



Briefing Report for Schools Forum

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Date: November 10th **Tel: 0191 643 7708**

Title of Briefing: Educational Psychology Update report

Please tick one box only for question 1 and 2.

1. Is this a strategic issue report or operational issue report?
2. Decision Required Debate Information Only

What is/are the issue(s)/aim(s) of the document: (Bullet points only)

To provide an update to the schools forum on the Educational Psychology Service

**Outline of main decision(s):
(Complete only if a decision is required.)**

Expected outcome(s):

Schools Forum to have an overview in relation to the:

1. Role and responsibilities of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
2. Allocation of Educational Psychology resources to support the function of the Local Authority
3. Service Level Agreement with schools
4. Staffing
5. Quality assurance and Measuring Impact
6. Service development
7. Current challenges

1. Role and responsibilities of the Educational Psychology Service

The EPS promotes the use of evidence based practice to promote social and emotional well-being and academic progress across the ability range in our population of children and young people aged 0 to 25 years.

The team is funded from finance from the Local Authority and the Service Level Agreement with schools.

2. Allocation of Educational Psychology Resources to support the functions of the Local Authority

The EPS provides the following services to support the functions of the Local Authority.

2.1 New requests for Statutory Assessments

The percentage of pupils in our schools who have a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is high and has remained consistent over the past four years (3.7% compared to a national average of 2.8 %). There is now an increase in requests from colleges in relation to the post 16 requests for EHCPs. This has a direct impact on the EPS who are therefore required to contribute to additional Statutory work.

2.2 Transfer for Statements into Education, Health and Care Plans

The EPS works closely with the Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SARS). Performance targets are in place to ensure timely conversion of Statements into EHCPs to ensure full conversion by March 2018. The teams jointly prioritise those cases where EPS input is needed. To date, the DFE has provided a grant to enable the Local Authority to meet demands.

The table below outlines the number of EPS workdays spent transitioning Statements to EHCPs:

SLA Year	EPS workdays spent transitioning Statements to EHCPs
April 2015 – March 2016	35
April 2016 – To date	30

2.3 Support with Complex Cases

The EPS supports the Local Authority in “targeted” cases where Education, Health and Care teams are involved in meeting outcomes for children with the most complex needs.

They support the Local Authority with the following:

- Attendance at and work relating to Out of Borough reviews
- Assessment / intervention of the Electively Home Educated
- Assessment / intervention of new arrivals into the borough – not yet in school placement
- Bereavement and Critical Incident support work
- SEN expert witness work
- Support in Tribunals

3. Service Level Agreement with schools

3.1 Schools and Educational Psychologist work allocations

All schools in North Tyneside continue to draw on the expertise and skills of the NTC EPS. Each school has a link Educational Psychologist (EP) and every effort is made to provide continuity of this relationship. The EPs work with Headteachers and Special Educational Needs Coordinators in identifying work priorities.

3.2 Costs of the Service Level Agreement

There will be no increase in EPS SLA costs for the year 2017-2018.

From the end of November 2016 schools will be able to buy into the EPS SLA for 2017 – 2018. The early bird offer continues to be in place allowing schools to access EP days at a cost of

£400 per day when agreeing to purchase SLA days prior to the start of the financial year (up to and inclusive of the 31st March 2017). From the 1st April 2017 EP days cost £428 per day.

When schools purchase services prior to the start of the financial / SLA year, the EPS Manager can better understand demand and address capacity issues more promptly.

4. Staffing

In September 2016 a full time EP was appointed to join the EPS, following four EPs reducing their hours. This post allowed the Service to maintain a previous level of Service capacity.

Since the 1st October 2016 there has been 61 days of mid-year additional buy-in requests and as a result of this the Service has been granted permission to advertise for a 0.6 part-time post. Delivery of these additional days is somewhat dependent upon the successful recruitment of the additional post and the appointment's available start date. Where possible the school's link EP will be freed up to deliver additional buy-in, but in some cases the link EP will need to be supported by another EP. Due to this predicament, additional days requested since October 2016 will only be charged against the school as and when the EPS Manager can guarantee their delivery by 31st March 2017. Each EP has been requested to pick up additional buy-in where capacity allows and will liaise directly with their schools over the number of additional days (as per the school's formal request) that they can deliver themselves within their current capacity.

