

**Hampshire Educational
Psychology Service**

Service Statement

**‘Educational psychology as a
resource for communities’**

Hampshire Children’s Services

**Hampshire Educational Psychology
Service**



**Hampshire
County Council**

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‘Educational psychology as a resource for communities’

Introduction

Given the number of changes in our working environment, it has become necessary to review our priorities. This service statement is a response. It differs from previous service statements because we have aimed to produce something that is short and accessible with supporting information included in appendices. We are circulating this service statement in a form that should allow it be kept up-to-date as we produce new information and revise existing information.

This service statement will set out the changed and changing context in which we work. We will describe our priorities and highlight the vulnerable groups that generally will be the focus of our work. Since we rely on managing our work through responsible partnerships with service users, we will outline a set of guidelines to support manageable working practices and ensure that children and families receive the best quality service.

Whilst schools continue to be an important focus and setting for our work, HEPS has always worked with the age range 0 to 19 years in a wide variety of community settings, and negotiated work with diverse partners, including directly with parents. The development of integrated children’s services, including locality teams, children’s centres and extended services, has further emphasised the significance of community engagement. The intention of this service statement is to provide information to reflect the diversity of our work in different community settings.

Background

Psychology is concerned with studying human behaviour and is primarily aimed at improving wellbeing and resilience. Educational psychologists are particularly concerned with how children and young people learn and develop in all aspects of their life. This is a broad remit and a considerable responsibility, not least since it requires us to work across such boundaries as home and school and closely with other services and agencies.

Our previous service statement was published in 2002 and was a response to a Best Value review of the Service completed that year. It signalled some important changes in service delivery, including the implementation of a more flexible approach to working with schools and the creation of community teams.

Since then, the Children Act (2004) and Every Child Matters have effected a transformation of our working environment. HEPS is now situated in the Children and Families Branch of the Children’s Service Department. There are new priorities for our work that have been set by central government: those that are described in the Children’s

Plan: Building Brighter Futures, the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, and the National Indicators. Hampshire County Council has defined its priorities: those in the Local Area Agreement and in the Children and Young People's Plan.

These priorities do not necessarily mean that some of the work that we have traditionally been asked to undertake has diminished or that the size of the Service has expanded (indeed, it hasn't). A strong theme of this service statement is an explicit acknowledgement that to help the most vulnerable children and young people we have to become more selective in the nature of the work that we undertake.

Service Principles and Beliefs

Our guiding purpose

To ensure that psychology is a resource for all children and young people in Hampshire, and for all adults who care for or work with them.

Our purposes

1. To apply psychology to promote the learning, development and psychological resilience and wellbeing of all children and young people within the context of the diverse communities to which they belong. This includes the application of psychology to activities that protect children and young people from harm, discrimination, and disadvantage.
2. To make the theory and practice of psychology available as an empowering and transformational resource.
3. To apply psychology to promote the effectiveness and psychological wellbeing of adults caring for and working with children and young people.

The beliefs that underpin these purposes are detailed in Appendix one.

Our ethical and policy context

In all our work we have regard for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, national legislation and guidance, our professional codes of ethics and competence, Hampshire County Council policies (including the Children and Young People's Plan), and our Service policies. During 2009 all educational psychologists will become regulated through the Health Professions' Council.

Key features of Hampshire Educational Psychology Service

We are known as ‘Hampshire Educational Psychology Service’ (HEPS) for a very good reason: it signifies our retention as a significantly centrally funded Service that exists to provide educational psychology as a resource for council tax payers in Hampshire’s many communities. Although we are centrally funded, we rely upon funding approximately one-third of the Service through generating income. It is one of the reasons why we need to charge for the training that we provide and for other activities, such as research, evaluation, and supervision. This brings some insecurity, especially since most of these funding sources are agreed on an annual basis.

The Service comprises administrative support officers, psychology research associates based in our Research and Evaluation Unit, and educational psychologists. We also support the training of educational psychologists, and across the year supervise a number of trainees, now undertaking a three year course at doctoral level. We also support psychology undergraduates on long-term placements. Further details of who works in HEPS and the nature of their role are outlined in Appendix two.

We are a limited resource with approximately one educational psychologist for every 9,000 children and young people aged 0 to 16 years. Nationally, there is a shortage of EPs. For a number of reasons, it is unusual for the Service to be fully staffed and since there is no ‘supply pool’ of EPs, we regrettably have to make cover arrangements for some work.

Further information about our context is provided in Appendix three.

Significant elements in delivering our Service

- we are organised into six community teams, covering each of Hampshire’s eleven Districts
- we provide a link EP for every school, education centre, children’s home, and for all full core offer children’s centres
- we work very closely with the SEN Service and with SEN Inspectors
- we offer relatively informal collaborative problem solving sessions (bookable consultations) to parents (and often members of the extended family), school staff, foster carers and adoptive parents
- we offer a priority response when there has been a critical incident or sad event involving a child or young person
- we offer training to adults who work with children and young people
- we provide a research and evaluation function to the whole of the Children’s Services Department (See Appendix four for further information)

- we currently provide the County lead strategic role for behaviour, social and emotional development, anti-bullying and attendance
- we provide supervision to members of other services such as area inclusion coordinators, and Portage workers.
- through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Commissioning Trust, we are engaged in developing and supporting the county wide CAMHS Strategy. The Service continues to actively engage with the Comprehensive CAMHS Commissioning Trust through chairing the strategy group and participating and chairing local implementation groups
- from the outset, we have been actively engaged in supporting the local authority roll out of the Common Assessment Framework procedures through chairing local steering groups, delivering training and evaluating the impact of the training within the local pathfinders. We are working closely with locality teams and regularly participate in teams around children. For details about how we are working with locality teams see Appendix ten.

Core functions of educational psychologists

Educational psychologists provide both universal and specialist services. We apply our psychology to six core functions:

1. **consultation** (see Appendix five)
2. **assessment** (see Appendix six)
3. **intervention**
4. **creating and delivering training**
5. **research** (see Appendix four), and
6. **contributing to local authority policy, strategy and practice.**

These functions apply to work with individual and groups of children, with their parents and carers, with institutions (such as early years settings and schools), with officers in the local authority, and with external services and voluntary agencies. A particular activity might involve more than one function.

