

Challenger Resource Manual



Northside
Partnership

Where Opportunity Meets Community

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Introduction & Contents

CHALLENGER RESOURCE MANUAL

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone that shared their experiences of Challenger over the course of writing this document. The Challenger Programme was initiated in 1995 by Mr Donal Boyle, Home School Liaison Teacher in Priorswood National School and Mr Noel Kelly, Home School Liaison Teacher in Darndale Primary School. We would like to acknowledge the contribution that both Noel and Donal have made in developing a programme for children in a disadvantaged area that focuses on realising educational potential. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution that the Challenger Steering Committee, parents and children have made to this document. Particular thanks go to the Challenger Co-ordinator, Jeannette Beirnes who has made a valuable contribution and also organised the appointments with all the local stakeholders linked to the Challenger Programme who contributed to this document. The Northside Partnership's Education team, Paul Hayes, Linda Shanley and Ken McCarthy are also central to the success of this programme. Many thanks to Margaret Kerrigan for her review of the manual and Michael Malone for taking pictures of the local area for this manual.

Colin Falconer, the author of this document, is Director of Inspirechilli, an innovation consultancy that specialises in asset-based training and development approaches for organisations from the UK to Australia. Colin has worked in various education, employment, health and quality assurance initiatives, including 14 years as Director of Innovation at youth charity The Foyer Federation where he introduced the concept of 'Advantaged Thinking'. He is an expert advisor for Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Youth Fund and a mentor for young entrepreneurs supported by The Bootstrap Charity in London where InspireChilli is based.

Northside Partnership

Established in 1991, Northside Partnership is a Local Development Company, limited by guarantee with charitable status. The company was originally established as a non-profit organisation to address long term unemployment in communities experiencing intergenerational unemployment in the North East area of Dublin. Since 1991 Northside Partnership's primary remit has expanded in recognition of the social, economic and cultural inequalities that contribute to poverty and social exclusion.

In pursuing its social purpose Northside Partnership implements several significant Government of Ireland funded programmes including the Local Employment Service (LES), Tús Community Work Placement Programme, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and an Area Based Childhood programme called Preparing for Life (PFL). In addition, Northside Partnership provides access to a range of Health Service Executive (HSE) activities including Healthy Food Made Easy and Smoking Cessation.

Northside Partnership works with an ethos of partnership and collaboration with key stakeholders at local, regional and national level to address social exclusion and poverty across the Northside Partnership catchment.

Northside Partnership is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors with members drawn from local community groups, statutory organisations, union and employer bodies such as the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) and key strategic stakeholders such as local educational institutions.



Vision

Our vision is to contribute to the building of a more equitable society in which individuals have opportunities to express their skills, talents and abilities through social, cultural and economic life

Mission

Working in partnership with individuals, communities, the state and private sector our mission is to research, design, develop and implement innovative and high-quality programmes to drive positive change

Values

We provide integrated supports that are guided by the following values:

*We **lead** by example in promoting a culture of dignity and respect with a generosity of spirit*

*Working in **partnership** we deliver and advocate for quality services*

*We are **accountable** to the communities we serve and our funders*

Northside Partnership has successfully delivered the Challenger programme since 1995, reaching over 200 young people and their parents each year.

Challenger is co-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Education and Skills.

The SICAP programme under the Department of Rural and Community Development, also receives funding from the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.

The Department of Education and Skills funds the Challenger Programme through the Higher Education Equity of Access initiative.

The Challenger Manual

This manual brings together learning and practice from Northside Partnership's experience of running Challenger between 1995 and 2018. The manual aims to guide an organisation interested in setting up and running a Challenger programme. It is split into ten discrete sections, each with a specific purpose as described below:

Section One **Get Inspired**

This section introduces the rationale behind Challenger, offers some inspiring quotes on its impact, and encourages the reader to reflect on the potential impacts of Challenger and the importance of capturing 'star stories' over the programme.

Section Two **Key Principles**

This section introduces the practice principles which form part of Northside Partnership's DNA and constitute the founding beliefs within Challenger's approach. It encourages the reader to assess how these principles are shared in their own practice in order to ensure close alignment at the outset of developing Challenger.

Section Three **Advantaged Thinking**

This section introduces the asset-based concepts of Advantaged Thinking which form a core part of the Challenger approach. It encourages the reader to assess how far relevant tests within Advantaged Thinking are shared in their own practice, encouraging an alignment in understanding to help ensure an Advantaged Thinking approach is fully expressed in future delivery plans for Challenger.

Section Four **The Programme**

This section introduces the three distinct phases that constitute the Challenger programme, including detail on its overall development cycle and the core curriculum at the heart of the programme. It encourages the reader to gain a full overview of how the programme works and to reflect on how the different Challenger elements can be delivered in their own local context.

Section Five **Connections**

This section encourages the reader to explore connections between Challenger's main strategic impact areas and any existing provision or resources within the organisation aiming to deliver Challenger. By doing so, the reader will be helped to identify important opportunities to add to or gain value from the delivery of Challenger.

Section Six Health Check Readiness

This section introduces all the elements that need to be in place for Challenger to be set up and managed effectively. The Health Check enables an assessment of how far essential elements are currently in place, with an opportunity to reflect on whether any individual elements need attention before commencing Challenger.

Section Seven Resource Considerations

This section focuses on the practical resource requirements for staffing and budgetary needs to deliver Challenger, along with guidelines for developing an appropriate communication plan that covers all the communication requirements within the programme. The reader will be helped to identify the details required to set up a staff delivery team, programme budget and communication plan.

Section Eight Best Practice Tips

This section draws together an extensive list of best practice tips drawn from Challenger evaluations and staff experience. The reader can utilise these tips to help guide the initial planning for Challenger as well as referring to the tips as opportunities for ongoing development once the programme has been established.

Section Nine Troubleshooting Scenarios

This section identifies possible issues that Challenger staff might face in running the programme. The scenarios each have a recommended answer which staff can refer to. The reader can use the Troubleshooting process as an effective way for staff to reflect on their understanding of the programme, consider planning opportunities to prevent future problems, prepare for delivery, and use as a source for ongoing reference over the running of the programme.

Section Ten Example Materials and Resources

This final section offers a repository of example templates, support and reference materials that can be used for the development and delivery of Challenger.

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Section One GET INSPIRED

The Challenger programme is about the inspiration that comes from taking up a challenge: how to make a positive change in the educational outcomes of young people from communities experiencing inequality and disadvantage?

The answer is to make an investment in the talents and skills of those at most risk of not achieving their potential. What this means in practice, is offering a programme that can provide structured support for young people from 6th class to 6th year to help them:

- + transfer from **6th class** into secondary school
- + prepare for their **Junior Certificate**
- + complete their **Leaving Certificate**
- + Encourage progression **to third level education**

This is a challenge best shared between young people, their parents, schools, the community, and the different organisations and individuals that believe in good educational outcomes for all. Working together, it is possible to establish a programme of activities that challenges young people to develop to their full potential academically, personally and socially, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and dignity that includes support for and from parents.

These form the primary objectives of the Challenger programme, to:

- + Maintain young people in education
- + Enable them to achieve their full potential
- + Create a positive culture around education in the community and by doing so make Third Level education both attainable and achievable
- + Work in partnership with parents to achieve these objectives
- + Increase the number of young people from disadvantaged areas progressing to third-level education

Northside Partnership started Challenger in 1995 to provide an effective means to achieve these objectives. Since then, around 80% of young people who enrolled onto Challenger have completed the programme and stayed in school to finish their Leaving Certificate. In terms of overall scope of the programme, approximately 40 new 6th class students can be taken on each year. Multiplied by seven years, and allowing for 1–2 drop outs per year, this gives a total figure of approximately 200 students participating in Challenger in any given year, along with their parents. Outcomes show that 87% of Challenger participants will progress into education, work or other positive life options.

What inspires individuals to take the Challenger challenge are the outcomes and stories of those who have gone before them. The star stories of young people and parents who have succeeded through Challenger. The best place to begin your own challenge is to listen to them...

Star Voices and Stories

Challenger is about the story of enabling opportunity and maximising potential.

As an evaluation into Challenger in 2015 noted: 'High expectations about achievement are more current now among children, parents and their schools. Challenger can make this dream more real and achievable for those chosen to participate'.

In the words of young people:

"I always wanted to get to college but it was mainly when I started Challenger that I seized the opportunity."

"Challenger has really made a difference to my education"

"Challenger is life changing. I wouldn't have been able to find my way through university into my current career without it."

In the words of parents and teachers:

"Challenger introduces our children to the idea of further education from an early age and supports them to aim high and supports them during this journey. It provides a great focus for 6th class and gives them a sense of responsibility for their own future".

"It develops their confidence, opens them up to new opportunities and affords them the opportunity to get help and support in subjects they may struggle with"

"This course has made a very big difference to my life circumstances."

"The Challenger Programme is outstanding. It has given my family opportunities we never would have had before ... and it was great fun!"

Follow in the footsteps of Challenger stars

1 Naomi

Naomi completed the Challenger Programme in 2011. She went on to Trinity College Dublin to study a degree in nursing for 4 years. She graduated in 2015 and is currently a theatre nurse in the orthopaedic hospital in the Cappagh Dublin. Naomi is the face of the new NSP promotional video that was made to promote the Challenger Programme.

2 Laura

Laura completed the Challenger Programme in 2010 and went on to IADT Dun Laoghaire for 4 years where she studied English Media and Cultural Studies. She then went on to complete a 1 year Masters in Equality Studies in UCD. Laura is currently working in SKY Media in the advertising department.

3 Conor

Conor completed the Challenger Programme in 2017. He attended Chanel College in Coolock Village where he achieved one of the highest leaving cert grades with 485 points. Conor comes from a lone parent family but always understood the importance of education and availing of the Challenger Programme. He completed the programme with excellent attendance in all activities throughout his seven year involvement. Conor was also linked in with other Northside Partnership programmes in Marino Institute of Education and the DCU Community Learning Hub.

Conor received the Challenger student of the year in 2016 and has recently commenced his degree course in business in Dublin City University. Conor maximised the opportunities through the Challenger Programme to enable him to progress his education.

4 The Hurley Family

Ciara is the oldest of the four Hurley's participating in Challenger. She attended Our Lady's Immaculate Darndale. Ciara set the bar high for her siblings in an area where the percentage of students completing their leaving cert was low and the drive or ambition to go on to 3rd level did not appeal to some in the area. Ciara completed her 7 year cycle on the Challenger programme and graduated in 2008 and went on to study primary school teaching in St Patrick's/ DCU Teaching College in Drumcondra. She was there for 3 years and completed her degree in 2009. Ciara went on to Bath University to study for a Masters.

Ciara is now currently teaching in her own primary school which is fantastic for the area and for the students she teaches. She is someone the students can look up to and is a great ambassador for the programme.

Audrey is two years younger than Ciara but also had a passion for education and followed Ciara's career path to becoming a primary school teacher. She was there from 2008-2012 completed her 4 year degree in St Patrick's/DCU College. Audrey travelled to Dubai to teach English to foreign students and is still currently there.

Robert worked hard to complete the Leaving Cert and gain the points to go on to DIT Kevin Steet to study Mechanical Engineering where he studied for 4 years to qualify as an Engineer.

Thomas followed in the foot-steps of Robert to study Mechanical Engineering in DIT St Kevin St. He had to repeat a year and graduated the same year as Robert. He is currently working in the UK.

Find out why people engage with Challenger, what they see as the benefits of the programme, and what their future aspirations are...

"I made new friends during the reading clubs and public speaking."

"The grinds teachers were brilliant in terms of the quality of teaching that they provided and really made it felt as though it was very personally focused on your sticking points."

"It helped me with Irish as I attended grinds and I now do higher level Irish. I learned how to socialize with others and made friends."

"When I was in primary they came around with information about Challenger that made it sound very appealing with lots of activities and help with secondary school."

"Challenger offered a lot to me so that I could excel in school and help me to get into third level."

