schools

Interim Progress Report: Pilot Initiative
2021-2022

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- Participating ETBs and schools. The high level of interest from Directors of Schools, Principals and school personnel across the ETB sector exemplifies the conscientious commitment of so many to inclusive education. Additionally, support from Principals of Inclusion Coaches who are working with other schools is appreciated.
- As a nationwide pilot, the support for implementation of this initiative across schools depends on the passion, expertise and commitment of a number of ETB appointed Inclusion Coaches. The Coaches have worked closely with key school personnel to champion strategic and schoolwide approaches to inclusive education.
- This initiative was originally piloted in Limerick and Clare ETB. Sincere thanks and appreciation are extended to the schools involved, the LCETB LILTA Team (Joe Lynch, Dr. Joe O’Connell, Angela Martin, Grainne Dennison and Gina O’Connor) and the Directors of Schools, Bernadette Cullen who initiated the pilot, and Donncha O’Tresaigh, who continued to support its implementation and subsequent development.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2021, an initiative aimed at supporting strategic and whole-school development of inclusive and special education commenced across thirty-three ETB post primary schools. This nationwide pilot was developed initially by Mary Immaculate College in collaboration with Limerick and Clare ETB. This interim report captures feedback from participating Directors of Schools, Principals of pilot schools and Inclusion Coaches at the end of the first academic year and mid-way through the project, with a view to informing the next stage of the pilot in Autumn 2022.

Provision Mapping

The initiative aims to build leadership capacity within the ETB sector to respond to increasingly diverse student populations through distributed and networked approaches to leadership amongst participating teachers.

The initiative applies a flexible, strengths-based and solution-focused approach to implementation which aims to build systematic, collaborative and situated approaches to professional learning and capacity building within and between schools across the ETB sector. Inclusion Coaches were appointed by Directors of Schools in ETB regions and will work with schools within their ETB to support further development of whole-school, systematic, collaborative approaches to inclusive and special education. Specifically, coaches will work with senior leadership teams, special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and Curriculum/ Subject Coordinators in their own schools and/ or other schools in their ETB to support implementation of a cycle of School Self-Evaluation (Department of Education and Skills (DES) Inspectorate 2016), informed by the Looking At Our Schools Quality Framework (DES Inspectorate, 2016), to develop a school Provision Map (Fitzgerald 2018; Fitzgerald, Lynch, Martin and Cullen 2021), reflecting current provision to support students identified with additional and special education needs across the Continuum of Support (DES, 2017; NEPS, 2010). The initiative aims to build networked regional teams of Inclusion Coaches across the ETB sector who will support implementation and development of provision mapping over time in participating schools. Inclusion Coaches can be teachers (Special Education Teachers (SETs), SENCOs and/or Curriculum Leaders/ Deputy Principals/ Guidance Counsellors) or other personnel (e.g., Psychologists, ETB Advisors already on release from schools).

Project Rationale

Research suggests that a parallel system of inclusive and special education exists in our schools despite schools' attempts to move towards integrated provision for students with additional needs and disabilities along a flexible continuum of support. Discrete delivery of special education can create 'siloed' approaches to education for some learners and put increasing pressure on SENCOs and SEN Teams (Fitzgerald and Radford 2017; 2020). Furthermore, since the introduction of the Special Education Teacher Allocation Model

(SETAM) in 2017 (DES 2017), the brief of the SENCO and SEN Team has expanded to incorporate all learners with identified needs. SENCOs are increasingly fulfilling key leadership roles in their schools. This initiative aims to build leadership for inclusive education across schools.

Research from an earlier pilot of this initiative (Fitzgerald et al. 2021) suggests that developing collaborative approaches to school self-evaluation as it relates to inclusive and special education will require a systematic approach involving development and embedding of systems to share relevant information about student and class profiles with all teachers to inform their planning for learning, teaching and assessment. Systems which allow for shared professional learning in schools, will help teachers to cascade their knowledge, skills and understanding across the school, and support in-school, situated capacity building amongst colleagues. Creation of dedicated SEN/ AEN teams are important to lead a schoolwide approach to inclusive and special education, and support colleagues to implement inclusive strategies in the classroom.

Project Aims

- Affirm and acknowledge existing good practice in relation to inclusive and special education in schools.
- Support schools to develop whole-school systematic, collaborative and collective approaches to inclusive and special education.
- Guide schools in their implementation of school self-evaluation (DES Inspectorate 2016) to develop a school provision map, reflecting current provision for students with additional and special educational needs across the Continuum of Support (NEPS 2010).
- Build systematic, collaborative and situated approaches to professional learning and capacity building.

2. INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

This section outlines the strands to support implementation of the initiative and are summarised as:

- Inclusion Coach Induction:
- School Visits
- Online events for pilot schools
- ETBI Strategic Priority Group for Inclusive Education
- Endorsement from The Centre for School Leadership

Table 1 presents a timeline for implementation of Provision Mapping from September

2021- December 2022, which has been amended following analysis of findings from the interim evaluation. A revised implementation timeline is presented in Table 8, Section 4 of this Report.

Inclusion Coach Induction

In May 2021, 46 Inclusion Coaches were selected by Directors of Schools across 14 ETBs to participate in the project. Inclusion Coaches work closely with one or more schools in their respective ETBs to support implementation of systems which will promote whole-school reflection on and evaluation of current inclusive practice. Some inclusion coaches are supporting implementation of provision mapping in their pilot schools, a minority are supporting schools other than their own in their ETBs, and some of these inclusion coaches have also initiated the provision mapping in their own schools. Therefore, while 33 schools are participating in the pilot, more ETB schools are also implementing provision mapping.

It was recommended that inclusion coaches be allocated some additional time to engage with the induction programme (1 day per week) if resources allowed, but local and flexible arrangements between school principals, inclusion coaches and Directors of Schools were also encouraged.

The learning outcomes for the induction programme will enable Inclusion Coaches to:

- Critically interrogate the concepts of Inclusive Education, Special Education, Inclusive leadership for school improvement;
- Review and evaluate current academic and educational policy measures relating to inclusive and special education and critique these in the context of school improvement;
- Apply skills-based, evidence-based approaches to leadership development and collaborative practice for organisational change and innovation;
- Apply mentorship skills to building leadership capacity of colleagues;
- Acknowledge the role of systematic, organisational approaches to Inclusive Education, with a focus on schools as learning organisations;
- Examine the role of personal value systems, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence in leading organisational transformation.

