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West Lothian Educational Psychology Service

Service Delivery Guidance

West Lothian's Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is an integral part of the Education Service, Quality Assurance Team serving the needs of children and young people of the Authority. The purpose of this policy is to outline the ways in which the Educational Psychology Service of West Lothian Council delivers the nationally agreed core functions of Educational Psychology Services within the context of the local authority.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Educational Psychology Service is to improve the wellbeing and educational outcomes of all children and young people in West Lothian through the practical application of psychology.

We aim to achieve this by:

- placing the needs of children and young people at the centre of everything we do
- identifying and addressing barriers to learning
- working collaboratively with our partners
- building capacity at individual and systemic levels
- operating within a context of continuous improvement

The following section outlines the ways in which the service puts these aims into practice.

Principles of Service Delivery

Working within the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework, The Children and Young People's Act (2014) and West Lothian's Continuum of Support, we consider our Service to be an important part of the holistic assessment and support framework in place for all children in West Lothian.

The EPS is also a key partner in the Education Services Moving Forward in Learning framework and is represented in all associated working groups. In this way, we ensure that the EPS is contributing to the authority and national priorities as outlined in the National Improvement Framework.

Our Service Improvement Plan is revised annually and is linked directly to both local and national priorities. Information about the ways in which the Educational Psychology Service contributes to improved outcomes for children and young people can be found on our website here:

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/EducationPsychologyService>

Collaboration with partners is therefore integral to achieving maximum success for children and young people. We work collaboratively with our partners who include: parents/carers and wider families, teachers, education support staff, social policy colleagues, allied health colleagues, voluntary agencies and any other relevant people involved in the life of the child/young person.

Informed parental consent will always be sought before engagement with the service commences. The sharing of information about our work with our partner agencies for the benefit of the child/young person will be undertaken in partnership with parents/carers and in line with Scottish Government guidance on Information Sharing. In circumstances where there are Child Protection concerns, the council guidance in this area is followed.

We actively involve children and young people at an appropriate level in all of our work with them. We seek to ensure that they understand why we are involved and provide information about what we do in advance of our work with them.

We always seek to ensure the most effective, least intrusive intervention. We therefore operate within all levels of West Lothian's Continuum of Support providing the majority of our input through consultation to support early intervention, and to build the capacity of colleagues and families. Our consultation role extends to development, planning and evaluation at both school and authority level.

We seek to ensure that all Educational Psychology Service activity is evaluated for the direct impact that it has on the lives of children and young people and to ensure that high impact work is prioritised. We promote only evidence based practice.

Range of Service Delivery

Every Local Authority Educational Psychology Service in Scotland has statutory functions as outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act, 1980. Our main statutory duty involves the giving of advice to parents, schools and local authorities regarding children with additional support needs.

In reality our role is much wider than this and, as determined by the Review of Provision of Educational Psychology (2002), we also ensure that the nationally agreed core functions are delivered effectively. These core functions include:

1. Consultation
2. Assessment and Intervention
3. Research
4. Staff Development / Building Capacity in others

In West Lothian, each of these functions is carried out at the levels of:

1. the individual child / family
2. the school and
3. the wider local authority

Educational Psychologists may become involved in relation to issues around learning, social/emotional development and mental health/wellbeing.

1. Consultation

Consultation and advice is our primary source of effective service delivery at all levels of the Continuum of Support regarding individual children and young people and at wider authority level through involvement in key strategic working groups. It is often the case that issues can be explored and progressed effectively through an effective Consultation process without the need for direct input.

- Effective Consultation follows a recognised process in order to fully explore the background, existing issues and potential sources of improvement.
- While no single format is used for Consultation, the Service operates in line with a solution focused approach, always seeking to identify possibilities for positive change.

- The ultimate goal of the Consultation process is to work with others to help and support them in thinking about an issue, and to then develop solutions jointly to move things forward. The Educational Psychologist's role is to help the adults solve the problems that they are experiencing in helping children reach their full potential.
- Consultation provides the opportunity for a comprehensive consideration of an issue with a view to establishing an action plan for taking things forward in a positive way. It is very much in line with the authority and national agenda of early intervention.
- Consultation also promotes capacity building in the consultee as it allows them to consider how to move things on for themselves within the context of a supportive professional dialogue.