As an organisation, HEPS has a long-standing commitment to promoting effective integrated working. This commitment is elaborated in Appendix seven. We also maintain a significant contribution to special needs education and processes, including the legal requirement to provide psychological advice. This is outlined in Appendix eight.

How do we ensure effective and equitable service delivery?

The Service is managed in six community teams, two based in each area. The teams deliver a mix of local authority activities and those commissioned and funded additionally to the core budget. The size of each team is determined by the number of young people aged between 0 – 19 years in each area covered by the team, and the capacity of the Service. Further information is provided in Appendix three.

Priorities for HEPS

This section provides a summary of Appendix nine, where we set out the strategic direction of HEPS and the national and local context within which we plan and deliver services.

Outcomes from the Children and Young People's Plan

At the time of writing Hampshire's Children and Young People's Plan is being rewritten. In its present form, the outcomes that HEPS is focussing upon are:

- increasing psychological well-being (CYPP: increased availability of mental health services; ECM and Children's Plan: be healthy)
- increasing preventative work to reduce youth crime, anti-social behaviour and exclusion (ECM and Children's Plan: staying safe/safe and sound)
- reducing the incidents of bullying (ECM and Children's Plan: staying safe/safe and sound)
- increasing access for children and young people to an excellent general education (ECM and Children's Plan: enjoy and achieve/excellence and quality)
- increasing numbers of children and young people in school and improving support for those not in school (ECM and Children's Plan: enjoy and achieve/excellence and quality)
- increasing access to HEPS and increasing children and young people's participation and voice (CYPP: increased accessibility and quality of information services, and increased number of positive news stories about children and young people; ECM and Children's Plan: making a positive contribution/on the right track)
- increasing an ability to participate in the school community and the community beyond school (CYPP: increased practical and work related opportunities for the 14-19 age group; ECM and Children's Plan: achieving economic well-being/staying on).

Priority groups for our work

We recognise that there are children and young people who are vulnerable often for multiple reasons, for example, poverty, physical ill health, loss and bereavement, and severe and complex learning, social and emotional needs. Within the CYPP outcomes we have identified, we will prioritise work with:

- emotionally vulnerable children and young people (this includes children who have experienced sad or traumatic events)
- children looked after and those on the edge of care (this includes adopted children)
- children and young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities (this includes our role in statutory assessment and review, and with children where tracking data indicates below expected attainments)
- children at risk of exclusion or out of school
- children moving between key stages or schools
- young offenders.

How to access the Service

Guidelines to support manageable working practices

HEPS has finite human resources. We do not operate a referral system, we don't have referral forms, for instance, and we have not adopted strict criteria for the work that the Service will undertake or decline. Rather, we emphasise a responsible partnership with Service users, which includes discussion and negotiation about Service involvement. In other words, if you think that the involvement of an EP in a piece of work is going to be helpful, we encourage you to contact the link EP for your school or setting (if there is a link EP) or the EP that works in your district. We expect to have a conversation about what you are asking of us, and to negotiate with you about whether there is an appropriate task for an EP and if so, what it is.

We can never meet all the requests for our involvement and although we have specified our priorities, we still need to have a basis for negotiating realistic workloads. We always have to balance the demand for quantity with a responsibility to provide quality. Balancing these demands and making the best use of our finite resources, as noted, relies upon responsible partnerships with our service users. To assist these partnerships we have identified a set of guidelines, as follows:

An EP will agree to take on a task when:

- the request is appropriate and applying psychology will add value, and
- a do-able task along with a clearly envisaged outcome can be negotiated, and
- there is sufficient capacity to carry out an effective piece of work.

An EP will not agree to take on a task when:

- diary commitments do not allow an effective piece of work to be carried out
- there is someone else who could do it – e.g. not duplicating work that another team or service should or could do, for example the Behaviour Support Team or the locality team
- there is no evidence of school action implemented and evaluated over time
- a piece of work has not been negotiated.

There are times when an EP will clear their diary by re-arranging appointments, when:

- there has been a sad event or critical incident in the school or community
- there is a critical phase requiring urgent action in on-going casework.

There are also times when an EP will need to make re-arrangements, for example, when:

- there has been an unexpected request for statutory assessment and because of legal time limits, it must be responded to
- an EP has been requested by the local authority to appear at a Tribunal or court proceeding
- an EP is absent through ill health
- there is significant EP absence in the Service.

These guidelines are also available in Appendix eleven.

Our beliefs

1. Inclusion is a fundamental human right. We promote communities that include all of their members and in which members assume their mutual responsibilities for all others in the community. This involves understanding and valuing diverse human perspectives and experiences, including those of vulnerable groups (the very young, children and young people in care, children from ethnic and racial minorities, children in poverty, those who show emotional vulnerability, and children with complex special educational needs).
2. Psychology is essentially transformational and provides support for change. As educational psychologists, we are more effective when we focus upon human strengths and upon enhancing competencies. We emphasise early intervention and prevention in the interests of promoting better outcomes for all children and young people.
3. We are all learners, and given appropriate conditions we are all able to learn, whatever our age or impairments.
4. Social and emotional development – psychological wellbeing – is an essential basis for academic attainment.
5. Learning and behaviour can only be understood in context and, in particular, thorough understanding the quality of the relationships in that context.
6. We seek to promote the delivery of services that involve effective interagency, interdisciplinary coordination and communication.
7. Where appropriate we support professional development and training (both when we receive it and when we deliver it) that is multi-disciplinary and collaborative.
8. Psychology is a community endeavour and is most effective when it is applied through collaborative approaches, in which individual needs and the voice of the child and young person are respected, responsibility is shared, and action leads to positive change.
9. We recognise that sometimes more effective interventions are achieved through working with whole organisations and groups than with individuals.

10. In order to assure high quality impact and outcomes, the application of psychology must be based on evidence provided through research and evaluation. We also support the efforts of others to research and evaluate their work.

11. The wellbeing of everyone who works for the Educational Psychology Service is important, as is the sustainability of the psychology services that we provide.

Who works for Hampshire Educational Psychology Service?

The Service comprises administrative support officers, psychology research associates based in our Research and Evaluation Unit, and educational psychologists. We also support the training of educational psychologists, and across the year supervise a number of trainees, now undertaking a three year course at doctoral level. We also support psychology undergraduates on long-term placements.