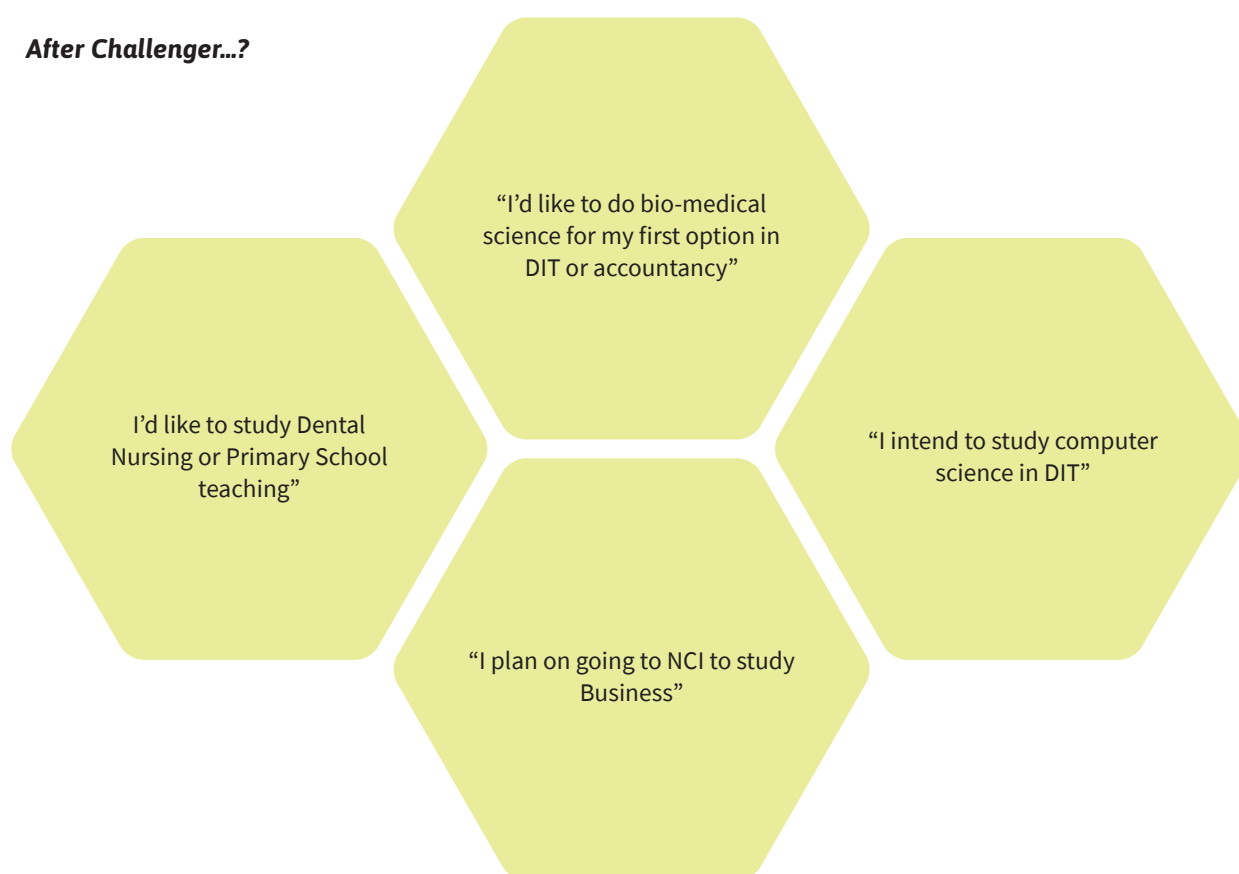
"I found that trips to Lilliput, Kilmainham Jail and Croke Park were really fun with the small group and you could ask lots of questions."

"The DCU visit was good as it gave you an insight of what it would be like to be studying there. I visited UCD with my school."

"The activities were fun and made me comfortable going into secondary school. It helped me make friends and gave me social and educational skills going into first year."

"Challenger is a great programme. It helps you in many ways like Irish, English, Maths and public speaking. Mind-mapping was very useful and many more. I would recommend Challenger to anyone. My brother is in 4th class and I'll be recommending it to him. I found it helped me to focus on my goals."

"Challenger has really made a difference to my education. The grinds at Junior Certificate level had a big impact on my results. It also helped my self-confidence to see how good I am in my work."

After Challenger...?**Reflection**

How might Challenger impact on the young people and families in your community? Which impacts will most inspire participation from young people and their parents, local schools, and your own organisation?

How will you capture star voices and stories to inspire others in the future?

Section Two

KEY PRINCIPLES

If you share Northside Partnership's inspiration for Challenger, the next step is to identify how you match with the practice principles that underpin the programme. These are the core beliefs of Northside Partnership. Each belief relates to key aspects in the development and delivery of a successful Challenger programme. It is useful to reflect on how far the beliefs listed below are true to the culture and practice of your current organisation and staff team.

Look over the eleven practice principles and identify whether they match with your organisation is:

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

1 Advantaged Thinking

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that all individuals have abilities in the form of talents, gifts and strengths and that by identifying and investing in them we can promote personal growth and development and lever their potential for individual and societal good.

We believe that rather than investing in people's problems, there needs to be a re-direction to invest in building people's abilities and harnessing their abilities for personal, as well as social good.

We will commit to making a positive investment in people to develop their assets and to invest in creating solutions- real jobs, real education and real community connections to enable people to thrive.

For more insights into Advantaged Thinking, see the next section of the manual.

2 Community

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that community, both in terms of place and interest, is a natural forum for human development

We value strong communities that support and nurture human development

We believe that community is a key component of civil society and has a central role in a healthy democracy

3 Equality

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe in a just and equitable society where each individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential

We believe that all individuals have rights and responsibilities

4 Empowerment and Wellbeing

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that empowerment of both individuals and communities is key to building a just and equitable society

We recognise the importance of both individual and community wellbeing as a key component of quality of life

5 Education (Education First)

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that education and life-long learning are critical to one's life chances and opportunities

We believe that families and communities play a key role in the education and nurturing of individuals in their development

We believe that everyone has something positive that they can contribute to society and the learning environment

6 Diversity

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that diversity, in all its forms, makes a significant contribution to Irish Society and the communities we serve

7 Participation and Engagement

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that employment or participation in meaningful activity is necessary for an individual to reach their full potential and contribute to society

8 Ethics and Accountability

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We acknowledge our responsibility to be effective in our work and to be accountable to the communities we serve and wider society

9 Communication

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that honest, effective communications is critical to our work and in understanding key issues affecting local communities

We believe that individuals and communities need accurate and relevant information to make good decisions

10 Collaboration & Partnership

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that by working in partnership we can maximise the benefits to the individuals, families and communities we serve

We believe that co-ordination of service delivery at local level is critical to bring about improved life chances for individuals, families and communities

11 Environment and Sustainability*

a strong **b** secure **c** weak

We believe that the environmental resources essential to the well-being and future of those we serve are scarce, valuable and under significant stress.

We believe that we have a responsibility to promote the conservation of those resources in all of our activities and to maximise the capacity and resilience of the communities we serve

We believe that solutions to the challenges faced in our communities must be sustainable from both a human and natural resource perspective.

* *Sustainability* is defined as 'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (United Nations, 1987)

Reflection

For any principles you have identified as secure or weak, consider what actions you could take to make them stronger inside your organisation?

These actions might form part of a preparation plan before commencing Challenger, or something you can enhance as part of your experience of delivering the programme.

Section Three

ADVANTAGED THINKING

Advantaged Thinking is a key underlying principle for Challenger. It helps to show how the programme delivers an asset-based approach to invest in and work with the strengths of individuals and communities.

Challenger is, in many ways, the ultimate Advantaged Thinking challenge. Therefore, to get started with Challenger, it is important to develop a good grasp of what Advantaged Thinking actually means. This section introduces a detailed overview of Advantaged Thinking, signposting to where it connects with the Challenger Programme. Advantaged Thinking is a powerful concept, so you may wish to take more time to consider what each of its Test areas mean to your wider organisational identity and work. By delivering Challenger, you will begin to put in place a powerful expression of Advantaged Thinking in practice.

Advantaged Thinking was first developed by Colin Falconer at UK youth charity The Foyer Federation in 2011. The following text explains each of the seven 'tests' that make up the Advantaged Thinking framework, as described by Colin Falconer in the Brotherhood of St Laurence's Advantaged Thinking Fidelity Framework (2019) from which the text below is reproduced. At the end, a table shows how the Challenger Programme maps against each Test. Challenger has the strongest match with Advantaged Thinking Tests three, four and five.

Test One How you talk about people

What does this Test look at?

Test One looks at how an organisation or service uses language and imagery to identify and define the people it works with. It promotes talking about people in ways that respect their individual humanity and potential. The Test is relevant to external communications and fundraising, as well as the language and terminology used in everyday practice. It requires services to: amplify strengths; use affirmative language; and disrupt labels.

Test Two How you understand people

What does this Test look at?

Test Two looks at how an organisation or service understands people in terms of both their support needs and challenges as well as their abilities, potential and broader individuality. The Test is relevant to impact measurement, evaluation, research, and service assessment processes. It requires services to: Identify strengths; harness storytelling; and track growth.

Test Three How you work with people

What does this Test look at?

Test Three promotes positive, person-centred working with both participants and staff. The Test asks us to consider how we can best work with people through enabling approaches that stimulate trust and belief, grow skills, resources and capabilities, and lead to sustainable outcomes. The Test is relevant to different types of support and development– from HR processes, to participant case management and training. It requires services to: develop strengths; asset-proof processes; collaborate; and be person-centred.

Test Four How you invest in people

What does this Test look at?

Test Four looks at how an organisation invests in people in ways that enable individuals to progress through experiences of 'surviving and coping' towards more sustainable, thriving livelihoods. Investments include financial, human, physical, program and partner resources. The Test embraces principles from the Sustainable Livelihoods ladder approach, within which individuals must take positive risks to develop assets that help them adapt out of 'coping' and move towards more flourishing states of identity and growth. The Test is relevant to risk and resource management, as well as approaches associated with providing people with a personalised 'deal' or 'opportunities' offer. It requires services to: validate strengths; personalise opportunities; embrace risks; focus towards thriving.

Test Five How you believe in people

What does this Test look at?

Test Five looks at an organisation's aspirations for its people (both participants and staff). This includes unconditional regard for who people are, a strong belief in what people can achieve with the right opportunities and support, and the determination to trust in people's potential. The Test asks us to consider how we believe in people in the same way that a good parent might believe in their child: with an unflinching recognition of value and humanity. The test is relevant to how an organisation expresses positive vision and values through its communications, HR, quality standards, management and support approaches. It requires services to: promote aspirations; ensure high standards; nurture trust; and sustain consistency.

Test Six How you involve people

What does this Test look at?

Test Six looks at how an organisation or service involves people as active agents in their lives and service experience. This includes harnessing individual experiences and insights to shape approaches, collaborate on solutions, and ensure authenticity and accountability. The Test is relevant to service delivery approaches, as well as systems for review, quality, management and governance decisions. It requires services to: do with, not to; encourage engagement; develop representation; and actively listen.

Test Seven How you challenge people (yourself and others)

What does this Test look at?

Test Seven looks at how an organisation challenges itself and others (in the service, local community, sector and society) to 'talk about', 'understand', 'work with', 'invest in', 'believe in' and 'involve' people in a positive asset-based way. It brings together all the Tests of Advantaged Thinking through a focus on shaping change at an individual, system and social level. The Test is relevant to advocacy, campaigns and influence work, as well as the ongoing professional and personal development of staff. It requires services to: celebrate success; mobilise networks; build capacity; and influence change.

Advantaged Thinking tests

Challenger match

1	Talk about people	Amplify strengths Use affirmative language Disrupt labels	Good evidence of amplifying strengths and affirmative language. Some evidence on disrupting labels.
2	Understand people	Identify strengths Harness storytelling Track growth	Good evidence of identifying strengths, e.g. through selection process and graduation. Some evidence of storytelling through focus on collecting star stories.
3	Work with people	Develop strengths Asset-proof policies Collaborate Be Person-centred	Good evidence of collaboration with stakeholders required to deliver the programme, person-centred approach; and focus to develop strengths through activity offer. Some evidence of asset-proof approach to policies.

Advantaged Thinking tests**Invest in people**

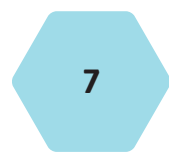
Validate strengths
Personalise opportunities
Embrace risks
Focus towards thriving

**Believe in people**

Promote aspirations
Ensure high standards
Nurture trust
Sustain consistency

**Involve people**

Do with, not to
Encourage engagement
Develop representation
Actively listen

**Challenge people**

Celebrate success
Mobilise networks
Build capacity
Influence change

Challenger match

Good evidence of validating strengths through graduation event and focus towards thriving through the STEPs programme for parents and Challenger aspirations.

Some evidence of personalising opportunities through consultation, and embracing risks through events offered.

Good evidence of promoting aspiration through the focus of the programme and graduation event, ensuring standards through the review reports and steering committee, and nurturing trust through relationships, identity of NSP, use of volunteers and peers etc.

Some evidence of sustaining consistency through the approach in this Manual to put in place transparent processes and plans.