Examples of consultation:

- Consultation with school staff (class teacher; support for learning teacher; head of house, head teacher, etc) about meeting the needs of individual children or young people, where schools have already tried implementing some support strategies
- Consultation with family or with multi-agency partners
- Consultation with a child or young person
- Consultation about a group of children, e.g. relationships within a class
- Consultation at a whole school level, e.g. development of a relationships policy; supporting a new Support for Learning teacher; gathering evidence as part of preparation for a Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE)

2. Assessment and Intervention

West Lothian Educational Psychology Service views assessment as one of the core elements of its service delivery. We believe that assessment is inextricably linked to intervention and that the assessment process will therefore lead to recommendations about ways in which situations can be improved.

The Service does not operate under a prescriptive framework of assessment. Rather, a range of approaches to assessment is encouraged. In all assessment activities, West Lothian Educational Psychology Service follows the guidance provided in the Code of Ethics and Conduct provided by the British Psychological Society and the Standards of Practice of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The Service fully endorses the Position Paper (British Psychological Society, 2014) which states that in all Educational Psychology assessment work in Scotland:

1. There should always be a clear rationale for educational psychology assessment. This should be directed to promoting the wellbeing and improving the teaching and learning of the children or young people concerned. It should build on information already available.
2. Assessment techniques and approaches are based on an understanding of current psychological theories, methodologies, evidence-based practice and research. Psychologists should be clear about the theory and evidence underpinning their practice.
3. Prior to assessment, parent(s)/carer(s) consent for educational psychologist involvement must always be obtained.
4. It is essential that educational psychologists advise about the most appropriate and embedded educational procedures, which will facilitate the views and participation of children and young people, as core features in assessment processes. Parent(s)/carer(s) may also require support and advice to help facilitate their views and participation.
5. Assessment acknowledges that children and young people develop as a result of an interaction between themselves and their environment. Assessment should be:
 - conducted over time and across different contexts;
 - minimally intrusive, whilst achieving the best outcome for the child/young person;

- inextricably linked to intervention in such a way, that the assessment is formative and provides results that inform any required intervention;
- built upon and inform the ongoing cycle of assessment, planning, intervention and review. In terms of best practice, be negotiated within a multi-agency, staged intervention framework;
- collaborative and working in partnership with parent(s)/carer(s), the child or young person, and those who work most closely with the child or young person; and
- mindful to consider and promote the young person's strengths for learning.

The Educational Psychology Service is also involved in the development and delivery of interventions at an authority level. This involvement is delivered through service representation in key authority planning frameworks. Full details of this involvement can be found in our EPS Improvement Plan.

Examples of assessment and intervention:

- Gathering and analysing existing information from different sources and asking those working with the child to complete checklists/schedules
- Observing a child in a school, nursery or at home
- Working individually with a child, including structured assessments such as Dynamic Assessment and interventions to address issues such as anxiety
- Group work to address issues around loss/bereavement or anxiety

3. Research

Through our dedicated Research Assistant post, we are able to offer high quality evaluation support to key authority initiatives. This is one of the core elements of the research work within the service.

The research function of the Educational Psychology Service has particular importance within West Lothian and we have a legacy of strong research contribution within the authority. As a result of their training, all Educational Psychologists are able to offer advice and consultation to schools and partner agencies about general approaches to research and evaluation.

In all research related work, we follow the British Psychological Society and HCPC guidance on Ethics and Consent.

Examples of research:

- Supporting school staff to carry out Practitioner Enquiry
- Supporting school staff with a literature review to assess the effectiveness of programmes being considered for use with children
- Evaluation of authority wide programme

4. Staff Development / Building Capacity in others

Staff development and Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) is a core function for the service and we are involved in supporting schools and partner agencies with key areas of improvement through the delivery of bespoke training in line with their individual improvement planning processes.

The service also delivers training on key priority areas identified at Authority level. All training is evaluated and analysed through the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) process. This information is fed into the planning process for future staff development work. Key development priorities for the Education Service are supported by the service through involvement in strategic planning, delivery of training and the development of approaches to key areas of learning and teaching.