What administrative support officers do

Our administrative support officers have a variety of recognised qualifications in administration, clerical and secretarial skills, including IT applications. Some also undertake a range of financial functions. They fulfil a role that goes beyond essential administrative duties, however, in that they function in ways that are more like a personal assistant in the private sector. Each support officer has an allocation of educational psychologists with whom they work, which means in time they develop a good partnership. They are at the front line in managing telephone contacts, frequently providing advice, information and guidance to parents and others. They manage administrative aspects of projects, and play a key role in organising courses and conferences. They are expected to exercise discretion, strict confidentiality, to take initiative and to act autonomously, within a clearly defined structure of accountability.

What trainee educational psychologists do

Educational psychology training recently changed to a three-year doctoral level course. All trainees must have a good initial degree in psychology either followed by a teaching qualification and at least two year's teaching or equivalent experience. We have a long history of working with the course at Southampton University and, indeed, many of the EPs in HEPS trained there. The trainees follow a carefully structured programme, and in the second and third year this includes a variety of placements in Hampshire. These placements are closely supervised and introduce a trainee to increasing levels of responsibility and complexity approximating the full range of work carried out by qualified EPs. Typically, trainee EPs undertake project work, small scale research, deliver some training, work with individual children and young people, with parents, carers, school staff and others.

What psychology research associates do

Psychology Research Associates (PRAs) have an honours degree in psychology and are required to have had some practical research experience. In general, they provide support for the research activity being undertaken by EP colleagues although most of their time is spent on direct research and evaluation activities. They are responsible for co-ordinating and running a number of research projects at any one time. Their precise role in relation to each project may vary depending on the nature of the work and the role undertaken by EP and other colleagues within Children's Services. Generally the work may encompass some or all of the following aspects of the research process:

- **Research design.** PRAs are responsible for designing research studies that address specific research questions and/or for providing advice on possible research designs. This is often undertaken in collaboration with other people working on the project.
- **Data collection.** PRAs are responsible for co-ordinating data collection. Data collection generally takes the form of conducting interviews or focus groups, collating questionnaire responses or testing children. Thus, data collection may involve liaising with, and visiting, schools or parents in their homes. Alternatively, it may involve mailing out and collating questionnaire responses or conducting on-line or telephone surveys.
- **Data analysis.** PRAs analyse the resulting data. Diverse qualitative and quantitative methods are employed in analyses. PRAs have experience of both approaches. They also have a statistical background and are familiar with a range of IT (e.g. Excel, Access, SurveyMonkey) and statistical packages (e.g. SPSS).
- **Data reporting.** Following analysis, PRAs typically interpret the results, draw conclusions, and make recommendations. This is captured in the form of a written report. Consequently, PRAs require good communication skills and must be able to convey the results of studies in a clear and accessible way.

What educational psychologists do

Educational psychologists (EPs) provide both universal and specialist services based on the psychology of learning, social and emotional development and organisational psychology. We use our psychology across six core functions:

1. **consultation**
2. **assessment**
3. **intervention**
4. **creating and delivering training**
5. **research, and**
6. **contributing to local authority policy, strategy and practice.**

Although children and young people are the focus, service delivery has a strong community emphasis in that EPs actively work with parents, carers, staff in pre-school settings, schools and other agencies. A key belief informing our service delivery is one of supporting the skills development of those adults who are closely engaged with the child or young person. In this way we enable adults to have much greater positive influence on a large number of children and young people. EPs are also closely involved in school improvement programmes such as the National Strategies for literacy, numeracy, behaviour and attendance.

Unlike any other local authority service, EPs have always worked for children and young people in the age range 0-19 years. The fact that EPs provide universal and specialist services that benefit the whole community is an important rationale for retaining the service centrally, rather than delegating it to schools, and for maintaining it as a county specialist service.

Our funding from the local authority is directed at our management and delivery of:

- a direct service to schools and communities across Hampshire
- support to pupils with statements placed in other Local authority schools and non-maintained schools
- advice and support to the Local Authority in fulfilling SEN statutory duties
- support to the Local Authority in strategic development to meet the needs of vulnerable groups of children and young people.

Anyone, including parents and carers, can approach HEPS with a request for involvement. The Service does not operate a formal referral system nor does it have strict criteria for involvement. Instead, we emphasise responsibly negotiated priorities.

EPs work with a wide range of institutions and networks including health, social services, and voluntary agencies. We work closely with colleagues in the Behaviour Support Teams, with Locality Teams, and with colleagues in the Inclusion Service. EPs are active in pre-school work, active in fostering and adoption work, active in CAMHS, and active in working with children in public care. Our statutory role in relation to special educational needs processes (including assessing the needs of individual children and young people) and as witnesses at Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunals, is important and can take disproportionate amounts of time.

In promoting the increasing capacity of universal services, EPs have long recognised that SENCOs and other support staff in schools are key to the development of a whole school response to meeting the needs of all children. EPs are therefore actively engaged in a wide range of project and INSET activities aimed at building the capacity of schools to fulfil obligations to the communities that they serve. Our Research and Evaluation Unit is able to provide guidance to school staff on evaluation as well as conducting evaluation projects.

The core skills and knowledge of EPs can be summarised as:

- understanding child and adolescent development processes
- understanding the psycho-social processes that interact to effect children's development
- assessing individual differences and their implications for progress in learning and personal development
- applying systematic social science methods to solving real life problems
- managing preventative and ameliorative interventions in partnership with others
- evaluating the effectiveness of joint interventions and services.

The context in which the Service works

Hampshire Children's Services is responsible for some 311,000 children 0 – 19 years old, of which 260,845 are 0 to 16 years old. The Educational Psychology Service is resourced to work for all children and young people 0 – 16 and with those young people 16 to 19 in local authority maintained schools who have a statement of special educational needs, of whom there are approximately 220. We emphasise service delivery to the community. Generally this means working through schools and other settings that support children, young people and families. There are:

- 501 primary and secondary schools
- 26 special schools and education centres
- 60 Children's Centres

In addition there are 200 Hampshire pupils with statements of special educational needs who attend independent special schools and a further 212 who attend special schools maintained by neighbouring authorities. We are also responsible for providing a service to young people at school action plus in Hampshire schools who are resident in other local authorities.