5. Quality Assurance and Measuring Impact

5.1 Advice / Report turn around: below are the figures for the Summer and Autumn Terms (up to 31st Oct) 2016.

Statutory Psychological Advice	Summer Term	Autumn Term Up to 31st Oct 2016	Totals for current SLA Yr, Up to 31st Oct 2016
Met deadline	61	8	69
Late	9	0	9
Totals	70	8	78

EP Reports	Summer Term 2016	Autumn Term Up to 31st Oct 2016	Totals for current SLA Yr, Up to 31st Oct 2016
Issued within 4 wk	104 (85 issued within 3 wk)	30 (4 issued within 3 wk)	134
Over 4 wk	52	5	57
Totals	156	35	191

% on time	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct
SLA Reports %	100%	86%	79%	46%	31%	50%	81%
Statutory Advice %	93%	83%	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The above data illustrates the challenge the Service has in managing the extremely high volume of both Statutory and SLA work in the Summer Term. This has a knock on effect to 'late' reports leaving the Service in September. The summer holiday period and annual leave commitments also result in a longer turn around of reports at this time. In many cases schools and EPs agree in advance that work concluded in July can be reported by the start of September, currently these 'agreed exceptions' are logged as 'late'. Current data systems are being amended to address this. In the majority of cases, where Statutory Assessments are late, it is due to circumstances outside of EPS control.

5.2 Individual Casework Feedback Survey

Since April 2016 EPs have been attempting to capture evaluative feedback after each cycle of involvement re. individual casework, from class teachers and parents / carers. This feedback has been sought by drawing the attention of schools and parents to the online EPS survey and sending out links to this survey with EP reports. A hard copy of the survey is also sent out to parents / carers in the post with the EP report.

Of the 27 returns received the table below provides a breakdown of the views expressed:

	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Educational Psychologist listened to my views	17	9	0	0	1
The Educational Psychologist shared verbal information in a way that I could understand	21	4	1	0	1
The Educational Psychologist shared written information in a way that I could understand	20	6	1	0	0
The Educational Psychologist helped me to understand how my child/pupil can be further supported	18	6	2	1	0
I know what the next steps will be towards supporting my child/pupil in school	17	6	2	1	0
The feedback meeting with the Educational Psychologist was helpful	19	3	2	1	1

5.3 Gathering the views of children / young people on their experience of working with the Educational Psychologist

A tool is currently being devised to allow the EPS to capture the child's views on their involvement with the EP and their perceived value of this.

5.4 Plan-do-review: measuring impact and perceived change

Currently EPs are identifying a select number of children / young people, with whom they are involved, to track progress and measure perceived change from the perspective of the school, the parents / carers and the young person. This will involve returning to the school / parents to gather evaluative feedback on the following: progress towards SEN Plan targets; perceived changes to the child's presentation in school / home; and the support arrangements around the child. The child will also be interviewed so that their perspective on what is different / what has changed since the EPs last involvement can be ascertained.

5.5 End of Year HT / SENCo Questionnaire Summary

22 schools responded to the above questionnaire the results received are summarised below:

How would you describe your experience of working with the Educational Psychology service over the last 12 months?

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	7	7	0	0

What aspects of Educational Psychology involvement and support do you most value?

- Training offered.
- Dialogue and discussion re. next steps.
- Individual assessment and resulting recommendations to inform practice.
- Advice and support via email.
- Being involved in planning specific interventions.
- The retention of the same EP professional; makes a huge difference. The new feedback meetings.
- The EP reports provide valuable evidence for the SARS panel. Strategies suggested by EPs are always valued.
- Someone to have an honest and open conversation with.
- Someone who can work with parents and give confidence to them as they are from 'outside' the school setting.
- Supporting discussions with parents which can be difficult and supporting with next steps.
- Support with identifying correct provision for individuals and communicating to parents.
- Support in identifying the specific nature of a child's additional needs, and advice as to how these can be best met in a mainstream school.

How do you describe your Educational Psychologist's:

a. Communication with school staff

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	11	2	1	0

b. Communication with parents/carers

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	10	3	0	0

c. Written communication/reports

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	9	5	2	0

Please describe the impact that working with your Educational Psychologist has had on the strategies and approaches used to support children/young people with SEND in your school

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	7	6	3	0

If an Educational Psychologist has delivered staff training, research or other project work into your school please detail below and describe the value of this

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	1	0	0	0

Do you value having access to counselling/therapeutic intervention from the EPS?