Some evidence across all areas through the delivery approach, involvement of parents on the steering committee, and collation of feedback through reports, with potential for more evidence of representation and listening from young people through greater innovation in that area over time.

Good evidence of celebrating success through the graduation events, and mobilising networks through the community; some evidence of intentions to build campaign capacity and influence change through programme and evaluation reports.

Reflection

Which Advantaged Thinking tests best reflect how your organisation works and aspires to work?

What might you need to do to develop greater capability in tests 3–5 in order to prepare for Challenger?

Section Four

THE PROGRAMME

Origins of Challenger

Data emerging in the early nineties from studies on patterns of participation in higher education indicated a significant zone of low participation in the Dublin 17 postal area – the districts of Darndale, Priorswood/Belcamp and Bonnybrook – where the 1995 Clancy report revealed that levels of access to higher education were only 6%, against a national average of 44%. The Northside Partnership, in collaboration with some local schools, planned a response to this issue and the Challenger programme was initiated: the core purpose was to identify, at the end of 5th class in primary school, a cohort of students with the potential to achieve in education, then to support these students through to the Leaving Certificate and maximise their progression onwards into higher education.

Challenger Development Timeline

The timescale for establishing Challenger falls into three discernible development cycles, from initial set up, to scaling the programme's growth, to sustaining the programme's future impact. Because the programme follows young people from 6th class to 6th year, it requires at least a 7-year period to deliver its full outcomes and gain learning from these initial impacts. Evaluation will continue to ensure the programme's currency and continued development over these cycles. Organisations commencing Challenger should be prepared for a long-term commitment to establish and grow the programme's full potential, following three development cycles that each cover seven year periods. Across these periods, as well as introducing student cohorts each year and responding to any tutor changes, the programme must have a secure induction process in place to engage new home school liaison officers when the posts change every 5 years.

Set up

1st development cycle

- + Initial programme and partnership development
- + Local launch
- + Iterative learning and review
- + Change in school liaison officers

Scale

2nd development cycle

- + Grow school participation
- + Grow communications and peer involvement
- + Iterative learning and review
- + Change in school liaison officers

Sustain

3rd development cycle

- + Develop quality and impact
- + Increase influence and funding
- + Explore and maximise innovations
- + Change in school liaison officers

The Current Challenger Programme

The Challenger programme has continued since its establishment in 1995, the original geographical area has been expanded slightly and two schools from the Kilmore West district are now involved. Challenger now works across five DEIS schools (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools). The programme was evaluated in 2000, and a further report was compiled in 2003. In 2015 the Northside Partnership undertook a review of Challenger, to understand how well it meets its objectives and to provide a basis for determining whether changes in the initiative are required to suit the current context and take account of the changes that have taken place since 1995 in the world of education in Ireland and in the communities in which the Challenger students live and learn.

The suburbs that are located along the northern fringe of Lot 2.3 Northside contain some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the country (Priorswood, Darndale, Kilbarrack, Kilmore West). These areas also rank highly in terms of the percentage of people in the lower social classes and early school leaving (Census 2016).

Predictions for future skills needs in Europe suggest that in the future, only 1 in 10 jobs will be within reach of an Early School Leaver (European Parliament, 2011). It is considered that student and family characteristics can explain approximately 80% of the variability in student achievement and the remaining 20% of the variability in student outcomes can be attributed to the characteristics of the schools that students attend (Rumberger and Lim, 2008).

Drawing on this evidence, Northside Partnership believes that the Challenger programme occupies an important role in this area and works with students, parents and local schools to provide a holistic programme that involves parents every step of the way. As the landscape changes, the Challenger programme continues to grow and evolve and learnings gleaned from evaluations and reviews are implemented to ensure the continued relevance of the programme.

Challenger is co-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Education and Skills.

The SICAP programme under the Department of Rural and Community Development, also receives funding from the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014–2020.

The Department of Education and Skills funds the Challenger Programme through the Higher Education Equity of Access initiative.

Governance and Reporting

Challenger has a Steering Committee which oversees and is accountable for the project. Membership comprises representatives of local primary and post-primary schools (Home School Liaison), a past pupil, local parent, Northside Partnership Staff (Education Co-Ordinator and Challenger Co-Ordinator) and the D17 School Completion Programme and Dublin City University. The Northside Partnership Board of Management oversee all reports on the delivery of the programme, a data and narrative report on the programme is uploaded to the IRIS system and monitored through Pobal and the Local Community Development Committee on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development. Northside Partnership also reports to the Department of Education and Skills on an annual basis.

The Co-Ordinator of the Challenger Programme is funded under SICAP, however one of the limitations of the programme is that under the SICAP programme all of the students below the age of fifteen are not counted as case-load and therefore do not roll up to Northside Partnership key performance indicators and targets. This programme is of considerable benefit, as is evidenced from the outcomes, and it would be useful to explore solutions to this challenge under SICAP 2018–2022. These activities all take place outside of school hours.

The Challenger Programme and SICAP

The table below locates the Challenger Programme within the SICAP 2018–2022 Programme Requirements.

Challenger Programme within the SICAP 2018–2022 Programme Requirements

Goal 2	Working with Individuals	
Thematic Area	Preventative Supports for Children and Young People	
Outcomes	G2 – 3.1	Local communities and statutory stakeholders develop holistic approaches to address early school leaving.
	G2 – 3.2	Children and their Families are supported in education and personal development.
	G2 – 3.3	Young people at risk of early school leaving remain within the education system.

What does the programme involve?

The Challenger programme involves three phases – with a number of activities under each phase.

Phase 1 Selection and Readiness

Students: Challenger recruits forty primary school pupils each year through an application and interview process guided by specified weighted criteria including academic achievement, interview performance and a personal statement. All Challenger participants must be resident in the programme's target catchment areas.

The students chosen are deemed to be at a point of readiness to avail of the programme and show a motivation to be involved, connected to the primary outcomes of direct access to third level education or progression through PLCs to third level education, with consideration given to secondary outcomes such as access to apprenticeship and employment in trades that offer development opportunities.

Selection is based on three things: academic potential, personal character and commitment, and the availability of home support for ongoing encouragement.

Academic potential is measured by scores in formal assessment in Sigma and Micra-T tests

Character potential and commitment is measured by interview, personal statement, and reference from school on attendance and behaviour

Home Support for aspiration and achievement is measured through parental interview.

Other forms of readiness and potential measurement that could be used include the VIA Character Strengths for Youth, and the Self-Efficacy Scale. Consideration might also be given to an appropriate community balance in Challenger, to increase engagement from those who would not normally be accepted– i.e., a target for a percentage with less strong academic scores as part of the Challenger cohort.

Post selection is based on those identified on the Challenger reserve list or recommended from a participating school to fill a vacant place where available.

The parents of prospective students are pivotal to the programme. At the interview there is a conversation held with parents to explain the importance of this and to let them know that their involvement is key to raising aspiration in their children. Challenger is also presented as an opportunity for the parents to participate in a personal development course and to explore their own pathways into education or training for the future.

This phase is important in raising expectations and building excitement about Third Level education and is a positive process where the skills and capabilities of the students and parents are named and pathways to education and training are opened up. In the event that a student is deemed not yet ready this is handled in a sensitive way and they are encouraged and referred to other opportunities.

Phase 2 The Challenger Programme

Programme of activities for Challenger Students

Once selected the Challenger programme offers a range of cultural, educational and social activities for all participants. All these activities are provided outside of school hours and off school premises for groups, with a combination of evening, weekend and holiday-time events. These activities are arranged and managed by the coordinator after consultation with the steering group. See the list below for the range of activities that students take part in during Phase 2 of the programme:

6th Class

- + Conversational Irish, Dublin City University (6 sessions)
- + Reading Club (4 sessions)
- + Public Speaking / Debate (6 sessions)
- + Cultural Events (4 day trips to Dublin museums)
- + End of Year Trip (Day trip)

1st Year

- + Conversational Irish, Dublin City University (6 sessions)
- + Maths Club (4 sessions)
- + Music / Rapping Workshop
- + Public Speaking (6 sessions)
- + Reading Club (4 sessions)
- + Activity linked to Third Level College (Dublin City University)

2nd Year

- + Conversational Irish, Dublin City University (6 sessions)
- + Coding workshop (6 sessions)
- + Music / Rapping Workshop
- + Maths Workshop (4 sessions)
- + Gaeltacht Scholarship, Co Mayo

3rd Year

- + Parent and Student Meeting on Subject Choices
- + Extra Tuition / Grinds (Maths, Irish, French, English and more)

4th Year

- + Study Skills
- + Education for All Fair
- + Maths & Irish Classes

5th Year

- + Introduction to Careers
- + Access Tours to Third Level Colleges
- + Irish & Maths Classes
- + Study Skills (1 session)

6th Year

- + Third Level Information Meeting
- + Guidance Meeting and One-to-One Session
- + Extra Tuition / Grinds (Maths, Irish, French, English, Biology & more)

All Years

- + End of Year Graduation Ceremony in Dublin City University.

Programme of Activity for Parents of Challenger Students**Parent Involvement**

In addition to the activity for students, parental involvement in the programme is pivotal. From the beginning, the parents of Challenger participants are expected to commit strongly to the programme and participate in the “Parents in Education Programme”, which is delivered primarily through the STEPS course offered by Pacific Institute (pacificinstitute.co.uk). Participation is required from at least one parent from each family.

The objective of the Parents in Education programme is to work with parents to:

- + Strengthen their commitment and understanding of their child’s educational pathway.
- + Provide a supportive and encouraging educational environment at home.
- + Explain and demystify third level education.
- + Develop positive mind-sets towards both their own and their children’s possibilities, thus enabling improved quality of life, both within the home and workplace.

STEPS is built around the core concepts of The Pacific Institute’s knowledge base. It is delivered with a licenced qualified facilitator who helps participants to co-create their learning through a wide variety of activities. After participating in the programme, individuals have greater expectations of success and higher self-efficacy. Parents who take part in the programme have reported:

- + Higher levels of motivation
- + Increased self-belief
- + Improved ability to set goals
- + Raised levels of personal accountability
- + Insight into how their mind works.

One parent who participated in the Challenger programme when asked about the benefits responded: “it was the knowledge that I got – to help them go to college, all of it is in simple form”.

In the curriculum below, it has been recommended to offer additional options for parents including sessions to improve awareness on mental health issues and online safety, learning topics that will help parents better support their children over the Challenger programme. These may have additional cost implications for the programme budget, pending

on ability to source provision in these areas. The MySelfieSteem is described in more detail in the Appendix support materials. The Mental Health First Aid is normally held over two days. It is recommended to source the Youth version of the course for adults supporting young people, which is accessible through MHFA Ireland (www.mhfaireland.ie)

Challenger Curriculum – all sessions are approx. 1 hour long. Young people

Topic Area	Recommended example	Years
Improving reading and public speaking	Reading Club; Public Speaking	6th class and 1st year public speaking.
Culture and Activity Trips	Croke Park; Viking Splash; Art Gallery; Lillyput in Westmeath	6th class;
Gaining confidence in Irish and Maths	Irish sessions on college campus; summer Gaeltacht scholarship; Maths sessions	6th class; 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th year. Gaeltacht in 2nd.
Building confidence through creative skills	Rapping and Coding workshops	1st Year (rapping); 2nd year (coding)
Exploring future destinations through college tours	Visits to colleges with chance to meet students and participate in a practical activity	1st and 5th year
Grinds for subject choices	Grinds: 8 weeks for 4 choices (Junior cert) and 10 weeks for 7 choices (Leaving cert)	3rd and 6th year
Advice and Guidance	1-1s on subject, career and college choices, access to grants, CV & interviews and other needs	3rd and 6th year
Personal empowerment and developing a positive mind-set	STEPS programme	4th Year
Managing Online safety and related life & wellbeing skills	MySelfieSteem	4th Year
Study skills	Creating the right space, dealing with distractions, styles of study and other tips	4th year
Volunteering	Opportunities to buddy new entrants, assist with clubs and trips, and promote Challenger	From 1st year

Challenger Curriculum – all sessions are approx. 1 hour long.

Parents

Challenger Area	Delivery Example	Years
Personal empowerment and developing a positive mind-set	STEPS programme	6th class (or on entry to the programme)
Advice and guidance	1–1s on learning needs and opportunities, financial supports, and next steps	End of 6th Class, 3rd year, and 6th year
Supporting online safety and wellbeing	Youth Mental Health First Aid MySelfieSteem	Optional in 6th class and 4th year
Supporting learning	Access to tuition in Irish, reading, writing, and maths	Optional each year
Volunteering	Opportunities to support Challenger activities	Optional each year

At the heart of the curriculum lies the **Annual Graduation Ceremony**, held at a University, providing an opportunity for students and parents to celebrate successes and reward the top 4 students from each year.