The structure of the induction programme recognises the importance of flexible and sustainable pathways to professional learning for Inclusion Coaches and acknowledges that while professional learning is a highly individualised endeavour, models supporting transformation are those identified as collaborative, grounded (Netolicky 2016) and adaptive (Davey and Egan 2020). Multi-modal approaches to induction programme delivery are illustrated in Figure 1 and comprise the following strands:

- *Structured online events.* Three online professional learning events were scheduled in Autumn 2021. They were supported with access to an extensive interactive Notebook, accessed through a dedicated ETBI MS Team, housing reflective journals, key policy, theoretical and empirical literature,

presentations and resources related to online learning. Online days ran from 9.30am-3.30pm, included both synchronous and asynchronous delivery, and focused on:

- Day 1 Theme: Overview of Provision Mapping and its rationale
- Day 2 Theme: The Policy Landscape for Inclusive and Special Education
- Day 3: Leadership for Inclusive and Special Education
- *Independent study and reflection.* Over the course of the academic year 2021-2022 Inclusion Coaches engaged with resources, empirical and theoretical research, policy literature and reflective logs contained within the Notebook.
- *Community of practice.* Structured communities of practice were scheduled monthly from March during the school day for one and a half hours online. Three meetings in total occurred which aimed to facilitate collegial sharing and fostering of collaborative relationship within and across ETBs. On each occasion, inclusion coaches were invited to present and share an example of good practice as identified by the needs of the group. Resources were distributed amongst the group. The following presentations took place:
 - Sinead O'Hara, Education Advisor WWETB: *WWETB Whole School Inclusion Policy*. This presentation included an overview of where the Provision Map sits within the inclusion policy and how it will be reviewed going forward, in line with the provision mapping process. Followed by an interactive discussion with Sinead.
 - Ramona Morgan, Inclusion Coach TETB, SENCO Borrisokane Community College: *Developing the SEN Team and Developing Schoolwide Communication Systems in Borrisokane Community College*, Followed by an interactive discussion with Ramona.
 - Marieke O'Connor, Inclusion Coach KETB, SENCO Killorglin Community College: *Digital systems for SSPs and PPPs in Killorglin Community College*. Followed by an interactive discussion with Marieke.
- *Mentoring.* School visits, drop-in clinics, email and telephone support were available to Inclusion Coaches throughout the year. Joint school visits with the project lead occurred with Inclusion Coaches who were supporting schools other than their own.

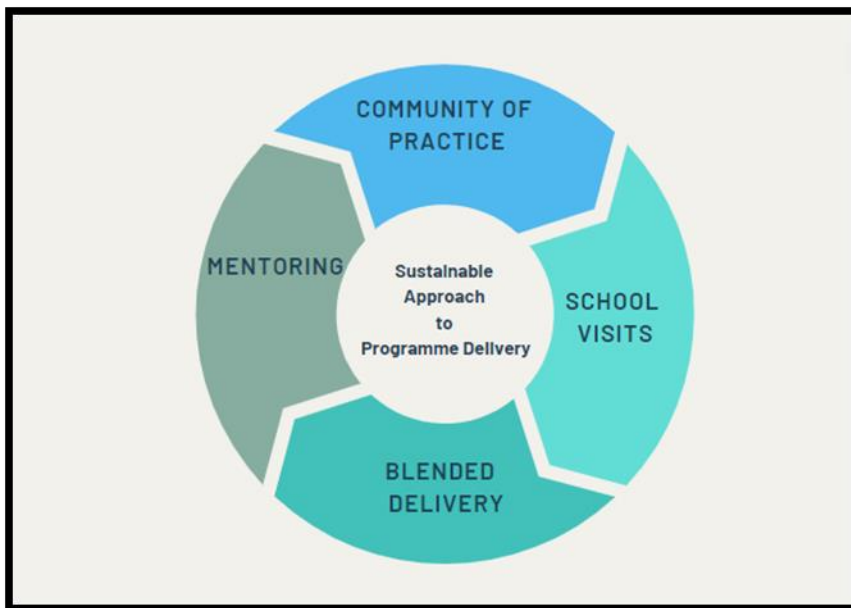


Figure 1. Multi-modal approach to programme of professional learning (Adapted from Fitzgerald et al. 2021).

School Visits

Each of the 33 pilot schools was offered an initial school visit between January and March. Twenty-nine schools received their first school visit. The purpose of the first school visit was threefold: to build relationships with key staff, including school champions and senior leadership teams; to discuss bespoke arrangements and timelines for implementation of provision mapping within individual school contexts; and to address any queries or concerns, in particular to discuss the initial staff workshop and surveys for parents and students.

The agenda for Visit 2, which the initial timeline suggested could happen between May/ October 2022, is to support analysis of data collected, and its integration with the School Improvement Plan or DEIS Plan.

Online Events for Pilot Schools

Three regional cluster meetings are scheduled throughout the pilot stage. Two meetings have occurred as per the schedule. In November 2021, the first regional cluster meeting took place online with pilot school principals, inclusion coaches and Directors of Schools, and offered an overview of the initiative and an opportunity to ask questions. At this meeting, principals were asked to return to their schools and identify key staff members who would lead the initiative. These 'School Champions' would ideally comprise a mix of teachers, and could be SENCOs, Guidance Counsellors, Curriculum/ Subject Leaders/ Deputy Principals.

The second meeting occurred in February 2022, and specifically supported School Champions to develop/ adapt workshop materials for the whole staff workshop/ focus group surveys. All materials, including surveys for staff, parents and students, PowerPoint presentations, and other materials were developed in consultation with Inclusion Coaches, and shared with School Champions in advance of the workshop. Inclusion Coaches then worked in small breakout groups with School Champions to assist with preparations with their workshops. The final regional cluster meeting is scheduled to take place as the initial pilot phase concludes in December. No dates have been identified yet.

ETBI Strategic Priority Group

The ETBI Strategic Priority Group for Inclusive Education comprises selected personnel from across the ETB sector including representative Directors of Schools, ETB Chief Executives, Principals, Education Officers and Policy and Development Officers ETBI and MIC Programme Lead. Linda Tynan, Director of Schools for LOETB is Chairperson and Valerie Lewis, Educational Policy and Development Officer, ETBI is Secretary. This group serves as the nucleus of the initiative where all strategic and operational decisions are made. Existing pathways facilitate communication back and forth between the Strategic Priority Group, Directors of Schools Group, Principal and Deputy Principal Groups, and Inclusion Coaches.

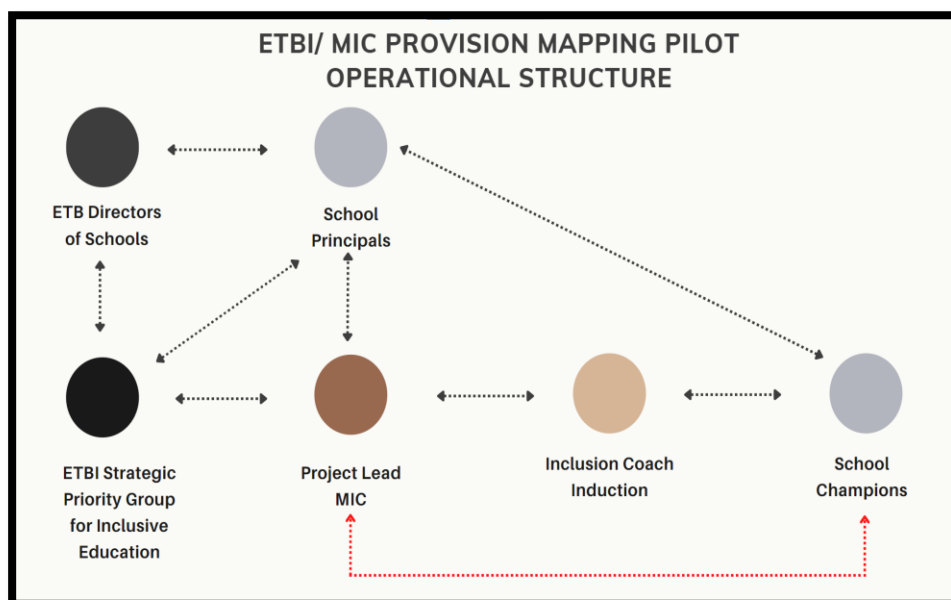


Figure 2. Communication Systems to Initiative Management and Implementation

Endorsement from The Centre for School Leadership

In discussions with Inclusion Coaches and the ETBI Strategic Priority Group, it was decided to apply for endorsement of the initiative to the Centre for School Leadership (CSL). Endorsement will publicly validate the quality of the initiative and communicate its relevance to school leaders; it will provide recognition to participating school leaders at all levels, (Senior Leaders, Inclusion Coaches and School Champions) of the value of their complex work in leading inclusive school improvement; it will contribute to professional learning opportunities for school leaders and it will guide a process of continuous reflection, evaluation and programme review as the initiative develops.