Examples of staff development/building capacity:

- CLPL offered through central authority directory
- CLPL offered in school in line with School's Improvement Plan
- CLPL offered to multi-agency partners

Secondary Schools

The Service is exploring different ways in which it can have most impact for children and young people in this sector, taking into consideration the work carried out by other partners and the complex organisational nature of secondary schools. Looking at the balance of work we carry out in secondary schools, the Educational Psychology Service plans to continue to be available for consultation around issues experienced by individual children and young people, but to increase the proportion of our time spent on work which can have more significant impact across the school, including:

- Attendance at multi-agency meetings (sometimes known as JAT/SRG/IPST) for consultation about pupils with significant additional needs
- School level consultation through involvement in other planning/strategic meetings e.g. policy development related to relationships or additional support needs
- Engaging with multi-agency partners to discuss and contribute to developments such as Family Learning
- Staff development/building capacity at a school or department level, with teaching and/or non-teaching staff
- Support with research/evaluation in line with School Improvement Plan

Service Development through Self-Evaluation

In line with the West Lothian Council Improvement Strategy, the Educational Psychology Service operates within a context of continuous improvement. As part of this, we operate a robust self-evaluation process whereby the views of key stakeholders are gathered and considered on a regular basis.

Information gathered from these sources is then used to plan the way in which the service is delivered as part of our ongoing improvement planning cycle. Further details regarding this aspect of our work can be found in our annual Service Improvement Plan and Standards and Quality report. Our self-evaluation data is also incorporated into the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) performance management process and is reviewed regularly.

Service Development through Professional Development / Performance Management

With regards to performance management of the service as a whole, the Educational Psychology Service has agreed annual targets for performance as determined within the 'Covalent' / WLAM system. The Educational Psychology Service operates within an ethos of continuing professional development for individual members of the team. All staff members have an annual review of their professional performance in line with the council wide scheme.

This process is linked to the annual Service Improvement Plan so that individual and service priorities can be aligned. These plans are then in turn linked to the Education Service and wider Children's Services Planning processes through involvement of the team in key authority working groups.

All staff members have regular Line Management meetings with a member of the management team within the service in order to provide appropriate support and challenge. All members of the team are also engaged in peer support throughout the year in order to further support the development of individual practice within a supportive yet challenging professional dialogue. In line with statutory guidance, all team members are registered with the HCPC and maintain a regular log of their own professional development in line with the HCPC regulations.

Appendix 1 – Service Standards – Our Work in Schools

The scope of our work goes far beyond schools, although they are the cornerstone of our service delivery. We currently spend the majority of our available time working directly with schools and nurseries to ensure early identification and intervention for children and young people with the most significant needs. Alongside this we aim to maintain equal opportunity for schools to access the wide range of knowledge and skills the Service can provide.

We work within West Lothian Council's Continuum of Support and are committed to addressing local priorities through the Single Outcome Agreement. We also work within national legislation, guidance and frameworks such as Getting it Right for Every Child, Additional Support for Learning, the Curriculum for Excellence, Looked After Children and Young People, the National Improvement Framework, the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the Pupil Equity Fund. We also recognise the growing evidence that refocusing front line services towards the early stages of a child's life is the most effective approach to improving long-term outcomes.

In line with the regulations of the Additional Support for Learning Act, we do not normally become involved with the assessment of, or giving advice on, pupils who are outwith our Local Authority's schools management (eg those placed in private non-specialist schools; educated at home), though individual requests may be considered on their merits.

Similarly, any direct requests from parents or carers for our involvement with their school-age children will normally be re-directed through the school in question, for their awareness and prioritisation.

How we operate within the Continuum of Support

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| Level 1 | Consultation about whole school improvement priorities/whole school development work |
| Level 2 | Consultation about whole class work
Consultation about individual pupils (parental consent & Assessment of Wellbeing required)
Involvement in authority planning processes for pupils (Inclusion and Wellbeing Forum) |
| Level 3 | Involvement of EP for a specifically negotiated and agreed piece of work with a child/young person (parental/pupil consent & Assessment of Wellbeing required) |
| Level 4 | Involvement in Education Placement Group (EPG) and Senior Officer Review Group (SORG) processes and procedures |

Planning work with schools/establishments

We aim to provide schools with a highly professional service based on the principles of continuous improvement, accountability, ownership and transparency. In order to better adhere to these principles, the Educational Psychology Service has an individual Service Level Agreement with each education establishment. This is negotiated each year to reflect current priorities. We aim to increase efficiency and improve our effectiveness by specifying what schools can expect of us as well as what we need from schools to achieve these aims.