Guide to curriculum content

Some background insights on the content from NSP's Challenger Co-ordinator

6th class

Irish	It is important to improve oral Irish, therefore it is a good idea to start this early in 6th class given it's importance in the Leaving Certificate cycle. NSP works with a 1st Year teacher student at college to teach Irish to the young people. Some of these student teachers have come from the community or have been former pupils from Challenger schools. In this way the pupils are seeing a role model from their own community and this can build aspiration and a connection that students can feel with the teacher. Sessions are held at the college and include a tour of the campus to reinforce that education is not scary and that college and University is a place where students from the Challenger programme can go. Teachers teach Irish in an engaging way using games and fun activities.
Reading club	A lot of kids do not read at home, so it is good for them to build this habit at an early stage. NSP has developed a relationship with a librarian and we hold the sessions at the local library. The librarian is asked to choose a book for reading club and to find an author to come and read for the group and hold a Q&A session on writing skills. Students are given a book to take home to read and they then write up a synopsis of the book. Reading Club works at its best if you can source local writers and chose books that will engage students.
Public speaking	These sessions cover pronunciation, role play, confidence and self-esteem building activities. Cultural events are chosen based on what is popular among students, what is popular locally, and cost. Popular examples have included visits to Croke Park, Viking Splash, the art gallery, and the Arás in Phoenix Park.
End of year trip	For the end of year trip, NSP has used an Adventure Centre in Westmeath (an hour or so from Dublin). This is child friendly and offers a range of different activities including rowing, artery, zip line, orienteering, and team building.

1st year

Irish	Ideally taught by student teachers who are slightly older and more experienced. This continues each year.
Maths club	General maths. Algebra and trigonometry. The content compliments what students are doing at school. NSP uses a tutor who also does the grinds. Exercises are visual and creative.
Music rapping	The day session includes brainstorming lyrics based on the lives and experiences of the students. They finish the day performing a rap and recording it, with the session facilitator laying down the music for them.
Public speaking	More advanced level to 6th class. The tutor gives feedback on each student in the sessions.
Visit to 3rd level college	NSP normally goes to Dublin City University. Half day visit – students sit in the lecture theatre, are given a talk by the access service, receive a goodie bag, get taken to a faculty, meet current students who are on access courses, and conduct a practical activity – often related to engineering or medicine.

2nd year

Coding workshop	NSP works with a secondary school tutor or college student who can deliver the session for free, there is a practical focus on creating something in the class.
Irish	Building on the year previous and moving to a more advanced level.
Maths workshop	At a more advanced level. The class is streamed into ordinary level and higher level maths.
Gaeltacht scholarship	Students can go to Mayo for 10 days over the summer holidays in August. Places cost €750. NSP pay €450, and parents pay €300 for students to attend. Normally 12 out of the 40 students take up places. Irish classes are held in the morning and in the afternoon, there are outdoor activities, followed in the evening with dancing.

3rd year

Guidance meeting on subject choices	Includes exploring how subject choices in 5th year will match with aspirations for progression to 3rd level. Potential for 1-1 follow up where students need more advice.
Grinds	Run Monday–Thursday 6–8pm, for 5 weeks before Xmas, from 19th November to 17th December then back on 7th of January for another 3 weeks. Sessions are led by specialist teachers in secondary schools who offer grinds. Northside Partnership use 9 tutors from a panel to deliver the grinds. Tutors are sourced through the Regional Education Network and via other teachers on the programme.

4th year

Study Skills	Northside Partnership use an English teacher to lead a single session on study skills, this includes visual activities on how to study, styles of study, and how to deal with distractions.
STEPS programme	NSP offers STEPS, a personal development course – see the note on STEPS in Section Ten support materials.
Maths and Irish	Supports are offered at a more advanced level.

5th year

Tours to third level colleges	Including Saint Patrick's College / DCU; Grangegorman; and Bolton Street. These are held over 3 half day trips, featuring hands on tours of the colleges.
Maths and Irish	Supports are offered at a more advanced level.
Study skills	A refresher based on the session from 4th year.

6th year

Third level info meeting

Including career guidance, choosing college courses, completing the CAO form, and getting to know the types of grants you can access based on parental income. This is followed up with 1-1 guidance meetings on the CAO form, troubleshooting challenges relating to costs and other support needs.

Graduation

Graduation ceremony held at Dublin City University this is an hour and a half event for about 200 people – including all the parents, students, and steering committee. This is an important opportunity to celebrate and reinforce the aspirations of the programme, promote achievements, and provide students and parents with an inspiring experience. Northside Partnership source an external speaker, and a former graduate to speak, and then students from each year talk about activity sessions. Everyone gets a rosette and four outstanding students from each year receive a printed graduation sash and get a book voucher and certificate. All students get a goodie bag with a €5 token and sweets. All parents get a rosette and a certificate. Two parents speak about the STEPS course, along with the STEPS tutor. See an outline of the graduation event in Section 10 Support Materials.

Outcomes

Students: Progression of 6th Year students

The Challenger Programme helps students to sustain their engagement at school to achieve a Leaving Certificate, with positive progression routes including Third Level Education. Of the 40 6th year students from the 2017-18 academic year who had commenced the Challenger Programme, 36 (90%) of them achieved their Leaving Certificate. Thirteen students (32.5%) progressed into third level education in a range of Colleges from DCU, Trinity, ITB and National College of Ireland. A further twelve students (30%) progressed to Post Leaving Certificate Courses in Colaíste Dhulaigh College of Further Education, Killester College and Colaíste Ide.

The students who progress onto PLC will also in future be given guidance and advice by NSP to consider their options to progress into further third level education. A further nine students (22.5%) decided to take up employment. With the economy stabilising and more job opportunities in the North Dublin area some students have decided to take up employment before they embark on their educational journey. Four students (10%) decided to take up apprenticeships in plumbing, logistics, electrician and car repairs.

2017/18 was the first year that Northside Partnership ran an Apprenticeship Fair and found lots of potential employers looking for apprentices. A further two students (5%) decided to travel for the 17/18 academic year. Overall, 95% of Challenger participants progressed into education, work or vocational training.

Parents: Participation

The Parents in the Education Programme is very successful. Of the 38 parents who commenced the programme in 2017/18, 31 (82%) completed and achieved their STEPS Programme Certificate presented at the graduation ceremony in DCU in May 2018.

Phase 3 Post Challenger

Students: Graduates from the programme are awarded certificates during a graduation ceremony in DCU at the end of the academic year. The Education Department in Northside Partnership continues to work with Challenger students to provide vocational and career guidance and to inform Challenger students about financial aid or other opportunities available to them.

Parents: Parents who successfully completed their programme are awarded certificates during a graduation ceremony in DCU at the end of the academic year. Each year both the parents and their children graduate at the same ceremony in DCU. Parents are then assisted to identify other courses available to them to progress their own educational pathways. Through the Challenger programme seminars for parents and students on educational topics are also arranged. All other Northside Partnership programmes and initiatives are also offered to parents.

Northside Partnership is currently exploring involvement of Challenger alumni in the programme with the possibility of former students providing mentorship to current students, giving career talks or offering their skills and experience to develop the programme.

As one Challenger alumni reflected:

"it encourages children to fulfil their potential".

Future innovation possibilities for Challenger

1 Opportunities to connect Challenger with –

- ▶ Programmes that support parents and children from pregnancy to early years education, in order to begin to raise aspirations and supports towards future involvement at an earlier stage
- ▶ Community volunteering, social action and leadership programmes that can provide opportunities for parents in Challenger to get more involved in their community
- ▶ Employment and social enterprise programmes as positive pathways for young people instead of 3rd level education.

2 Opportunities to develop Challenger through –

- ▶ Use of digital technology to enhance delivery and communication, exploiting opportunities to connect with and equip young people in new ways.

Reflection

Which aspects of the Challenger programme resonate with you most?

How will you source the different content areas listed in the programme curriculum?

What steps do you need to take to begin to plan out the three phases of Challenger?

Section Five

CONNECTIONS



Before commencing Challenger, it is recommended to check if any of the main Programme impacts connect with existing internal provision, expertise or resource areas that might help their delivery.

This will avoid any potential opportunities being missed. Where identified, connections can be made to ensure participants in Challenger benefit from access to other provision, or appropriate arrangements made to share relevant resources with or between the programme. For example, if your organisation already offers any support or programmes for adults returning to education, then plan in at the start how parents on Challenger might be able to access this as a progression pathway from the main programme.

Challenger will help an organisation impact on five strategic delivery areas:

- 1 Increased educational attainment, personal development and vocational pathways for young people from disadvantaged areas
- 2 Increased parental engagement with and aspiration for education in disadvantaged communities
- 3 Increased social justice for disadvantaged communities through the provision of accessible supports for those with unmet potential to express their talents
- 4 Increased partnership working between stakeholders able to invest in educational and cultural opportunities for young people and parents
- 5 Increased promotion of positive identity and investment potential for communities and young people in danger of being written off as disadvantaged.

Challenger Area**Connection with any existing provision, expertise or resources**

1 Increased educational attainment, personal development and vocational pathways for young people from disadvantaged areas

2 Increased parental engagement with and aspiration for education in disadvantaged communities

3 Increased social justice for disadvantaged communities through the provision of accessible support for those with unmet potential to express their talents

4 Increased partnership working between stakeholders able to invest in educational and cultural opportunities for young people and parents

5 Increased positive identity and promotion of investment potential for communities and young people in danger of being written off as disadvantaged

Reflection

What actions can you take to maximise the potential from any identified connections during the introduction of Challenger?

If there are no connections, are there any other areas where Challenger might add value to or benefit from your existing provision and resources?

Section Six

HEALTH CHECK READINESS

You have reviewed Challenger's underlying principles, reflected on Advantaged Thinking, understood the content of the Challenger programme, and are now ready to get started on shaping your programme. But before you get started, it is time to take a health check.

There are 20 Essentials to set up a successful Challenger programme. The Challenger Health Check will help you work out what Essentials you might need to include in your development plan to make sure you are fully ready to commence a Challenger programme.

Grade each Essential below as either:

- 1 Not in place – a gap to develop
- 2 Partly in place, an area to strengthen
- 3 Securely in place, or
- 4 An area of strength

Challenger essentials

Score

1	Understanding of how the education system for age 10 to 18 is managed and delivered, including measures to address educational disadvantage
2	Access to a geographical area of disadvantage in Ireland where young people achieve lower levels of educational attainment
3	An independent organisational identity serving the interests of young people and parents in the community
4	Organisational values, ethos and approach that match the spirit of the Challenger programme, as outlined in sections 2 on Key Principles and 3 on Advantaged Thinking
5	A positive, trusted reputation within the target community
6	Relationships at leadership level within target schools
7	Relationships with Home school liaison officers in each target school
8	Relationships with third level colleges
9	Relationships with local businesses and potential sponsors

Score

10	Relationship with a principal or former principal who can be approached to chair the steering committee
11	Access to a network of appropriate tutors and providers able to deliver the curriculum content for young people and parents
12	Ability to offer or access a range of complementary services to Challenger – including specialist learning support, funding and careers advice and guidance
13	Access to a training centre to run activities outside schools
14	A staff member to co-ordinate the programme who has local connection, understands the needs and potential of parents and young people, and has the skills outlined in the post description
15	Capacity to set up and support a steering committee to guide the development of the programme, made up of stakeholders including schools and parents
16	Capacity to manage contracting, budgets, programme monitoring and data tracking
17	Systems and processes to capture annual feedback and output sources to evaluate progress of the programme
18	Policies and procedures to work with children and volunteers and manage safeguarding and GDPR compliance
19	Capacity to communicate the programme through schools and communities to target participants
20	Access to funding of around 30,000 euro to pay for core delivery costs (in addition to staff costs)

Reflection

Note the Essentials you have scored as a 1 or a 2.

Create a specific plan for how and when you might develop or strengthen these areas so you can be fully ready to begin working on your Challenger programme.

Section Seven

RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

This section explores some of the resources required for Challenger's

- 1 internal staffing
- 2 external staffing
- 3 funding, and
- 4 communications.

1 Internal staffing

Staff responsibilities

Challenger has specific internal management and delivery responsibilities, which can be shared across at least two or more posts. Management responsibilities can be subsumed into an existing post, but programme delivery requires a designated staff member, along with some additional staff capacity for administration.