In May 2022, an application to the CSL to endorse the Provision Mapping Initiative was prepared by the ETBI Strategic Priority Group and submitted. In late May, following peer review by an expert panel, we were informed that the project would progress to the next phase of the endorsement process, and would be paused until the full pilot cycle was completed, and a final evaluation undertaken.

3. INTERIM EVALUATION

This section outlines the methods employed to capture the perspectives of Directors of Schools, pilot school Principals and Inclusion Coaches at this stage of the initiative.

Methods

Data Collection: Surveys

Survey responses were collected from Inclusion Coaches, Principals and Directors of Schools in May 2022 using MS Forms. Surveys were designed collaboratively between the initiative lead and some members of the ETBI Strategic Priority Group. Respondents were emailed a link to the survey, and responses were collected anonymously. Bespoke surveys were issued to each group which comprised a combination of ranked questions, closed and open-ended questions (Appendix A).

Sampling

Purposive sampling was undertaken to capture the perspectives of key personnel involved in the pilot initiative at this interim stage (Table 2). Wider school personnel perspectives are not captured in the data, which represents a limitation of the research to date, however, a more in-depth final evaluation is

planned when the pilot is completed, which will capture multiple perspectives. Additionally, the data collection coincided with a particularly busy time of year for schools and ETBs, which is reflected in the response rate.

Table 2. Sample Response Rate

Respondents	Total Number Invited	Response Rate
Inclusion Coaches	46	26: 57%
Principals	33	18: Response rate 55%
Directors of Schools	14	4: Response rate 29%

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse ranked questions, while open ended questions were coded and presented thematically.

4. FINDINGS

Survey findings are presented according to questions for each of the three groups; Inclusion Coaches ($n=26$), Principals ($n=18$), and Directors of Schools ($n=4$).

Inclusion Coach Survey Findings

Twenty-six of the total 46 Inclusion Coaches responded to the survey, representing a 57% response rate and thereby suggesting that findings may be representative of the wider group. Of the 26 respondents:

- 16 were leading the implementation in their own schools (pilot schools)
- 10 were supporting other schools to implement provision mapping, 4 of whom were also implementing it in their own schools (non-pilot schools).

Findings are presented thematically as they relate to survey questions and are categorised under the following themes:

- Programme Delivery, Content and Materials
- Engaging with the Induction Programme: Challenges and Opportunities
- Forward Planning

Programme Delivery, Content and Materials

Responses to ranked questions (Table 3) indicate high levels of satisfaction with the delivery, content and approach to the induction programme to date.

Table 3. Inclusion Coaches Ranking Question Responses

Question	Average Response
How effective were the three online days in the Autumn in supporting your understanding of your role as an Inclusion Coach? (1=least effective; 5= most effective)	4.54
How effective was the initial school visit in supporting you in your role as an Inclusion Coach? (1=least effective; 5= most effective)	4.31
How effective was the monthly online Community of Practice in supporting you in your role as an Inclusion Coach? (1=least effective; 5= most effective)	4.54
How effective was the combination of learning approaches (online presentations; online breakout group activities; offline independent activities; school visits; community of practice) in supporting you in your learning? (1=least effective; 5= most effective)	4.62
How would you rate the quality of the materials provided? (1= poor, inaccessible and irrelevant; 5= excellent, highly accessible & relevant)	4.92

Engaging with the Induction Programme: Challenges and Opportunities

When Inclusion Coaches were asked if they had adequate time to engage with the project this year, most (17) indicated that they did (Figure 3). Those who selected ‘other’ also indicated pressures with finding time and elaborated, with one respondent stating that *‘It worked better in Autumn when we could work from home, as working when in school it was very difficult to manage expectations’*. Another explained how *‘Yes [I did have enough time] at certain times of the year it was quite challenging to devote enough time to it’*, while a final comment indicated that the needs of the school did not facilitate release on Tuesdays.



Figure 3. Inclusion Coach Responses to Question: Did you have sufficient time to engage with the project this academic year?

When asked if they experienced any challenges with involvement in the initiative during the academic year 2021-2022, the majority (18) said yes (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Inclusion Coach Responses to Question: Did you experience challenges in your role as an Inclusion Coach this academic year?

Key challenges reported by Inclusion Coaches are categorised according to their prevalence in the data and are outlined below.

Time

Lack of time to devote to the initiative, finding time to meet with School Champions, finding time at staff meetings with so many competing agendas, and also finding time to engage with online induction events and materials were identified as the predominant challenge by respondents. Some indicative responses are included.

When meetings are scheduled during the school day, it was more difficult to dedicate time to be fully engaged. I felt a little conflicted between roles and expectations. Personally, being out of school to complete workshops works better.

At times, it was difficult to devote enough time to do complete the reading, etc., but this was due to staff shortages due to Covid. This will rectify itself, going forward, hopefully!

Timing was an issue as a lot of staff meetings were already set so trying to figure out a date for the meeting was difficult.

Working as an inclusion coach when the school is not a pilot school was very difficult to arrange cover.

Being an Inclusion Coach for other schools.

Mentioned earlier, 10 Inclusion Coaches are supporting schools which are not their own. Responses indicate that this added an additional layer of complexity and ambiguity to the work. Comments below are representative of the views expressed in the surveys.

I think the role with regard to the pilot school (if it's not your own school) needs to be further defined. How much interaction should you have with the school? Are pilot schools clear about the inclusion coaches role?

I think moving forward it would be more productive if inclusion coaches were just doing it in their own schools.

It has been difficult to get responses or keep schools on target at times, different when you're present in the school to bring the team along. Schools have been experiencing enormous challenges so I relied on light touch pressure. We're on track but a little behind schedule as a result.

I am an Inclusion Coach for another school and also for my own school. The challenge I find is ensuring that I am offering support as an Inclusion Coach to the external school but allowing the team in place to work in their own context. Then in my own school I am more involved in the work of the pilot programme working with the team for our school context. This is a challenge but I also see it as a fantastic learning opportunity as an Inclusion Coach.

Motivating Colleagues to Engage

A few responses indicated that engaging staff with the initiative, and achieving 'buy-in' from some colleagues was a challenge. One respondent indicated that perhaps management '*were not giving the time and recognition*' which made it difficult to motivate and engage others.

The word cloud (Figure 5) illustrates some of the key words mentioned in qualitative comments when Inclusion Coaches were asked to elaborate on challenges experienced.

