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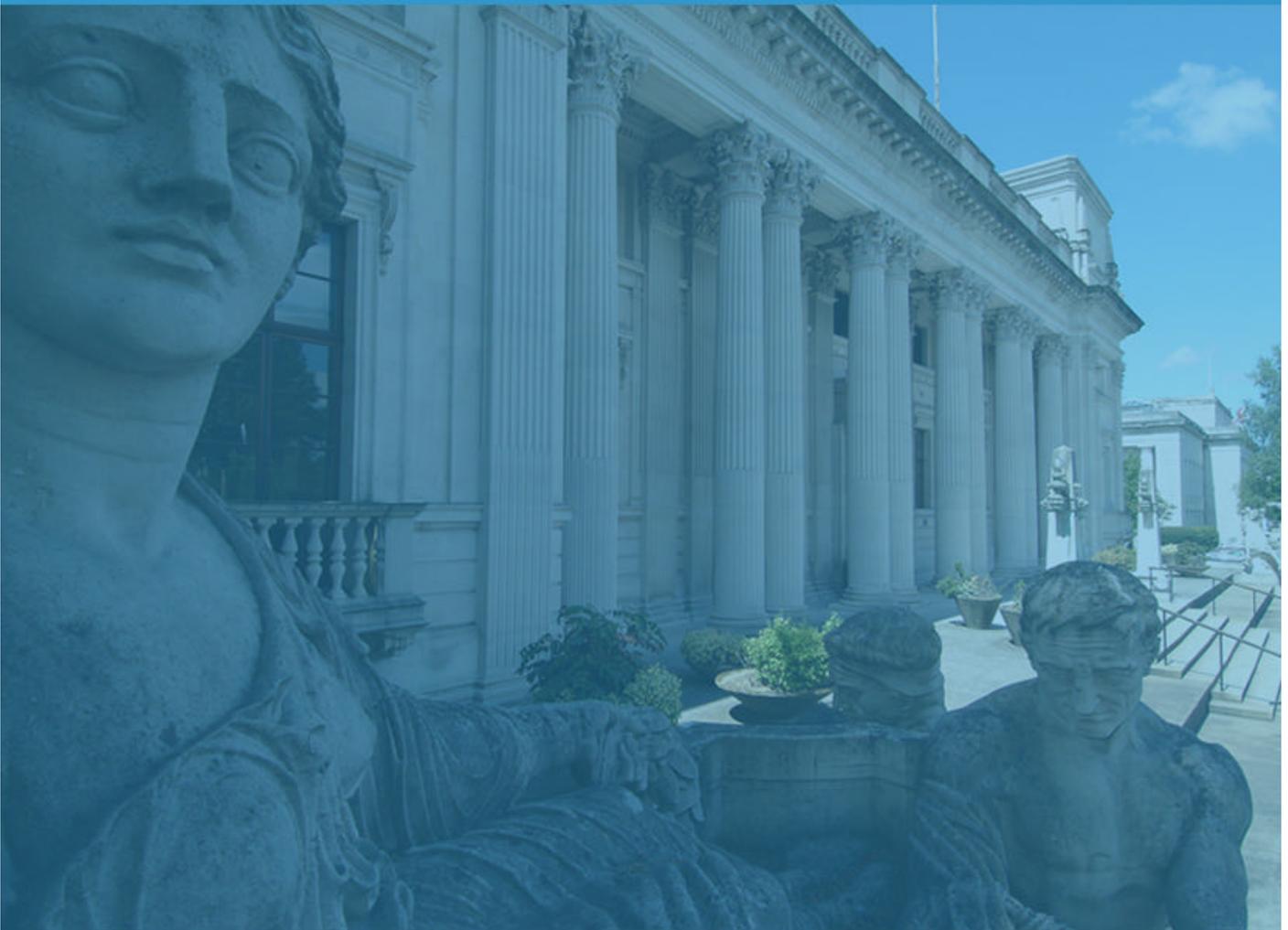
Working Paper 147: Evaluation of the Wales-Wide Implementation of the ASSIST Programme

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EVALUATION OF THE WALES-WIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSIST PROGRAMME

This report was prepared for the Public Health Improvement Division, Welsh Assembly Government: July, 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Wales, the ASSIST Programme is implemented by the former National Public Health Service (NPHS) for Wales, now Public Health Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government. Implementation began in November 2006, and involved a two-stage process. The Programme was delivered in five schools during the 2006-2007 school year, which enabled the Programme documentation ('Training the Trainers' Guide and Programme Manual) to be finalised and any significant problems in implementation to be addressed. The second stage of implementation anticipated delivery in fifty schools during the 2007-2008 school year. In fact, the Programme was delivered in only twenty-three schools.

The main aims of the research were to examine:
- How the ASSIST Programme was implemented by the NPHS for Wales (now Public Health Wales)
- How schools responded to the ASSIST Programme
- If there were any barriers to the implementation of the ASSIST Programme

The research began in August 2007 and concluded in July 2008. A number of methods, including interviews, observation, questionnaires and an 'implementation diary' were used to obtain data from trainers involved in delivering the Programme, trainers who would train trainers to deliver the Programme, researchers, teachers and others, such as Welsh Government personnel.

In general, delivery of the ASSIST Programme during Phase One of implementation was successful, and no significant problems were encountered in planning with schools or organising the Programme. Teams implementing the Programme largely adhered to the structure and suggestions laid out in the Programme Manual. However, a number of important issues were encountered;
- Using training teams comprising staff with different knowledge and skills caused some organisational problems.
- On occasion, schools did not provide suitable venues for school-based sessions suggesting a need to stress the importance of appropriate school facilities.

A number of minor issues were identified, which were anticipated to better facilitate future rollout.
- Minor issues in relation to printing and distribution of resources.
- There is a need for some degree of flexibility in planning the follow-up sessions in school to allow for holidays, exams and other events, ensure trainer availability and ensure that students do not miss the same lessons for every meeting.

- A major facilitator of the success of Programme implementation was identified as the support and co-operation of an appropriately designated member of staff in the school.
- Preferential rates could sometimes be obtained if using venues on multiple occasions, or by getting the school to book the student transport from the school to the venue.
- A number of additions and updates to the Programme Manual contents were suggested following Phase One, some of which were made.

In general, the quality of delivery during Phase Two was good and again, the training teams largely adhered to the ASSIST Programme Manual, although a number of issues arose which had the potential to affect successful implementation.

- A range of trainers were recruited, and trained to deliver the ASSIST Programme. Issues relating to the use of NPHS staff were combated by employing full-time personnel to work on future rollout. However, the ability to recruit male trainers to deliver the Programme remains an issue.
- 'Training the Trainers' was considered a successful course, both from the perspective of trainers and trainees. A number of logistical issues were identified but these were unlikely to affect the outcome of the course. The most significant criticism was that the course could have been better targeted to the learning needs of some participants.
- Planning visits were successfully conducted by the Programme Co-ordinator in every school which expressed an interest in the Programme. Every school visited agreed to allow the Programme to be implemented.
- Planning the order in which schools should be contacted and subsequently gaining access proved to be the most significant barrier to implementation, and was the main reason that rollout on Wales was restricted to 23 schools instead on the anticipated 50. If gaining access remains a problem, this has the potential to impact on staffing requirements and/or the cost of delivery.
- No significant difficulties were encountered regarding resourcing the Programme.
- Peer nomination sessions were carried out in every school. Appropriate staffing levels and session durations were achieved. Arrangements largely under the control of schools, for example, timetables, venue provision and teachers' propensity to change the list of potential peer supporters, were barriers to successful implementation.
- Peer recruitment meetings were conducted in every school. The aims and objectives of the session were met successfully in all but one school. However, trainers were keen to recommend that this session could be more successful if a different approach was taken. The need for peer nomination information to be kept confidential was raised as an issue in one school.

- The general arrangements for the peer supporter training were on the whole good. In some cases, decisions were made not to use certain venues in future.
- All four follow-up sessions were conducted in 20 of the 23 schools. The aims and objectives of the session were achieved with varying degrees of success depending on timing, behaviour and attention span of students, and the content of the sessions.
- In the majority of cases schools nominated a contact teacher who was helpful and supportive of the Programme. These individuals were identified as being key to facilitating implementation.

A number of deviations from the Programme (as outlined in the Programme Manual) were encountered. The degree to which these variations were acceptable and avoidable (Holliday et al., 2008) in the context of the rollout of the ASSIST Programme in Wales was identified. Those deviations identified as avoidable and unacceptable included:

- Deviation from the preferred timetable on a number of occasions.
- In three schools only two follow-up sessions were carried out.
- Inappropriate venues were used for external training events. For example, the only parallel training course to be run was held in two different venues.

Guidance is provided in the Programme Manual for strategies to avoid these issues occurring in future, where relevant.

A number of recommendations for future rollout were identified. Several of these reinforce recommendations identified in the ASSIST Programme Manual. The remainder are based on realised best practice and required amendments to the ASSIST Programme following rollout in Wales.

Recommendation one: Programme Co-ordinator to maintain the mix of experience/background in the pool of ASSIST trainers, as has been achieved so far in Programme rollout.

Recommendation two: Programme Co-ordinator and all trainers to ensure that schools are not provided with details of the scores students receive through the peer nomination process, or any other information obtained in confidence other than where ethics/child protection issues may require it.

Recommendation three: Programme Co-ordinator to create a database of recommended external venues for future use.

Recommendation four: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to clearly specify and stress the importance of appropriate room arrangements with the school contact teacher in advance of the sessions.

Recommendation five: When planning the Programme with schools, Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to try to ensure that follow-up sessions are planned at times which encourage students to attend.

Recommendation six: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure continuity of training staff throughout the Programme within any specific school.

Recommendation seven: When planning the Programme with schools, Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers (when applicable) to identify a second contact in the school in order to facilitate contact and success.

Recommendation eight: Universities to implement improvements to the Programme suggested at the end of Phase One (already implemented prior to Phase 2).

Recommendation nine: Universities to explore other ways in which information may be provided, particularly during the follow-up sessions. To include consideration of providing additional written resources for students to take away.

Recommendation ten: Programme Co-ordinator to amend strategy used to contact schools in order to maximise the number of schools that are engaged.

Recommendation eleven: Universities to amend contents of Programme Manual to reflect need to attempt to make contact with two or more members of staff in schools when first contact is made.

Recommendation twelve: Universities to revisit 'Training the Trainers' course content and structure, and investigate course accreditation.

Recommendation thirteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure that where two training sessions are run in parallel, they are conducted in the same venue, and in rooms of comparable quality.

Recommendation fourteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to pay close attention to the guidelines provided in the ASSIST Programme Manual in terms of timetabling sessions in the school year and school day. Whilst there can be some flexibility when scheduling sessions, to allow for school events and holidays etc, significantly shortening or lengthening the intervention period is unacceptable in the context of the ASSIST Programme.

Recommendation fifteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure that schools are clear about what is expected in terms of venues for school-based sessions at the planning meeting and remind them prior to sessions; and that the Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers pay close attention to the recommendations outlined in the ASSIST Programme Manual for both the in-school and external training venues. (See recommendation four.)

Recommendation sixteen: Universities to consider amending format of peer recruitment meeting as outlined in the ASSIST Programme Manual to reflect experience in Wales.

Recommendation seventeen: Universities to identify if there is guidance in relation to designation of responsible adult sent from the school, and amend Programme Manual accordingly.

Recommendation eighteen: Programme Co-ordinator and all trainers to note that the introduction of new activities can be useful if there is time available within the training (particularly during 'free' time'), but these should not substitute the activities outlined in the Programme Manual.

Recommendation nineteen: The school contact is key to the successful implementation of the Programme. Programme Co-ordinator to encourage the school to nominate an appropriate individual and ensure that the staff contact is aware of their commitments.

Recommendation twenty: Universities to consider including guidance on suitable spot prizes and resources to take away in the Programme Manual

1   <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

1.1   <u>Rolling out the ASSIST Programme in Wales</u>

In Wales, the ASSIST Programme is being implemented by the National Public Health Service (NPHS) for Wales, now Public Health Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government. Implementation activities for the rollout of the ASSIST Programme in Wales began in November 2006 with the appointment of the Programme Co-ordinator. The implementation of the ASSIST Programme was a two-stage process. The Programme was initially delivered in five schools during the summer term of the 2006-2007 school year, which enabled the Programme documentation (ASSIST Training the Trainers Guide and ASSIST Programme Manual) to be finalised and any significant problems in implementation to be addressed. The second stage of implementation anticipated delivery in fifty schools during the 2007-2008 school year. In fact, the Programme was delivered in only twenty-three schools. A number of reasons for this are considered below.

1.2   <u>Aims of the research</u>

The mains aims of the research were to examine:

- How the ASSIST Programme was implemented by the National Public Health Service for Wales (now Public Health Wales)
- How schools responded to the ASSIST Programme
- If there were any barriers relating to implementing the ASSIST Programme outside of a research context

2 __METHODS__

There were two phases of rollout, involving two sets of training for the training teams and two occasions on which schools were approached regarding their receipt of the Programme. It was necessary to capture this activity for evaluation purposes.