Northside Partnership ran Challenger with one part-time Challenger Programme Co-ordinator (20 hours per week). The post was funded by the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP). An Education Guidance Counsellor supported the project equivalent to approximately 0.5 days per week to take on the main management responsibilities and deliver the advice and guidance elements within the curriculum. The project was also allocated a TÚS employee for 19.5 hours per week to support monitoring and record keeping.

The list of main responsibilities below includes an outline of key behaviours for the programme delivery post, which can be used to shape an appropriate job outline for recruitment purposes.

Management responsibilities

- + Chair of Steering Committee (if the post is not held by a school principal)
- + Overseeing challenger's development and performance including impact measurement
- + Applications for funding
- + Developing partnership relationships
- + Overseeing financial payments for programme tutors
- + Master of Ceremonies at annual graduation event.



Programme delivery responsibilities

- + Overseeing activities and events in the annual programme schedule, including co-ordinating dates, venues and tutors
- + Compiling reports to management on performance and activity
- + Overseeing annual programme recruitment, including the promotion, interview, selection and on boarding process
- + Securing replacement students for programme drop outs
- + Controlling programme correspondence and communications, including reminders of workshops and events and co-ordinating the use of digital communication channels
- + Managing the graduation event
- + Overseeing attendance at workshops
- + Working through with all student and tutor concerns/ problems.
- + Ensuring programme documentation is in place– including the workshop planner, brochures, letters to parents and students
- + Upkeeping the admin database with contact details to communicate with programme participants

Key behaviours required for programme delivery role:

- + Positive energy to drive the programme, with the confidence to be fully autonomous and solution focused
- + Excellent interpersonal, communication and listening skills
- + Passionate belief in and empathy for the purpose of Challenger
- + An understanding of and connection with the needs and experiences of the local community reached through Challenger
- + High levels of discretion and sensitivity to work with different people and organisational needs

2 External staffing

The delivery of the Challenger programme also relies upon external staffing, including specialist subject tutors and volunteer assistants. A key consideration for working with external staff is the provision of a positive induction to the Challenger Programme.

For the Challenger Programme to be successful it relies on working relationships that it builds up over a long period. Whether it is school teachers who offer academic support in particular subject areas or volunteer parents who support the Challenger Co-ordinator with cultural trips or College tours. These relations are at the very core of the Challenger Programme. Challenger is not school, and, learning is in a fun way has always been at its heart. This is why creating a positive induction for tutors and volunteers is vital to the success of the programme.

Why is an induction important?

An induction is a way to introduce a new tutor or volunteer to the delivery organisation and the Challenger Programme. It helps them feel part of the team and helps insure that they have all the information they need to have a great experience. It is important that everyone associated with Challenger conducts themselves in a non-judgemental manner with leadership qualities, and the ability to relate to young people. Insuring tutors or volunteers have a person-centred approach is paramount to the experience the young person will have over the next seven years on Challenger. Young people who feel part of the process will feel more inclined to commit to the programme. The Challenger Programme is seven years long and a young person giving 80% attendance is a mammoth commitment when competing with sports, a job, a favourite programme, favourite team playing or family commitments.

How should you deliver an induction?

Having a small brief meeting at the beginning of the academic year with tutors and volunteers has a positive impact on the Challenger Programme. The briefing could take place in the venue where most of the activities take place for example for a tutor where the subject grinds take place or in the main building of the organisation. It's important to keep it as interesting and to the point as possible. Volunteers are giving up their free time to attend the induction. Having an experienced tutor or volunteer at the induction will help give clarity and also provide a good roadmap on how to proceed in different situations.

There are three main topic areas to include in an induction:

1 Challenger delivery principles

Every organisation is different but there are some common delivery principles that Challenger Programme facilitators should abide by. These include:

- + **Challenger is not like school** – be firm and clear but do not take an authoritarian approach. See your role more as a good youth worker than a traditional teacher.
- + **Challenger should be fun and exciting** – use interactive exercises, games and conversation topics to engage and sustain young people's interest.
- + **Challenger should be supportive and encouraging** – help people to believe in themselves, use positive language, give second chances, and emphasise future aspirations for success
- + **Challenger should be person centred** – know who is on the programme and try to tailor activity to people's different interests, learning styles and needs. Do with, not to!
- + **Challenger is about learning and career progression** – be a good role model and influence for young people by sharing your own learning and career story.

2 Who am I volunteering with?

- + Explain what the organisation is trying to achieve. The mission statement, values, a short history and future plans could be useful. Also introducing relevant staff members to volunteers or tutors.
- + Identify the benefits from the experience. Parents who volunteer or tutors who are employed on the Challenger Programme might want to see the benefits to discuss why they are going to be doing this work.
- + Who else will be volunteering? Getting to know other volunteers or tutors can build your team and help them feel part of something.

3 What will I be doing?

- + Introduce the role and what they will be doing.
- + Explain what support is available to them, including who to speak to if they have any problems. If the grinds take place in a different building introducing tutors to security personnel or having contact telephone numbers can be beneficial i.e. opening closing buildings after hours.
- + Explain relevant policies and procedures, including the payment procedure.
- + Explain how they can claim expenses, if relevant.
- + Discuss how they can remain safe when volunteering (Garda Vetting).
- + Provide any equipment they may need such as a camera when taking photographs.
- + Discuss any hopes and fears they may have.
- + Provide an opportunity for volunteers to make suggestions of other skills / talents they could share with the organisation. It can be useful to create an induction checklist with content relevant for your organisation or an induction pack so tutors and volunteers can see what's coming up.

3 Funding

The outline delivery budget opposite does not include staff costs. An additional budget for staff costs will need to cover at least one part time (20 hrs) delivery post to co-ordinate the programme, along with a contribution to management time for one senior staff member overseeing the programme, and some part time (19.5hrs) administration support. The budget is based on using the STEPS programme to deliver the personal development part of the curriculum. Note that in addition to the expenditure budget, parents pay €300 to contribute to the Gaeltacht costs for each student taking up a place.

The overall budget has been rounded up to 33K to build in some flexible resource for the programme co-ordinator to respond to identified needs over the year's programme, such as student hardship, unforeseen delivery costs and opportunities to celebrate the vital role of parent volunteers.

Challenger cost areas	Cost
Reading Club	€368
Public Speaking	€460
Conversional Irish transport	€1,500
Cultural Events	€1,500
End of year trip	€1,300
Maths	€1,200
Rapping	€500
General Transport	€3,000
Gaeltacht Scholarships	€5,400
Grinds	€8,500
Study Skills	€200
STEPS programme	€4,200
My SelfieSteem (students)	€1,600
Graduation materials	€2,000
Hardship & extras fund*	€1,272
Total budget	€33,000



4 Communications

How should the Challenger brand be communicated?



The Challenger brand should be promoted as:

Educational

Social

Fun

Aspirational

Accessible

Person-centred

Confidence building

About believing in potential

Successful

For parents, children & schools

Independent

Trustworthy

Collaborative

Open & flexible



The Challenger brand should NOT be promoted as:

A learning support programme

A youth club

Only for academic high flyers

What External Marketing and promotional materials are required?

- 1 Showcase film
(e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNXjoEUCay4&t=100s>)
- 2 Programme brochure
- 3 Primary school poster
- 4 Star stories from young people and parents
- 5 Annual review of activities, successes and impact
- 6 Website/page and social media identities
- 7 Branded collateral
- 8 Fundraising messages / sources.

What Programme communications are required?

- 1 Information and selection event invites
- 2 Registration pack with code of behaviour, attendance policy and permission slip
- 3 Selection forms, personal statement form, and selection decision letters
- 4 Annual timetable
- 5 Information letters for activities, timetables and opportunities
- 6 Graduation invite
- 7 Email, text, and social media reminders
- 8 Additional guidance and support offer for participants
- 9 Contact with former graduates on destinations and volunteering opportunities
- 10 Tutor pack with attendance list
- 11 Annual consultation on activities
- 12 Template to capture star stories.

What School communications are required?

- 1 GDPR agreement
- 2 Annual programme info, participant list and graduation invite
- 3 Activity Noticeboard
- 4 Steering group agendas, minutes, and requests, including success and challenges, info on Junior Certificate results, destination of 6th years and Leaving Cert grades
- 5 Annual consultation on fit with school activities.

What areas should be targeted as part of a communications plan?

There are 10 main communication areas to focus a plan on.

The areas cover a range of different audiences, from parents, to young people, schools, tutors, funders, governance stakeholders, the wider community, participation partners, internal departments, delivery staff and volunteers.

The table opposite is designed to help you identify when and how you will communicate with each audience, as a first step to help shape your final communications plan.

Target areas**When and how to communicate**

- 1** Parents: to support their children to participate in Challenger and benefit their own learning
- 2** Young people: to aspire to enter onto Challenger and sustain ongoing engagement
- 3** Schools (primary and secondary): to promote Challenger
- 4** Tutors: to participate in Challenger
- 5** Funders and sponsors: to support Challenger
- 6** Governance stakeholder members: to oversee Challenger
- 7** The wider community: to connect with the culture change promoted through Challenger
- 8** 3rd level participation partners: to support Challenger
- 9** Internal departments: to understand potential connections with Challenger
- 10** Delivery staff and programme volunteers: to acknowledge their contributions

Section Eight

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

The following 40 top tips offer a practical 'to do' list to help your Challenger programme put in place best practice ideas arising from the direct experience of Northside Partnership. Use the list to plan your programme or identify opportunities for development.

The tips are structured under 6 programme areas:

- + Engagement and Participation
- + Communication and Information
- + Feedback and Peer Involvement
- + Tracking
- + Governance
- + Additional Funding and Support

Engagement and Participation

- 1 Encourage participation on the Challenger Programme by extra parent information sessions, coffee and enrolment morning in schools. Look for opportunities to discuss the programme directly with parents and promote advantages to the young person.
- 2 Encourage the Home School Liaison post within Primary schools to share information with students who could engage with the Challenger Programme in the future
- 3 Encourage the Home School Liaison post in Secondary Schools to note students who may be interested in the Challenger programme to apply for the reserve list
- 4 Develop a formal 'on-boarding' programme for new Home School Liaison officers so they fully understand the programme and can maintain consistency
- 5 Raise the status of Challenger by promoting it in schools and the community through posters, a digital presence, and news stories, using creative opportunities such as a poster for primary school designed by Challenger participants.
- 6 Information about the Challenger programme should be sent each year to the Principal, the Home School Liaison Officer and the Guidance Counsellor to inform them about who is a participant and the activities offered to them

Communication and information

- 7 Encourage the School Liaison post to take responsibility for setting up and updating a Challenger noticeboard in secondary schools with relevant news, contacts, and details
- 8 Promote the financial support made available to Challenger students if they progress to 3rd level and the assistance they receive for accessing funding and CAO applications
- 9 Irish lessons and grinds increase students' chances of achieving desired points in the Leaving Cert and should be promoted as opportunities for success through Challenger
- 10 Compile successful 'star stories' of Challenger participants each year to be shared with others, making sure you have permission to use the story content in future promotions
- 11 Identify and harness the most effective communication platforms to connect with parents and students, from timetables designed to pinup on fridges, to Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, and other channels for information and promotion
- 12 Encourage students to be proactive and keep on-going contact with the programme co-ordinator by sending a monthly text, email or other form of communication.
- 13 Develop a strong digital identity for the programme to increase its visibility and offer a trusted space for participants to access information and encouragement
- 14 Develop an Education Support Network database with contacts for Principals through which requests for sourcing tutors can be directed
- 15 Invest in the annual Graduation event as a key opportunity to communicate the impacts of the programme and reinforce its aspirations for parents and students by the event being held at a University with VIP speakers.