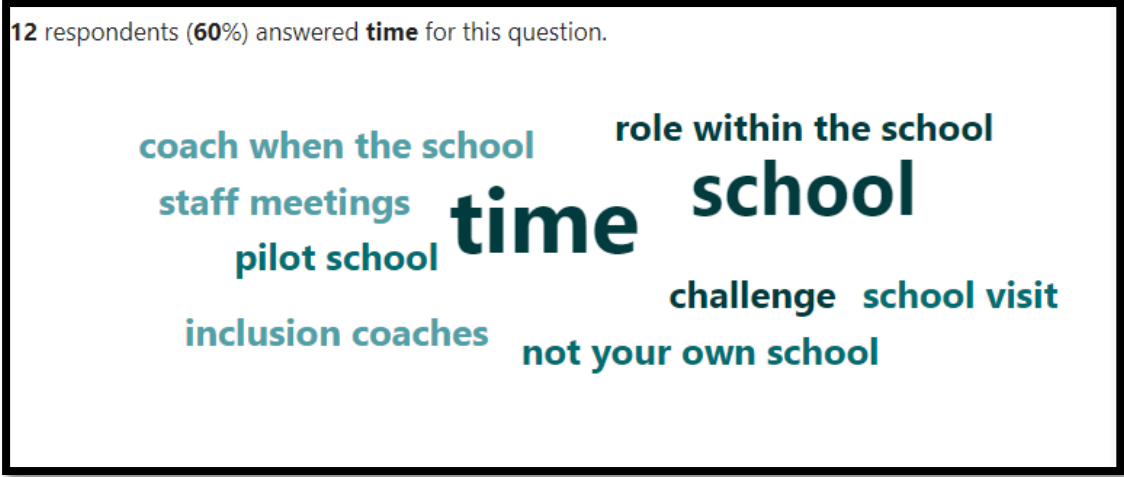


Figure 5. Inclusion Coach Word Cloud to Question: If you did experience challenges this year, what were they and how could you be further supported?

Forward Planning

In attempting to support emerging professional learning needs of Inclusion Coaches, and to inform planning for the Autumn, the survey asked them to identify what else they would like to cover during the induction programme. Table 4 summarises responses. Five responses indicated they were happy with the topics covered to date. The data point to the need for support for data analysis, integration of the data with existing school policies, leadership, and continued engagement with collegial sharing of evidence-based practices to support inclusive and special education provision in schools.

Table 4. Inclusion Coach requests for additional professional learning

Topic request	Number of Responses
Analysis and interpretation of data gathered.	3
Role of Inclusion Coach outside of Provision Mapping	1
The process alignment with SSE/ SIP/ DEIS Planning	2
Guidance for whole school practical use of the continuum of support - embedding the continuum into everyday language	1
Evidence Based Programmes to support inclusive and special education learning, teaching and assessment across schools (emerging form school data)	3
Documentation required moving forward	1
Leading change	3
Continued Community of Practice to support collegial sharing of evidence-based practice and resources.	2

More scheduled visits to schools.	1
More specific timelines for actioning project.	1
Clearer role descriptors for Inclusion Coaches	2
Feedback from more experienced Inclusion Coaches	1

Connected to the previous question, Inclusion Coaches were invited to add any other suggestions they had to improve the induction programme. Suggestions are summarised below and signify individual responses:

- School Champion: Clearer guidelines required to select appropriate school champions.
- Blended Approach: Online meetings are accessible, efficient and well structured, but some face-to-face meetings would be helpful. For breakout group activities during the Community of Practice meetings, one person suggested less time was needed.
- For online workshop sessions, it is advisable to complete these out of school, perhaps during afternoons. This would allow Inclusion Coaches to leave school, which limit the number of distractions/ interruptions.
- Greater emphasis on building leadership skills.
- Continued sharing of evidence-based practice amongst the group via the Community of Practice and monitoring of progress.
- Provide a greater level of integration of Provision Mapping with school level structures and systems.
- Avoid scheduling evening meetings.

A number of respondents took the opportunity to report on the benefits of participation in the project, which are illustrated by the following comments.

The Induction Programme has been an excellent learning experience for me. I found the opportunity to collaborate with other Inclusion Coaches from diverse contexts invaluable. The dialogue that derived from this collaboration has had a positive impact on my learning and my personal reflection on my role. I found the presentations and workshops delivered really informative and it helped me understand the provision mapping journey from listening to other schools' experiences.

... it was excellent. So informative and positive at the same time. I would go so far as to say it was uplifting in the sense that it was so affirming of the work done in schools.

A really excellent programme. I'm glad I had the opportunity to partake.

The blend of theory, practice, presentations of examples of working systems in schools and the building up of relationships and communities of practice, have made it such a worthwhile and enjoyable experience. I have gained a huge amount of knowledge this year to bring back to school and have gotten the contact details of the nicest of people with great knowledge who are always willing to give help/advice.

When asked if they wish to continue as Inclusion Coaches in the next academic year, 25 responded in the affirmative as illustrated in Figure 6. Further, when asked how confident they feel now in leading the project within their respective ETBs (1= not confident; 2= somewhat confident; 3=very confident), the average response was 2.35, with 10 Inclusion Coaches indicating that they felt 'very confident', and a further 15 indicating 'somewhat confident'. One respondent signalled that they were not confident.



Figure 6. Inclusion Coach Responses to Question: Are you happy to continue as an Inclusion Coach next academic year?

The final question on the survey invited Inclusion Coaches to comment on anything else of importance and the majority took the opportunity to comment on their positive experience of the programme, the learning gleaned over the year, the collaborations and relationships developed with schools and fellow Inclusion Coaches. Some took the opportunity to reinforce key suggestions previously mentioned, such as the recommendation for Inclusion Coaches to lead the project in their own schools before supporting other schools; finding time to engage with activities and online events during school time was mentioned again also; as was finding time to schedule the staff workshop.

Pilot School Principals Survey Findings

Findings are presented thematically as they relate to survey questions and are

categorised under the following themes:

- Programme Delivery, Content and Materials
- Engaging with the Induction Programme: Challenges and Opportunities
- Forward Planning

Programme Delivery, Content and Materials

Eighteen of the total 33 Principals responded to the survey, representing a 54% response rate and thereby suggesting that findings may be representative of the wider group. Of the 18 respondents, 17 had received their first school visit. When asked how effective the school visit was in supporting Principals and colleagues to begin to implement provision mapping, (1=least effective; 5= most effective), an average response of 4.39 was gleaned from the data, which is represented in Figure 7. While 18 respondents contributed to this question, it is noteworthy that Respondent 7, who gave a rating of 2, had also indicated that they did not have a school visit yet.