The size and deployment of the Service

The Service currently has an establishment of 40 full time equivalent educational psychologists, delivered by a total of 60 EPs. In real terms, we have 26.3 full time EPs, funded by the county council, giving a psychologist to pupil ratio of about one psychologist for every 11,800 young people 0 to 19 years. Because of staff shortages, this ratio is inevitably higher in any one year.

Undertaking additionally commissioned activities funds just over one-third of the Service size. In this way the Service is able to expand its range of activities for Hampshire children and young people. These activities include undertaking activities on behalf of the SEN Service and contributing to the Team for the Education of Children in Care. Other commissioned work includes: training and development for staff in the Early Education and Childcare Unit, for preschool providers, and the provision of input to the initial EP training course at Southampton University. These activities enable the educational psychology service to provide a range of support to Services within the Children's Services Department and to support the development of provision for vulnerable children in Hampshire.

Through selling services we are able to employ more EPs but clearly they have to deliver the activities for which they are paid. This means that there are still limits to the extent to which we can respond when EPs leave the Service, are ill for a prolonged period, or go on maternity leave.

To deploy staff across the county and to reflect the community focus of our work we have used a relatively simple formula based on the number of children and young people aged 0 to 19 years, and the number of EPs in post. The table overleaf details the full time equivalent EP for each District. No formula is perfect and we will continue to monitor and review deployment to ensure that we are as responsive as we can be within the capacity of the Service to the needs and demands of communities.

Team capacity for each district area

District Council	Full time equivalent EP
Winchester	1.8
Test Valley	2.1
New Forest	2.7
Eastleigh	2.2
Rushmoor	1.9
Hart	1.9
Basingstoke and Deane	2.9
East Hampshire	2.1
Gosport	2.3
Havant	2.2
Fareham	2

Research and evaluation

Overview

HEPS hosts a Research and Evaluation Unit and is taking a strategic lead on behalf of the Children's Services Department for research and evaluation, and for research ethics and governance. The Department is committed to evaluating the impact of its work to ensure that children and families are experiencing better outcomes and that decisions about policy, strategy, and practice are based on the best available evidence about what is effective. The Unit is also taking a lead in HEPS in evaluating the progress that we are making on our priority outcomes.

What we mean by 'research and evaluation'

In our work, the terms 'research' and 'evaluation' are virtually inseparable since in the main we want to find out what works effectively for children and young people. This generally means using established research methods to evaluate the impact of an intervention. There are three broad ways in which we understand research and evaluation in HEPS.

First, we work with others outside the Service to either support their own evaluation of what they are doing or as independent researchers, to conduct an evaluation for them. Usually, we are paid to carry out this kind of evaluation.

Second, we evaluate the findings of research. All members of the Service are expected to draw upon an evidence-base to inform the work that they undertake. We want to ensure that in either directly carrying out a piece of work or in making recommendations to others, as far as possible we know that there will be a high probability that the direct work or the recommendations will be effective.

Third, we are concerned to evaluate the impact of the work that we undertake. Historically, this has been difficult for all EP Services, not least because much of our work is collaborative. This means that we often rely on others to carry out, say, a set of recommendations. In other cases, it can be difficult to tease out what specifically made a difference and whether or not it was the action of a single person or, as is most frequent, a combination of actions and events.

We routinely evaluate the projects in which we are involved and many of the evaluation reports get published as internal Hampshire documents. We also use some of our research as the basis for conference presentations, and articles subsequently published in our professional journals or transformed into books.

In terms of other forms of service activity, we have sought to find ways of more systematically evaluating what we do. In particular, we have set out to obtain an accurate reflection of the activities that we undertake, the different groups of people that benefit from those activities, and the difference that those activities have made. We have gone beyond our regular survey of staff in schools to routinely sample the experiences of parents and carers, and to pilot a variety of ways of sampling the experiences of children and young people. We rely upon informal feedback from other service users. Staff in the Service routinely record the time spent on certain activities, and there are periodic sample interviews and what are called, internally, 'quality and effectiveness' measures. Through reflecting upon a specific piece of work, this measure intends to form a bridge between our knowledge about psychological theory and how that theory is put into practice.

What educational psychologists in HEPS mean when they use the term ‘consultation’

In Appendix six we acknowledge that ‘assessment’ can mean many different things. Similarly, the terms ‘consultation’ and ‘consultant’ have so many meanings as to become almost meaningless without clarification. Consultation is not the same as a discussion and it is not the same as simply providing information or advice, where the nature of the concern or problem is clearly understood and there is a clear way forward.

We practice consultation as one of a number of psychological interventions upon which we draw. Our use of consultation is as a purposeful, collaborative problem solving intervention that uses techniques of active listening, clarifying, challenging, questioning and reflecting. It draws upon psychological theories and a psychological understanding of how difficult situations develop and are maintained. It is frequently an informal process that aims to enable someone to be more effective in an aspect of their work that they are concerned about. Responsibility for working with the concern is retained by those who are raising the concern.

Educational psychologists in HEPS have a long history of using consultation and for a number of years have offered regular, usually school-cluster based, bookable consultation and review sessions to focus on concerns about learning and behaviour. These sessions are open to parents and carers, extended family members, and setting or school staff but do not include the child or young person. Details of the consultation sessions being offered are available from the local offices.

Hampshire Educational Psychology Service's model of collaborative assessment

Introduction: Assessment for intervention

'Assessment' can mean very different things to different people. Frequently it is assumed that everyone shares the same understanding of what it means. At least, this can lead to uncertainty and confusion. This appendix describes what assessment means to educational psychologists in Hampshire. There is a graphic representation at the end of this appendix.

In Hampshire, EPs are expected to assess the functional needs of children to help them access education, not to undertake differential diagnosis of childhood conditions such as autism, and ADHD. Our framework for assessment recognises that how children and young people learn and behave concerns an interaction between inherited characteristics and experiences at home, settings outside the home, and relationships within the peer group. The model makes it clear that homes and schools have their own characteristics that shape how children develop – and these characteristics may change over time.

Educational psychologists work with staff in pre-school settings and schools, and with parent/carers to:

- identify the social, emotional and learning needs of children
- design and implement individual education plans at (pre) school action plus
- find more effective ways of helping children.

Educational psychologists help to plan interventions for individual children when, despite best efforts, progress is slow and learning is resistant to the strategies tried.

