

TITLE	Educational Psychology Service Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2018
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR	Director of Children's Services - Interim Jim Leivers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To update members on of the value and challenges faced by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in the light of the SEND Reforms and the development of a traded model of service delivery.

RECOMMENDATION

A traded service model is introduced to enable service growth and development.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) provides psychological advice, intervention and support to children, young people and their families within Wokingham Borough. It supports Wokingham Borough Council in meeting its statutory duties in relation to the identification, assessment and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The demand of for Education Health and Care needs assessments has increased since the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014 which coincided with a reduction of the EPS establishment. This paper outlines the role of the EPS in supporting the LA that go beyond the statutory functions related to SEND and suggests possible risks of limiting the service to a purely statutory function. The plan to trade with all schools in Wokingham from April 2019 presents opportunities and challenges, not least how to meet the statutory demands while retaining enough capacity to maintain a comprehensive traded offer. It draws attention to activities that in the future might be brought in house and therefore saving some expenditure elsewhere.

This report is intended to outline the role and responsibilities of the Educational Psychology Service in supporting the LA in discharging its statutory duties and the opportunities and pressures on the service in light of the proposal to trade with all Wokingham Schools from April 2019.

Background

For the purposes of this report the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is defined as those employed as educational psychologists (EPs) and managed and supervised by the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP). The service consists of 5.4 fte EPs (PEP, 2 SEPs, and 4 EPs). The whole service under the umbrella term Educational Psychology Service includes the Learning Support Service (LSS) (2.0fte) and the Early Years Inclusion Service (EYIS)(2.5 fte).

All WBC EPs are registered with the HCPC and are eligible for chartered status with the British Psychological Society. All our EPs are encouraged to develop specialist interests our current specialisms are, in Early Years, Sensory Impairment, ASD, LAC and Fostering (Attachment) this EP sits on Fostering Panel and is our link with the Virtual School, our other SEP leads on the assessment and support for young people post sixteen.

Core Value: The EPS will always seek to work in partnership with parents/carers their children, young people, other professionals and local authorities, and include their opinions when making any recommendations, the EP has a primary duty of care to any child or young person for whom advice is requested.

Early Intervention:

The greatest emphasis of EPS work is providing psychological assessment, intervention, advice and support to and for individual children. In order to achieve a better knowledge of the contexts in which most children are educated the EPS operates a link EP approach where each publicly funded school in the borough has a named link EP. In order to prevent the EPS from holding a waiting list each school attends a termly School Planning Meeting (SPM) managed by their link EP and attended by a LSS teacher and a member of Foundry College. This enables the school SENCO to prioritise and target support from the most appropriate service. They leave the meeting with dates for EP consultations, agreed interventions for transition annual reviews and signposting to other more appropriate services. The EPS is accessed through the completion of a Request for Involvement Form. Parent /carer informed consent is required prior to EP involvement with a child. The EPS offers a solution focussed consultation model of assessment and intervention, the introduction of the Signs of Safety model by Children's Social Care complimented our approach.

The EPS also offers school surgeries. This operates in similar manner to a GP surgery where teachers or TAs can discuss any concerns with their link EP. This early intervention enables school staff to discuss their concerns around unnamed children, groups of children and whole classes with the EP who then offers advice directly to the teacher/TA most concerned.

Demand for the EPS is high as can be seen in the table below. Please note this does not include any ongoing work with children already known to the service, group work or some statutory work "commissioned" by the SEN team such as assessment as a result of a change of placement request.

New Requests for Involvement between 1/9/14 and 31/7/15	New of Requests for Involvement between 1/9/15 and 31/7/16	New of Requests for Involvement between 1/9/16 and 31/7/17	New of Requests for Involvement between 1/9/17 and
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			31/7/18
213	264	222	271

Currently the primary needs identified as requiring EPS support are related to ASD, children presenting with traits suggestive of ASD but without a diagnosis, anxiety and emotional regulation often related to ASD and children who have experienced early life trauma. There is a need for a coherent strategy to support children, young people and their families with ASD or traits and associated difficulties.

In addition to activity on behalf of individual children and young people the EPS prioritises responding on request to any school or setting involved in a critical incident or sad event.

Mental Health and Well-being

Mental Health and well-being is an increasing area of concern. In response to some of this demand the EPS has developed and delivers group interventions. Each secondary is offered an Exam Stress group per year targeted at children who have been identified as having particular difficulties managing the pressures of GCSEs or A levels. The evaluations by the young people and children participating in these groups report that they feel better able to cope with the stress of sitting exams and they have strategies they can use that feel appropriate to them.

In addition the EPS runs a six day training course for Nurture Assistants annually, which trains TAs to deliver evidence based interventions for children with social and emotional and mental health needs. The programme is psycho-educational and practical and is based on the highly evaluated ELSA programme. To date the EPS has trained **77** Nurture Assistants whom are offered termly group supervision. Local evaluation has shown positive outcomes for children supported by Nurture Assistants.

Statutory Duties:

The Wokingham EPS supports WBC in discharging its statutory duty to provide psychological advice as part of Education Health and Care needs assessments.