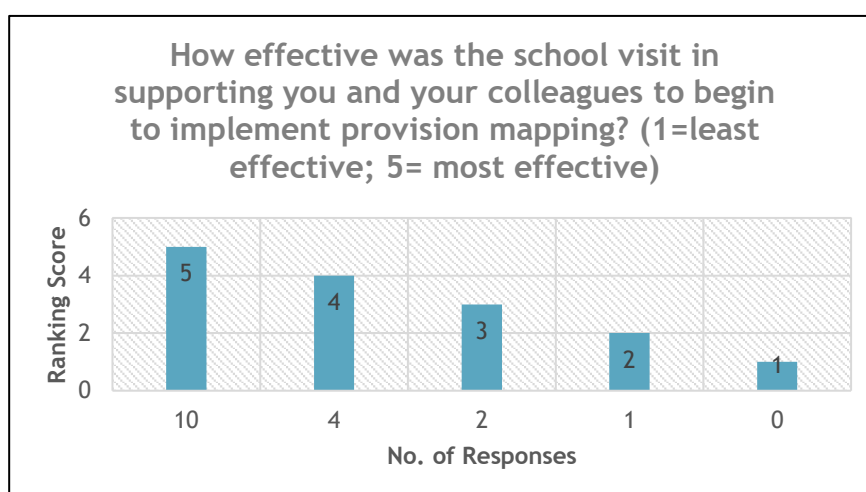


Figure 7. Principal Responses to Question: How effective was the school visit in supporting you and your colleagues to begin to implement provision mapping?

Principals were asked ranked questions about the communication and quality of the materials, both of which were favourably reported on. One respondent ranked '2' for communication, which would indicate a lack of clarity about the project.

Table 5. Principals' Ranked Question Responses

Question	Average Response
How clear was communication with you about the provision mapping process? (1=least clear; 5= most clear)	4.44
How would you rate the quality of the materials provided? (1=	4.67

poor, inaccessible and irrelevant; 5= excellent, highly accessible & relevant)

As with the Inclusion Coach survey responses, some Principals signalled that they did not have sufficient time to engage with the initiative as illustrated in Figure 8.

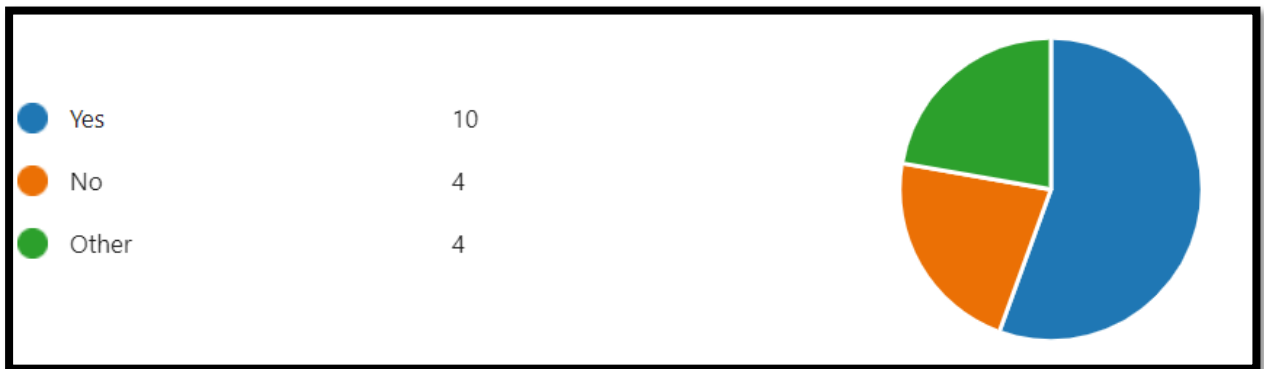


Figure 8. Principal Responses to Question: Did your school have sufficient time to engage with the project this academic year?

Further commentary was provided by the four principals who selected ‘Other’, with comments illuminated below.

We would have scheduled study leave 1 day per week for the SENCo if we were aware of the extent of the commitment needed.

Working at a pace that suits us.

We could have done with more time but cuts to CP hours in recent years has had a significant impact on school's ability to plan.

Due to Covid and the busyness of returning to normality it was difficult to put all the ideas into action in the timeframe we had. This however was more to do with events in school life than the project. By the time we fully got our heads in the project we had to postpone some aspects of the project to next year.

Engaging with the Induction Programme: Challenges and Opportunities

Eight principals experienced challenges implementing the initiative, and when probed further, the following challenges emerged, which concur with challenges experienced by Inclusion Coaches.

Time

Time to engage fully with the process was identified as a challenge by a number of respondents. Covid resulted in staff meetings being scheduled once restrictions lifted, with heavy agendas in a limited timeframe. One respondent felt that, in hindsight, they could have given additional time to the SENCO to complete the work involved, while two respondents expressed the view that timeframes were unclear, and suggested that more concise expectations for schools should be given. Tuesday release for Inclusion Coaches was not possible for one respondent.

Motivating Colleagues to Engage

One respondent identified 'getting buy-in from staff' as the biggest challenge and suggested that having 'an outside facilitator who has implemented the 'Provision Mapping' elsewhere to present to the whole staff when we have our process underway' would be helpful.

Feedback also indicated that schools were at different stages in terms of their implementation, with some yet to deliver the staff workshop, and others having collected data from staff, parents and students, as illustrated in Figure 9. Additionally, when asked if they would be ready for a second school visit in Autumn, 15 principals indicated that they would be ready, while 3 were not sure.



Figure 9. Principal Responses to invitation to select which of the following aspects of provision mapping have been implemented this academic year in schools.

Forward Planning

Principals were invited to share suggestions for improving the provision mapping initiative. Many helpful suggestions were offered which are synthesised in Table 6. Nine principals indicated that they had no suggestions to improve the initiative, with some commenting positively on the progress to date.

When principals were asked if they were happy to continue with the initiative in the next academic year, 17 answered affirmatively, with one principal wishing to opt out.

Table 6. Principals’ suggestions to improve the initiative.

Suggestion
Explore, assessment, intervention, retest and evaluation strategies to develop sustainable good practice in SEN.
Advice to senior leadership on how to optimise additional allocation of hours, to avoid ‘filling up’ timetables.
Second school visit could be scheduled for late September.
More time to subject departments to engage with the mapping exercise.
A clear structure and agenda for school visits to allow staff to prepare in advance.
Evidence Based Programmes to support inclusive and special education learning, teaching and assessment across schools (emerging form school data)
School champions in schools are critical in creating buy-in from staff.
Support from senior leadership is crucial to the project.
Building a team to implement the project as the time and workload is bigger than anticipated.

The final survey question invited principals to contribute any other important information not already expressed. Many commented affirmatively on their involvement in the project and its potential for positive school improvement, with one principal saying *‘I commend the fact that this is a whole school approach and not just targeted at the SEN dept. All staff are aware of its importance’*. Another principal indicated that data from the project would underpin the next cycle of SSE, and would welcome ways to integrate wellbeing within the data analysis. Another commented on the quality of materials and supports provided *‘the supports provided were excellent and each step of the process was clearly outlined. The presentation content for the staff workshop was excellent’*, while another believed *‘we are well supported with resources and advice. As a school we have to work to take this on and fully implement it. So far it has been a very positive experience for us.’* Some constructive feedback was also offered. One principal suggested that the staff survey was too long, while another let us know that a new SENCO would be in place in the next academic year, with much to learn. This is noteworthy, as succession planning will need to be factored in to the initiative to support continuity and knowledge transfer.

Directors of Schools Survey Findings

Four out of 14 Directors of Schools responded to the survey and therefore findings cannot

be generalised to the wider population. Nevertheless, others may concur with findings outlined.