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	6	1	0	0

How would you describe the usefulness of our Service Level documentation:

a. Educational Psychology Service SLA – Terms and Conditions

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	13	3	0	0

b. Parent Information Leaflet

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	11	3	0	0

c. EPS Local Offer

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	10	2	0	0

d. Therapeutic Offer

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	7	2	0	0

e. Training Menu

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	12	3	0	0

5.6 Training delivered centrally – available to all schools in NT

Training delivered by the EPS consistently received good to excellent feedback. The courses recently developed and delivered include:

- Supporting Children to manage Loss and Bereavement

Exceeded Expectations	Fulfilled Expectations	Some questions Remaining	Met few of my expectations
43%	57%	0	0

- Restorative Approaches for Schools (managing conflict and challenging behaviour)

Exceeded Expectations	Fulfilled Expectations	Some questions Remaining	Met few of my expectations
38%	62%	0	0

- Supporting Children to manage Worry and Anxiety

Exceeded Expectations	Fulfilled Expectations	Some questions Remaining	Met few of my expectations
80%	13%	7%	0

Forthcoming training events include:

- Mindfulness Approaches in the Classroom
20 January 2017, 9.30am – 4.00pm – Langdale Centre

6. Service Development

6.1 Learning Trust Action Research Project

EPS has ran 3 x action research projects successfully in conjunction with 3 Learning Trust (LT) schools on the theme of working memory and attention. (See Appendix 1 for further details). This is shortly to be disseminated via SENCo networks. This work was funded by 15 days of SLA funds: 10 days funded by LT and 5 days NTC.

The EPS is currently in negotiation with the LT regarding funding for further action research to commence in the new year. Schools interested in participating who have action research questions in mind are welcome to contact the EPS for further discussion.

6.2 RHELAC EP Role

The RHELAC team are now funding the equivalent of a 0.5 EP post. RHELAC EP time is used for a variety of purposes:

- Individual casework with Looked After Children (LAC) and their families / carers
- Support for schools, including LAC
- Therapeutic intervention with LAC / families and carers
- Whole school support and training
- Wider training development

In October 2016, a training module entitled ‘Supporting Adolescents with Attachment Difficulties in Secondary Schools’ was developed by Dr Wendy Jackson (EP) and Jane Pickthall (Virtual Head) on behalf of Sunderland University. North Tyneside schools can access this online training module (equivalent to 10 hours CPD) via the link below at a cost of £55:

<http://wp.sunderland.ac.uk/celandt/supporting-adolescents-with-attachment-difficulties-in-secondary-schools/>

6.3 Psychotherapeutic Offer for children / young people with SEMH needs

- **Theraplay®** is now offered to promote better attachment relationships between children / young people and parents and / or key adults in schools. This intervention is evidenced to aid young people’s engagement with learning and promotes emotional regulation.
- **Psychotherapeutic intervention** to help young people develop self awareness, engage in reflection, discover choice and make positive changes.

- **Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)** this evidence based intervention can be offered to help school staff use the 'Principles of Attunement' to mediate learning opportunities with young people considered difficult to engage. This approach can also be used in conjunction with Theraplay® principles to develop trusting relationships between children and key adults in school with attachment related difficulties.
- **Mindfulness training** is available for school staff and children / young people.
- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy** based interventions can be offered to young people with specific mental health related difficulties.
- **'Friends for Life'** will be offered in 2017. These evidence based interventions aim to support children / young people to manage anxiety and become more socially confident. Two programmes are to become available, 1 for primary and 1 for secondary age children.
- **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy** this skill set is to be developed in 2017..

6.4 EPS and CAMHS working together to support children and young people with emotional and mental health related difficulties in schools

EPS and CAMHS are looking to work together to develop a 10 module training programme for schools to assist in the development of Emotional Wellbeing Practitioners. It is proposed that the training will run across the academic year, one day per month and will include teaching elements, skills practice and group supervision. It is hoped that an element of group supervision would continue post training to further embed skills and build staff confidence. The aim would be to run a pilot year initially and then subsequently seek course accreditation with a local FE establishment.