Our involvement will lead to an action plan, or individual education plan, following the four-fold assessment model given in the Code of Practice. This model is consistent with the HEPS assessment principles, and it entails consideration of the:

- child's learning characteristics
- learning environment
- teaching style
- learning task.

The effectiveness of an intervention must be monitored and reviewed over a period of time. It cannot be a 'one off' involvement. Time must be spent on reviewing a plan and then making any necessary changes. This type of assessment is best supported through a consultative approach.

The sections following will elaborate our approach to assessment.

Assessment purposes

In HEPS, we view assessment as being aimed at achieving the following purposes:

- to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people
- to generate understanding of what is happening, who is concerned, why there is a concern and what can be done to make a difference to the situation
- to evaluate the impact of the context on learning processes, cognition, social and emotional development and the interaction between them
- to investigate a broad range of hypotheses that are guided by psychological research and theory, and last but not least
- assessment itself serves as an intervention and is inextricably linked to formal, planned interventions.

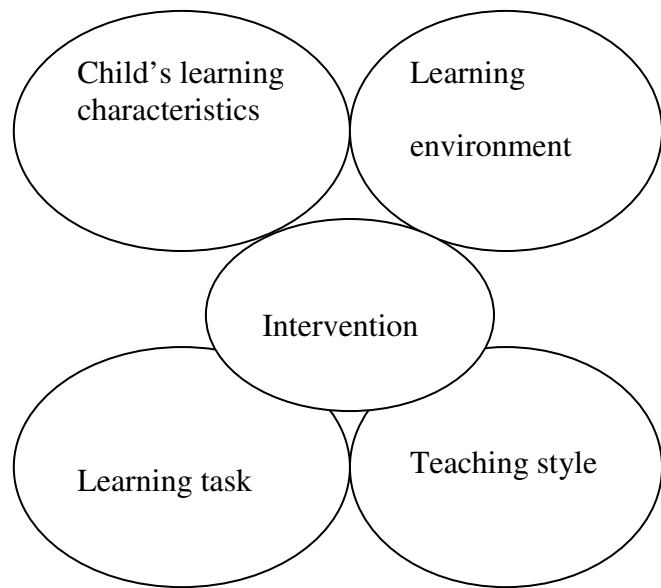
Assessment principles

Assessment processes are based on an understanding of psychological theories and research, which emphasise the dynamic, interactive nature of children's learning and social behaviour with the environment in which they develop. HEPS assessment practice is therefore consistent with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, which states:

The assessment process should always be fourfold. It should focus on the child's learning characteristics, the learning environment that the school is providing for the child, the task and the teaching style. It should be recognised that some difficulties in learning may be caused or exacerbated by the school's learning environment, or adult/child relationships. This means looking carefully at such matters as classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation in order to decide how these can be developed so that the child can learn effectively.

(DfES, SEN Code of Practice, 2001, para 5:6 page 44)

These principles are illustrated in the diagram below:



In particular:

- assessment processes are based on sound psychological principles and focus on solutions rather than problems
- assessment practice is formative and provides the necessary information in a timely and accessible way in order to inform any required intervention
- assessment practice is informed by continuing professional development including professional supervision and performance assessment processes
- assessment is embedded in a context where we need to be sensitive to ethical practice, equality of opportunity, politics and values
- assessment practice shows sensitivity to the dangers of bias e.g. on the grounds of ethnic, linguistic, cultural background or gender
- educational psychologists are aware of the impact of their own belief systems and attitudes on assessment processes.

Assessment practice conforms to the *British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct* (BPS, 2006) and the *Framework for Psychological Assessment and Intervention* (BPS, 2002)

Assessment Practice

Assessment practice reflects the importance of the interaction between children and young people and their environment by being conducted over time and in relation to different contexts, while involving parents and/or carers as essential contributors to and partners in the assessment process. Assessment seeks and takes

account of the views of the child or young person, however complex the child's needs. In addition assessment draws, where appropriate, on the views of other professionals.

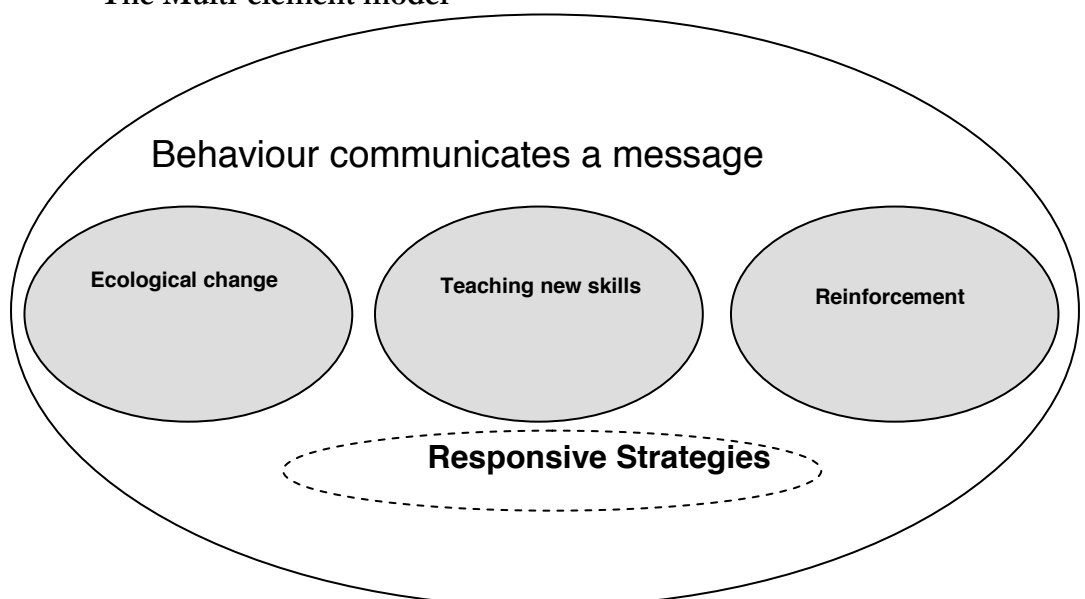
Assessment practice involves a wide variety of processes, techniques and approaches that draw upon the evidence-base within psychology. These include assessment based upon:

- analysis of already existing and emerging assessment information provided by others
- the child's context and circumstances without direct work with the child
- consultation and discussion over time with direct contact adults
- direct observation of the child/young person in a learning context
- direct teaching of the child or young person by the psychologist
- the theory and practice of mediated learning experience
- the use of problem-solving frameworks through discussion with direct contact adults
- interviews with the child or young person
- group work with children and young people
- video material provided by others.