2.1 __Data collected__

Interviews, observation, questionnaires and an 'implementation diary' were used to obtain data from trainers involved in delivering the Programme, trainers who would train trainers to deliver the Programme, researchers, teachers and others, such as Welsh Government personnel. The data collected, and issues covered, are outlined in Table 1.

Interviews were conducted with staff involved in implementing the Programme, and included the Programme Co-ordinator and two other staff who had played a significant role in implementing the Programme during Phases One and Two. Questionnaires were completed by trainers who implemented the Programme at each session they attended, and teachers provided written feedback after the recruitment session, training session, and at the end of implementation in their school. An 'implementation diary' was completed by the Programme Co-ordinator, in which she documented key issues pertaining to implementation of each stage of the Programme. This was completed as an undated record of issues that arose during each stage. In addition, secondary data in the form of minutes from steering group meetings, and the end of Phase One team debrief meeting, the Service Level Agreement (SLA) drawn up between the NPHS and trainers, budget data, correspondence with schools relating to uptake of the Programme, and information on attendance at each stage were collected to provide background information on delivering the Programme in schools.

2.2 __Timing__

The research commenced in August 2007. Data collection was carried out at various stages, largely dictated by the timetable of the rollout Programme. Implementation of the Programme began when schools were approached by the Programme Co-ordinator in early 2007. The first 'Training the Trainers' session took place in April 2007, after which implementation began in schools. Consequently data concerning this phase were collected retrospectively. Minutes of steering group

meetings and the Phase One team debrief meeting were collated post-hoc and the end of this stage was marked by interviews with trainers in August 2007. Since the second stage of implementation had already begun prior to August 2007, with schools having been contacted in the summer term of 2007, correspondence and minutes of relevant meetings were again collected retrospectively. All other data collection commenced in September 2007, when potential ASSIST trainers attended the three-day 'Training the Trainers' session. Data collection for this phase ended in July 2008, when interviews were conducted with key trainers and the Programme Co-ordinator.

Table 1: Outline of areas of interest and tools used

Phase	Issue(s)	Data collection method
Phase One of implementation (Nov 2006-Sept 2007)		
	-How training teams were put together -The response of schools -Issues relating to procuring resources -General arrangements for the training -Issues regarding the use of the ASSIST Guide and ASSIST Programme Manual	-Question in interview with Programme Co-ordinator -Implementation diary -Minutes of meetings regarding Programme setup
Phase 2 of implementation (April 2007-Sept 2008)		
Recruiting training teams	-How training teams were put together -The rationale for using certain external contractors -The experience/background of internal staff used	-Question in interview with Programme Co-ordinator -Implementation diary -Minutes of meetings regarding Programme setup
Approaching schools	-School response	-Implementation diary -Copies of correspondence with schools -Standard letter requesting details of reason for refusal -Question in interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers
The following data were collected in all schools that showed an interest in receiving the Programme and asked for a visit from the ASSIST training team.		
Planning visit with schools	-If any concerns were raised regarding provision of information for governors/school staff/contact teachers/parents -School response -Who conducted the visit -Any concerns/barriers raised regarding timetabling the Programme as intended, roles and responsibilities, arrangements for each element of the Programme	-Questionnaire completed by personnel who conducted planning visit
Training the trainers	-The general arrangements for the training and how these impacted on the training event -How well the stated aims and objectives of the training were met -Whether the *content* of the training was sufficient and appropriate to prepare the trainers to train students as peer supporters for the ASSIST	-Non-participant observation, recording information on a pro forma -Evaluation questionnaire completed by the ASSIST trainees at the end of their training -Evaluation questionnaire completed by the specialist

	Programme -Whether the *style* of training was appropriate in preparing the trainers to train students as peer supporters for ASSIST -What experience and skills the trainers felt they already had that would be useful in working with young people on ASSIST -Participant reaction and interaction -Whether any other issues arose during the course of the training that might have impacted on the implementation of the ASSIST Programme	trainers at the end of the training event -Question in interviews with key staff
Selection of external training venues for peer supporter training	-Criteria/rationale for selecting venues -Details of venues used	-Implementation diary -Questionnaire completed by personnel involved in arranging training session -Questions in interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers
Resource acquisition	-Issues relating to the procurement of resources (documentation, posters, leaflets etc.)	-Implementation diary -Minutes of steering group meetings -Questionnaire completed by personnel involved in arranging training session -Questions in interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers
Staffing and timetabling	-The rationale for staffing -The rationale for timetabling -Actual timetabling of session achieved	-Implementation diary -Questions in interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers
Peer nomination	-Issues raised by Year 8 students during the nomination process -The general arrangements for the peer nomination session -The opinion of key school staff concerning the peer nomination process and the students who were asked to attend the recruitment meeting -Whether any other issues arose that might impact on the recruitment of peer supporters	-Implementation diary -Questionnaire completed by personnel involved in arranging and conducting peer nomination session -Questionnaire completed by school contact teacher -Questions in interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers
Peer supporter recruitment	-General arrangements for the peer supporter recruitment meeting -How well the objectives of the meeting were met -How information regarding Programme was received by students -The interaction between students and ASSIST trainers	-Questionnaire for school staff responsible for organising each peer supporter recruitment meeting -Implementation diary -Questionnaire completed by personnel involved in

	-Whether any other issues arose that might have impacted on the recruitment of peer supporters	arranging and conducting peer nomination session and peer recruitment meeting -Questions in interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers
Training the peer supporters	-The general arrangements for the training and how these impacted on the training event -How well the stated aims and objectives of the training were met -The questions or concerns the students had about their potential role as peer supporters -Whether there were differences between the training events for individual schools that might result in differences in outcomes between schools -How the accompanying member(s) of staff reacted during the training -Whether any other issues arose during the course of the training that might have impacted on the implementation of the ASSIST Programme	-Implementation diary -Questionnaire completed by personnel involved in arranging and conducting the session -Questionnaire completed by school staff member who attended the training session -Questions in interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers
Supporting the peer supporters	-The general arrangements for the follow-up visits and how these impacted on the implementation of the Programme -How well the stated aims and objectives of the follow-up visits were met -How the students reacted during the follow-up visits -What questions or concerns the students raised about their role as peer supporters -Whether there were differences in the delivery and organisation of follow-up visits between individual schools that might result in different outcomes between schools -The extent to which the students undertook the role of peer supporter within the school -Issues relating to organising the follow-up visits in school -Whether any other issues arose during the course of the follow-up visits that might have impacted on the implementation of the ASSIST Programme	-Implementation diary -Questionnaire completed by personnel involved in arranging and conducting sessions -Questionnaire completed by school contact teacher at end of follow-up sessions -Questions in interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers
Overview of stages		-Interviews with Programme Co-ordinator and key trainers (July 2008)

3   RESULTS

3.1   Response rates

3.1.1   Phase One

Three interviews were conducted with trainers who implemented the Programme in schools during Phase One. These trainers included the Programme Co-ordinator and two trainers who had led delivery in one or more schools.

3.1.2   Phase Two

At the beginning of Phase Two, three trainers were interviewed, and feedback was received from nineteen participants at 'Training the Trainers'. The questionnaires completed by trainers and teachers in each school are documented in Table 2. Training teams provided complete datasets in four schools. Only six training teams returned the outline of the training form, which asked them to provide information on each activity carried out at the peer supporter training. It is unknown why trainers did not return these documents despite numerous reminders having been sent by email by Jo Holliday (JH) and the Programme Co-ordinator. Discounting these documents, all other documents were received from trainers in a further eight schools. In three schools, a maximum of three evaluation documents were received from trainers. Teachers in eleven of the 23 schools returned all three evaluation forms. No evaluation forms were received from teachers in two schools. In one school, only one form was returned, and in the remainder, two forms were returned. Evaluation questionnaires were given to school staff by the ASSIST training team, so it is not known whether a low response in any one school was due to the teacher not completing the forms they were given, or to trainers not distributing the forms.

Table 2: Questionnaire completion by school

Evaluation document	Term 1 (Phase 2)								Term 2 and 3 (Phase 2)														
School ID	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
From Trainers																							
Planning visit with schools questionnaire	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peer nomination trainer evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X		X	✓	✓	✓
Peer supporter recruitment trainer evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peer supporter training trainer evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Outline of peer supporter training event	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	✓
Follow-up one trainer evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Follow-up two trainer evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Follow-up three trainer evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓
Follow-up four trainer evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X
From teacher																							
Peer supporter recruitment teacher evaluation	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peer supporter training teacher evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
End of Programme teacher evaluation	X	X	✓	✓		X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X

NB. X indicates non-completion

3.2   Phase One implementation

This phase of implementation provided the opportunity to address issues with documentation (ASSIST Programme Manual and ASSIST Guide) and implementation prior to full-scale rollout of the Programme in Wales.

3.2.1   How training teams were put together

All potential ASSIST trainers attended the three-day 'Training the Trainers' course prior to the delivery of the ASSIST Programme in schools. At this training it was made clear to attendees that even though they had attended the course, they were not guaranteed work, due to the work Programme and suitability. Furthermore, potential ASSIST Trainers were given the option of not continuing as a trainer for the ASSIST Programme.

> *"It was a two way thing, just like you could opt out and say you don't want to go into schools after you have done the training, we could say well we don't want to use you…"*
> Trainer 1 interview, phase 1

Following the training, four out of the eleven trainers trained did not go on to deliver the ASSIST Programme. One of the trainers, having undergone the training, made the decision not to continue and deliver the Programme. A further three trainers did not maintain contact with the Programme Co-ordinator following the 'Training the Trainers' event. Whilst no active decision was made on the part of the Programme Co-ordinator that these individuals should not continue as trainers, and the lack of contact was largely driven by them, the Programme Co-ordinator acknowledged that these trainers were unlikely to be suitable to deliver ASSIST, due to a lack of experience of working with children, and to issues relating to interaction with the rest of the team.

Guidance regarding delivery of the ASSIST Programme stipulates that to ensure a rounded delivery, trainers with a variety of backgrounds should be engaged to deliver the Programme in schools. The Programme Co-ordinator took on board the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to the training teams. Training teams comprised of people from a number of different organisations and sectors. A training company (Company X) was used, as they had been used in the trial, had substantial experience of working with young people, and were considered to be energetic, lively and professional trainers. Further team members were recommended (for example, at common interest conferences), already known to the project Co-ordinator, or recruited by word of mouth. The

delivery team comprised of trainers from Company X, health promotion specialists, NPHS staff and independent trainers, some of whom had previously worked for Company X. The need to use mixed training teams, as in the trial and to ensure consistency in delivery across schools, was endorsed by the Programme steering group and acknowledged as important at the Phase One team debrief meeting.

The need to ensure a mix of trainers delivering the Programme in any one school was acknowledged as having its advantages. However, the practicality of achieving this was questioned:

> *"It is one of the biggest nightmares of my job putting together mixed training teams, and trying to map availability of 3 or 4 individuals as opposed to saying to Company X 'here are 3 schools' or saying to this group of 4 people 'here are your 6 schools, just agree your diaries'. Do you know what I mean; it's an absolute nightmare trying to get people into mixed teams who are all available at the same time."*
>
> Trainer 1 interview, Phase 1

Having Company X involved was considered a necessity as they could supply trainers at short notice when no-one else was available. However, this had the potential to lead to issues regarding continuity and uniformity of delivery, as the mixed team experience has been identified as differing significantly from that delivered solely by trainers from Company X (as occurred in one school due to a lack of availability of other trainers).

During Phase One no NPHS staff other than the Programme Co-ordinator were employed to work on the implementation of the Programme. However, a number of full-time NPHS employees took annual leave in order earn extra money implementing the Programme. A new policy executed early in 2008 meant that full-time employees could no longer do this, and part-time employees would only be paid at their current salary rate, and not the rate paid by the ASSIST Programme team.

> *"[Trainer 10], say who is NPHS was due to be the lead…some of the follow-up is after Christmas so he won't get paid for those. Because the person who does the follow-ups really needs to be the lead trainer I'm going to have to say to him 'you can't be the lead trainer because you can't see it through'. Looking at the numbers I will lose 8 trainers straight away with this new ruling. There are 4 people…who are part-time NPHS who can probably still do it, but they just have an issue about how to pay them because if they are on the payroll already then they're not happy to pay them in a different way."*
>
> Trainer 1 interview, Phase 1

This led to serious concerns about future staffing levels, particularly since the mixed team needed to include individuals with a background in health promotion, who were likely to already be working

within the NPHS. An option presented was that NPHS staff may be permitted to deliver the training unpaid, as part of their professional development, or that it may be possible to employ someone part-time who delivered the Programme as part of their job.

Recommendation One: Programme Co-ordinator to maintain the mix of experience/background in the pool of ASSIST trainers (as had been achieved so in Programme rollout).

3.2.2   School response

Schools were approached to receive the ASSIST Programme based on geographical proxy measures of deprivation. Of the schools approached during Phase One of implementation, none declined to take part. In one school, the Programme Co-ordinator had been unable to get in touch with the contact teacher, and as a result the implementation in that particular school was delayed. A further school declined to participate at the time suggested due to commitments to other mentoring projects within the school, but agreed to take part at a later date.