Programme Delivery, Content and Materials

A series of short ranked questions were asked and are illustrated in Table 7. Average scores for ranked responses are lower than those for Inclusion Coaches and Principals, which would indicate there is some work to be done to improve communication with Directors of Schools and offer more explicit guidance. Furthermore, when asked if communication about the project within their respective ETBs was effective (i.e. between Directors of Schools and Inclusion Coaches /Principals; between Inclusion Coaches and Schools), two of the Directors stated that it was not effective.

Table 7. Directors of Schools Ranking Question Responses

Question	Average Response
What impact has the provision mapping project had in pilot schools to date? (1=no impact; 5= very positive impact)	4.0
How clear was communication with you about the provision mapping process from the ETBI Strategic Priority Group? (1=least clear; 5= most clear)	3.75
To what extent do you understand the role of the Inclusion Coach in your ETB? (1= no understanding; 5= full understanding)	3.75

When asked what would help to support Directors of Schools engagement with Inclusion Coaches in the next academic year, some helpful responses were gleaned which are outlined below.

‘Continued awareness development and relevant networks and CPD, as embedding something such as this can be a slow, iterative, incremental process. Only after a while can the results become increasingly apparent.’

[It] ‘needs a more formalised arrangement - meetings need to be set up in advance; clearer lines of communication needed - will take full responsibility for not following up with the inclusion coaches...’

‘Our internal agreement to schedule meetings.’

‘Regular meetings of the coaches as a national network National draft templates.’

Engaging with the Induction Programme: Challenges and Opportunities

When Directors of Schools were asked if they experienced challenges in supporting the implementation of provision mapping in pilot schools this academic year, all four said yes. Time to support the project was identified by two respondents; competing for time and space among other initiatives were also cited by two. In particular, one respondent elaborated to explain that *'the work on ethos overshadowed the work on the inclusion project. It was challenging having both running concurrently'*. Other challenges included, *'uneven understanding'*, challenges presented by Covid, general fatigue in schools, and an absence of face-to-face meetings. One noted that *'the pressures now on the teacher allocation due to the withdrawal of the Covid concessions will be a factor going forward'*.

When asked if they had suggestions about how the ETBI Strategic Priority Group could further support respective ETBs to implement provision mapping, feedback was generally positive about the level of support already in place and all indicated that they wished to continue with the initiative next year. Comments like *'Lean ar aghaidh..good work being undertaken'*, and *'I think we are quite far along in this process'* were offered. One suggestion asked to consider the Ethos Initiative national framework as a model of support.

Linked to the above question, Directors of Schools were asked what information they needed about the project for the next academic year to support their planning, and again some informative feedback was offered. While one respondent indicated a *'good flow'* of information was already forthcoming, another suggested a *'simple plan with small steps'* would be helpful. Some important questions were also asked, which will need to be revisited with Directors of Schools in Autumn:

- What is the plan going forward, how will the inclusion coaches support new schools, and who will provide support for the inclusion coaches?
- Are other schools to receive more direct support?

Finally, when asked if there was anything else of importance worth noting, one Director of Schools emphasised the importance of supporting the Colaistí lán-Ghaeilge, all of whom will require translation of resources, and may need some specific supports for inclusion. A further comment referenced the challenges some schools are experiencing when including students with more complex needs, particularly those in special classes. These students can be segregated in schools, with concerns regarding *'some of the physical manifestations of the frustration of those students, particularly those who are non-verbal'*. This respondent also indicated that enabling subject teachers to take responsibility for the learning of these students is an ongoing challenge.

Summary of Findings

Findings from across the three datasets, while not representative of all participants, are overwhelmingly positive about the provision mapping initiative. A synthesis of findings reveals that almost all respondents are committed to progressing the initiative in the next academic year.

All respondents commented positively on the quality of resources and materials provided, the multimodal approach to the induction programme and support, and offered some suggestions for further refinement and improvement.

Schools are at different stages of implementation, which is allowed for in the timeline and reflects the varied contexts of schools. Many experienced challenges this academic year. Time to engage with the initiative, finding time to release Inclusion Coaches, and an underestimation of the time required to fully implement the process were identified as key challenges. Covid, unsurprisingly, also impacted schools' ability to engage fully.

Benefits to participation in the initiative were conveyed. Inclusion Coaches reported on the professional learning opportunities afforded to them, the new collaborative relationships developed, and the recognition and affirmation of existing good practice. Principals reported the benefits of developing an integrated approach to inclusive school improvement, which will, in time, build whole-school capacity to respond to diverse student needs at both classroom level, and individual learner level. While the provision mapping framework aims to develop whole school integration of SSE and the Continuum of Support, findings across all datasets signal a need for more support and guidance in this area.

The next section will outline the implications of these findings for future planning and will inform next steps in Autumn 2022.

5. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings reveal helpful signposts for further refinement and development of the provision mapping initiative to support current and future schools' involvement. Recommendations for further development and planning are outlined thematically.

Resourcing

Resource implications for Directors of Schools, pilot schools, and the initiative more broadly are outlined and dates for Autumn release for Inclusion Coaches, Principals and School Champions scheduled (Table 8). In summary, key recommendations relating to resourcing of the initiative in the Autumn are:

- Findings spotlight the complexity of implementing a whole-school approach to inclusive and special education, which is borne out in both the empirical and policy literature relating to school improvement and implementation of change. To acknowledge the complexity of the process, it is recommended that a robust support mechanism be established should schools/Principals need additional support or reassurance. Communication between Directors of Schools and pilot school Principals in early Autumn is advised to identify any additional support needs.
- Inclusion Coaches will need release from school on the dates and times indicated on table 8.
- Time to engage with the initiative was identified as a challenge. Wherever possible, it is advised that Inclusion Coaches/ School Champions be given a small derogation in teaching to lead the initiative. Local negotiations are necessary to identify the time required, given the variability across schools. Inclusion Coaches supporting schools other than their own may also require occasional release to visit the schools.
- Translation of materials as Gaeilge is identified as a priority and DDLETB has already taken the initiative to develop some resources for Coláistí lán-Ghaeilge. Johanna Fitzgerald is also liaising with ETBI to source external funding for this work. This is ongoing.
- highlight the need to acknowledge the complexity of the process and the recommendation for the inclusion of a robust support mechanism should schools/Principals need additional support or reassurance.

Professional Learning Schedule

This section outlines the schedule of events and opportunities to engage with professional learning for pilot schools, Inclusion Coaches and Directors of Schools. Key recommendations are summarised:

- Directors of Schools will be invited to attend all events outlined in Table 8, subject to their availability. Their involvement is critical to the further consolidation and development of the initiative.
- The Community of Practice approach adopted throughout the initiative was identified as an effective model of professional learning and networking by Inclusion Coaches. The existing Inclusion Coach community of practice will continue to meet monthly as indicated in Table 8. Based on emerging professional learning needs identified by Inclusion Coaches, some identified guest speakers will contribute in areas such as leadership, coaching, and student voice. Inclusion Coaches will be invited to share good practice at these events also.
- As an extension of the ETBI community of practice, it is recommended that Inclusion Coaches establish ETB level communities of practice with personnel from across all schools if this is not already in place. Directors of Schools are advised to liaise directly with Inclusion Coaches within their respective ETBs to

discuss.