Assessment processes and particular approaches are selected on the basis of their relevance to the presenting problem and their fitness to the purpose(s) of the assessment. Part of an EP's training and subsequent professional responsibility concerns determining what form of assessment is appropriate under what circumstances.

Assessment of additional behaviour, emotional and social development needs typically considers the communicative function of presenting behaviours, the possibilities for ecological change, the opportunities to teach new skills, the impact of rewards and sanctions, as well as the need to plan responsive strategies for behaviour that presents a risk. This is illustrated in the diagram below:

The Multi-element model



Assessment: Health warnings

Caution is usually expressed over many assessment processes and approaches. Even when assessment has taken place over time, it will necessarily be limited to particular settings and times, and educational psychologists will always want to express caution as to the extent that their findings can be generalised. There can be particular problems if a statutory assessment for special educational needs is started when there has been no EP involvement. Because of the legal time scales for producing psychological advice, the EP may simply not have the time to undertake as thorough an assessment as would be desirable.

In itself, the central purpose of assessment making use of psychometric or standardised measures is to determine how a child or young person compares (through a score or a centile) to other children and young people of the same age. Such measures are limited in their reliability and validity and carry risks of bias, especially if the population sample used to standardise the test is markedly different from the child or young person to whom the test is being administered. Such limitations and potential biases are based on an appreciation of the statistical properties of any instrument including an awareness of standardisation information.

Assessment: Reporting

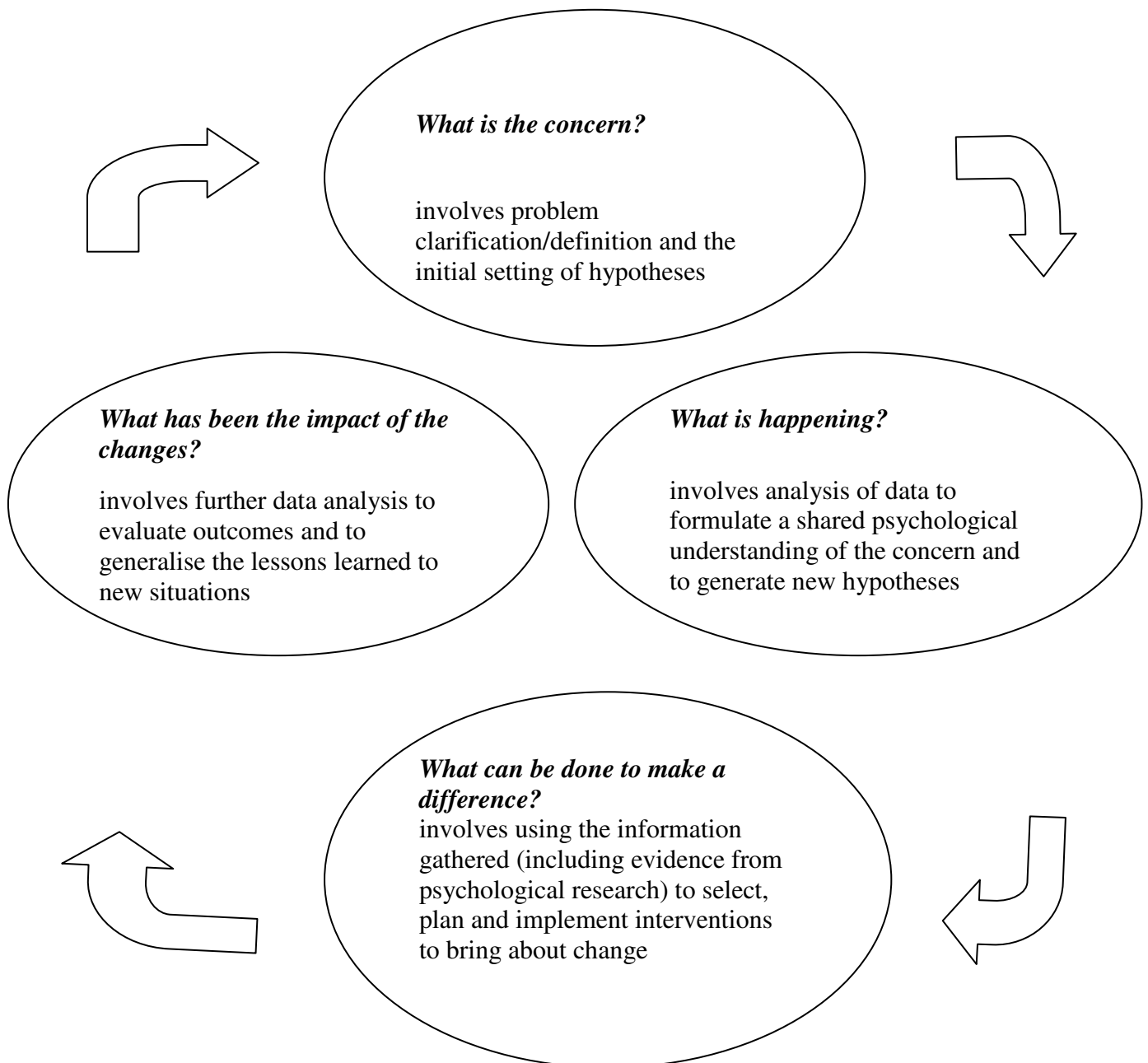
In general terms, an educational psychologist will negotiate what form of reporting within what time scale will be appropriate. The reporting of assessment outcomes and data is sensitively presented and will relate to the purpose of the assessment. Educational psychologists are aware of and acknowledge the impact of assessment processes and activities on:

- the child or young person e.g. self-esteem, self perception, motivation
- the family, for example, the nature of expectations of the child
- a setting or school system, for example, curriculum, teaching and expectations.