All schools approached agreed to participate in the Programme and were particularly enthusiastic when they realised that their time commitment would be negligible and that there was no financial cost. A common reason for participation was that smoking was an issue within the school. Schools were also enthusiastic about the other possible uses for peer mentoring within the school. One school suggested that it would be useful for the school counsellor to be made aware of students who had no nominations in the peer recruitment process. This information was provided on this occasion.

Recommendation two: Programme Co-ordinator and all trainers to ensure that schools are not provided with details of the scores students receive through the peer nomination process, or any other information obtained in confidence other than where ethics/child protection issues may require it.

3.2.3   Issues relating to procurement of resources

The key issue identified about acquiring resources related to timescales; there was an underestimation of how long tasks such as printing and translation would take. This can largely be attributed to the multi-agency element, with different individuals being responsible for different

tasks, rather than one person being responsible for writing, producing, proofing and arranging printing. Closer links with the graphics department of the Welsh Assembly Government was suggested as a way to partially overcome this issue.

Distributing resources for trainers and schools also presented issues, and it was suggested that there was a need for a 'head office' to distribute refresher packs (containing all supporting resources) on an annual basis. Trainers required easier access to leaflets, handouts and other items that they could distribute at sessions. The steering group agreed that resources would be replaced twice a year due to wear and tear and to update information.

3.2.4 General arrangements for the training

3.2.4.1 External training venues

In the ASSIST Programme Manual, clear guidelines were provided about suitable venues for the peer supporter training. Several venues were used during Phase One, including a hotel, golf club and a local YMCA. In the team debrief meeting at the end of Phase One, and in the rollout feedback, a number of factors were identified relating to the selection of external training venues, with certain criteria being identified as desirable, and contributing to more successful implementation of the training. These were:

- Proximity to the school
- Cost
- Space available within the room
- Limited likelihood of the students disturbing others using the venue
- Outdoor space*
- Appropriate, healthy catering**

*Where outdoor space was not available, it was preferable for students to eat lunch in a different room
** Hot food was more popular than sandwiches, and toast and cereal were well received for breakfast/mid-morning snack.

Although these venues were considered acceptable for the ASSIST peer supporter training, it was acknowledged that each had their disadvantages. For example, in relation to the YMCA:

> *"...it's almost like a kind of community leisure centre. It's got a café on the ground floor level, go down one floor and you have got a couple of training rooms. Upstairs they have got some conferencey training rooms and they just happened to not be available. So we trained in the two rooms downstairs – that in itself was fine. The only problem was that because there was a café upstairs, the sandwiches they had made were so completely fancy*

*the first day a lot of the kids were like 'I can't eat those sandwiches' because they were so
put off with the fancy fillings, and lots of them were going upstairs to the café. It's that thing
of some have money, some who haven't. So if I was to run that again, although that's a
really nice venue, that café didn't necessarily help by it being there."*

<div align="right">Trainer 2 interview, Phase 1</div>

In order to select of venues in the future, the need to compile a database of preferred venues was
identified so that they could be used repeatedly. A theatre and an education centre at a country park
were identified as possible venues for Phase Two, in addition to a public sector venue in Cardiff:

*"…I have booked [venue 1], and I'm going to try and book that for all the Cardiff schools
because you can hire outdoor space on the day and its dead cheap, so you don't have to hire
it if you don't need it, so that's good. Also there are young adults everywhere in the building
so you don't feel that you are intruding. And it's really central and it's really cheap. [Their
training rooms] they're brilliant. Really, like lots of companies use them. They are quite
upmarket, they are like hotel conference rooms."*

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 1</div>

Recommendation three: Programme Co-ordinator to create a database of recommended external
venues for future use.

3.2.4.2 School facilities

At the team debrief meeting on conclusion of Phase One, the Programme Co-ordinator reported that
despite requests for halls with desks to be provided for the peer nomination session, some schools
had wanted to conduct the peer nomination session in halls with students seated on the floor.
Various rooms were provided by schools, and those where the students were able to sit at desks in
an examination style were identified as being preferable to more informal settings. Sitting on the
floor was identified as unacceptable and should be avoided. At this meeting, the group reiterated
the guidance provided in the ASSIST Programme Manual, that the following venues (in order of
preference) are appropriate for this session:

- Desks in the hall, exam style. Whole year group at once or rotated classes.
- Desks in the dining hall.
- Individual classrooms: preferably one room used in rotation.
- Individual classrooms: all at the same time required a much larger number of trainers and
  should be avoided where possible.

In general, the facilities provided by schools for the recruitment meetings and follow-up visits were considered acceptable, although the size of venue for both meetings was identified as important, and where classrooms were provided for follow-up visits, moving furniture used valuable time required for the follow-up activities. Rooms such as science and computer labs were considered inappropriate for the sessions. The preference was to have some carpeted space so more physical activities could take place without the constraints of a classroom. In the instances where requirements were clearly outlined to the school prior to the meetings these were generally met. The importance of having this conversation was re-iterated at the Phase One team debrief meeting.

Recommendation four: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to clearly specify requirements and stress the importance of appropriate room arrangements with the school contact teacher in advance of the sessions

3.2.4.3   *Timing in the school year/day*

It was agreed that four follow-up sessions was an appropriate number of sessions to hold with the students. However, timetable restrictions meant that it was sometimes difficult to fit these four sessions into the 10 week period. A degree of flexibility in timing was considered to limit the disruption to the Programme timetable caused by exams, holidays and other school events but in general, trainers responsible for arranging the timetable experienced little difficulty, for example:

> *"I think it worked really well. I was able to fit in all of the follow-up sessions and the training and recruitment, all that, it all fitted in really well in the schools I was leading on. The timing of the training is dependent on the school, when you can get the coaches together, but I still think that works really well because in a sense there is a little bit of flexibility in the timings of activities or in the timings of the day so I also think that worked really well."*
>
> <div align="right">Trainer 2 interview, Phase 1</div>

The length of the school day presented some organisational issues as trainers were sometimes required to be at school/venue as early as 8.30 am, and in some cases lived a long way from the school/venue. Furthermore, where the school day finished early, the afternoon session was sometimes only about an hour long. However, it was acknowledged that as long as the length of the school day was known in advance, this could be taken into account during the planning for the session.

Issues were also raised regarding breaks for trainers during the peer supporter training. In particular, it was felt that time was required during the lunch period for the trainers to have a break and also to prepare for the afternoon session but this was not possible if the sole responsibility for the students over lunch was appointed to the trainers. It was suggested that further support was needed from the teacher(s) present to enable this over the lunch period.

The in-school sessions were timed appropriately in most cases, and schools made an effort to time sessions so that students did not always miss the same lesson, increasing their willingness to attend;

> *"They did try to do that, and I think they tried to do it in different PSE slots as well, but they did miss Maths and French, but they knew where they were going. So I think they tried to do that."*
>
> Trainer 3 interview, Phase 1

Recommendation five: When planning the Programme with schools, Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers try to ensure that sessions are planned at times which encourage students to attend

3.2.4.4 Transport

In several school buses were used to drop off and collect students; either buses that were hired, or the school's own bus. Preferential rates were facilitated by the schools booking the buses and them being paid for from the ASSIST budget.

> *"Also other schools, like [school 2] this term have said we will book the buses because they will do us a cheaper rate. A lot of schools will do that if you say to them, will you book the buses and we will pay for them."*
>
> Trainer 1 interview, Phase 1

3.2.4.5 Staffing ratios

In line with guidance from the Programme Manual, the group present at the Phase One team debrief meeting agreed a minimum of two trainers per group were required to effectively facilitate sessions. In addition, it was agreed that the co-ordinating trainer would attend each session for the schools they were responsible for. Where this was not possible during follow-up sessions, another trainer who had attended the peer supporter training was required to attend in order to maintain continuity of trainers for the students. It is unknown if this guidance was adhered to.

Recommendation six: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure continuity of training staff throughout the Programme within any specific school.

3.2.4.6   Contact teachers

The cooperation and support of contact teachers was identified as being paramount to the successful rollout of the Programme in schools. Those contact teachers who were considered supportive aided implementation by discussing and helping to organise follow-up sessions, ensuring the rooms were set out appropriately, providing support and encouragement for the students in the absence of the trainers, ensuring that the students attended follow-up sessions and brought their diaries, and helping to maintain discipline in the group. It was recognised by the trainers that the more committed the school were to the Programme, the more successful and sustainable it would be:

> *"Some schools are really really keen on it and the contact teachers introduce you to the head and introduce me to anyone and say 'oh this Programme, we are really lucky that we are doing it', they are dead enthusiastic. And you know that will have a high profile...She wants it to have a profile, that they are doing something to do with health promotion in school. And everything will run like clockwork with her and you will have a decent room and all those logistics will be really good. But other schools, like the one I am supposed to be in on Friday, the guy still hasn't got back to me. It got delegated to him by the deputy at the meeting I had with her, which was hopeless because he's not even there to say I'm happy to do that. He has never got back to me, he has never got back to Company X...That doesn't fill me with confidence that it will be the smoothest run rollout in that school. So there are different attitudes."*
>
> <div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 1</div>

Indeed, the effectiveness of the school contact teacher was identified as the most significant barrier to implementing the ASSIST Programme in schools during Phase One.

On one occasion, a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) was sent to a training session because the school did not wish to cancel the training because of internal staffing issues. This posed no significant problems and was acceptable in terms of school policy as the LSA would be permitted by the school to be the 'school adult' on a school trip. However, this did raise issues in relation to the need to obtain definitive guidance on the subject and suggested the need to allocate a second contact teacher in the school, in case this situation arose in the future.

Recommendation seven: When planning the Programme with schools Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers (when applicable) to identify a second contact in the school in order to facilitate contact and success.

3.2.5 Issues regarding the use of ASSIST Guide and ASSIST Programme Manual

No issues were raised regarding the use of the ASSIST Guide and ASSIST Programme Manual. The Manual was considered a comprehensive description of how to implement the Programme.

> *"There is so much detail in it, a monkey could deliver it if you were in a push. And I think that's important, it's like the Dummies Guide to rolling something out. I think the content, being an ex-teacher myself, is really spot on level wise. The teachers who have been involved last term have fed that back to me on a lot of occasions, that the content was really good – it was age appropriate. Loads of good ideas that teachers said that 'if I didn't have to stick to the National Curriculum I would be teaching like this all the time, not doing what I do in my classroom'. So I think part of the success in rolling it out is that the product is usable and it's a good product. The teething troubles are more to do with the logistics of it than the actual content. I think the content is excellent and I think coming into it new, not as someone who was involved in the trial, everything you need to know is in there. And the same for trainers – I think if you have got a manual then you don't actually need me other than to say yes or no. So I think the success is down to the detail and down to the fact that the people who wrote the document had actually done the project themselves."*
>
> Trainer 1 interview, Phase 1

During Phase One emphasis was placed on delivering the Programme without deviating from the Manual. It was felt that in the future the Programme would benefit from being a little more flexible.

> *"I wouldn't want any of my trainers to just bulldoze through every activity in a follow-up because it said so in the manual, so I think they have got enough common sense to adapt it."*
>
> Trainer 1 interview, Phase 1

In terms of the content of the sessions, whilst the trainers who were interviewed and who gave feedback at the team debrief meeting generally thought that they were appropriate, a number of suggestions were made which they thought might enhance both the experience and effectiveness of the Programme. These are detailed in

Table 3.

Recommendation eight: Universities to implement improvements to Programme suggested at the end of Phase One*

*Many already implemented prior to Phase 2

Table 3: Suggested improvements to the Programme following Phase One

Stage	Suggested improvements
Peer nomination	- Providing names and form groups of students named on the peer questionnaire was difficult as many students put their hands up and it was impossible to provide them with the information that they required quickly. It was suggested that the trainer put the names and tutor groups of each teacher in year 8 on a large piece of paper or on the board where the students could see it.
Peer recruitment meeting	- The OHT presentation was generally felt to be distracting for the students and it was decided that it would be optional but that all of the information must be given to the students. It was suggested that the information be combined and given to students in written form at the end of the session, but that there needed to be more thought regarding more interactive ways of giving this information during the session.[1]
Peer supporter training	- It was suggested that activities from follow-up sessions could be used to supplement the 2 days training if the trainers felt that this was necessary. - Trainers delivered a new activity that involves drawing round the body to show the effects of smoking. Although this was not included in the Programme Manual, trainers found it to be useful, fun and engaging, and it was thought that it should be included in the training where possible. - Role-play was seen as a useful and lively way of engaging the young people during the training, and the need for more role-play during the training was identified. - Values Continuum could have more contentious statements and reflect the new legislation.[1] - It was suggested that an icebreaker should take place before Personal Shield.[1] - It was suggested that students should write in their diaries during 'What happens next?' instead of using a photocopied sheet. This would emphasise how to use them and that the comments are useful and valued.[1] - It was suggested that more games should be included in the Manual.[1]
Peer supporter follow-up sessions	- Flipchart papers used at the training were seen as a useful resource for the follow-up visits, reinforcing that the young people's input was valued during the two day training sessions, and also providing a ready-made resource. - The idea of using stamps in the diaries when they were brought in, as an incentive and to acknowledge that the students had brought them in, was supported. -Follow-up sessions were thought to contain too much content and all activities are red (considered essential elements of the Programme). The group felt that ideally they should look at diaries (providing students with further guidance on how to use them and their purpose), do an information based activity, a skills based activity, a general discussion (in order to explore with the peer supporters how they were getting on in their role) and a reminder of the next session.[2] - It was also suggested that the 4th meeting could be something more formal, part of an assembly for example, that the trainers could be involved in and so that the whole year group could celebrate the success.
General	- Trainers suggested that the Programme should include more information giving

| | exercises like information islands where peer supporters have the opportunity to explore information and find things out for themselves. |

[1] Manual contents subsequently amended to reflect these useful additions and updates.
[2] Follow-up sessions subsequently made more flexible and less content-heavy by streamlining them to have the same structure and moving one activity to day two of the training.
NB. These amendments labelled [1] and [2] were formally made after Phase 1.