Feedback and Peer Involvement

- 16 Consult with students and parents on the range and content of activities provided each year through focus groups and surveys
- 17 Students who have just completed Challenger should be asked to give feedback about what they consider are the successes and any low points of the programme
- 18 Ask past participants to talk with Challenger students to share experiences, and target key moments in the programme such as end of 3rd year and 5th year
- 19 Develop a 'Buddy System' for secondary level students so that they can get support from peers in Challenger
- 20 Create a Challenger Club for older students in schools to support younger ones
- 21 Train Transition Year Challenger students to promote Challenger in primary schools and assist with reading clubs and trips
- 22 Look for opportunities to involve parents as volunteers and recognise their input in the success of the programme

Tracking

- 23 Track retention rates for participants to Leaving Certificate and their transfer to third level, with a 70% target for each
- 24 Track and record whether students choosing PLC route eventually go to Third level
- 25 Ensure that Junior Cert results, Leaving Cert results and destinations are shared and recorded through a central system that updates annual stats for the programme.
- 26 Track students post-Challenger to support transition needs and record progression.
- 27 Track the learning progression of parents and any positive impacts on their wellbeing
- 28 Track drop outs from the programme and respond to emerging patterns from any drop out issues in the overall programme design

Governance

- 29** Ensure an appropriate representative on the steering group from each second-level school with Challenger students, who should be tasked with providing updates on any successes and challenges involving Challenger students
- 30** Include a parent on the committee, able to represent the voice of other parents involved in Challenger
- 31** Get a former or current Principal to volunteer as chair of the Steering Committee
- 32** Ensure the annual programme is discussed by the Steering group around May each year, to check any needs from and potential duplication or clashes with school plans
- 33** Keep in touch with measures to address educational disadvantage at Primary, Second Level and Third Level, by formally monitoring reports in the Steering group from the Higher Education Authority www.HEA.ie and the Department of Educational and Skills www.des.ie
- 34** Task the Steering group with ensuring that a representative from each Primary and Secondary school attend the annual Challenger Graduation Ceremony

Additional funding and support

- 35** Hold a celebration lunch for Challenger students who have just completed Leaving Certificate in late August or early September after the first round of CAO offers have issued, allowing for opportunities to discuss options, access grants, support funds, ACCESS programme places, and advice on the transition process.
- 36** Develop a Transition Fund to help people bridge the gap into University.
- 37** Develop a Discretionary fund to deal with financial hardship
- 38** Set up an annual scholarship bursary, (possibly funded from the Education Trust), to be awarded to the top student annually who achieves the highest points in the Leaving Certificate.
- 39** Ensure opportunities for parents and students to access other supports and services are maximised by mapping and signposting local offers through Challenger and providing space to present and discuss these in the annual programme for parents and students
- 40** Develop a relationship with Access Officers at 3rd level colleges and ensure those who progress to 3rd level are linked with them to receive maximum support.



Section Nine

TROUBLESHOOTING SCENARIOS

Use the 21 troubleshooting scenarios below to prepare for and prevent challenges that might arise over the course of Challenger. The exercise can also help develop a team's overview of the whole programme.

You will find answers to each scenario at the end of the section.

Consider the following 21 scenarios, noting what you would do in response or discussing further with team members:

- 1 A parent complains about their child not being selected on Challenger

- 2 A child scores high on the assessment but you are worried about the capacity of the parent to commit to or be able to offer support

- 3 The school recommends a child whose parent won't come to the interview

- 4 The cohort identified through interviews is smaller than you had wished for, should you lower the threshold for acceptance or try more interviews?

- 5 People on the shortlist get disinterested in Challenger, so when you turn to offer places in later years they are no longer so keen to take them up

- 6 A student repeatedly fails to turn up to activities

7 There are clashes between the Challenger timetable and the school's plans for activities over the year

8 A tutor drops out from delivering a Grinds subject at the last moment – where do you find a new one?

9 You are struggling to find sufficient tutors to run the Challenger programme

10 You are unable to deliver STEPS and need to find an alternative offer for parents – what do you do?

11 You receive a report of bad behaviour during an activity on an external trip

12 You receive feedback that some parents are struggling with issues such as depression, loss, and family violence

13 You receive feedback that particular classes are boring or topics not of interest to students

14 Young people are beginning to lose commitment due to pressures of needing to take on part time work

15 You are struggling to access information from schools to help you respond to student progress etc.

16 Your Challenger programme has clashes with the school's annual calendar in terms of activity dates and similar content

17 Some of the Challenger fees for activities, and/or the costs involved in third level education, is putting people off from continuing

18 You are struggling to find sufficient funds to deliver the Graduation ceremony – where can you turn to?

19 Students are losing interest in Challenger during the transition 4th year and struggle to refocus

20 Students progressing on from Challenger find it hard to adapt to 3rd level education in their first few weeks

21 If there are two children from the same family how would you help them afford the cost of 2 people going to Gaeltacht at once?

Troubleshooting scenario answers

- 1 A parent complains about their child not being selected on Challenger

Refer to the scoring system and top scores; remind them about the reserve list.

- 2 A child scores high on the assessment but you are worried about the capacity of the parent to commit to or be able to offer support

You should choose the child and hope that the STEPS programme will engage the parent.

- 3 The school recommends a child whose parent won't come to the interview

If there is no parent you can ask for a sibling over 18.

- 4 The cohort identified through interviews is smaller than you had wished for, should you lower the threshold for acceptance or try more interviews?

You should go back to the school's Home School Liaison post to identify other students for interview.

- 5 People on the shortlist get disinterested in Challenger, so when you turn to offer places in later years they are no longer so keen to take them up

You should stress the financial incentives of accessing the Grinds as a selling point and re-emphasise the star quotes that promote Challenge.

- 6 A student repeatedly fails to turn up to activities

You should talk to the student, contact the parents, give them every opportunity to attend and refer to the behaviour contract, before as a last resort sending a formal letter to remove them from the programme if needed.

- 7 There are clashes between the challenger timetable and the school's plans for activities over the year

You need to proactively check with schools about 6th class trip in May to avoid clash with Communion as they are Catholic schools, and check that their 6th year graduation in schools won't clash with challenger graduation. Use Steering Committee members to check by setting your graduation date in Feb at a steering committee meeting, and then call the secretaries in the school to check on dates for Communion before finalising the timetable.

- 8 A tutor drops out from delivering a Grinds subject at the last moment – where do you find a new one?

Use the 'Regional Education Network' to advertise vacancies through and set up an email address list to directly contact all the school principals as well.

- 9 You are struggling to find sufficient tutors to run the Challenger programme

Use the 'Regional Education Network' to advertise vacancies through and set up an email address list to directly contact all the school principals as well.

10 You are unable to deliver STEPS and need to find an alternative offer for parents – what do you do?

Refer to the description of programme content to source an alternative provider.

11 You receive a report of bad behaviour during an activity on an external trip

Use the behaviour contract and verbal warning system. Contact the parents to escalate any issues.

12 You receive feedback that some parents are struggling with issues such as depression, loss, and family violence

Signpost them to a recommended counselling service for specialist support.

13 You receive feedback that particular classes are boring or topics not of interest to students

Check whether feedback is about the content or more about personal confidence and peer pressure? Also check in with tutor to ensure activities meet approach of the programme.

14 Young people are beginning to lose commitment due to pressures of needing to take on part time work

This is likely to be 4th and 5th years arising from financial pressures at home. Try to entice individuals to come back to 6th year by stressing programme benefits and star quotes. Keep in communication to hold out the opportunity to re-engage.

15 You are struggling to access information from schools to help you respond to student progress etc.

Once people are on programme you can collect your own data. You have your own registration night every year to keep that info up to date; and can get the home school liaison post to take responsibility for sharing information on leaving certificate results and identifying new people on the course where there are drops outs.

16 Your challenger programme has clashes with the school's annual calendar in terms of activity dates and similar content

You should seek to avoid this by holding a Steering Committee session on future timetabling – normally done in the last Steering Committee in May, so you are ready for September.

17 Some of the challenger fees for activities, and/or the costs involved in third level education, is putting people off from continuing

Stress that the total required is only £380. Ask the school to help in individual cases, and turn to a pool of potential funding supports such as Vincent de Paul, and other charities. Ideally, it would be great to have a discretionary fund available for Challenger to support those in need.

18 You are struggling to find sufficient funds to deliver the Graduation ceremony – where can you turn to?

You should look at sponsorship from big companies in the local area, selling to them the vision and impacts of the programme for the community.

19 Students are losing interest in Challenger during the transition 4th year and struggle to refocus

Stress that the programme offers STEPS and My Selfie in 4th year, which are both engaging activities likely to be popular. Consider offering an additional incentive trip in the programme for 4th year students.

20 Students progressing on from Challenger find it hard to adapt to 3rd level education in their first few weeks

Ensure that they are connected with Access Officers who might be able to offer additional support.

21 If there are two children from the same family how would you help them afford the cost of 2 people going to Gaeltacht at once?

Build into the programme budget a discretionary fund to offer support for incidents such as this.

Section Ten

EXAMPLE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

List of contents

- 1 Challenger promotional brochure and leaflet
- 2 Challenger interview selection document
- 3 Challenger application personal statement form
- 4 Challenger Code of Behaviour
- 5 Outline of STEPS programme
- 6 Outline of MyselfieSteem programme
- 7 Outline of Gaeilge sessions for Leaving Certificate students
- 8 Outline of Graduation day format
- 9 Example timetables for:
 - + Junior grinds
 - + Leaving Certificate grinds
- 10 Example letters sent to advertise
 - + the first 6th class information evening
 - + the 6th class student trips, and
 - + the Rapping workshop.
- 11 Suggested programme data to collect
- 12 Evaluation questions to ask Challenger students and parents

Resource 1

Challenger promotional brochure and leaflet

Challenger Parents' Programme

Parent Information Evening

As part of the Challenger Programme, all 6th class parents from the participating schools are invited to attend an information evening in October 2017 where they will be given information about the programme, how it will benefit their children and the role they can play.

Parents and Education Programme

Parents of Challenger children are encouraged to take part in courses which will help them to support their child's education. In 2017/18, we will offer the STEPS motivational programme to parents of all 6th class children on the programme. The STEPS programme gives people the tools to make any changes they want to.

The Challenger Programme is outstanding. My daughter is much more confident because of the activities she took part in. I really enjoyed the STEPS course as well. It has given my family opportunities we never would have had before to learn and it was great fun! - Jeni, Darndale



Contact Us

For more information on the Challenger Programme, you can visit our website www.northsidepartnership.ie.

- You can also contact any of the following people
- Jeannette Beirnes, Challenger Programme Coordinator
Phone: 01-8485630 / 0872139172 | Email: jeannette.beirnes@northsidepartnership.ie
 - Paul Hayes, Guidance Counsellor
Phone: 01-8485630 | Email: paul.hayes@northsidepartnership.ie
 - Matthias Borscheid, Manager, Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme
Phone: 01-8485630 | Email: matthias@northsidepartnership.ie

Our offices are located at:
Northside Partnership, Coolock Development Centre, Bunratty Drive, Coolock, Dublin 17.



The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015-2017 is funded by the Irish Government and co-funded by the European Social Fund and includes a special allocation under the Youth Employment Initiative.



Challenger Programme

Supporting Educational Achievement



Serving the Communities of Bonnybrook,
Darndale, Kilmore West and Priorswood

www.northsidepartnership.ie



Challenger Programme Background

The Challenger Programme was set up by Northside Partnership in 1995. It provides structured supports for students and their parents from 6th class to 6th year to:

- Help students to transfer from 6th class into secondary school
- Help students to prepare for their Junior Certificate
- Help students to complete their Leaving Certificate
- Encourage progression to third level education

We believe that the young people of Dublin 5 and 17 are as talented and skilled as their peers elsewhere in the country and we wish to encourage a higher number to progress to third level education.

We therefore aim to provide a programme of activities that challenges our students to develop to their full potential academically, personally and socially, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and dignity.

We believe that this approach is working for our Challenger students, with 82% of students who started the programme since 2002 completing the programme and staying in school to complete their Leaving Certificate.

The Challenger Programme is overseen by a committee with representatives of Northside Partnership, third level colleges, local primary and post-primary schools, parents and students.

How Does It Work?

Each year 40 students from our five local partner schools join the programme. Our partner schools are:

- Our Lady Immaculate SNS, Darndale
- St Joseph's NS, Bonnybrook
- St Francis SNS, Priorswood
- Scoil Fhursa (Boys School), Kilmore West
- Scoil Ide (Girls School), Kilmore West

For children who join the programme, we organise a range of activities throughout the school year to encourage both academic and personal development. All of these activities take place outside of school hours. You can read about the type of activities that we offer on each year of the Challenger programme on the next page.

Every year we have a recruitment process where we offer all students in 6th class in our partner schools the chance to apply to join the programme. All children who join the programme will automatically be offered a place on the next year of the programme once they have attended 80% of the support activities provided.