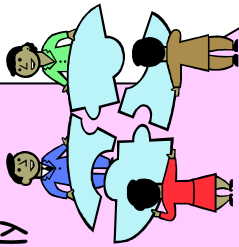
Assessment by educational psychologists: Summary

The HEPS model of collaborative psychological assessment can be summarised as a cyclical consultation process that principally involves clarification of concerns, hypothesis testing through planned intervention and evaluating the evidence for positive outcomes arising from the changes made. This is represented in the diagram overleaf:

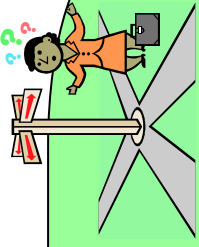
The HEPS model for collaborative psychological assessment



...a collaborative process.
 ...helping people to make sense of the knowledge they already have.
 ...a dynamic and interactive process.
 ...informed by the views of everyone involved, especially the children/young people.
 ...supported by our (EP) colleagues, who help us to reflect, learn and who constructively challenge our thinking.
 ...ethical and operates within BPS professional guidelines.
 ...independent.



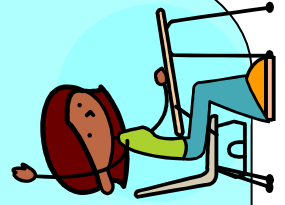
...complex, because it tries to make sense of people, their stories and their contexts.
 ...where possible, carried out over time.
 ...constrained by the need to balance competing demands.



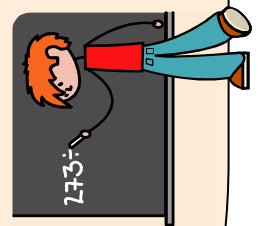
For educational psychologists working in HEPS, **assessment** is...

...asking questions based on our psychological understanding.
 ...choosing and using a range of approaches which are 'fit for purpose'.
 ...a process of hypothesis testing.
 ...a process which balances scientific measurement/evidence with individual interpretations.
 ...often focused on specific aspects whilst remaining aware of wider issues.

...interested in the process and content of learning.



...working towards positive outcomes.
 ...based on a belief that change can happen and everyone can learn.



HEPS strategic commitment to integrated children's services

The people who work for HEPS are committed to the greater integration of services. This is informed by three main ideas:

1. The core purpose of HEPS' work is to achieve improved life chances for children and young people through the promotion of wellbeing and resilience

We share this purpose with all parents, carers, professional groups, and with children and young people themselves. It includes the application of psychology to activities that protect children and young people from harm, discrimination and disadvantage. The Service has an established record in early intervention and preventative working as well as in building capacity to manage identified needs. The breadth of applications of psychology means that EPs are closely involved in most aspects of achieving fairer and better outcomes for children; being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a contribution and participating in economic well being. Partnership working is therefore central to the effectiveness of the Service.

2. Psychology provides an empowering and transformational resource, particularly when it is applied across boundaries

Effective partnership working relies upon applying psychology across boundaries. Difficulties experienced by children are usually the result of an interaction between factors in their lives. This means that EPs consider the child's whole situation and not just school related issues. EPs use their psychological understanding and skills to build co-operative working relationships across boundaries such as those between home and school, between various education service professional groups, between different local authority services, between local authority and NHS organisations, and between voluntary organisations, community groups and local children's services. All of the professionals involved will use their own psychological knowledge and skills in such cooperative working. However, EPs have a distinctive depth of training in psychology and breadth of partnership experience that places them at the centre of developing integrated work.

3. Integrated work by HEPS involves applying psychology to promote the effectiveness and psychological wellbeing of adults caring for and working with children and young people.

Effective integrated working depends upon the wellbeing of those who care and work for children and young people. A range of Service activities, from collaborative problem solving to support over managing sad events and critical incidents, are designed to support those individuals who often have to cope with seemingly overwhelming events.

HEPS contribution to special needs education and processes

The requirements of Every Child Matters have not removed from the local authority its duties under special educational needs legislation and the SEN code of practice. A key function of HEPS is to support the local authority, through the SEN service, in fulfilling its statutory duties and to assist in the continuing development of improved provisions and systems for children and young people with special educational needs.

In meeting statutory duties, educational psychologists are required:

- to complete advice for statutory formal assessment within a six week period from a request being received from the local authority
- to respond to parents who directly request statutory assessment
- to contribute to the planning for special educational needs and disabilities tribunals and, where necessary, attend
- to engage in mediation with families to reduce the number of tribunals in which the local authority engage
- to support the local authority in making appropriate educational placements for children and young people with special educational needs through attendance at Local Advisory Placement Group, County Placement Group and County Forum.

In supporting the development of special educational needs provision across the county for all children and young people in Hampshire, HEPS hosts six posts on behalf of the local authority each of which has a clear specialist focus. There are senior specialists in the areas of:

- autistic spectrum disorders
- behaviour, emotional and social development
- early years
- physical intervention
- severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour
- speech, language and communication

The EPs who hold these posts help steer and implement the local authority strategy in each area. They contribute to training for settings and schools in their respective specialisms and, when requested, take a lead in establishing new service provision.

Some of these activities are over and above those funded and commissioned by the local authority and are delivered on a year-by-year basis through commissions from other services and external monies.

The strategic direction of HEPS: the national and local context within which HEPS operates

Central Government legislation and guidance

Since the last Service Statement was written (July 2002) the Local Education Authority and Children's Social Services Department have merged to become the Children's Services Department.

Consequently the wider range of legislation relevant to Children's Services Departments now guides HEPS.

The Children Act 2004, which provides the legal underpinning for the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme, emphasises the need for services to respond to the needs of the whole child and for local authorities to develop more efficient and effective systems for inter-agency working. Key aspects of the Children Act 2004 include a need for all services for children to:

- contribute to children achieving the five outcomes (i.e. be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being)
- further improve the development of inter-agency working and training
- improve information sharing, and
- increase participation of those receiving services.

The Government's recent, comprehensive ten year plan for children and families, The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures (2007), further emphasises and elaborates the five outcomes. In particular, it focuses upon:

- securing the wellbeing and health of children and young people.
- safeguarding the young and vulnerable
- individual progress to achieve world class standards and close the gap in educational achievement for disadvantaged children
- system reform to ensure the point immediately above
- ensuring that young people are participating and achieving their potential to 18 and beyond
- keeping children and young people on the path to success.