Interviewees made several comments regarding the resources provided to students, highlighting that it would be useful to provide more information to take away with them so that they had the information to refer to during the period when they were talking with their friends. Examples of extra materials included summaries of information islands, extra bookmarks and the smoking quiz.

> *"…I guess my point had been about in giving the young people more information on paper to take away or to give out at the follow-ups, that re-information, saying what has already happened. So maybe more summaries of information islands for them to have on paper. I know they get the bookmarks and stuff but I think they could do with more written down information, even in the front of the diary, maybe there are bits of information that could be added to the front of the diary or something, so it is there for them to see. Because I think they do try and remember stuff but I think after a while some of that information might get muddled or…they need more written stuff."*
>
> Trainer 2 interview, Phase 1

Recommendation nine: Universities to explore other ways in which information may be provided, particularly during the follow-up sessions. To include consideration of providing additional written resources for students to take away.

Gift vouchers were considered a grey area, as it is difficult to have consistency about who receives them. It was decided to award £150 worth to each school instead of the individual students. The Programme Co-ordinator suggested that a school certificate be produced to acknowledge the contribution of the schools should they wish to display this.

3.3   Phase Two implementation

3.3.1   Recruiting training teams

Recruitment of training teams started during Phase One of implementation. This stage of the evaluation collected additional information on recruitment and changes to the training team.

As in Phase One, the use of mixed teams, both in terms of background and gender was required, particularly since delivery using teams comprised solely of trainers from Company X was found to deliver a different training experience than that of mixed teams and contributed to issues relating to continuity of delivery and replication of the trial.

A number of the trainers recruited during Phase One were retained during Phase Two. The delegates at 'Training the Trainers' held in September 2007 comprised of a range of individuals, a number of whom were from Company X, whilst the majority of the remainder had a health promotion background. The possibility of having to deliver the Programme through the medium of Welsh in North Wales was addressed through the training of Welsh-speaking staff. Phase One steering group meeting minutes recorded that there were 28 delegates on the Phase Two Train the Trainers session comprising 5 trainers from Company X including 3 Welsh speakers, 2 professional trainers and 21 health promotion professionals including 2 Welsh speakers and 2 based in North Wales.

As previously noted, a number of problems were encountered relating to using NPHS staff as ASSIST trainers during Phase Two. Official guidance from the government tax website provided no definitive answers regarding classifications of employed and self-employed, and as a result it was agreed that from 1st January 2008 full-time NPHS staff were no longer able to deliver the Programme whilst taking annual leave, although part-time employees would be able to continue to deliver ASSIST on days when they were not employed by the NPHS. The human resources department of the NPHS also expressed a preference for trainers who deliver ASSIST to be recruited and put on contracts with the Trust, partially so they could be protected in the event of an incident. However, this was deemed unworkable as the recruitment process would take too long, and the Programme Co-ordinator would be responsible for occupational health, health and safety and all other workplace requirements for upwards of 40 people. Issues were also raised by the steering group regarding insurance, as freelance workers were not covered by the Trust's insurance and would require their own Professional Indemnity, which led to concerns about losing significant numbers of trainers if this was insisted upon. These changes had a significant impact on the practicalities of putting together training teams.

> *"Training teams were generally mixed as they are supposed to be. In a couple of schools I think it was solely Company X; that was largely because I lost a lot of trainers at Christmas due to the finance issues and Company X were quite frustrated with to-ing and fro-ing all the time when I could just give them one school where they could all work together on that so I gave them a couple just to do that were nearer where they worked. And North Wales, obviously myself and Trainer 11 have done that so we haven't got a youth workery type*

person or a health promotion person in that, but that's just logistics because I can't get anyone to go there. So the trainers stayed the same generally just mixed Company X, independents like Trainer 4, Trainer 12…"

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

The recruitment of trainers was the most significant barrier to implementing the Programme in North Wales. External contractors such as Company X were willing to travel to North Wales to deliver the training but it was recognised that this would have been expensive and the preference was to recruit local staff. Despite contacting Healthy Schools Co-ordinators and signposting to a variety of different groups and smoking cessation specialists, the Programme Co-ordinator found the only method of recruiting trainers was through the internet. Potential trainers were located, but they were not available in time for delivery in the first North Wales school.

It was agreed that the most suitable way of overcoming some of the staffing issues was to employ staff within the NPHS and it was decided to recruit two term-time only trainers to deliver ASSIST, their roles comprising 70% training and 30% project support. The aim was for them to be in post by 1st April 2008 on a one-year contract so that they could lead in a minimum of 4 schools per term from September 2008 and provide support to other trainers in the interim. An administrator was also to be recruited. In the event, three trainers were appointed to deliver the ASSIST Programme on a full-time basis. All three trainers came into post during summer 2008 and completed the 'Train the Trainers' course in July 2008. It was agreed that a full-time administrator would be recruited in September 2008 who would be shared between the ASSIST team and Stop Smoking Wales.

When sourcing trainers, the need for male trainers was highlighted where groups of students are mixed sex, and the need for at least one male trainer per group of students was suggested. Whilst some of the Company X trainers were male, it was not always possible to request a male trainer as work was not directly allocated by the Programme Co-ordinator. Consequently, when recruiting members of staff to work for the NPHS it would have been preferable to express a preference for male trainers within the job description, but human resources guidelines prevented this.

3.3.2   Approaching schools

The first stage of implementation entailed approaching schools identified as being in some of the most deprived areas in Wales and canvassing their interest in the ASSIST Programme. A number of schools turned down the opportunity to receive the Programme, and it was important to document this.

3.3.2.1 School response

The Programme Co-ordinator reported that four schools did not want to receive the ASSIST Programme. One refused because of staffing changes in the school and emphasised that they normally engage in most activities. The second refused because they felt the Programme was more suitable for Year 9 students and had this been the case they would have engaged with it. The Programme Co-ordinator reported that the third school said that they didn't have a problem with smoking. The reason for refusal in the fourth school is not known. A further nineteen schools did not respond to correspondence. It is not known why these schools chose not to engage with the Programme.

The key barriers to implementing the Programme encountered at this stage were problems reaching the contact teacher, which often involved several phone calls and letters, and identifying the correct person at the school was occasionally problematic. The Programme Co-ordinator acknowledged that waiting for schools to respond resulted in fewer schools implementing the Programme during Phase Two of rollout than was anticipated. At the ASSIST steering group meeting held at the end of Phase Two she reported that of the fifty schools in which she hoped to implement the Programme, she had received no response from nineteen of these. Instead of waiting for schools to respond it was agreed that a list of new schools would be prepared, which would also be contacted once reasonable attempts had been made to contact schools on the original list. In doing so, it was anticipated more schools could be contacted in future years. In the implementation diary, the Programme Co-ordinator suggested that this process may be facilitated by sending initial letters about the Programme to both the PSE Co-ordinator and the Headteacher, and, where applicable, the Head of Year 8.

Programme costs relevant to gaining access to schools were also a potential issue. Since the majority of staff delivering the Programme were employed on a daily basis (i.e. not employed by the NPHS), the fact the Programme was delivered in only twenty-three of the intended fifty schools is likely to have a limited impact on the cost per school as they delivered the Programme as and when required. However, their daily rate was significantly higher than if NPHS-employed staff were used so the Programme cost per school is likely to have been higher than if NPHS staff were used. Whilst employing NPHS staff has the potential to make substantial financial savings, this may be a false economy if access issues remain a problem, and these staff are idle for significant periods of time.

Recommendation ten: Programme Co-ordinator to amend strategy used to contact schools in order to maximise the number of schools that are engaged.

Recommendation eleven: Universities to amend contents of Programme Manual to reflect the need to attempt to make contact with two or more members of staff in schools when initial contact is made.

3.3.3 Planning visit with schools

The planning visit with schools was intended to allow the Programme Co-ordinator to talk in-depth with senior school staff about the implementation of the ASSIST Programme within their school and make arrangements for each stage of the Programme.

In general, schools were receptive and positive regarding the Programme at this stage. All schools visited by the ASSIST Programme Co-ordinator agreed to implement the Programme. As part of the planning process, schools were asked their reasons for implementing the ASSIST Programme. The most common responses were:

- Reduction in smoking (18)
- Interest in peer work/mentoring (11)
- Health benefits (5)
- Increasing self-esteem of students (2)

There was also a desire to be involved in external training Programmes, wanting to receive the Programme having been involved in the trial and participation because it involved no financial cost to the school.

No concerns were raised regarding the provision of information to governors, school staff and parents and carers but a number of relatively minor issues were raised in terms of the ability of schools to facilitate the implementation of the ASSIST Programme (see next section).

Timetabling the ASSIST Programme

The majority of schools reported no concerns or barriers in this area. Of those schools that did express concerns these were:

- Timetabling issues in two schools resulted in a need to plan several peer nomination sessions during different lessons over a week (five sessions in one school and seven in another).
- Difficulties in timetabling due to exams.
- A number of schools also requested that the Programme was timetabled to fit around other events at the school. One school also requested that the Programme finish during the summer term to enable students to be presented with their certificates at their end of year celebration assembly.

Some schools also requested dates to be closer together than suggested in the ASSIST Programme timetable. It was noted that where schools favour the use of the PSE lesson for implementing the ASSIST Programme, in some schools, PSE was delivered every two weeks. This therefore created difficulties in planning the Programme as per the recommended timetable. In interview, the Programme Co-ordinator suggested that a flexible approach to timetabling needs to be adopted.

Roles and responsibilities

In terms of roles and responsibilities of Programme personnel no significant issues were encountered, although in some cases there was some confusion as to who the nominated contact was. Notes from the visit emphasised the need for the contact teacher to attend the training session.

Arrangements for each element of the Programme

Although the majority of schools reported no issues in this area, several reported problems with:

- Hall availability
- Space for survey
- Teachers saying that they would remove students they considered unsuitable from the list.

3.3.4   Training the Trainers

The three-day Training the Trainers course was considered the beginning of the Programme.

3.3.4.1   *General arrangements for the training and how these impacted on the training*

Participants were asked what was considered good about the training and what could be improved. Factors described as good were the venue (including accessibility), break times, space available, knowledge and hands on experience of methods, timing and pace, catering, mixed trainers and general course content. Generally the training was described as being excellent and very enjoyable. However, a number of areas were identified for improvement, including:

- Timing - try to avoid the first day back at school for the benefit of those with children.
- Advanced notification and confirmation of venue etc.
- Issuing trainers with a timetable for each day of the training.
- More fresh air in the venue.
- A bigger space and one large room rather than two small ones.

3.3.4.2 How well the stated aims and objectives of the training were met

Aim: To provide participants with the knowledge, skills and confidence to identify, recruit, train and support Year 8 students to be peer supporters

Objectives:
1) To demonstrate that the training Programme is delivered through a pre-determined and tested range of activities that must be followed
2) To ensure an in depth knowledge of the training Programme
3) To ensure that trainers have appropriate and accurate information about smoking and young people
4) To develop the skills required to deliver the training Programme

Participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which the aims and objectives of the course were met. All were rated as being met either 'very well' or 'quite well' by all participants, a view supported by the non-participant observer and the delivering trainers. Of those objectives identified as being met 'quite well' those most commonly identified were 2 and 3 (see above).

3.3.4.3 Content of the training

Overall the content of the training was considered both sufficient and appropriate to equip the trainers to deliver the Programme. Details of the Programme content and delivery were provided

clearly and in a way that made it easy to retain the information. Activities were relevant and useful, and information was appropriately detailed. One participant suggested that there may have been a little too much walking through of the material, and another suggested that it might be useful to provide a recap of the content of the peer supporter training at the end of the session as a reminder of what had been covered. These views were endorsed in interviews with trainers at the end of Phase Two.