7. Current Challenges

- Turning around EP reports within 4 weeks during the summer term when the statutory demand is at its highest. If this trend continues there may be a need to deliver an increased proportion of SLA during the Autumn and Spring terms to allow for additional EP capacity for statutory work in the Summer term. However, EPs typically find that requests for SLA input are also high in the Summer term due to concerns relating to pupil transitions. Therefore, this proves to be a challenging dilemma, particularly as the Service has been unsuccessful previously in securing locum or temporary staff to manage the pressure.
- The ability to provide permanent posts whilst managing the financial risk of employing staff on a permanent basis without assurance of continued / additional buy-in.
- Offer access to the Educational Psychology SLA with the Preschool market and Post 16 market to support providers to adhere to the SEN standards within the Code of Practice.
- EP travel time (to and from school visits) is not currently charged against SLA. Regionally, Educational Psychology Services are looking into charging for travel time, as offering this time at no cost is proving to put strain on EP Service budgets.
- Recognition and understanding from schools that the Service has to deliver purchased SLA days evenly across the year. The Service expectation is that an EP is required to deliver at least one third of their SLA per term. School requests to block book SLA days, particularly at the end of the year can put significant strain on the Service and its ability to deliver against performance indicators.

APPENDIX 1

Action Research Project in collaboration with The Learning Trust, North Tyneside Educational Psychology Service, Balliol Primary School, Benton Dene Primary School and King Edward's Primary School

10 days funded by the Learning Trust plus an additional five days Educational Psychology time for the pilot project.

Action Research Focus: Projects seeking to evaluate interventions designed to develop the attention and working memory skills of primary school children.

Educational Psychology Service support:

- Promoting Action Research as a valuable model of CPD for staff.
- Delivering training to researchers and teaching staff on cutting edge research and research methods. EPs are all qualified researchers and have experience in producing and authoring research. The Lead EP running this project has recently published research in Educational Psychology in Practice. EPs also access training through the university in relation to research methods.
- Supervising the planning and implementation of research projects via one to one meetings.
- Administering assessments, data collection and interpretation. Supporting staff to measure impact in an outcome driven context.
- Providing additional current research material, writing, co-writing and editing projects. As EPs we have access to vast educational and psychological research databases to utilise.
- Setting deadlines and putting structures in place.
- Offering reassurance and emotional support to maintain the momentum of projects.

Comments from school staff

'Using the model of action research can enable us to really develop our practice. Brilliant working with the E.P. Service and being multi- agency. More time that's what we need!' (Benton Dene)

'The project gave me the opportunity to explore an area that I was keen to learn more about but was unsure of how go about it.' (King Edwards)

'I was able to form a positive and supportive relationship with an assigned member of the EP service which allowed me to further my understanding by gaining their expert knowledge and expertise. By working together and having 1:1 meetings it allowed me to explore different pathways within my field of exploration.' (king Edwards)

'This method of research in school is invaluable as staff get the opportunity to work in their own environment yet have an expert on hand for advice and forward planning.' (King Edwards)

'We have learnt so much from working together, it's been great for our relationship. We have loved being involved in this project.' (Balliol)

'We have seen a real impact on our children within the intervention, in the classroom and in their experiences.' (Balliol)

3 Remarkably Different Projects

Balliol Primary School Action Research Project

Produced by Mrs Michaela Rogerson, Teaching Assistant, with support from Mrs Tracy Bell, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and Dr Amelia Fay Taylor, Educational Psychologist and the Learning Trust.

Research Question

Does a Mindfulness based programme have an effect on a child's anxiety and, consequently, their working memory?

Hypothesis

Using a Mindfulness based programme will improve a child's anxiety and will have a further, positive, impact on their working memory.

Abstract

This small scale Action Research Project focuses on a sample of 6 Year 2 pupils in a North Tyneside Primary School. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator and Teaching Assistant designed a programme based on Mindfulness and delivered this across the summer term. Evaluation of the intervention was triangulated using a variety of data collection methods including pre and post intervention assessments using memory subtests from the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (KABC-II) and the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale Teachers' report (Spence S.H. 1998). In addition, data was collected from diaries produced by the children, observations undertaken by staff using the Well-being and Involvement in Care Settings (Laevers, 2005) and anecdotal information collated by staff. Results indicate differing results for each pupil but overall a positive effect on managing anxieties, working memory and classroom involvement. In particular, 2 case studies highlighted how the programme and equipped pupils with means to manage their anxieties both at home and at school.

Benton Dene Primary School Action Research Project

Co-produced by Dr Amelia Fay Taylor, Educational Psychologist, Mrs Anna De Courcy, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, and Teaching Assistants at Benton Dene Primary School with the support of the Learning Trust.

