



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20TH JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report aims to provide information for members regarding the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) model of service delivery and how the work of the Service has evolved following the implementation of the ALN Reform. The report will also include examples of interventions and support offered by the EPS and will outline the range of work that the EPS is involved in both with schools and the LA. The report will enable Members to gain a better understanding of the breadth of the EP role in both supporting schools, the LA and our partners in health and social care.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The EPS provides a wide range of support to Early Years, Schools and alternative settings, to staff, parents and carers and works with children aged 0-19 years.
- 2.2 Educational Psychologists (EPs) also provide guidance to support pupils transfer to specialist settings including post-16 settings. This support aims to facilitate a clear understanding of pupil needs, to inform appropriate provision planning.
- 2.3 The EPS uses a consultation model to support school and parental understanding of the difficulties that might be underpinning a pupil's learning, behaviour and wellbeing to enable agreed actions to be co-constructed to target areas of need.
- 2.4 The EPS has adapted its model of service delivery and has introduced a phased model of delivery which is aligned with the ALN Act and Code.
- 2.5 The EPS has developed and delivers a wide range of training to school staff and other professionals within the Local Authority Learning Education and Inclusion Service aimed to empower staff to both understand and support pupil learning, behaviour and wellbeing.
- 2.6 The EPS has also developed and delivers interventions to support pupil wellbeing, behaviour and learning.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and
- a) consider the information contained in the report and to offer views and comments;
 - b) endorse the approach taken by the EPS to support schools, other education professionals and parents to better understand pupil needs and deliver timely interventions to bring about positive change in children and young people's lives.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members are asked to endorse the approach the EPS has taken to provide an equitable time allocation and phased model of service delivery that is closely aligned with the new ALN Act and Code. Through the delivery of this model the EPS is able to work both at a more preventative and early intervention level (phase a – universal support) through to a more targeted (phase b consultations) and specific level (phase c direct assessment and bespoke interventions). This model aims to empower schools and other education professionals (and parents) to gain a better understanding of pupil/their child's needs and, in the case of education staff, deliver timely interventions to bring about positive change in children and young people's lives. This report needs to be read in conjunction with Scrutiny Report 828: 'Pupil Welfare Support Provided to Schools since the Pandemic' and Scrutiny Report 834: 'Provision of Services for Children with Additional Learning Needs Including Those with Disability'.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The EPS provides a wide range of support to Early Years, Schools and alternative settings, to staff, parents and carers and works with children aged 0-19 years.
- 5.2 Educational Psychologists (EPs) use a consultation model of service delivery which aims to support children by working with the adults (school staff, parents and carers) who have direct contact with them and who are therefore most likely to impact on their lives.
- 5.3 The EPS works closely with every school in Caerphilly CBC to help support school staff to better understand and meet the needs of learners with increasingly complex needs.
- 5.4 Each school has an allocated amount of time with their EP. School allocation is currently calculated based on the following criteria:
- (i) the number of pupils on roll
 - (ii) the number of pupils who are FSM (free school meals) and
 - (ii) the percentage of pupils with ALN (additional learning needs) in school.
- 5.5 In addition to the allocated number of school visits schools also access:
- (i) a planning meeting at the start of the Autumn term to discuss school's priorities for the year ahead at both a strategic level – to identify possible training needs that the EPS can support with, group work and individual pupil work;

- (ii) half-termly cluster consultation meetings where pupils can be discussed anonymously with the EP and the Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCo's) from the cluster schools to identify approaches that can be used to support these pupils and support the school's graduated response and sharing of good practice across schools;
- (iii) a range of training and monthly workshops to enable schools to both better understand and support pupil learning, behaviour, wellbeing and pupil attendance;
- (iv) ongoing supervision and coaching linked to specific interventions (e.g., ELSA supervision, YMHFA – Youth Mental Health First Aid and Human Givens coaching);
- (v) wellbeing interventions delivered by the EPS (e.g., Lego group, CBT – cognitive behavioural therapy groups, Draw and Talk and Dot Breathe Mindfulness whole class intervention);
- (vi) a review meeting towards the end of summer term to review the support received by the EPS and identify planning and training needs for the following year.