> *"I mean if anything I would say, it was perhaps slightly overly detailed in that it made it all appear, a little bit more complicated that it actually is... But I mean perhaps that's just the case with general training anyway, you give people all of the information and they filter out the bits which they actually need."*
>
> Trainer 4 interview, Phase2

> *"It was extraordinarily thorough. Err, it couldn't, it couldn't have been more thorough if it tried it really did go through every single aspect of, everything that we would need to do in the program."*
>
> Trainer 5 interview, Phase2

A number of minor issues and areas of improvement were suggested:

- Difficulties in focusing on the first day and too much emphasis on the history of ASSIST.
- Need for more introduction/ice breaker activities to help participants to get to know one another.
- The need to stress the casual nature of peer support.
- Introducing an informal evaluation after day 1 and day 2.
- Providing information on the links between self-esteem and smoking and other behaviour in order to prepare trainers to deal with any relevant issues regarding this that might arise.
- More course content (as opposed to an overview of ASSIST) could be included in day 1 of the training as some participants felt that it was a little slow and could have been more participative.
- Focusing on more participative activities.

Participants were asked which aspects of the training were most useful in preparing them to train and support young people as peer supporters for ASSIST. Areas identified were:

- Working through the parts of the Programme and explaining delivery points
- Smoking facts
- The use of icebreaking techniques and 'liveners' used to maintain interest for students
- The background to ASSIST
- Practice sessions
- Good quality resources, specifically the comprehensive and easy to follow ASSIST Manual

- Running the mock follow-up sessions
- Emphasis on the informal nature of the peer supporter role
- More time for questions and answers would have been beneficial.

3.3.4.4   Style of the training

The majority of participants felt that the style of the training was excellent and found it enjoyable, describing it as fun, flexible and energetic. It enabled them to feel confident, particularly in terms of more dynamic activities that they may not previously have been familiar with. The interactive nature of the training equipped participants well for delivery in schools and the training style was conducive to remembering facts. The use of mixed teams was felt to improve the training experience, providing an opportunity to share experiences and learn new or different training styles. Observation of the training ascertained that activities were delivered effectively and appropriately.

Participants were asked if there was anything they would have changed about the course. The majority were happy with the course but a number suggested a few minor changes, including:
- Spending more time getting to know others on the course in a relatively informal way.
- Improve the balance between 'serious' activities and those that were more interactive (as was the case on day 3 of the training).

3.3.4.5   Previous experience and skills of trainers

As previously identified, the experience of participants on the 'Training the Trainers' course varied hugely and the experience of the course identified on evaluation forms reflected this in terms of what they felt that they had gained, or found useful. Due to the variety of participants there were differing levels of both knowledge and experience of training methods and also of health promotion. In terms of course content, it was suggested that it would be useful for those without a health promotion background to be provided with additional information on smoking, and that those with training expertise may need less training on methods. However, it was considered important that both groups should have all of the skills and knowledge prior to delivering the training.

> *"... I thought, for people who weren't trainers previously on the course it was probably useful, but, you know pretty much, there wasn't much new information for me... I think if you're gonna employ people who aren't used to working with children, aren't used to using cooperative learning methods, basically people from health backgrounds who purely don't*

have, don't have any training experience. I think, yeah, that is some sort of introduction to it."

<div align="right">Trainer 5 interview, Phase 2</div>

One of the trainers interviewed suggested that it would be more appropriate if the previous experience of trainers was used to suggest ways to vary activities rather than being told how they should vary them. The non-participant observer felt that it was useful that the participants could draw on the experience of trainers who had been involved in the trial and those who had previously run sessions in Wales.

3.3.4.6   *Participant reaction and interaction*

Observation witnessed that the participants reacted positively to the training with good levels of participation in all activities, although there was some variability that can be attributed to individual personalities. The non-participant observer and the trainers reported that participants interacted well with one another despite some not knowing each other previously, and made an effort to work together during activities. The atmosphere was considered supportive and all participants were positive and keen to learn.

3.3.4.7   *Other issues that might impact on the implementation of the ASSIST Programme*

One of the trainers mentioned that issues raised about the type of young people who would be taking part helped them to discuss and find solutions to issues that may arise during the training.

The non-participant observer suggested that accreditation of the ASSIST 'Training the Trainers' course would be valuable as some participants may not be suitable, or have the necessary skills to deliver the training in schools.

Recommendation twelve: Universities to revisit 'Training the Trainers' course content and structure, and investigate course accreditation

3.3.5   Resourcing the ASSIST Programme

The ASSIST Programme requires numerous resources, both in terms of venues and documentation. This stage of the evaluation was concerned with the availability of suitable venues and other resources within the ASSIST Programme budget and appropriate timescales.

3.3.5.1 Selection of external training venues for peer supporter training

Criteria/rationale for selecting venues

Guidelines regarding venues highlighted in the ASSIST 'Training the Trainers' course, and the experience gleaned from Phase One of Programme implementation were considered when trying to locate suitable training venues during Phase Two. The Welsh Assembly Government stipulated further criteria that, where possible, public sector venues should be used for peer supporter training. This was not considered a feasible option, particularly in terms of cost, and the Programme Co-ordinator was keen to explore alternatives:

> *"From WAG to the NPHS, to everyone to use our own facilities or public sector, but a room at the Millennium Theatre down the bay is £600 a day you know so, which I'm not prepared to pay for a public sector venue, so, but my boss is happy that what we are doing is ok because we have different requirements to adult courses."*
>
> <div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

During Phase Two, the Programme was delivered in different areas of Wales to those covered during Phase One. Thus, it was necessary to find new venues, which posed some problems, particularly in North Wales, where there was some unfamiliarity with the local area. Venues in the South Wales valleys often took a long time to find as they were scarce, often expensive, and unsuitable for larger groups where two parallel training sessions need to take place.

Details of venues used

Fourteen venues were used, ranging from football grounds to theatres. APPENDIX 1 provides the distance of the venues from schools and comments from trainers about the suitability of the venues. In general venues were appropriate and within an acceptable distance of the school. Venues furthest from schools tended to serve more rural schools, and those in the South Wales valleys.

On the whole, venues were described as being 'good' or 'excellent'. However, a number of issues were highlighted by specific contact teachers, including problems with food provided (5 schools), space available at the venue (5 schools) and venue staff being unfriendly (1 school).

One training session was conducted as two parallel sessions conducted in two separate venues, thus deviating from recommendations laid out in the ASSIST Programme Manual.

It was acknowledged that there was value in using a venue on a number of occasions, because bulk booking could be more cost effective, but also because the venue became aware of requirements. As stated after Phase One, a need to develop a database of recommended venues was highlighted.

> *"Now that we have got a venue down here that we use a lot they are really well set up for it, they know how to do the room, they know that we take them outside – so I think all that works well now, I think, and also I have started collating a spreadsheet of all the venues, all the contacts all the everything for coaches and so that will just become a directory I guess, Wales directory for ASSIST."*
>
> Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2

Recommendation thirteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure that where two training sessions are run in parallel, they are conducted in the same venue, and in rooms of approximately equal standard.

3.3.5.2 Procurement of resources

Issues related to the procurement of resources

The main issue relating to the acquisition of resources focused on the Welsh language and the need for resources to be bilingual. The Programme Co-ordinator expressed frustration over not being able to use good resources because they were not bilingual and when buying spot prizes (which were introduced into the follow-up sessions in the hope of encouraging the students to bring their diaries), choices were limited to those without writing on them so they didn't have to be translated. In terms of the Programme Manual and other written resources, it was sometimes difficult to estimate how many needed to be printed. This resulted in an excess of, for example, Welsh ASSIST Programme Manuals which may not be needed and may become out of date before they are used.

Lack of office space also meant that storage of resources was an issue. It was anticipated that this would not be a problem once the Programme Co-ordinator moved to new office premises.

3.3.5.3 Staffing and timetabling

Rationale for staffing ASSIST Programme sessions

As per the Programme Manual, a minimum of two trainers was recommended for each session, with a ratio of 1:15 at the peer recruitment and follow-up sessions, and 1:10 at the peer supporter training. It was suggested that the teacher should be consulted as to how challenging the students in the group are in order to inform how many staff are required for the peer supporter training

Timetabling ASSIST Programme sessions

Clear guidance is provided in the ASSIST Programme Manual regarding timetabling the ASSIST Programme. During rollout, the number of days between each stage of the Programme varied hugely, and on occasion deviated significantly from the preferred timetable (Table 4).

Table 4: Timetable: variation in the number of days between sessions

	Days difference between each session					
	Nomination to recruitment	Recruitment to training	Training to follow-up 1	Follow-up 1 to follow-up 2	Follow-up 2 to follow-up 3	Follow-up 3 to follow-up 4
Preferred timescale (days)	7	14	7	21	21	21
Mean	12	25	14	15	19	13
Mode	7	15	12	10	21	14
Range	0-36	6-97	4-28	6-47	0-61	0-42

Whilst some deviations were due to school holidays arising between follow-up sessions, larger deviations were due to organisational issues with the school and the scheduling of the timetable within the school prior to the school summer holiday. In three schools only two follow-up sessions were conducted, shortening the intervention period. It is clear that in a significant proportion of schools, the peer supporters were not having conversations with their friends for the full ten week period, and it is possible that scheduling issues will have affected the impact of the Programme.

> *"This term, because it's a summer term so you haven't got a carry over[follow-up session beyond the summer holiday], 2 schools won't get them all finished and ours have been close together, partly because in the school I was in they wanted them over by a certain time because they have got other stuff they want at the end of term- one of the schools where they won't get them all in is because the teachers strike knocked their training back a month, so that was my fault... And I did say to them you know you are not going to fit an extra one in- look at the activities, match them up with what the kids need the most and just do that you know. So yeah, they can all be fitted in – I think, we never do them 3 weekly, that's too long, definitely too long... I think weekly is actually quite good because they don't lose momentum but then it does mean it's over quickly, so maybe a week between the training and the first one then 2 weekly, but 3 weeks is too long...."*
>
> Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2

Recommendation fourteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to pay close attention to the guidelines provided in the ASSIST Programme Manual in terms of timetabling sessions in the school year and school day. Whilst there can be some flexibility when scheduling sessions, to allow for school events and holidays, significantly shortening or lengthening the intervention period is unacceptable in the context of the ASSIST Programme.

The Programme Co-ordinator reported that the ASSIST team in the Bristol area was diarising schools a year in advance, and offering schools a window for training to choose from. In Wales, diarising was carried out on a term by term basis to try and accommodate school timetables. If the approach adopted in Bristol proved successful, it was suggested that this should be trialled in Wales.

3.3.6   Peer nomination

The aim of the peer nomination session was to nominate influential individuals to be peer supporters for the ASSIST Programme.

3.3.6.1   Issues raised by Year 8 students during the nomination process

Students in only one school expressed concerns regarding confidentiality. Other questions/enquires were raised in six schools, three of which were to ask what the questionnaire was for. In all but one school, questions were raised about the questionnaire content; for example, comprehension, information about other students, for help with spelling, and for clarification on who, and how many people, they could name.

3.3.6.2   The general arrangements for the peer nomination session

Feedback provided on trainer evaluation forms showed that the peer nomination questionnaire was completed with groups of approximately 20-30 students in a classroom setting in nine schools, and in a hall in eight schools. In one school, instruction was given in the year assembly and then students were split into groups of approximately 50 for the nomination session. The Programme Co-ordinator acknowledged in the implementation diary that the trend was towards conducting the session in individual classes and that this required more trainers and bore an increased cost. If sessions could be conducted back-to-back by trainers, this reduced the number of staff required but increased the amount of time taken to tally questionnaires as there were less staff to undertake it. Experience revealed that the most efficient way of tallying peer nomination questionnaires was as a group of three, with one to clean, one to call out names, and the other to record the tally score.

The school timetable often dictated the arrangements and timing of the session as outlined here:

"[School 20], they have this funny timetable where they have, each tutor group has PSE in a different lesson so myself, [Trainer 4] and [Trainer 13] from Company X did 2 classes each on separate days so we had to go into [School 20] 6 or 7 times because they all have PSE at the same times on the same days, absolutely head banging. There is a school next term that does that but they have been really good and said for one day we will put them all in PSE together – that's the only thing I feel that schools, where it is difficult, where schools could actually put desks out in the hall, take 10 minutes but they don't want to do that."

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

Privacy for the nomination session varied greatly from 'very poor', where students did not have chairs, to 'excellent', where exam desks were used. When asked to provide a score between 1 ('very poor') and 5 ('excellent'), the mean score provided by trainers who ran sessions in 21 schools was 3. The behaviour of students and the response to the questionnaire also varied.

In every school, sufficient time was allowed to explain the aim of the session (5-10 minutes) and allow students to complete the peer questionnaire (5-20 minutes).

There was a teacher present for at least part of the peer nomination session in every school. In only one school did the teacher leave the room during the session. In five schools, the teacher did not get actively involved in the session. In five schools, the teacher/teachers present provided disciplinary support, and in nine they helped students with comprehension and provided other assistance.

3.3.6.3   Other issues that might impact on the recruitment of peer supporters

Following the nomination session, a number of schools exercised their right to change the list of students sent to them, and in one school they did so without telling the trainer until after they had told the students. Behaviour was the reason given for this, despite considerable reassurance that challenging behaviour could be managed and that it was important that a range of students were involved.