Wokingham EPS submits **100% psychological advice within the statutory timeframes**. A statutory assessment takes on average 2-2.5 days to complete.

In accordance with the SEN Code of Practice the EPS also supports the annual reviews of children in year 5 and in year 9. Last academic year 2017/18 there were **71 children in year five and 68 in year nine**.

The service also supports the LA in presenting psychological advice to the SENDIS Tribunal on average **15 tribunals are lodged per academic year**, EP support to the tribunal process takes on average **7 days**.

EHC Needs Assessment	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Assessments requested	99	110	136	167
Assessments agreed	66	80	106	116 (15 requests still to be considered at SEND panel)
Assessments	12	16	21	25 (average time)

competed by 1fte EP (as of July 24 th)				required to complete this work 2 days)
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[2018 National SEN analysis.pdf](#)

The specialist EYs Senior EP chairs the Early Years Support Panel. This is the mechanism by which WBC fulfils its statutory duty to respond to health service notifications of pre-school children who may go on to have special educational needs. This panel assesses need based on the information provided by health colleagues and allocates the appropriate services for further assessment and intervention. The EPS receives on average 31 **new pre-school cases** a year.

The EPS has representation on the SEND panel primarily but not exclusively through the PEP.

Measuring impact:

Measuring impact it is a perennial problem for the service when so many of our interventions rely on others to follow through and the increase in demand for statutory work diminishes the capacity of the service to offer direct interventions. We currently are trialling a simple measure of impact based on a three point scale at School Planning meetings (SPMs). Ideally we would have the support of the Intelligence and Data team to analyse the impact of the service. Service users like the service as demonstrated in our annual survey. Parents feel heard and our interventions helpful although the rate of return of those surveys is still very low. Seeking the views of parents in relation to work we have carried out as part of the statutory processes can be difficult as their satisfaction can be linked to the outcome of the assessment which is usually the “Holy Grail” and Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Our impact is evaluated in terms of school/settings perception of the improvements for the child/young person. Our involvement with parents and carers is also evaluated in terms of their perceptions of improvements and how the EP conducted their intervention and assessment and the accessibility of the service. We are trialling a child/young person evaluation this term.

Quality Assurance

All WBC EPs are registered by the HCPC and qualify for BPS chartered status. They attend fortnightly group supervision and have one to one supervision with the PEP every six weeks. Each term an area of need is chosen, discussed and any reports written by team members are critically reviewed. The PEP contributes to SEND panel on a minimum of a monthly basis therefore takes these opportunities to quality assure psychological reports submitted as part of the statutory assessment process. The EPS has a history of supporting the national bursary scheme to provide trainee educational psychologists with placement which provides close links with universities and brings current research into our small service. The PEP aims to attend the termly South of England PEP meeting which is a source of information, opportunity to share good practice, CPD and informal supervision.

CPD has been a challenge in recent years with no apparent funding available for appropriate CPD. The EPS has responded by trying to grow our own by using our trainees and our own specialist EPs to lead in-house CPD; however this can only go so far. When we think about trading it will be even more important to ensure the service is up to date and has the understanding and skill to deliver high quality interventions.

What else can the EPS offer?

Capacity is an obvious issue for almost every service as it is for the EPS. However by

looking beyond the obvious SEND statutory duties to where the EPS could support vulnerable children there could be the potential for savings elsewhere. The service has an obvious role in supporting inclusion. For example

- **More direct interventions with children and young people**

EPs are qualified to deliver appropriate evidence based interventions that could be cost effective for the LA. If by providing EP intervention a child successfully remains in mainstream education for one or two more years the LA could be the cost of an out of borough placement plus travel costs which in some cases can amount to tens of thousands. This saving could then be directed towards high quality in borough provision to maintain children in their local area. The EPS has tried to provide enhanced EPS support to in borough resource bases and specialist provision in order to increase capacity in these settings thus preventing children going out of borough for their education.

- **A further role for the EPS in Mental Health and well-being:**

In 2017-18 the EPS was asked to support the School's Link Project and the Psychological Perspectives in Education & Primary Care (PPEP Care) training programme. The EPS has supported these endeavours because of our links with settings however none of the Future in Mind funding has supported the EPS involvement. Mental health is a key priority however it cannot be supported without a more creative use of the funding available.

In addition to a limited number of one to one interventions, limited by capacity rather than expertise, the EPS is supporting Mental Health and well-being through the Nurture Assistant training, Exam Stress groups and a pilot project using a group CBT intervention with children in year six and their parents presenting with high levels of anxiety (evaluation to be completed in September). Members of the EPS are trained in CBT, Solution Focussed and Narrative Therapy. This area of our work is rarely recognised as the perception the EPS role is limited to supporting statutory work.

Mental Health Green Paper

Berkshire West CCG intends to make a bid to become a Trailblazer for the Mental Health Teams proposed in the Green Paper. The other two LAs, Reading and West Berks are keen to participate.

The outline plan is that each LA would include all their schools and therefore we would have three Mental Health Teams per LA. This could attract £326,000 we think per team.