The EPS are holding a consultation with Head Teachers this summer term to consider whether there needs to be any changes to this model of service delivery.

5.6 The EPS links in with the Local Authority Service Improvement Plan through its work on the following three actions plans:

- (a) Support the implementation of the ALN Act
- (b) Identification and support for vulnerable learners
- (c) Embedding a whole school approach (WSA) to wellbeing.

5.7 Support the implementation of the ALN Act

5.7.1 The ALN and Educational Tribunal Act and corresponding Code of Practice covers pupils from 0-25 years of age who remain in an education setting and who have an IDP - Individual Development Plan. To support the implementation of the ALN Act and Code, the EPS provides dedicated support to our Early Years settings and children requiring assessment before they start school, all schools and education settings and supports post-16 transition planning.

5.7.2 The EPS works with the Early Years Service and attends ISCAN (Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs) Panel and the Local Authority's Emerging Needs Panel. Attendance at these panels, enables the EPS to help identify which children, based on their level of complexity, require a psychological assessment to inform their education planning. A PCP (person-centred planning) meeting is then organised between the receiving school, parents, EP and any other services involved at this point, in order to plan and support the pupil's transition into the education setting.

5.7.3 The EPS has adapted its model of service delivery to schools so that it aligns and is compliant with the ALN Act and ALN Code. The EPS now operates a phased model of service delivery incorporating phases A, B and C. This model enables EPs to intervene and offer support to education settings at a much earlier stage by building capacity in these settings to support the development of their universal provision.

- 5.7.4 This is carried out through the introduction of Phase A work (e.g., staff training, workshops, wellbeing offer (schools can access wellbeing training and an intervention), anonymous group half-termly cluster consultations, planning and end of year review meetings). The EPS also co-delivers cluster moderation meetings with the Statutory Officers and Advisory Teachers to moderate school provision maps and support sharing of good practice across school clusters.
- 5.7.5 The next stage in this model is Phase B work, which aims to support the development of school's universal and targeted provision (e.g., staff and parent consultations, review consultations, PCP meetings, bespoke training based on school needs, direct staff supervision and support (ELSA, Nurture etc.).
- 5.7.6 This then progresses to Phase C work, which aims to develop school's targeted and specific provision (e.g., assessment of pupil's educational or psychological needs that may require ALP – Additional Learning Provision, EP consultation and advice for identified ALN – Additional Learning Needs, multi-agency collaboration (clinics, meetings, reviews) and bespoke direct intervention from the EP.
- 5.7.7 Working in this way enables EPs to meet the requirement of the Act and the Code to identify whether a child or young person has ALN based on a wide range of evidence gathered over time.
- 5.7.8 EPs may also be required to provide psychological advice as part of a child's IDP, or to attend a PCP review, or in relation to a change of pupil education placement.
- 5.7.9 A member of the senior EP team also sits on the weekly ALN Panel to provide advice and help facilitate panel decisions around school requests for additionality, pupil placement and provision, requests for ALN notices, and LA support with the identification of ALN or ALP.
- 5.7.10 The EPS supports post-16 education planning and in spring 2022 we launched our post-16 transition protocol to all of our secondary schools and education settings. We have used Welsh Government funding to encourage and enable our secondary schools to, in line with the transition protocol, run MATSM (Multi-Agency Transition Screening Meetings) to RAG rate their year 11 pupils to identify those that need additional support with their post-16 transition planning. This has ensured that key information has been shared with the receiving college to enable them to put appropriate measures in place to support these pupils.
- 5.7.11 The EPS is currently running a research project to gain stakeholder views on post-16 transition experiences to enable us to identify the extent to which what we are doing is making a difference. Moving forward, in line with our protocol and WG guidance, schools and EPs will begin the Post-16 transition planning in year 10 to enable more time to assess, plan and support pupil transitions. In particular, this will enable us to identify at an earlier stage those pupils who might need to access independent specialist provision, to see whether, with support from the LA, their needs could be met in their local college, rather than in an expensive independent specialist provision, which would in turn enable them to remain in their local community.
- 5.7.12 To support this work, we have a lead EP for post-16 who is leading on supporting effective transitions for learners with more complex needs. The Lead EP and EPs within the Service routinely link with post-16 providers including local Further Education colleges and independent specialist provision providers typically

undertaking individual assessments and providing advice as part of transition planning for pupils moving between statutory and post 16 settings.