Other education legislation and Central Government guidance (e.g. the 2006 Education and Inspections Act) has placed emphasis on:

- improving provision in the early years
- improving school discipline and pupil behaviour
- maintaining a focus on teaching and learning and improving standards
- defining parental responsibility; and

- developing capacity in schools to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

At the same time, the National Strategies (developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families), whilst continuing to maintain a focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology, have expanded to embrace children and young people's behaviour, emotional and social development (including social and emotional aspects of learning), attendance and anti-bullying.

There has also been increasing emphasis on the concept of 'progressive universalism', that is, developing capacity in universal services (e.g. schools) to meet children and young people's needs, whilst maintaining quality delivery of targeted and specialist services where necessary and appropriate. This model applies to the 0 – 19 age range across the whole range of service providers including schools, local authority services, health services and the 'third sector' (i.e. voluntary agencies).

Hampshire's response to Central Government legislation and guidance

In broad terms, to meet the requirements of Central Government legislation and guidance, Hampshire County Council has set three priorities, alongside eight Local Area Agreement priorities, and it has also developed a multi-agency Children and Young People's Plan (there are twenty outcomes for children and young people in the plan and eight priorities for service development, although this plan is currently being reviewed).

More specifically, the County Council has responded to the requirements of legislation guidance in the following ways:

- creating a Children's Services Department led by a Director of Children's Services, with three branches, Education and Inclusion, Children and Families, and Performance and Resources
- producing a Children and Young People's Plan
- increasing the focus of services so that they are responsive to local community needs, including establishing locality teams in each district
- implementing the use of the Common Assessment Framework
- improving information systems and providing training for information sharing
- improving access to information about services (e.g. Hantsfish and Hantsdirect)
- creating a local children's safeguarding board
- increasing the participation of service users (particularly parents/carers, children and young people) to maximise impact and advise on the development of services

- developing schools (especially extended schools) and children's centres as hubs to access local services
- increasing emphasis on evidence-based practice and impact measures related to the five outcomes of Every Child Matters
- supporting the concept of 'comprehensive' child and adolescent mental health services
- establishing a CAMHS Children's Trust to ensure equity of provision of services to promote children's emotional health and wellbeing across the Local Authority.

Factors specific to educational psychology services

The delivery of educational psychology services in Hampshire continues to be guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, national legislation, our professional codes of ethics and conduct, Hampshire County Council policies, and our Service policies. In the near future all psychologists will be regulated by statute. We also have regard to the recent national review of educational psychology services, 'A Review of the Functions and Contribution of Educational Psychologists in England and Wales in the light of "Every Child Matters: Change for Children"', which made a series of recommendations, including:

- all educational psychology service development plans should be based around meeting the five Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people
- educational psychology services should seek to expand and develop their activities where psychological skills and knowledge can be used to greatest effect (e.g. staff training, research, systems work with organisations, group and individual therapy)
- educational psychology services should continue to work with other agencies to enhance and develop effective multi-agency work.

The context of training for educational psychologists is also changing and since 2005 initial training consists of a three year course at doctoral level. Educational psychology services are now required to play a greater role in providing experience for those in training and enabling them to contribute to service delivery.

How will Hampshire Educational Psychology Service contribute to integrated working associated with the Common Assessment Framework and locality teams?

Educational psychologists continue to be actively engaged in a wide range of community-based projects, training courses, and collaborative problem-solving consultation activities aimed at building the capacity of schools, pre-schools and parents and carers to meet the learning, social and emotional needs of vulnerable children. These tasks and roles link with and complement the work of the locality team and make a significant contribution to early intervention.

As part of its approach to service delivery, HEPS is committed to the:

- maintenance of a named link EP for all schools and pre-schools
- provision of a named link EP for all children's centres in the local district
- provision of a named link EP for all children's homes in the local district
- delivery of bookable problem-solving consultations (for parents and carers and staff working in schools, pre-schools and children's homes).

Where appropriate, educational psychology service involvement may also include:

- participation in Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings, following negotiation
- provision of support for a child or young person, their family, a universal provider, or a support practitioner, usually following agreement within the context of a Team Around the Child meeting. This may involve consultation, psychological assessment, the planning or the delivery of a targeted intervention. It may also involve acting in the lead professional role, when the EP is in the best position to do so
- supporting the delivery of CAF related training to local practitioners
- contributing to local support groups for CAF completers and lead professionals
- participation in multi-agency problem-solving meetings taking place in schools.

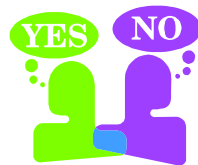
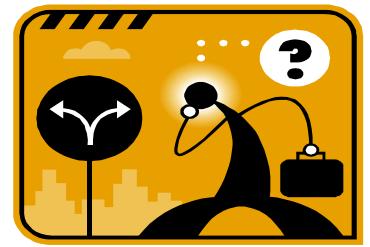
As a targeted, specialist service, EPs will not complete CAFs.

Area principal educational psychologists and district senior educational psychologists will meet regularly with the relevant locality team manager and Behaviour Support Team leader (and, where appropriate, with other managers of local support agencies) to review the work of the locality team, to engage in strategic planning, and collaborate in problem-solving for complex cases and situations.

Subject to advance planning, staff availability and funding, there are also a number of services that could be offered to the locality team. These include:

- provision of supervision, professional development and training
- working with locality team members on developing and delivering training courses
- contributing to project work and action research
- support for evaluation of service and project delivery.

Involving the Educational Psychology Service



To be (involved) or not to be...

An EP will agree to take on a task when:



- The request is appropriate
- Applying psychology will add value
- A 'do-able' task with clear outcome can be negotiated
- There is sufficient capacity to carry out an effective piece of work.

An EP will not agree to take on a task when:



- A piece of work has not been negotiated
- Someone else could/should do it
- There is no evidence of school action implemented over time
- Diary commitments do not allow an effective piece of work to be carried out.



Diary changes...

An EP will clear their diary when:

There has been a sad event or critical incident.

There is a critical phase in on-going casework.

But, they may need to make re-arrangements, such as when:

There has been an unexpected request for statutory assessment to be completed within legal time limits.

There is a need to appear at a tribunal or court hearing.

An EP is absent through ill health.

There is significant EP absence in the service.

For further information about this document, please phone the Hampshire Educational Psychology Service on 01962 846398 (HQ); 01962 876239 (Winchester Office); 02392 441496 (Havant Office); 01252 814727 (Fleet Office)

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