Each establishment has a link Educational Psychologist. Within each Educational Psychologist's caseload, work is prioritised according to need. Input from the wider team can be accessed for specific developments as appropriate and some CLPL opportunities can be accessed centrally.

General Standards

Schools can expect Educational Psychologists to:	Schools are expected to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow professional standards as determined by the British Psychological Society and the Health and Care Professions Council • Negotiate ways of working with individual schools according to current needs across caseload • Be up to date with recent legislation • Be well informed about West Lothian Council's policies and procedures for additional support needs • Inform schools as soon as possible if a visit has to be cancelled or rescheduled • Complete Records of Visit promptly following each school visit • Respond to telephone calls and emails within 2 working days in line with Council procedure • Provide leaflets and relevant forms for working with the Educational Psychology Service • Seek annual feedback on our service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate ways of working with link Educational Psychologist according to current needs • Negotiate priorities and use of time for each school visit • Keep to negotiated timetable for Educational Psychologist's visit as far as possible • Make time available for key staff to consult with Educational Psychologist • Provide accommodation appropriate to the agreed activities • Inform the Educational Psychologist if it is necessary to change the agreed programme, with as much notice as possible

Involvement with Children and Young People

Consent must be obtained from a parent or carer before discussing any child under the age of 16 with an Educational Psychologist. It is expected that all parents/carers will be given a copy of the "Information for Parents/Carers" leaflet prior to any discussion taking place.

Young people over the age of 16 can consent to become involved with us without the consent of their parents although, in these cases, the young person would always be encouraged to discuss the situation with their parents.

Schools can expect Educational Psychologists to:	Schools are expected to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only discuss a named child once parental consent has been agreed • Consider views of children/young people • Meet with parents and members of school staff to discuss the children and young people who are involved with the Service • Complete Records of Involvement following initial consultation meetings and copy to schools (and parents/carers if they were present) • Where appropriate, work directly with the child/young person • Provide written feedback where detailed assessment work has been undertaken • Copy all reports and letters that we produce to parents/carers • Share proportionate relevant information with partner agencies when appropriate • Work with groups/whole classes alongside other professionals (this requires parental permission not a referral) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in the Assessment of Wellbeing process prior to raising a child with the Educational Psychologist • Provide leaflets to parents, children and young people about the Educational Psychology Service prior to gaining consent • Obtain informed parental consent prior to the name of a child or young person being raised with the Educational Psychologist using the EPS Leaflet for Parents/Carers • Where Records of Involvement have been completed following a consultation with school staff only, school to store this information in PPR and to share with parents/carers • Provide access to PPRs and copies of Individualised Educational Programmes and other internal records as required • Complete child's planning paperwork

Attendance at Child's Planning Meetings and Reviews

Schools can expect Educational Psychologists to:	Schools are expected to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive punctually • Prioritise attendance at Child's Planning Meetings, with appropriate notice, for children and young people where there is ongoing involvement with the Service 	<p>For children and young people where there is ongoing involvement with the Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite the Educational Psychologist to child's Planning Meetings and reviews with appropriate notice • Minute meetings held in school and send copies to all participants • Involve children/young people in meetings as appropriate

References

The British Psychological Society Code of ethics and practice (2009):
<http://www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/ethics-standards/ethics-standards>

The British Psychological Society (position paper) Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland (2014)
http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/Quals/aspep-sdep_assessment_position_paper_2014.pdf

The Children and Young People's Act (2014)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

Education (Scotland) Act, 1980
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/44/contents/enacted>

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/7/contents>

HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (2012)
<http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10003B6EStandardsofconduct,performanceandethics.pdf>

Scottish Executive (2002). *Review of the provision of educational psychology services in Scotland (The Currie Report)*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158375/0042905.pdf>

The Scottish Government (2013) *A guide to getting it right for every child*.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/publications/practice-guide>

West Lothian Educational Psychology Service: Service Delivery Guidelines
Internal report, available on request.

Links to reports about the performance of the Educational Psychology Service and the Service Improvement Plan can be found on the EPS website: <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/EducationPsychologyService>