The model of the Mental Health Team **must** :

1. Provide face to face interventions.
2. 500 CYP per year receiving an evidence based intervention per 8000 students/pupils for each team set up
3. Each school linked to the team must have a nominated Designated Mental Health lead
4. Providing consultation and training, working through the Designated Lead that supports a whole school approach
5. Working within/ towards an Integrated referral system with broader CYP mental health services

Other information about teams:

- **£326,000** per team available as an estimate covering pay and non-pay costs
- Nominal team to include **7.5FTE**

The model proposed by the three LA PEPs would involve an EP leading each Mental Health Team and overseeing and implementing many of the interventions. The mental health academy in West Berks that is widely promoted as a good model has brought EPs into their model as it was recognised that schools have particular relationships with EPs, confidence in their skills and systemic understanding of how schools operate.

The Mental Health Team will also consist of newly created School Mental Health workers who are going to be trained by Reading university from January 2019, a Band 7 or above Mental Health Practitioner from CAMHS who would offer supervision as per the Green Paper however in our model they would primarily be involved in managing risk, supporting and signposting to higher Tier CAMHS services and attending our Early Help Hub. We envisage this will be 0.5 fte per LA. As per the Green Paper the total team would therefore be multi-disciplinary and 7.5 fte.

- **Further support for Vulnerable Groups** –LAC and those fostered and adopted.

Our specialist EP supports the Virtual School and Foster Panel as well as highly rated training to Foster Carers. This is an in-house resource that is underutilised with support for these families commissioned from elsewhere.

Analysis of Issues

Time required to compete statutory work as this demand increases:

- means time spent supporting children and settings is reduced
- impact on capacity to trade
- Staff morale is low as opportunities to work directly with children and young people are reduced in favour of writing reports under tight deadlines.

Mental Health Green Paper –Trailblazer Bid

- The **risks** of WBC/EPs **not** being involved:
- The CCG and other LAs will go ahead without WBC
- The newly created Mental Health will deliver mental health interventions free to schools and settings and therefore cutting off a source of funding for the EPS/LA.
- The LA/EPs will have little or no oversight or control over what interventions are being delivered in schools and to whom.
- There is a risk the Mental Health Team becomes an extension of CAMHS and nothing changes for our children and young people with low to medium mental health needs.
- The Berkshire West CCG will go to another provider and further distance the LA from schools and our efforts of support and keeping oversight of the needs in the community to help us plan provision and interventions that are appropriate and cost effective.
- We miss out on the funding attached to the trailblazer which could in effect reduce the earning target required by the EPS while the traded model is embedding. It is likely that all CCGs/LAs will have to implement Mental Health Teams at the end of this two year pilot this provides an opportunity to devise a model that will work for our locality.
- Berkshire West CCG will approach another provider which is outside our influence.

Challenges if the Trailblazer bid is successful:

- Recruitment
- Office space/school space.

Striking a balance between statutory work, offering psychological services to support early intervention as well as supporting to children and young people with complex needs.

- The pressures on the public sector to do more with less presents an opportunity to look at how the EPS is used as a provider of some support that is currently commissioned by the LA from elsewhere as well as earning from schools and colleges. There is optimism within the service and LA that trading will provide financial stability as well as better outcomes for children. In order to be able to trade the service will need to meet the statutory demands and still have capacity to trade. The ambition to trade beyond the WBC boundaries is limited by the capacity to deliver. Continue as we are with the increasing statutory demands and we risk losing staff to private practice. Nationally recruitment of EPs is a challenge.

Recruitment and retention

- We need to have a three year plan to provide viable service with a range of development opportunities in order to attract and retain staff, the benefits of which are quality assured practice, positive relationships with stakeholders and better outcomes for children. The service needs to be in a position to cover the statutory demands and trade, this includes capacity for the PEP to develop strategy and the ability to cover maternity leave starting in December 2018 and long term illness which affected the service in the Summer Term 2018.

Introducing a fully traded model

- The EPS offers a wide range of training, however so far have not benefitted from full recoument into the service.
- Demand for the service has remained high. However there is friction between early intervention and the pressures of increased amount of statutory work and the timely completion of Education Health and Care needs assessments.
- There is a disconnect between the graduated approach towards assessment of SEND advocated in the Code of Practice and the strong push for assessment where a child *may* have special educational needs, as outlined in the Children and Families Act and nationally tribunals are being lost on "failure to assess" grounds. This presents a strategic challenge to the EPS and the LA as a whole particularly in the light of schools having to pay for early intervention and training to support inclusion. As yet it is difficult to predict the impact of the SEND reforms on the additional work created by the increase of age to 25.
- It is hoped that eventually by developing a traded model where earnings return to the service the service can grow and the demand for early and direct intervention from the EPS increases. However anecdotal evidence from services that already have a traded service note that for the first two to three years of the traded model there is a fall in demand as settings adjust. Initially many delay requesting EP support preferring to request statutory assessment sometimes on scant information and therefore get an EP assessment "free".

The ADCS paper below expresses concerns about the pressures on LAs to respond to SEND and supporting inclusion.

<http://adcs.org.uk/education/article/a-vision-for-an-inclusive-and-high-performing-education-system>

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers
NAPEP submission for the Education Committee inquiry into support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). June 2018

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