"We have had quite a lot of that this term where teachers have pulled kids off the list because of their behaviour, they are not prepared to let them represent the school, even though I made a big thing of it at the first meeting and when we give them the list – in one school they took them off, they didn't tell us, they just removed them, so there wasn't anything we could do about that... the school I have just done in North Wales actually she was the one who just took them off it and she made a big thing at the first session saying how she had removed kids from that list because they were naughty, to the rest of the kids it was all a bit... She is a nice teacher, she is a good contact teacher, but she made a real thing of the behaviour and it wasn't for naughty kids, and you just think, it's not really about that. But that will always happen and fair enough the school should have the ultimate say. I have to say, in a school where they have pulled out the naughty ones, the challenging ones,

sometimes it is still hard work, and you think can you imagine if you had the 4, so it actually makes your job easier, it just affects how successful, do you know what I mean... But then in other schools someone took a couple off and when you go to the next round for the voting there are 7, you know the numbers game, you lose 2 you gain 7 and that pushes you into 2 parallel trainings so there are all sorts of knock on effects."

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

In another school, the teacher reported that one student might not be allowed to attend because of ongoing behavioural problems in school. In one of the schools in which students were excluded, the teacher replaced the nominated students with others from Year 8 without informing the trainer(s).

"...he had added someone onto it... and the teacher I'm sure was doing it for the right reasons because he thought it would be lovely for this particular child and she would get a lot out of it... we have quite a lot of, I would say in 4 or 5 schools where they say we are taking people off there, and it doesn't matter how much you say it's not a reward..."

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, phase 2</div>

In the implementation diary, the Programme Co-ordinator suggested that it works well if the students are taken through the survey one question at a time. She also reiterated the suggestion made after Phase One, that it is virtually impossible to give students names that they are unsure of from the year group list. Even with a teacher and Learning Support Assistant (LSA) helping, the process is still slow. In order to combat this, it helps if form class names and the equivalent teachers' names are put on large pieces of paper that the students can refer to.

3.3.7 Peer supporter recruitment

Nominated students were asked to attend a peer supporter recruitment meeting. The aim of the peer supporter recruitment meeting was to recruit influential students identified through the peer questionnaire procedure on to the training course.

3.3.7.1 *General arrangements for the peer supporter recruitment meeting*

The arrangements for the meeting varied hugely. The room provided ranged from a science lab and a drama hall with fixed stepped seating to large, spacious halls. In general, regular classrooms required furniture to be moved and could be cramped if the groups were particularly large.

"Sometimes the room you get is awful, you know – ideally instead of a classroom it is better to have a room where they can stand in a circle, put the chairs in a circle."

In the majority of schools, the contact teacher was present at the session, and appeared organised and supportive of the Programme. In two of the 24 schools from which trainer evaluations forms were received, only one member of ASSIST staff was present at the peer recruitment meeting. In the remaining 22 schools, either two or three staff were present. Even though the recommendations regarding student to trainer ratios appeared to be acknowledged by trainers, the ratio of students to ASSIST staff ranged from 8:1 to 22:1 and the Programme Co-ordinator suggested that where the group of students is particularly small, that this session can be conducted by one trainer.

A number of issues were raised relating to successful facilitation of the sessions. These included the need to organise paperwork correctly (ensuring parental letters were in named envelopes, ensuring medical forms and consent forms were copied back-to-back to reduce the risk that one will get lost and providing name badges for students).

Recommendation fifteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure that schools are clear about what is expected in terms of venues for school-based sessions at the planning meeting and remind them prior to sessions; and that the Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers pay close attention to the recommendations outlined in the ASSIST Programme Manual for both the in-school and external training venues.

3.3.7.2   *How well the objectives of the meeting were met*

The aims and objectives of the peer supporter recruitment meeting were as follows:

Aim: To recruit the influential students identified through the peer questionnaire into the training Programme.

Objectives:

- To give information about the roles and responsibilities of a peer supporter
- To outline potential benefits of being a peer supporter
- To ensure that the students understood the level of commitment required to fulfil the role of peer supporter
- To make the potential peer supporters feel positive about ASSIST by promoting a friendly atmosphere

- To give potential peer supporters the information and essential paperwork to be completed by their parents/carers

In all schools, trainers reported that the overall aim of the peer recruitment session was 'very well' or 'quite well' met. In school 3, the trainers felt that they had not succeeded in providing information about the roles and responsibilities of a peer supporter. The trainer in this school reported that *"It wasn't easy to get them to absorb anything."* In the same school, the trainers struggled to provide outline information about the training course and follow-up sessions. In the remaining schools, these objectives were achieved either very well, or quite well. The other four objectives were achieved successfully in every school.

3.3.7.3   How information about the Programme was received by students

Trainers who attended recruitment meetings in 22 schools reported that the students present were excited/positive/interested during the session. In one school, trainers suggested that students were intimidated by the large group (43 attendees) so were very quiet, and in another, they reported that they were difficult to motivate.

Students in sixteen schools asked questions about the training session. In thirteen of these schools, the query was regarding wearing school uniform for the training. Other questions included whether ASSIST involved talking in front of lots of people, if they had to pay, if their friends could come, what lessons they would miss, if they had to go to registration, queries regarding travel, if it involved an overnight stay, and whether they would get paid.

3.3.7.4   The interaction between students and ASSIST trainers

In their Phase 2 interviews, trainers acknowledged that the interaction between trainers and students, and therefore the dynamics of the session differed according to which trainers were present. The Programme Co-ordinator reported that trainers took different approaches in recruitment meetings in order to make them more interactive, for example, by playing games.

> *"I think actually the one I did as lead was quite boring, looking back and having compared to other peoples – [Trainer 4's] was the best because he had put all the stuff in speech bubbles from the manual onto post its so he would start off with a game which they love and gets them dead excited and they think this is brilliant, then they have to go off in teams, find the post its, write the answer on a separate piece, you know really good, and it takes them about 10 minutes and he makes it quite teamy and he lists who got the answers right the*

quickest and then they get a prize – quite a lot of that which Company X do as well I like whereby they have group prizes you know for like the quiz or something and it will just be chocolate or something small, and they don't do it all the time but they do do quite nice little group activities. So I think it works better where they do something like that where they do an activity where they are up and about, not just listening."

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

The use of chocolates as prizes has since been discontinued to ensure that the Programme is consistent with the philosophy of Appetite for Life and Healthy Schools.

Recommendation sixteen: Universities to consider amending format of peer recruitment meeting as outlined in the ASSIST Programme Manual to reflect the experience in Wales.

3.3.7.5   *Other issues that might have impacted on the recruitment of peer supporters*

Trainers identified a number of issues that may impact on the recruitment of peer supporters. They reported that the groups from a number of schools were enthusiastic about participating. However in one school, the main reason for signing up was identified as missing lessons, and in another, a number of students actively chose not to participate.

> *"At the end of the session, three 'cool' boys refused to participate as they did not want to touch anyone or stand close to them. Eventually, I told them if they didn't participate they probably wouldn't enjoy training and they walked off"*

<div align="right">Trainer evaluation, School 20.</div>

Trainers described that this was a very streetwise group who were not outwardly impressed by the benefits of being a peer supporter, and that the loss of the three boys may have negatively impacted on recruitment. Retention of students in this school was at least 69% for each of the subsequent sessions so it is unlikely that the loss of these students had the anticipated effect.

3.3.8   Training the peer supporters

After parental consent was obtained, potential peer supporters were taken out of school for two days training. The aim of the peer supporter training course is to give peer supporters the knowledge, skills and confidence to discuss the health, economic and environmental risks of smoking in informal, non-confrontational and supportive environments, and in so doing, to promote being smoke-free among their peers.

3.3.8.1 *The general arrangements for the training and how these impacted on the training event*

In general, trainers and school staff reported that the general arrangements for the training were good. Trainers in two schools said that the venue was too small, and, in one, there were no opening windows. In three schools they said that the food was not appropriate (unhealthy, or not enough of it). Detailed comments regarding venues choices are provided in section 3.3.5.1.

Transport was reported as being late in two schools and the knock on effect of this had to be managed by, for example, amending breaks.

> *"They were generally ok – I would say this year mostly it has probably kicked off at half nine, on average they will be picked up at half two – the trainers have tended to play with the lunch break depending on how much work they have got through, especially on day 2 – it's really nice actually when [Trainer 12] got [Venue 11] as a venue the kids were dying to have a tour of the football ground so they shortened breaks, and you know when it's like on the activities if you want to shorten it get 3 groups to feed back instead of 5, they did that, then the kids had a guided tour of the ground that they absolutely loved, so that worked really well."*
>
> <div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

Evaluation forms were received from trainers who conducted training sessions in 21 schools. At each training session, there were at least two ASSIST trainers present. Details on the number of students present at these sessions are incomplete, but in schools where information is provided, a ratio of between 1:6 and 1:11 ASSIST trainers to students was achieved. In 10 schools, the ratio of trainers to students was described as being 'good' or 'excellent'. In two schools, trainers suggested it was a little high, and in one school, the ratio was identified as restricting the length of breaks that the trainers were able to take (5 minutes). In another school they thought that the training would have worked better if it had been conducted with two groups of approximately 10 students, instead of a single group. It was also suggested that where two parallel training sessions are run, training teams should be balanced for gender, style, etc.

In every school but one, at least one member of school staff was also present. The designation of these staff is unknown. However, some schools were noted as having sent a Learning Support Assistant, again raising the need for clarity regarding what the school finds acceptable in terms of responsibility. The Programme Co-ordinator also recommended that where a parallel training session was carried out, that there should be two school staff present at the training venue.

Recommendation seventeen: Universities to identify if there is guidance in relation to designation of responsible adult sent from the school and amend Programme Manual accordingly

3.3.8.2 How well the stated aims and objectives of the training were met

The aim of the peer supporter training course is identified in section 4.3.8, the objectives were:

- To increase knowledge about the health, environmental and economic risks of smoking;
- To emphasise the benefits of remaining smoke-free;
- To develop the skills to promote smoking prevention among their peers.

These aims and objectives were all achieved either 'very well', or 'quite well'. In most cases, peer supporters were thought to have the knowledge and skills to undertake their roles, although further emphasis on knowledge was highlighted as being potentially useful and further work on confidence and the practical application of skills would be useful. School staff tended to agree with the ASSIST Trainers' views, suggesting that some issues may need to be reinforced.

> *"Some pupils retained the facts learned on day one and others may need this session repeating. They were a little unsure about how, when and where to start a conversation"*
> Teacher feedback, School 2

> *"The pupils certainly had the knowledge to be a peer supporter – this was demonstrated through the training days. I am not sure all of them were/are mature or confident enough to carry out the peer work. There are a number of more confident pupils who do have the skills."*
> Teacher feedback, School 8

The degree to which students understood their role as a peer supporter varied. Whilst the majority appeared to understand what they had to do, some were more interested and motivated than others, and the trainers felt that in some schools it was difficult to ensure that the students understood that they did not just have to talk with smokers.

> *"I think they always think that they have to go up to groups of kids who smoke and try and get them to stop, because when you say to them what are your fears, what are you worried about going back to school, I don't want to talk to people I don't know, I don't want to talk to people who smoke, so they always worry about that... and we do it in all the follow-ups, it's about ad-hoc conversations, it's about chatting with people you already know, people who are in your friendship group, not people you don't know. Um, so whilst you think they are clear on the role, you do need to keep reinforcing that, because when you go to the follow-ups and they say no I haven't had a conversation and you ask why they give the same reasons which are because I don't know anyone who smokes, or I didn't want to go up to that group, so they obviously still struggle with that concept."*

School staff provided feedback about the level of involvement from students. The majority reported that students, on the whole, were engaged and enjoyed the experience. Some were reportedly more involved than others, which may have been a consequence of disinterest, or shyness.

3.3.8.3 Questions and concerns raised about being a peer supporter

No questions and concerns were raised by peer supporters at the time of the training session.

3.3.8.4 Differences between the training events for individual schools that might result in differences in outcomes between schools

Other than differences in organisational aspects of the training (for example, venues), few differences in the training events were acknowledged. Attentiveness and behaviour were recognised as affecting the ability of students to absorb information provided at the training session, and therefore, the time spent on activities and the depth to which these were considered. One trainer reported that they had introduced an extra, new activity to the training.

> *"I did add one as an extra because we had time which was really good where I wrote another quiz, but based on all the knowledge they had learned in the activities, and there were 20 questions that were hidden on post its all around a separate room in the venue and they had 3 minutes in mixed teams to go and find as many questions and get the scribe to write the answers as they could and the winning team, and they had to come up with team names and stuff, got chocolates, and they all got chocolates for taking part because I can't bear to, because they love it – and that was another favourite activity, the time thing, because none of them, I made it difficult enough so none of them could get them all right, so in that three minutes they were just haring all over the place so that was quite good. And I did think of just getting that typed up as an activity, just the questions and answers because it is quite nice to have an extra, and it didn't take that long."*

The same trainer also reported that they had taken the peer supporters outside to do the 'true, false, don't know' activity as it was a nice day, and that this had been well received.

Recommendation eighteen: Programme Co-ordinator and all trainers to note that the introduction of new activities can be useful if there is time available within the training (particularly during 'free' time) but these should not substitute the activities outlined in the Programme Manual.

3.3.8.5 School staff reaction to the training

In the majority of cases, teachers reacted positively towards the training, and many were complimentary about the course on their evaluation forms. However, in two schools, the trainers thought that the teacher(s) present were not entirely supportive of the Programme. In school 9, the teachers present reportedly talked over trainers and played on their mobile phones, and in school 18, the teacher occasionally intervened inappropriately.