Student Programme of Activities: 2017/18*

	Date	Activity
6 th Class	January	Conversational Irish, DCU St. Patrick's Campus (6 sessions)
	January—February	Reading Club (4 sessions)
	February—March	Public Speaking / Debate (6 sessions)
	March—April	Cultural Events (4 day trips to Dublin museums and cultural venues)
	May	End of Year Trip (Day trip)
1 st Year	November—December	Conversational Irish, DCU St. Patrick's Campus (6 sessions)
	November	Maths Club (4 sessions)
	November	Music / Rapping Workshop
	January—February	Public Speaking (6 sessions)
	March	Reading Club (4 sessions)
2 nd Year	March	Activity linked to Third Level College (1 session—DCU Glasnevin)
	November—December	Conversational Irish, DCU St. Patrick's Campus (6 sessions)
	October—November	Coding workshop (6 sessions)
	January	Music / Rapping Workshop
	February—March	Maths Workshop (4 sessions)
3 rd Year	June	Gaeltacht Scholarship, Colaiste Acla, Co. Mayo (50% contribution)
	October	Parent and Student Meeting on Subject Choices
	November—February	Extra Tuition / Grinds (Maths, Irish, French, English and more)
	TBC	Study Skills
	TBC	Education for All Fair
4 th Year	TBC	Maths & Irish Classes
	TBC	Introduction to Careers
	TBC	Access Tours to Third Level Colleges
	TBC	Irish & Maths Classes
	TBC	Study Skills (1 session)
5 th Year	October	Third Level Information Meeting
	November	Guidance Meeting and One-to-One Session
	November—February	Extra Tuition / Grinds (Maths, Irish, French, English, Biology & more)
	May	End of Year Graduation Ceremony in DCU Glasnevin campus.
	All Years	

*Typical annual programme, dates and activities are subject to the availability of staff and venues and may change.

Resource 2

Challenger interview selection document

- ☐ **Box 1** = Answered question poorly
- ☐ **Box 2** = Answered question fair
- ☐ **Box 3** = Good answer
- ☐ **Box 4** = Very Good answer

Children Questions

1 Tell us a little bit about yourself. What are your interests, hobbies, clubs you are in outside school?

- ☐ Very little detail (1 point)
- ☐ Mention one interest or hobbies (2 points)
- ☐ Engages in a number of activities (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about his/her interest's hobbies and Clubs (4 points)

2 When you leave school what you would like to be?

- ☐ Don't know (1 point)
- ☐ Mentions one career but very little detail (2 points)
- ☐ Mentions career option and outlines reasons/ambitions (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively around career prospects (4 points)

3 What do you know about the Challenger programme? (based on Info night and leaflet)

- ☐ Don't know (1 point)
- ☐ Mentions one activity on the programme (2 points)
- ☐ Identifies two or more activities on the programme (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about the Challenger activities (grinds, St Pats, cultural tours) (4 points)

4 What are you looking forward to about secondary school?

- ☐ Don't know (1 point)
- ☐ Mentions one interest (2 points)
- ☐ Would like to get involved in a number of activities in school (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about his/her interests in secondary school (4 points)

5 If you are chosen for the Challenger programme you will be expected to attend classes, trips and be involved in various activities which may clash with personal activities outside our programme. How do we know that you will be able to attend? (i.e. if GAA / soccer practice is on a same night as Math grinds which one will you choose).

- ☐ Not able to commit (1 point)
- ☐ Able to commit but prioritises other activities outside Challenger (2 points)
- ☐ Able to commit (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about commitment and priorities all Challenger activities above anything else (4 points)

Parents/Guardian Questions

Can the Parent/Guardian commit to doing the STEPS programme

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes continue with the questions:

1 Why is a good education important for your child?

- ☐ Very little detail (1 point)
- ☐ Mentions one point about why education is important (2 points)
- ☐ Parent mentions their own experience in education and why it is so important (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about the importance of education today (4 points)

2 How have you ensured that your child has regular attendance in school?

- ☐ No support, or poor attendance at school (1 point)
- ☐ Mentions one point about how supportive the Parent or Guardian is (2 points)
- ☐ Parent/Guardian explains how supportive they are (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about the support that they are willing to provide to ensure that their child is 100% committed to school (4 points)

3 What are your hopes for your child after their Leaving Cert?

- ☐ No hopes (1 point)
- ☐ Mentions continuing education (2 points)
- ☐ Talks about educational options in detail (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about third level education (4 points)

4 What is it about the Challenger Programme that can help your child reach their full potential? (Relate to what was presented at info night/in brochure/what they have heard about programme from others)

- ☐ Very little detail (1 point)
- ☐ Mentions one activity on the Challenger programme (2 points)
- ☐ Mentions two or more activity on the Challenger programme (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about the support that the Challenger programme can offer and the activities that are involved that will help their child (4 points)

5 If we offer your child a place on the Challenger programme, can you commit to us that he/she will attend all Challenger activities? Outline/give examples how will you ensure this.

- ☐ Very little detail (1 point)
- ☐ Talks generally about committing to the programme (2 points)
- ☐ Commits to the programme and talks about support (3 points)
- ☐ Talks extensively about the support that the parent is willing to provide to ensure that their child is 100% committed to Challenger (4 points)

Resource 3

Challenger application personal statement form

Your details

First Name

Surname

Parent's Name

Surname

Address

Home Telephone

Mobile Number

Email Address

School

Gender
☐

Male

☐

Female

Date of birth

Interests/Hobbies

Personal Statement

Why should you be selected for and how will you benefit from being a Student on the Challenger Programme?

Parent's Signature

Student's Signature

Resource 4

Challenger Code of Behaviour

We expect all pupils on the Challenger Programme to:

- + Behave respectfully towards everyone they meet
- + Be friendly to everyone
- + Take care not to damage any property
- + Listen attentively and work hard during all classes and activities
- + Behave in a safe and courteous manner on Challenger trips and activities
- + Remember at all times that they are representing themselves and their parents on the Challenger Programme.

All breaches of these rules will be recorded.

If a child chooses not to follow these rules, **sanctions** as outlined below, will apply.

Step 1 Verbal warning

Step 2 Verbal warning and parents contacted

Step 3 Parents and child called for a meeting with Challenger co-ordinator.

If behaviour does not improve then the child may be asked to leave the programme.

We have read and understand the Challenger Code of Behaviour. We agree to support the Challenger Programme in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. We agree to follow the rules and understand the possible sanctions if these rules are broken. Please sign, date and return this slip to the Challenger Coordinator at Northside Partnership.

Thank-you for your continued support for the Challenger Programme.

Parent

Child

Date

Resource 5

Outline of STEPS programme

Overview of STEPS, delivered by The Pacific Institute

The STEPS® programme is designed to help unlock potential by encouraging individuals to take a fresh look at their lives. It helps people to see how much they are truly capable of achieving and offers tools to make that happen. It enables anyone to realise that life is full of opportunities and shows how you can pursue these opportunities with confidence.

STEPS® is built around the core concepts of The Pacific Institute's® knowledge base. It is delivered with a licenced qualified facilitator who helps participants to co-create their learning through a wide variety of activities. The programme covers 13 sessions and includes a workbook to support homework activity. After participating in the programme, individuals have greater expectations of success and higher self-efficacy. Individuals will see:

- + higher levels of motivation
- + increased self belief
- + improved ability to set goals
- + raised levels of personal accountability
- + insight into how their mind works.

Parents undertake STEPS at the outset of the Challenger programme, while for students STEPS forms part of their 4th year activity. This means that STEPS® offers a common learning experience and language that parents and students can share through their different classes in the curriculum. It is a powerful enabler for achieving future goals through the programme.

For parents in particular, participation in STEPS® is designed to build up confidence and self-esteem, raise awareness about new opportunities and make them more open to change. Given these skills parents should be more confident and committed in supporting their children's education. It will:

- + Equip them with better parenting skills
- + Improve relationships with teachers and foster more involvement in school life
- + Help them explore how beliefs are formed, i.e. past experiences of school
- + Increase expectations of success, levels of motivation and self-belief

In the words of past participants:

"I found the programme very good in teaching you how you look at things, how to change the way you think and changing the way you do things in a more positive way."

"I never had much of a reason to get up in the morning. Now I have a spring in my step and am good humoured"

"It was very informative, fun and inclusive"

"This course has made a very big difference to my life circumstances. It helped me make a very big decision to enable me to go forward"

The delivery of STEPS® was specifically tailored by Pacific Institute to meet the needs of Challenger. It is an integral part of the curriculum for both students and parents. For further information, see pacificinstitute.co.uk.

Resource 6

Outline of MySelfieSteem programme

MySelfieSteem

A Programme For Life For Young People

MySelfieSteem was developed as a programme for life for young people, offering information and education in relation to staying safe while using social media.

There is a growing need to support young people's safety while they are using social media and exploring the realms of an online world. While there is a great emphasis placed on the problems that the internet can cause for young people, not enough has been done to create a solution.

MySelfieSteem was developed as a response to the following needs among young people:

- + **Young people have little awareness of how to stay safe online**
- + **The young people are pressured into sending images online and feel they can't say no**
- + **The young people have their boundaries violated by online predators due to incidents of online grooming**
- + **Some young people experience cyber bullying by their peers**
- + **Young people feel conflict as they want to tell someone about their abusive experience, yet they don't want to get anyone into trouble**
- + **Young people are afraid to say no for fear of further repercussions**
- + **Some young people are linked with mental health professionals due to their negative experiences online**
- + **Young people sometimes turn to maladaptive coping behaviours such as self-harm and alcohol/drug abuse.**

MySelfieSteem was set up as a 12 week learning programme offering not only information and awareness about online safety but also practical life skills and healthy coping strategies for difficulties that young people encounter both online and in life in general. MySelfieSteem is recommended as part of the 4th year activity programme for students, as well as an option for parents to gain a better insight into supporting their child's online safety.

The following is a list of the modules taught in the programme:

- Week 1** Me & My Selfie (Relationship with self and others)
- Week 2** Social Selfie (Body Shaming, Sexting, Catfishing)
- Week 3** Physical and Emotional Selfie (self talk, affirmations)
- Week 4** Selfie safety (online safety, revenge porn, be share aware)
- Week 5** Online grooming (Information for young people)
- Week 6** Emotional intelligence (Developing empathy)
- Week 7** Relationships and boundaries (healthy relationships)
- Week 8** Managing Conflict (conflict resolution)
- Week 9** Building Resilience (coping skills)
- Week 10** Building Resources (support for me)
- Week 11** Anxiety (impact on brain and body)
- Week 12** Ending (Future goals and vision board)

Cost: The cost for the young people's Programme is €1,600 per programme. For further details of how to access more information on the programme, please contact Northside Partnership.

Resource 7

Outline of Gaelge sessions for Leaving Certificate students

Layout of 10 week session with Leaving Certificate Students – Gaelge 2018–2019

Teacher: Tara Hanly

	Leaving Certificate Ordinary Level	Leaving Certificate Higher Level
Week 1	Géibheann & Cáca Milis (1 poem & 1 story) Tapework Oralwork	Géibheann & Cáca Milis (1 poem & 1 story) Tapework Oralwork
Week 2	Colscaradh & An Gnáthrud (1 poem & 1 story) Grammar Oralwork	Colscaradh & An Gnáthrud (1 poem & 1 story) Grammar Oralwork
Week 3	Mo Ghrá-sa (idir luibíní) & Oisín i dTír na nÓg (1 poem & 1 story) Tapework Oralwork	Mo Ghrá-sa (idir luibíní) & Oisín i dTír na nÓg (1 poem & 1 story) Tapework Oralwork
Week 4	An tEarrach Thiar & Cáca Milis (1 poem & 1 story) Grammar Oralwork	An tEarrach Thiar & Cáca Milis (1 poem & 1 story) Grammar Oralwork
Week 5	An Spailpín Fánach (1 poem) Tapework Oralwork	An Spailpín Fánach (1 poem) Tapework Oralwork
Week 6	Hurlamaboc & Oisín i dTír na nÓg Grammar	Hurlamaboc & Oisín i dTír na nÓg Grammar
Week 7	Ceapadóireacht – Composition Scéal (story) Comhrá (conversation) Grammar	Essay Writing Grammar
Week 8	Ceapadóireacht – Composition Blag (blog) Litir (letter) Tapework	Tapework Oralwork Essay Writing
Week 9	Oralwork – Sraithpictiúir (picture sequences) (practice) Tapework	An Triail (1 Drama) (The Trial) Summary revision Character revision
Week 10	Oralwork – Filíocht (Poetry) (Reading poems) Tapework	Oralwork – Sraithpictiúir (picture sequences) (practice) Filíocht (Poetry) (Reading poems)

Resource 8

Outline of Graduation day format

Key ingredients for graduation event

- + Venue confirmation
- + Catering for tea, coffee and biscuits
- + Transport booked
- + Speakers – including a challenger graduate, dean of DCU/University, celebrity author and/or sport person, and students from each year prepared to speak about the impact of different activities
- + Book tokens – €5 each student and €20 for outstanding students from each year
- + Awards – including rosettes and sachets for all students and parents
- + Content – including Challenger promo video and a slideshow of images from different activities over the year
- + Invitation letters for all Challenger years, the schools and Steering committee members

Presentation Format

Event held from 7–8.30pm at Dublin City University

Introduction

MC to welcome everyone to the End of Year Presentation night, including the following groups:

- 1 VIPs
- 2 Challenger graduate
- 3 Committee members
- 4 Teachers
- 5 Parents
- 6 Students

Play end of year video

First Speakers:

- + [xxx], Northside Partnership's Challenger Programme
- + [xxx], final year Student St. Patrick's Campus, DCU.
- + [xxx], top selling Author or other VIP

Second Speakers:

Students [xxx] to say a few words about their time on the Challenger Programme:

- + 6th Class
 - ▶ Reading Club: [xxx]
 - ▶ Public Speaking: [xxx]
- + Cultural Tours
 - ▶ Dublin Zoo: [xxx]
 - ▶ Glasnevin Museum: [xxx]
 - ▶ Viking splash: [xxx]
- + St Patrick's Conversational Irish [xxx]
- + Day trip Lilliput Adventure Centre [xxx]
- + 1st Year: Rapping workshop [xxx]
Play the song and present students with their rapping CD.
- + 2nd Year: Coding workshop [xxx]
- + 3rd Year: Gaeltacht [xxx]
- + 5th year: Overview of Challenger Senior Cycle Programme [xxx]

Awards for Outstanding Effort:

For excellent attendance and commitment to the Challenger Programme.