Research Question

Will implementing Mediated Learning Experiences (MLE) enable Teaching Assistants to better support children's learning in their view?

Hypothesis

Implementing Mediated Learning Experiences (MLEs) will improve the way Teaching Assistants support children to learn.

Abstract

This small scale Action Research Project focuses on a sample of 15 Teaching Assistants within a North Tyneside Primary School. The school's Educational Psychologist delivered training on the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). Teaching Assistants planned to implement this approach across all subjects over a 6 week half term to support children's learning. The evaluation of the impact of the training in the MLE was undertaken by a focus group pre intervention and by correspondence between the SENCO and Teaching Assistants post intervention. Data highlighted the links between current practice and the MLE. Analysis of

barriers to implementation highlighted that staff required additional time to implement the MLE in their practice and needed additional training to practice MLE. A plan was put into place with the SENCO as to how the next cycle of Action Research could be conducted and evaluated. This involved an additional training session on practising facilitating MLEs, an additional focus group and semi structured interviews with selected pupils.

King Edward's Primary School Action Research Project

Co-produced by Mrs Nicola Brown, Assistant Head Teacher and Dr Amelia Taylor, Educational Psychologist with the support of the Learning Trust.

Research Question

Can a computerised memory training package improve the working memory skills of children with identified working memory difficulties?

Hypothesis

Providing the programme 'Jungle Memory' across a term will improve the working memory of children identified with working memory difficulties.

Abstract

This small scale Action Research Project focuses on a sample of 2 male pupils identified as experiencing difficulties with working memory through the Working Memory Rating Scale (Alloway, Gathercole and Kirkwood, 2008) and classroom observations. The research was conducted in a North Tyneside Primary School. The children accessed the Jungle Memory programme for 10 to 15 minutes over an 8 week term. Pupil progress was measured using the inbuilt assessment programme within Jungle Memory and a post test using the Working Memory Rating Scale (Alloway, Gathercole and Kirkwood, 2008). Results indicate an improvement in the working memory skills of both pupils. The discussion provides implications for developing practice using Jungle Memory in the future.

Next Steps

Two projects have been completed and we are awaiting some additional information from school staff to complete the third write up (staff sickness as caused an unavoidable delay).

The Educational Psychology Service are considering evaluation tools to use with Action Research Projects to determine the impact of Educational Psychology support.

The projects need to be disseminated within and between the schools involved and at a wider level. This is to be negotiated with the Learning Trust.

The full projects will be available at the end of October and will initially be disseminated electronically. We hope to also disseminate in the following ways:

- SENCo Networks
- Publication on the EPS web page
- Learning Trust schools' support event
- Possible publication in an academic journal

The Future

Incorporating our learning from the current projects, we would be keen to contribute to facilitating Action Research in the future. We see it as a valuable model of both engaging in CPD work for school staff, generating context specific learning about practice, measuring impact and creating evidence, building strong staff networks through collaboration, contributing to the graduated approach to SEN (and forming evidence for OFSTED) and generating research for dissemination in North Tyneside.

Possibilities for change

- Our learning has highlighted that Action Research would be most successful ran over two terms to give staff adequate time to plan, implement and write up projects.
- Action Research worked best when at least two staff members were involved in planning, implementing and writing up projects.
- Providing whole group support on research methods may help staff plan a project which would meet their needs and provide the most valuable information for their setting.
- Action Research needs wider dissemination and school staff need to commit to engaging in this.
- Challenges arose over staff being released to engage in Action Research and this needs to be negotiated as part of the offer to schools.
- Where school's completed their own written project, ownership of the project was greater. Whilst some schools could not commit to this level of involvement, having realistic expectations as to what could be produced and asking school staff to engage in that process might enhance learning from the projects.

Proposal for a subsequent Action Research project

- To be planned around a topic proposed by the SENCo forum / negotiated with the Learning Trust
- To run over at least 2 terms
- To be accessed by at least two staff members per school
- Release time and write up to be negotiated at the start of the project
- Joint funding between schools' Service Level Agreement with the EPS and Learning Trust to be considered to cover 15 days
- EPS to provide an initial training day around the chosen topic and evidence based practice as well as a training session on research methods for schools who will participate
- EPS to provide ongoing supervision of all projects and to collaborate in data collection, interpretation and support write up and dissemination