3.3.8.6 Other issues that might have impacted on the implementation of the ASSIST Programme

No additional issues were reported as having an impact on the implementation of the Programme.

3.3.9 Supporting the peer supporters

During the ten week period in which the peer supporters were asked to have conversations about smoking with other Year 8 students and record their experiences in their diaries, the trainers conducted four follow-up visits in each school. The aim of these sessions was to support and encourage peer supporters to undertake their role in school.

3.3.9.1 General arrangements for the follow-up visits and how these impacted on the implementation of the Programme

The venue provided by schools varied and had the potential to impact on the success of follow-up sessions. Some schools appeared to make a conscious effort to provide a suitable venue for the follow-up visits (i.e. a large space with moveable desks, or no desks in which a circle of chairs could be assembled). Following the first follow-up session, schools appeared to take it on board if a venue was unsuitable.

On occasion, rooms were not booked or were found to be unavailable for the session, resulting in a loss of time at the start of the session, which subsequently impacted on the ability of the trainers to deliver the required activities. Sessions were also shortened as a consequence of behavioural issues.

> *"…because you are hassling them with behaviour, that can take 5 minutes, because they are not there on time that's 5 minutes. I ended up looking at their diaries while [Trainer 11] was delivering her activities, and I did write comments in them so at least when they got*

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them back they could see that I had looked at them and put a sticker in them and stuff. But I think what [Trainer 11] and I ended up doing was thinking logistically we have got, and also some of them are 50 minutes on your timetable slot, and you can probably take out 15 from faffing and shouting and whatever. So we would say which, based on what they had said the previous week about what they were struggling with we would look before the next follow-up, we would divvy out the activities and say if we run out of time which are the key ones we need to do based on what they said they were lacking. So then we said we will definitely do that and that and if we can we will do those, but there is a lot of content."

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

The need for a supportive and organised contact in the school was raised as a very pertinent issue at this point of delivery, both in terms of facilitating the Programme by ensuring a suitable venue was provided, and also in terms of support and encouragement for the students. Trainers highlighted the need for students to be reminded about the time and location of the meeting, reminded to bring their diaries, and of the importance of school staff being present at the meeting. The information sheet for schools states that a teacher should be present at the follow-up sessions, as experience from the trial suggested that the students are more responsive and co-operate better in the school setting when a teacher is present. Despite this, of the seventy-three follow-up sessions for which evaluation forms were returned, 13 (18%) of these had no teacher present. Whilst teachers were generally considered supportive and maintained good communication links with the trainers, their actual involvement in the Programme was identified as being limited at this stage.

"The teachers have taken a bit of a back seat in the whole thing, which is understandable because they're busy people. But, where it has worked best is where you've had the same teachers throughout the training and at each of the follow-up sessions as well, and they're kind of, they're almost a part of the project by the end."

<div align="right">Trainer 4 interview, Phase 2</div>

The support of the school as a whole was also considered important in terms of the priority placed on addressing smoking behaviour, and the degree to which they reinforced and supported the messages that the peer supporters were being asked to deliver to their peers as part of the Programme.

"There's been schools that have said, oh you know, these kids have got such odds stacked against them, it's so deprived that, you know, tackling smoking is the least (of their problems)…smoking isn't a priority amongst all the other issues."

<div align="right">Trainer 5 interview, Phase 2</div>

"I did feel that the training was more effective where you had a really good contact teacher, you know like in [School 21], the contact teacher there is a PE teacher, the kids love him, he is funny, you know he was bigging them up all the time and I think they actually

quite wanted to please him and I think that makes a big difference. I think the school I was doing in North Wales, after the 3rd follow-up I was driving up the drive and 3 of the girls from the follow-up came out of the bushes so I waved- I know you have been having a cigarette and I think, like yesterdays school follow-up, all these kids out in the bushes at playtime and I think there is no adult there, there is no one sending them back in so how is that, the school is not really supportive unless it's that it's not acceptable. And I'm not talking about a big campus where teachers would have to walk miles round a field, and it's by the gates where visitors come in, it's not acceptable really. So I think you need a kind of whole school approach to it really."

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

This was also acknowledged in feedback from school staff at the end of Programme delivery.

Recommendation nineteen: The school contact is key to the successful implementation of the Programme. Programme Co-ordinator to encourage the school to nominate an appropriate individual and ensure that the staff contact is aware of their commitments (attendance at sessions, arranging rooms etc).

The ratio of trainers to students varied significantly at the follow-up session. Table 5 summarises data obtained from trainer evaluation forms completed after each session and shows that while the Programme Manual recommends that two trainers should be present at follow-up sessions, this was not always observed in practice; on five occasions, only one ASSIST trainer was present.

Table 5: Ratio of trainers to students present at follow-up sessions

	Follow-up one	Follow-up two	Follow-up three	Follow-up four
Range	1:6-1:28	1:6-1:16	1:5-1:15	1:7-1:16
Mean	1:11	1:10	1:10	1:11
Mode	1:8	1:8	1:11	1:11
Median	1:11	1:9	1:10	1:11

3.3.9.2 *How well the stated aims and objectives of the follow-up visits were met*

Trainers and school staff considered follow-up sessions useful in providing support and assistance to the peer supporters. The ASSIST trainers felt that the aims and objectives of the follow-up visits had been variably achieved (see Other factors impacting on the achievement of stated aims and objectives included:

- Behaviour of the peer supporters
- Time constraints

- Peer supporters not being forthcoming with problems they were having, or being uncomfortable in the group environment
- Boredom and loss of interest as the Programme progressed
- Activities being too repetitive

Figure 1). They identified a number of issues which affected their ability to achieve these. In particular, their ability to monitor diaries was hampered because students often forgot to bring them or because they were not reminded about the follow-up meeting.

> *"… they hardly ever brought diaries- I even emailed the teacher and she had to have a go at them about it, I gave them stickers when they did bring them and prizes and then some of them had conversations but hadn't written them in their diaries anyway you know, you think, I think the kids who have loads of conversations and record them all in their diaries, they like their diaries. But realistically that's the minority, so it just means you are nagging 80% of them over something that they are not interested in because 20% have done it you know, so then you have to nag the 18. Whereas if the majority don't do it, couldn't we just have that chat about hows it going, I don't think they need diaries."*
>
> Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2

It was also recognised that the follow-up sessions were most effective when they were held reasonably close together, as momentum could be better maintained over a ten week period:

> *"I think it would have a good knock on effect if it was more brief, and over a shorter time because maybe then you wouldn't lose the enthusiasm and the motivation so much, 'cos it's hard to keep the motivation going."*
>
> Trainer 5 interview, Phase 2

Other factors impacting on the achievement of stated aims and objectives included:
- Behaviour of the peer supporters
- Time constraints
- Peer supporters not being forthcoming with problems they were having, or being uncomfortable in the group environment
- Boredom and loss of interest as the Programme progressed
- Activities being too repetitive

Figure 1: Achievement of objectives of the follow-up visits

Follow-up one	Very well	Quite well	Not very well	Not at all well
To review the peer supporters' first experiences in their role and respond with appropriate support	4	14	4	1
To practise starting having conversations	2	11	6	2
To revisit information provided on the training course and to encourage its use in conversations	7	12	3	0
To monitor diaries on an individual basis	4	7	8	3
Follow-up two	**Very well**	**Quite well**	**Not very well**	**Not at all well**
To respond to issues raised by the peer supporters	5	12	2	0
To look at their perceived skills and how they can best be used	2	14	2	0
To consider the importance of body language in any conversation	1	8	7	3
To monitor diaries on an individual basis	5	3	10	1
Follow-up three	**Very well**	**Quite well**	**Not very well**	**Not at all well**
To respond to issues raised by the peer supporters	6	9	5	0
To review information learned about quitting smoking	5	12	3	0
To review the key skills of being a peer supporter	3	10	5	1
To look at the influence on young people's decision-making	5	7	7	1
To monitor diaries on an individual basis	7	6	4	1
Follow-up four	**Very well**	**Quite well**	**Not very well**	**Not at all well**
To respond to issues raised by the peer supporters	7	8	1	2
To reflect on their experiences of being a peer supporter	7	11	3	0
To collect diaries from the peer supporters	6	8	4	1
To thank peer supporters for their participation and recognise this through presentation of certificates	12	6	0	1

3.3.9.3 How the students reacted during the follow-up visits

Trainers and teachers reported that the reaction of the students varied across schools. Some were highly engaged for the duration of the intervention period, whilst others were unmotivated and lost interest shortly after the training. This became more noticeable as the follow-up sessions progressed. In the final follow-up visit, the majority of students were engaged and excited about the visit, probably due to the different content of the session which focused on presenting certificates.

3.3.9.4 Questions and concerns raised about being a peer supporter

A few students reported getting teased and that they had received negative feedback from peers. On the whole, however, respondents reported that the students involved in the Programme during Phase 2 of implementation experienced no issues.

3.3.9.5 Differences in the delivery and organisation between individual schools that might result in different outcomes between schools

In general, differences across schools related to the ability of trainers to deliver the required activities, as a consequence of, for example, venues and student behaviour. However, in making amendments to and judgements about the important activities to deliver, trainers were mindful of the need to deliver the Programme according to the Programme Manual. The scheduling of sessions varied across schools, and is likely to have had a significant impact on Programme outcome.

3.3.9.6 The extent to which the students undertook their role within the school

Some peer supporters engaged well with the role, and reported having conversations about smoking, although sometimes these were not with other Year 8 students, but with family members. Others were not interested and lacked motivation to undertake the role, particularly those whose reason for taking part was to get time off school. As the Programme progressed, they, in particular, became more apathetic. For this reason, the need to engage students and provide them with new information or experiences at follow-up three was identified. Several trainers reported that whilst the peer supporters remembered smoking-related information, they were reluctant to pass this information on to their friends and peers.

> *"Um, based on just the one school I have done this term they were hardly having any conversations and I don't know how to get round that really, so it felt like it doesn't really*

matter how far apart they are if they're not having conversations between them, but then if we use that argument then why have any, if they're not having conversations."

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

3.3.9.7 Other issues that might have impacted on the implementation of the ASSIST Programme

Despite it being reinforced throughout the Programme, a number of trainers highlighted that some peer supporters struggled to grasp that they were not expected to talk with smokers about quitting, but that the focus was on preventing the uptake of regular smoking.

The need to remind peer supporters of the information learned at the training throughout the intervention period was raised, and a number of possible solutions suggested, including providing further resources at the follow-up sessions, and including facts in the peer supporter diaries.

> *"I think what we have found out that by the time of even the first follow-up they have forgotten an awful lot of information and I think that even though we give them bookmarks and like we do the smoking quiz and stuff like that I think in a way they need something more to take away with them. You know like even like if it was a nice colour booklet or something on the facts, or like the old diaries where you could slip the bookmark inside. I don't think, I think at the end of the training they need something in colour that is attractive that has maybe the ingredients for ready steady cook, you know that picks up on the activities in a newsy, teen magazine type way that they can refer to. I do think they need that. And quite cleverly in the last follow-up yesterday when I looked at one boys diary he had copied all the smoking facts from the activity onto the notes page into his diary, so instead of saying I can't remember them he actually had them written down, so that's what they need really, or an insert in the diary with the facts in English and in Welsh, you know they need it on hand, but not as a separate, do you know what I mean. I don't think we give them a good enough resource to take away at the end of it."*

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

The emphasis on diaries during the follow-up session was also thought to distract from the content of the session, and the need to make these sessions more engaging and fun was stressed. As well as providing spot prizes when students brought their diaries to sessions, the introduction of more games was suggested as a possible option.

> *"I just feel like you never get all the work done so then you feel a bit, we planned to do that and we didn't, and it's very difficult to engage the kids. I think that is a general thing, and every week it seems you know 2/3 of them haven't brought their diaries so there is a discussion about that, 2/3 out of them haven't had a conversation since the last follow-up, um so then you talk about that – it does become quite tedious because when they are doing the training you don't have that horrible nagging teacher-ish side to you because you don't need it, but as soon as it comes to – possibly actually that would be good if you removed the*

<div align="center">52</div>

diaries, that takes away the nagging to bring the diaries – you do become more like a teacher because your expectations are different and there is something tangible they need to do for you. I think there should maybe be more games in the follow-ups instead of activities, but if we could make the games- you know like I ordered those inflatable balls with tobacco facts on, maybe more games like throwing the ball in the circle with the facts as a knowledge activity."

<div align="right">Trainer 1 interview, Phase 2</div>

Recommendation twenty: Universities to consider including guidance on suitable spot prizes and resources to take away in the Programme Manual

4   <u>**CONCLUSIONS**</u>

In general, delivery of the ASSIST Programme in Wales during Phase One has been successful, and there were no significant problems encountered in planning with schools or organising the Programme. Teams implementing the Programme largely adhered to the structure and suggestions laid out in the Programme Manual. However, a number of important issues were encountered;

- Using mixed training teams caused some organisational problems where trainers were based a long way from the school, and because it was sometimes difficult to engage a group of trainers with different styles of delivery.