- + VIP to present Certificates to the Outstanding Students

VIP to present certificates to VI Year Students**Parent STEPS Programme:**

STEPS Programme staff member to say a few words and present certificates to parents

Final presentation to all students on Challenger

Close of event for 8.30pm.

Resource 9

Example timetables

Challenger Programme

Grinds Programme

Junior Cert Timetable 2018/2019

Points to note:

- 1 All Junior Cert Grinds will commence on **Monday 19th November 2018**
- 2 Grinds will run for 8 weeks for all Junior Cert subjects (Dates listed below)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
6.00–7.00	Irish J.C (O) T. Hanly	History J.C. (H) J. Power	English J.C. (H) S. Ollosey	French J.C. (H) L. Devaux
	Business J.C (H) M. Kelly		Maths J.C. (O) A. Fox	
7.00–8.00	Irish J.C. (H) T. Hanly	Geography J.C (H) S. McVeigh	Maths J.C. (H) A. Fox	Science J.C. (H) J. Behan

Dates of Grinds Classes: 8 weeks (week beginning):

- + 19th November
- + 26th November
- + 3rd December
- + 10th December
- + 17th December

Christmas Break

- + 7th January
- + 14th January
- + 21st January

Challenger Programme

Grinds Programme

Leaving Cert Timetable 2018/2019

Points to note:

- 1 All Grinds will commence on **Monday 19th November 2018**
- 2 Grinds will run for 8 weeks for Leaving Cert Ordinary Level and 10 weeks for Leaving Cert Higher Level
- 3 Grinds listed beside time with tutors name underneath

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
6.00–7.00	Maths L.C (H) A. Fox	Geography L.C (H) S. McVeigh	English L.C. (H) J. Power	Biology LC (H) M. Fitzpatrick
		Irish L.C (O) T. Hanly		
7.00–8.00	Maths L.C. (O) A. Fox	Irish L.C (H) T. Hanly	History L.C. (H) J. Power	French L.C. (H) L. Devaux
	Business L.C (H) S. M. Glynn		English L.C (O) S. Ollosey	

Dates of Grinds Classes (week beginning):

Leaving Cert (Ordinary) 8 weeks

- + 19th November
- + 26th November
- + 3rd December
- + 10th December
- + 17th December

Christmas Break

- + 7th January
- + 14th January
- + 21st January

Leaving Cert (Higher) 10 weeks

- + 19th November
- + 26th November
- + 3rd December
- + 10th December
- + 17th December

Christmas Break

- + 7th January
- + 14th January
- + 21st January
- + 28th January
- + 4th February

Resource 10

Example letters sent to advertise

Challenger Programme 6th Class Information Evening

22nd October 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It's with great pleasure that I would like to introduce you to a programme that has been running in Northside Partnership since 1995. The Challenger Programme provides a structured support for students from 6th class to 6th year. It can –

- + Help students to transfer from **6th class** into secondary school
- + Help students to prepare for their **Junior Certificate**
- + Help students to complete their **Leaving Certificate**
- + Encourage progression to **third level education**

We believe that the young people of Dublin 5 and 17 are as talented and skilled as their peers elsewhere in the country and we wish to encourage a higher number to progress to third level education. We therefore aim to provide a programme of activities that challenges our students to develop to their full potential academically, personally and socially, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and dignity. We believe that this approach is working for our Challenger students, with 82% of students who started the programme since 2002 completing the programme and staying in school to complete their Leaving Certificate.

Each year children are selected on the basis of their potential and ambition. A key feature of the programme is that Parents are involved.

This years information evening for parents and students will take place on the following date:

Venue: Parnell's GAA Club, Coolock Village

Date: 8th November 2018

Time: 6.00pm – 7.00pm

After this initial meeting, children and their parents will be invited to attend a brief meeting in their own school for a place on the Challenger Programme.

Looking forward to seeing both parents and students at the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Jeannette Beirnes

Challenger Co-ordinator

[Telephone number]

Insert funders logos as applicable

6th Class Trip

Lilliput Adventure Centre, Co. Westmeath

27th March 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The 6th Class Challenger Students Trip will be travelling to Lilliput Adventure Centre, Co. Westmeath on **Saturday 7th April 2018**. The group will be under the supervision of Jeannette Beirnes Challenger Co-ordinator and parents. Depending on the weather, most students will take part in water-based activities, such as canoeing and windsurfing for one half of the day. The land based activities such as orienteering, abseiling and archery will take place in the second half of the day.

In order to take part in the water activities, your son/daughter must be **Water Confident**. This does not mean that they must be a good swimmer, but that they are relaxed in the water. **Everyone wears Wet Suits, Life Jackets and Helmets**. If your son/daughter isn't confident in the water, there is still lots of other activities that they can take part in.

Because of the water based activities your son/daughter will need:

- + Old runners to walk down to the seashore and to wear while canoeing or windsurfing etc. The runners will get wet so the older the better.
- + Swimming Togs.
- + Shower gel, shampoo and towels to shower after the activities.
- + Shoes or runners or walking boots for the land based activities. Warm clothes for the outdoor activities.
- + Food will be provided.

Parents are asked to pay €20.00 towards the cost of the trip. I would ask you to bring the deposit to the Northside Partnership no later than **Wednesday 4th April** by 3.00pm to secure your son/daughter's place on the trip.

- + The Bus will collect your son/daughter on **Saturday 7th April at 9.30am** from St Francis Senior School, Priorswood.
- + Bus will return to St Francis Senior School at **5.30pm that evening**.

If a problem arises and you can't go on the trip please contact me on mobile – xxxxxxxxxx

Kind regards,

Jeannette Beirnes
Challenger Co-ordinator

Insert funders logos as applicable

Challenger Programme Rapping Workshop

23rd January 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This year the Challenger Programme Music **Rapping Workshop** will take place on the following,

Date: Saturday 3rd February

Venue: Northside Partnership, Bunratty Drive

Time: 10.00am – 4.00pm

Background

The Music Rapping Workshop will be taken by Garry McCarthy who is a music producer/rapper/youth workshop facilitator from Co. Cork who began producing, writing and recording his own hip-hop tracks for a local radio station back in 2004. Since then, he has released 3 albums, penned a top 20 hit with “Not Tonight – The Bouncer Song”, performed at Electric Picnic, The Marquee in Cork, released the “Girl on Facebook” music video and wrote the Cork GAA anthem of 2010 “Give us back Sam Maguire”. Garry has a unique style which brings witty, edgy and local lyrics over some of the catchiest beats out there. Never trying to Americanize his music, Garry remains true to himself and urges young people to try do the same when expressing themselves lyrically and musically.

Garry McCarthy

Music Producer

As hip hop has become an important voices for the youth, Garry is now heavily involved in delivering music workshops. From delivering a FETAC Level 5 Music Technology class to students as a stepping stone into 3rd level education, to working with schools and youth groups to write and record their own hip hop songs, to helping people with special needs express themselves through rap. Garry’s work has made a positive impact on many young people. As Garry has a first class honours degree in Multimedia.

This is a great opportunity for our student to learn in a more unconventional way. As this is a full day workshop, please give your son/daughter a packed lunch on the day. Please contact the Northside Partnership to confirm your child’s attendance, telephone number – xxxxxxxxxx.

Kind Regards,

Jeannette

Challenger Co-ordinator

Insert funders logos as applicable

Resource 11

Suggested programme data to collect

Data: Collection of information about Challenger

(Recommendations from the 2015 review of Challenger by Niamh Mernagh)

A data-gathering plan should address both the collection of information and its collation and analysis:

- + A system for gathering information, e.g. by creating templates that are circulated using texting and email.
- + A more scientific approach to the collation and analysis of information (beginning with a dedicated file for each student) would permit interventions to be planned for students who require extra support or guidance to succeed.

A formula for data – gathering in Challenger

Graphs and tables should be designed to include:

- + Number of starts in Challenger by primary school and year
- + Number of Challenger carryovers by year and school {including those (if any) added to the programme and the reasons for their inclusion and information about drop outs}
- + Number of Challenger completers of the Junior Certificate per school and their results
- + Number of Leaving Certificate completers per school and total points achieved
- + Derived from these figures the number of Challenger drop-outs and retention rate by year.

Annual transfer Indicator data to include:

- + Number of Challenger Leaving Certificate students transferring to;
 - ▶ University
 - ▶ Third Level College or Institute of Technology
 - ▶ PLC
 - ▶ Employment
 - ▶ Other

Data and information about Challenger and Challenger students should be supplied annually to the Steering committee by the programme coordinator.

Challenger students from the outset should be encouraged and required to provide information about their outcomes directly to the coordinator using email and texting. This would facilitate the prompt collection of data.

Resource 12

Evaluation questions to ask Challenger students and parents

(From Initial Evaluation of the Challenger Programme, by Siobhan Phillips and Ellen Roche, 2000)

Challenger Students

Initial Expectations

- + How did you feel when you were told you had been selected for Challenger?
- + What were your first impressions of Challenger?
- + Was anyone worried? What about?
- + What did you hope would happen as a result of becoming involved on Challenger?

Effectiveness

- + Can you tell us a little about the activities you were involved in as part of Challenger?
- + What did you enjoy most?
- + Is there anything anyone would change?
- + Is there anything you would do more of / less of?
- + Is there anything you as a group didn't do that should be included for future Challenger students?

Outcomes / Impacts

- + Has your involvement in Challenger changed you in any way? How?
- + What about your school work, how has that been affected?
- + Has your involvement in Challenger changed your parents in any way. How?
- + Is there anything you do differently as a result of your involvement on Challenger?

Future

What do you hope to get from Challenger?

- + What do you find most difficult about school?
- + What are the biggest barriers or difficulties for you continuing on into third level education?
- + In terms of getting over those difficulties, what would help you most?
- + Looking back on your expectations so far, how realistic were your initial hopes for your involvement on the programme?
- + What do you hope for your education in the future?
- + What changes, if any, would you make to Challenger?

Challenger Parents

Initial Expectations

- + How did you feel when you were told your children had been selected for Challenger?
- + What were your first impressions of Challenger?
- + Did anyone have any doubts? What were they?
- + What did you hope your children would gain from their involvement on Challenger?
- + What did you hope you, as parents, would gain from your involvement on Challenger?

Effectiveness

- + How well did the parent activities prepare you for your children's involvement in the programme?
- + What activities did you find particularly valuable? In what way?
- + Is there anything anyone would change?
- + Is there anything you would do more of / less of?
- + Is there anything you as a group didn't do that should be included for future Challenger parents?

Outcomes / Impacts

- + Has your involvement on Challenger changed you in any way? How?
- + Has Challenger changed your children in any way? How?
- + Is there anything you do differently as a result of your involvement on Challenger?
- + Is there anything your children do differently as a result of Challenger?
- + How supportive have you found the schools to your child's education (Second level, Primary – is there a difference?)
- + Is there anything the schools can do to make it easier for your children to reach their potential?

Future

- + What in your view are the most important supports that need to be put in place to allow your children to reach their full potential in the education system?
- + What are the biggest barriers to your children continuing on into third level education?
- + If you were Minister for Education, what changes would you make to the education system to fully support children from your area?
- + Looking back on your expectations so far, how realistic were your initial hopes for your children's involvement in the programme?
- + What do you hope for your children's education in the future?
- + What changes, if any, would you make to Challenger?

Contact

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**Northside
Partnership**

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