- While a second school visit was originally scheduled for Autumn 2022 to support schools, clustered workshops with Inclusion Coaches and School Champions will replace these visits, with a focus on data analysis and its integration with SSE/DEIS planning. Dates are illustrated in Table 8.
- A blended approach to professional learning, support and guidance will be adopted in Autumn.
- On October 4th 2022 an online event will be organised for Directors of Schools, pilot school Principals, School Champions and Inclusion Coach to commence this process. Case study schools, some of whom have embedded provision mapping at a whole school level and integrated it with existing school policies, will be invited to share experiences and resources. Materials to scaffold schools' work in the next stage of planning will be circulated in advance of the online event. It is recommended that schools will have some data collected (from staff/ students/ parents) to plan for next steps.
- Four schools still require an initial school visit. Johanna Fitzgerald will link with relevant schools and Inclusion Coaches to schedule visits (or a cluster of visits) at a time convenient to the schools and Inclusion Coaches.
- ETBI Strategic Priority Group will organise an official in-person launch of the initiative in November/ December at a central location as indicated in Table 8. It will bring together Inclusion Coaches, Principals, School Champions, Directors of Schools and other involved personnel to review progress to date and plan next steps as they pertain to individual schools and ETBs. It will also provide an opportunity to celebrate and recognise the work and commitment of all involved in the initiative.

The Role of the Inclusion Coach

Findings indicated an ambiguity surrounding the role of inclusion coaches. Key recommendations to support further development of the role, and provide clarity relating to expectations and duties are summarised:

- On September 13th, an online meeting with Inclusion Coaches is scheduled to develop an operational definition for the role with reference to a more explicit outline of role expectations. It aims to provide greater clarity for Inclusion Coaches, Directors of Schools and schools. These guidelines will be drafted collaboratively with existing Inclusion Coaches and Directors of Schools.
- A central repository for resources and materials has been created on the existing ETBI MS Team for Inclusion Coaches in the 'Files' Section. The repository will be curated by a dedicated team of Inclusion Coaches, who will be identified at the initial Community of Practice on 13th September 2022.

Evaluation Informing Planning

As a pilot initiative, cyclical evaluation of the experiences of participating personnel is critical to its improvement. This interim evaluation sought perspectives of key personnel at a mid-stage of the initial implementation process to inform planning for the next stage.

Key recommendations to support cyclical review and evaluation are outlined:

- A more in-depth research evaluation of the pilot initiative is planned for December 2022, with a view to publication of a final report in Summer 2023. Johanna Fitzgerald will seek institutional ethical approval from Mary Immaculate Research Ethics Committee (MIREC) in early September to undertake the research.
- An application to the Centre for School Leadership for endorsement of the initiative is currently in process and will progress once a full evaluation of the initial pilot is undertaken.
- Consultation with Directors of Schools will be undertaken early in the academic year 2022-2023 to decide on future directions of the initiative in a second phase (commencing in academic year 2023-2024). Key considerations include: future (and potentially expanded) role for Inclusion Coaches; resource implications; future leadership of the initiative and succession planning; support for new schools; further support for existing pilot schools beyond the initial implementation phase.

Table 8. Provision Mapping Event Schedule Autumn 2022

ETBI SEN MAPPING PILOT - Autumn 2022													
	Pilot School	Pilot School	Pilot School	Pilot School Data Gathering	Inclusion Coach CoP 1	Online Meeting: Case Studies & Data Analysis	Pilot School Action Planning	Whole Staff Presentation	Inclusion Coach CoP 2	Inclusion Coach CoP 3	Inclusion Coach CoP 4	End of Initiative In Person Meeting	Submission to BOM
CLUSTER 1 - LEINSTER													
CITY OF DUBLIN	Clonturk CC	Coláiste Eoin		Sept/October 2022 Staff, student, parent surveys distributed	13 September 1:30-3:30pm	4 October 10:00am-12:00pm: DoS; Principals; School Champions; Inclusion Coaches. 1:00-3:30pm: School Champions & Inclusion Coaches	October/Nov 2022 *Analyse data, develop map and action plan	Oct/Nov/Dec *Feedback on data	18 October 1:30-3:30pm	15 November 1:30-3:30pm	15 November 1:30-3:30pm	Nov/Dec Dates TBC: Full day *Review of Pilot Phase	Autumn 2022 or Spring 2023 *Provision Map to BOM for ratification
DDLETB	CP Setanta	Balbriggan CC	Colaiste Cois Liffe										
KWETB	Piper's Hill College	Coláiste Chill Mhantáin	St. Conleth's CC										
CLUSTER 2 - MIDLANDS/WEST													
GRETB	Merlin College	Clarín College	Roscommon CC	Sept/October 2022 Staff, student, parent surveys distributed	13 September 1:30-3:30pm	4 October 10:00am-12:00pm: DoS; Principals; School Champions; Inclusion Coaches. 1:00-3:30pm: School Champions & Inclusion Coaches	October/Nov 2022 *Analyse data, develop map and action plan	Oct/Nov/Dec *Feedback on data	18 October 2:00-3:30pm	15 November 1:30-3:30pm	15 November 1:30-3:30pm	Nov/Dec Dates TBC: Full day *Review of Pilot Phase	Autumn 2022 or Spring 2023 *Provision Map to BOM for ratification
LWMETB	Mullingar CC	Athlone CC											
LOETB	Tullamore College	Clonaslee College											
KCETB	Coláiste Mhuire	Duíske College											
CLUSTER 3 - MUNSTER													
KERRY ETB	Castleisland CC	Killorglin CC		Sept/October 2022 Staff, student, parent surveys distributed	13 September 1:30-3:30pm	4 October 10:00am-12:00pm: DoS; Principals; School Champions; Inclusion Coaches. 1:00-3:30pm: School Champions & Inclusion Coaches	October/Nov 2022 *Analyse data, develop map and action plan	Oct/Nov/Dec *Feedback on data	18 October 2:00-3:30pm	15 November 1:30-3:30pm	15 November 1:30-3:30pm	Nov/Dec Dates TBC: Full day *Review of Pilot Phase	Autumn 2022 or Spring 2023 *Provision Map to BOM for ratification
CORK ETB	Carrigafoey CC	Coláiste Mhuire	Coláiste Phobail Bheantraí										
TIPPERARY ETB	Nenagh College	Colaiste Phobal RosCré											
WWETB	St Paul's CC, Waterford	Coláiste an Átha											
CLUSTER 4 - NORTH WEST													
DONEGAL	Abbey VS	Moville CC		Sept/October 2022 Staff, student, parent surveys distributed	13 September 1:30-3:30pm	4 October 10:00am-12:00pm: DoS; Principals; School Champions; Inclusion Coaches. 1:00-3:30pm: School Champions & Inclusion Coaches	October/Nov 2022 *Analyse data, develop map and action plan	Oct/Nov/Dec *Feedback on data	18 October 2:00-3:30pm	15 November 1:30-3:30pm	15 November 1:30-3:30pm	Nov/Dec Dates TBC: Full day *Review of Pilot Phase	Autumn 2022 or Spring 2023 *Provision Map to BOM for ratification
MSLETB	St. Brendan's College	Coola Post Primary	Davitt College										
CMETB	Beech Hill College	Colaiste Dun An Rí											

Limitations

This interim evaluation captured the perspectives of Directors of Schools, pilot school Principals and Inclusion Coaches participating in the provision mapping initiative. It gleaned insights about progress to date, enablers and barriers to participation, and sought recommendations for further enhancement of the initiative to support Autumn planning. A short survey, using MS Forms was disseminated, which represents their perspectives at a snapshot in time. Limitations are acknowledged in the research, which include a poor response rate to some surveys, and purposive sampling of participants, which is not representative of the entire views of participating schools. Further, this initiative is at an exploratory pilot phase, and survey research does not allow for rich, descriptive experiences to be captured. A more in-depth evaluation, involving both qualitative and quantitative methods would facilitate greater understanding of the complexities involved in leading inclusive school improvement.