- On occasion, schools did not provide suitable venues for school-based sessions, suggesting a need to stress the importance of appropriate school facilities.

- One school wanted to inform the school counsellor which students received no nominations. Providing this kind of information to schools was not considered appropriate.

A number of minor issues were identified, which, it was thought, would better facilitate future rollout. These included:

- It was suggested that a central office from which resources could be distributed would facilitate resource provision.

- Planning the follow-up sessions in schools raised awareness that there has to be some degree of flexibility in timing to allow for holidays, exams and other events, to ensure trainer availability and ensure that students do not miss the same lessons for every meeting.

- A major facilitator of successful Programme implementation was identified as the support and co-operation of an appropriately designated member of staff in the school.

- A need to compile a database of venues for future use in order to cut costs, save time and ensure recommended facilities are used. Getting the school to book the student transport from the school to the venue also often resulted in a lower rate being secured.

- A number of additions and updates to the Manual contents were suggested following Phase One, some of which were incorporated.

Phase Two of implementation was revealing in terms of identifying positive aspects of the implementation process, and deviations from the recommendations as documented in the ASSIST Programme Manual. In general, the quality of delivery during Phase Two was good and, again, the training teams largely adhered to the ASSIST Programme Manual, although a number of issues arose which had the potential to affect successful implementation:

- A range of trainers were recruited, trained and retained to deliver the ASSIST Programme in Wales. Issues relating to the use of NPHS staff were combated by employing full-time personnel to work on future rollout. However, the ability to recruit male trainers to deliver the Programme remains an issue.

- 'Training the Trainers' was considered a successful course, both from the perspective of trainers and trainees. A number of logistical issues were identified, but these are unlikely to have affected the outcome of the course. The most significant criticism was that the course could have been better targeted to the learning needs of some participants, and perhaps different sessions could be run for those with different training needs and levels of experience.

- Planning visits were successfully conducted by the Programme Co-ordinator in every school which expressed an interest in the Programme. Every school visited agreed to allow the Programme to be implemented, but gaining this contact in the first place was reported to be problematic, leading the Programme Co-ordinator to make attempts to contact a number of key individuals in each school, rather than relying on just one point of contact.

- Planning which schools should be contacted and subsequently gaining access to these schools proved to be the most significant barrier to implementing in schools, and was the main reason that rollout in Wales was restricted to 23 schools instead of the anticipated 50. Since the majority of staff delivering the Programme in Wales were employed to do so on a daily basis (i.e. not employed by the NPHS), the fact the Programme was delivered in only twenty-three of the intended fifty schools is likely to have a limited impact on the cost per school as they delivered the Programme as and when required. Whilst employing NPHS staff has the potential to make substantial financial savings, this may be a false economy if access issues remain a problem, and these staff are idle for significant periods of time.

- No significant difficulties were encountered regarding resourcing the Programme. The major frustration revolved around the need for all resources to be bilingual, and the limitations and time pressures this placed on implementation.

- Peer nomination sessions were carried out in every school. Appropriate staffing levels and session durations were achieved. Sessions were facilitated by ASSIST trainers writing the names of form teachers and their form group on the board, or on a large piece of paper. Arrangements largely under the control of schools, for example, venue provision and teachers' propensity to change the list of potential peer supporters were barriers to implementation.

- Peer recruitment meetings were conducted in every school. The sessions achieved the aims and objectives in all but one school. However, trainers were keen to recommend that this session could be more successful when a different approach was taken.

- The general arrangements for the peer supporter training were, on the whole, good. There were an adequate number of ASSIST staff present at each course, and schools sent at least one member of staff. Training venues were largely appropriate (although the unhealthy nature of the food was criticised in several). In some cases, decisions were made not to use certain venues in future. Public sector venues were considered alongside other venues but selection was always made in terms of value for money. Finding venues in North Wales was acknowledged as being difficult, due to unfamiliarity with the area. Maintaining a database of suitable and previously used venues (a recommendation from phase 1) was agreed to be beneficial for future rollout.

- All four follow-up sessions were conducted in 20 of the 23 schools in which the Programme was implemented. Appropriate trainer ratios were achieved in the majority of sessions. In terms of achieving the aims and objectives of the session, they were achieved with varying degrees of success, depending on timing, behaviour, boredom and the content of the sessions.

- In the majority of cases schools nominated a contact teacher who was helpful and supportive of the Programme. Contact teachers were identified as being key to facilitating implementation. However, in some schools this was not the case, and the need to ensure that the contact teacher, is consistent, and that they attend sessions, has been stressed.

A number of deviations from the Programme as outlined in the Programme Manual were encountered. Here we identify the degree to which these variations were acceptable and avoidable (Holliday et al., 2008) in the context of the rollout of the ASSIST Programme in Wales. Strategies for avoiding these issues arising in the future, if at all possible, are also suggested.

Variation category	Deviation from Manual, or variation between schools	Avoidance strategy
Unavoidable and acceptable	Provision of various venues, of varying degrees of suitability by schools for on-site sessions.	This is acceptable but the requirements of venues for each session should be reiterated at the planning session and prior to each stage of the Programme, in order to encourage schools to provide suitable venues.
	The timing of sessions was adapted according to behaviour and educational needs, and also when organisational issues meant time was cut short or extended.	This is acceptable but unavoidable given the mix of young people involved and the need to fit in with school timetables; However, this can be managed to some extent by, for example, reminding the school contact teacher of an impending session so that they can make necessary arrangements and informing students.
Avoidable and acceptable	Peer nomination sessions were run differently by different trainers.	This is acceptable given the different style and approach of ASSIST trainers.

		However, care should be taken that the same information and messages are given to the potential peer supporters if different strategies are adopted.
	Student to trainer ratio was adapted according to behaviour and educational needs.	This is acceptable.
	On occasion, additional activities were run during training sessions.	This is acceptable but trainers should be mindful not to replace official ASSIST activities with their own.
Avoidable and unacceptable	The most significant departure from the Programme Manual occurred when timetabling the Programme in schools. In numerous schools, the deviation from the preferred timetable was unacceptably short, or long. Whilst the preference may be for schools to timetable sessions on a two-weekly basis in order to fit in with the PSE timetable, this results in the intervention period being significantly less than 10 weeks long.	There is a need to manage timetabling of sessions in schools in a more appropriate manner. Leaving too long between nomination and the training may mean that by the training, the status of nominated students has changed. Timetabling the follow-up sessions so that they span significantly longer than ten weeks results in boredom. Timetabling the follow-up sessions so that they span significantly less than ten weeks means that the peer supporters are not having conversations with their peers for the full ten weeks.
	In three schools, implementation took place in the summer term and only two follow-up sessions were carried out. In one school, a teacher strike resulted in this timetable change.	Organising implementation with schools should be carried out in a timely manner to ensure enough time for all sessions to be completed prior to the school summer holidays. Where the school requests implementation to start too late in the school year, they should be encouraged to rethink the timing or delay until the next term
	Inappropriate venues used for external training events. For example, the only parallel training course to be run was held in two different venues	Venues should be visited to ensure suitability and a list of suitable and endorsed venues prepared to facilitate future rollout. In the event of parallel training sessions, these should be carried out in the same venue and in facilities of a similar standard.
Unavoidable and unacceptable	-	-

5   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the experience of rolling out the ASSIST Programme in Wales, a number of recommendations for future rollout in Wales and elsewhere have been identified. It is important to reinforce that a number of these are identified in the ASSIST Programme Manual. The remainder are recommendations based on realised best practice and required amendments to the ASSIST Programme following rollout in Wales. Some of these recommendations are relevant to the universities and some are relevant to those implementing the Programme.

Recommendation one: Programme Co-ordinator to maintain the mix of experience/background in the pool of ASSIST trainers as has been achieved so far in Programme rollout.

Recommendation two: Programme Co-ordinator and all trainers to ensure that schools are not provided with details of the scores students receive through the peer nomination process, or any other information obtained in confidence other than where ethics/child protection issues may require it.

Recommendation three: Programme Co-ordinator to create a database of recommended external venues for future use.

Recommendation four: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to clearly specify and stress the importance of appropriate room arrangements with the school contact teacher in advance of the sessions.

Recommendation five: When planning the Programme with schools, Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to try to ensure that follow-up sessions are planned at times which encourage students to attend.

Recommendation six: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure continuity of training staff throughout the Programme within any specific school.

Recommendation seven: When planning the Programme with schools, Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers (when applicable) to identify a second contact in the school in order to facilitate contact and success.

Recommendation eight: Universities to implement improvements to Programme suggested at the end of Phase One (already implemented prior to Phase 2).

Recommendation nine: Universities to explore other ways in which information may be provided, particularly during the follow-up sessions. To include consideration of providing additional written resources for students to take away.

Recommendation ten: Programme Co-ordinator to amend strategy used to contact schools in order to maximise the number of schools that are engaged.

Recommendation eleven: Universities to amend contents of Programme Manual to reflect need to attempt to make contact with two or more members of staff in schools when first contact is made.

Recommendation twelve: Universities to revisit 'Training the Trainers' course content and structure, and investigate course accreditation.

Recommendation thirteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure that where two training sessions are run in parallel, they are conducted in the same venue, and in rooms of approximately equal quality.

Recommendation fourteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to pay close attention to the guidelines provided in the ASSIST Programme Manual in terms of timetabling sessions in the school year and school day. Whilst there can be some flexibility when scheduling sessions, to allow for school events and holidays etc, significantly shortening or lengthening the intervention period is unacceptable in the context of the ASSIST Programme.

Recommendation fifteen: Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers to ensure that schools are clear about what is expected in terms of venues for school-based sessions at the planning meeting and remind them prior to sessions; and that the Programme Co-ordinator and lead trainers pay close attention to the recommendations outlined in the ASSIST Programme Manual for both the in-school and external training venues. (See recommendation four.)

Recommendation sixteen: Universities to consider amending format of peer recruitment meeting as outlined in the ASSIST Programme Manual to reflect experience in Wales.

Recommendation seventeen: Universities to identify if there is guidance in relation to designation of responsible adult sent from the school, and amend Programme Manual accordingly.

Recommendation eighteen: Programme Co-ordinator and all trainers to note that the introduction of new activities can be useful if there is time available within the training (particularly during 'free' time'), but these should not substitute the activities outlined in the Programme Manual.

Recommendation nineteen: The school contact is key to the successful implementation of the Programme. Programme Co-ordinator to encourage the school to nominate an appropriate individual and ensure that the staff contact is aware of their commitments (attendance at sessions, arranging rooms, etc).

Recommendation twenty: Universities to consider including guidance on suitable spot prizes and resources to take away in the Programme Manual

References
Holliday, J., Audrey, S., Moore, L., Parry-Langdon, N. and Campbell, R. (2009) High fidelity? How should we consider variations in the delivery of school-based health promotion interventions? Health Education Journal, 68, **1**, 44-62

APPENDIX 1: DETAILS OF VENUES USED

School	Venue	Distance from school (miles)	Trainer views of venue suitability
1	1	3.3	No comment.
2	2	5.5	Sounded like a good venue and said they could provide for our needs. The room was a bit small for our needs, and the organisation of refreshment and lunch wasn't smooth! However, it provided an excellent outdoor play area that they group loved and made good use of.
3	3	4.3	Close to school. Young person friendly. Adequate sized room, on site catering. Clean, tidy and good outside space
4	4	4.4	The ones [venues] I wanted originally were booked on the dates I'd been given. I had to find alternative took half day. But it was better than any of the others plus very reasonable in the end
5	5	3.4	Was good venue
6	6	2.0	No comment.
7	7	10.6	20 mins away from school. Statutory sector. Large enough room. Young person friendly. On site catering and in budget
8	8	15.0	It was the nearest big enough venue that was available at the right price.
9	9	2.5	Excellent venue – very good value - £12 per head / per day - all food, no room hire cost.
10	9	11.6	No comment.
11	6	6.1	I didn't book venue but was fine
12	1	3.1	Day 1 – one large room available. Day 2 we had two smaller rooms pretty close to each other. I was a little concerned over noise as meeting going on in room next to ours but no complaints
13	10	3.1	No comment.
14	10	6.4	No comment.
15	5	1.9	Very good – light and airy, outside space, privacy, good food, nice and friendly staff etc.
16	5	2.1	Venue worked very well. Two groups had separate rooms to work in and also a large communal area, which both groups 'spilled' into and had breaks in. Limited outdoor space though but this didn't matter as it was raining.
17	5	5.2	Good venue – good, airy space and use of garden although management complained about noise on 1 lunch-time occasion
18	11	7.3	No comment.
19	12	15.5	After enquiring with 11 different venues, these were the only 2 options. Both venues managed the two parallel training sessions.
	13	1.5	
20	1	1.3	One large room divided into two. Had to walk a long way through public areas to canteens, which wasn't ideal. Also had to walk over a road and through a car park to outside space.
21	6	8.7	Close to the school and I have used it before and liked the venue. Nice space, friendly staff, outside area, good food etc.
22	6	1.8	No comment.
23	14	4.6	Proximity of venue. Separate rooms for breakfast and lunch. Competitive

			rates. Flexible staff. Outdoor space