Conclusion

Findings reveal the positive impact of the provision mapping initiative in schools. The research provided insights into the ways in which the initiative should develop in the Autumn and beyond, and offered signposts for further development and refinement of the process.

To conclude, identifying the dynamics at play within and between schools, and isolating what works for schools as they continue to embed provision mapping has the potential to build universal collaborative expertise across the ETB sector, and develop flexibly responsive and reflective inclusive schools. Significantly, the ETB sector has emerged as a dynamic leader in its responsiveness to policy-driven change, and has demonstrated an efficiency, strategic vision and commitment to systemic approaches to inclusive education and teacher professional learning.

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Appendix A: Survey templates

MIC/ ETBI Provision Mapping Project Interim Survey for Inclusion Coaches

Dear Inclusion Coaches,

We are now more than half way through the provision mapping pilot project and I would appreciate your feedback on progress to date. This feedback will be collated anonymously to inform an Interim Progress Report, which will be circulated amongst yourselves, the ETBI Strategic priority Group, Directors of Schools, and Pilot School Principals. Your feedback is critical to the continued improvement and development of the project and I appreciate your time and insight.

With sincere appreciation, Joh

* Required

1. In my role as an Inclusion Coach, I am (select one option) *

- Working in my own pilot school to support implementation of provision mapping
- I am working with other school/s to support them in their implementation of provision mapping.
- I am supporting other schools to implement provision mapping, but I am also developing it in my own school.

2. How effective were the three online days in the Autumn in supporting your understanding of your role as an Inclusion Coach? (1=least effective; 5= most effective) *

- 1 2 3 4 5
-

3. How effective was the initial school visit in supporting you **in** your role as an Inclusion Coach? (1=least effective; 5= most effective)*

- 1 2 3 4 5
-

4. How effective was the monthly online Community of Practice in supporting you in your role as an Inclusion Coach? (1=least effective; 5= most effective) *

1 2 3 4 5

5. How effective was the combination of learning approaches (online presentations; online breakout group activities; offline independent activities; school visits; community of practice) in supporting you in your learning? (1=least effective; 5= most effective) *

1 2 3 4 5

6. How would you rate the quality of the materials provided? (1= poor, inaccessible and irrelevant; 5= excellent, highly accessible & relevant) *

1 2 3 4 5

7. Did you have sufficient time to engage with the project this academic year?*

Yes

No

Other

8. Did you experience challenges in your role as an Inclusion Coach this academic year? *

• Yes

• No

9. If you did experience challenges this year, what were they and how could you be further supported?

10. What else would you like to cover during this Induction Programme? *

11. Do you have any other suggestions to improve the Induction Programme?

*

12. Are you happy to continue as an Inclusion Coach next academic year? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

13. How confident do you feel now in leading this project within your ETB

(1= not confident; 2= somewhat confident; 3=very confident). *



14. Finally, if there is anything else that you feel is important to mention, but I haven't asked, please use this section to add additional comments.

MIC/ ETBI Provision Mapping Project Interim Survey for Pilot School Principals

Dear Principals,

We are now more than half way through the provision mapping pilot project and I would appreciate your feedback on progress to date. This feedback will be collated anonymously to inform an Interim Progress Report, which will be circulated amongst yourselves, the ETBI Strategic Priority Group, Directors of Schools, and Inclusion Coaches. Your feedback is critical to the continued improvement and development of the project, and to planning for the next academic year. I appreciate your time and insight.

With sincere appreciation,
Johanna

* Required

1. Has your school had the first school visit? *

Yes

No

2. How effective was the school visit in supporting you and your colleagues to begin to implement provision mapping? (1=least effective; 5= most effective) *

1 2 3 4 5

3. How clear was communication with you about the provision mapping process? (1=least clear; 5= most clear) *

1 2 3 4 5

4. How would you rate the quality of the materials provided? (1= poor, inaccessible and irrelevant; 5= excellent, highly accessible & relevant) *

1 2 3 4 5

5. Did your school have sufficient time to engage with the project this academic year? *

Yes

No

Other

6. Did you experience challenges in implementing provision mapping this academic year? *

• Yes

• No

7. If you did experience challenges this year, what were they and how could your school be further supported?

8. Please select which of the following aspects of provision mapping have been implemented this academic year in your school. *

Whole staff workshop delivered/ surveys completed

Student surveys disseminated

Parent surveys disseminated

Survey data analysed

Other

9. The second school visit aims to support schools to analyse the information from surveys and to use this information to inform the School Improvement/ DEIS Plan. Will your school be ready for this visit in

Autumn 2022? *

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

10. Do you have any other suggestions to improve the provision mapping programme?*

11. Are you happy to continue as a pilot school in the next academic year? *

- Yes
- No

12. Finally, if there is anything else that you feel is important to mention, but I haven't asked, please use this section to add additional comments.

MIC/ ETBI Provision Mapping Project Interim Survey for Directors of Schools

Dear Directors of Schools,

We are now more than half way through the provision mapping pilot project and I would appreciate your feedback on progress to date. This feedback will be collated anonymously to inform an Interim Progress Report, which will be circulated amongst yourselves, the ETBI Strategic Priority Group, Principals of participating schools, and Inclusion Coaches. Your feedback is critical to the continued improvement and development of the project, and to planning for the next academic year. I appreciate your time and insight.

With sincere appreciation,
Johanna

* Required

1. What impact has the provision mapping project had in pilot schools to date? (1=no impact; 5= very positive impact)*

1 2 3 4 5

2. How clear was communication with you about the provision mapping process from the ETBI Strategic Priority Group? (1=least clear; 5= most clear)*

1 2 3 4 5

3. Was communication about the project within your ETB effective (i.e. between you and Inclusion Coaches and Principals; between Inclusion Coaches and Schools) ? *

• Yes

- No

4. To what extent do you understand the role of the Inclusion Coach in your ETB? (1= no understanding; 5= full understanding) *



5. What would help to support your engagement with Inclusion Coaches next academic year? *

6. Did you experience challenges in supporting the implementation of provision mapping in pilot schools this academic year?*

- Yes
- No

7. If you experienced challenges this year, what were they?

8. Do you have suggestions about how we can further support your ETB to implement provision mapping?

9. What information do you need about the project for the next academic year to support your planning? *

10. Please select any of the following systems which were established/used this year to support communication and collaboration about the project within your ETB. *

A community of practice was established for School Champions/ Inclusion Coaches

The Principal and Deputy Principal's Forum was used to discuss the project.

Other

11. Are you happy to continue to be involved in the project in the next academic year? *

Yes

No

12. If you answered No to 011 can you share why?

13. Finally, if there is anything else that you feel is important to mention, but I haven't asked, please use this section to add additional comments.