5.8 Identification and support for vulnerable learners

- 5.8.1 The EPS has developed a Vulnerable Learners Matrix (VLM) which aims to identify a pupil's level of vulnerability through the identification of individual, school, family and community risk and protective factors. The matrix also highlights targeted and specific interventions that can then be put in place to ameliorate the impact of these risk factors through the provision of protective factors in these domains. This matrix is currently being piloted in two secondary schools, a primary school and an infant and junior school; after which any further refinements will be made prior to rolling out the VLM to all schools.
- 5.8.2 The EPS has also developed a Reintegrating Learners Toolkit which aims to promote early intervention (phase a and b work) to prevent emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). Linked to this, the EPS has provided training to schools and other education staff within the LA on how to use the Toolkit to support pupil attendance and develop a reintegration plan and has created information booklets for children and young people, parents and carers.
- 5.8.3 The EPS can also provide intensive, ongoing (phase c) support where pupils school attendance issues have become more entrenched and have developed into EBSA. This support (along with the work outlined in sections 5.6.4-5.6.7 below) is undertaken by our Assistant EPs (under close EP supervision). This work is aimed at identifying pupil needs, overcoming barriers to school attendance, identifying an appropriate education placement and co-developing with the pupil and their family a reintegration plan back into an education setting. Please see Scrutiny Report 828: 'Pupil Welfare Support Provided to Schools Since the Pandemic' for more information on our work to support pupil welfare and EBSA.
- 5.8.4 The EPS also work with pupils who have received a permanent exclusion to identify pupil, family and school views to inform appropriate education provision and pathway planning.
- 5.8.5 The EPS also provides support to the Llais Centre through the provision of a detailed psychological assessment of pupil needs and views to inform education placement planning for hard to place pupils.
- 5.8.6 The EPS has also set up a pilot parent-pupil engagement project for pupils in Glan y Nant PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) and the Hive Community Tuition Centre. This project aims to target parent/carers understanding of their child's needs and improve parent/carers-pupil communication. Please see Scrutiny Report 828: 'Pupil Welfare Support Provided to Schools Since the Pandemic' for more information on the Llais Centre project and the parent-pupil engagement project.
- 5.8.7 The EPS is also working with the Youth Service on a transition project in which evidence-based practice is being used to support a group of pupils from one primary school identified as most in need of support for their Key Stage 2-3 transition. This support will consist of a 6-week group intervention during the current summer term, access to support over the summer and support in the Autumn term of the pupils' year 7. In addition to providing direct support to these pupils, the project will ensure that key information is passed onto the secondary school to enable key supportive measures to be put in place. Evaluation data will then be used to inform further work and guidance to schools to support pupil transition processes.

- 5.9 Embedding a whole school approach (WSA) to wellbeing
- 5.9.1 The EPS co-developed with other education support teams in the LA the Inclusion Compendium (IC) for schools which contributes to a cohesive model for inclusion, wellbeing and relationship building across schools. The IC also highlights examples of best practice across our schools and reflects pupil views on what makes a difference to their wellbeing in schools. We are looking to launch the IC alongside the new Education Strategy in the Autumn Term 2023.
- 5.9.2 The EPS regularly consults with schools to identify their training needs each year (e.g., via the termly Pastoral Leads meeting, chaired by the Principal EP, start of year planning and end of year review meetings). Training is then developed and delivered in response to school feedback (for example, this year we developed training on neurodiversity, supporting behaviour through an emotion regulation lens and positive psychology). The EPS also continues to provide ongoing training and support to schools on trauma-informed approaches.
- 5.9.3 The EPS offers universal and targeted wellbeing training and interventions (through our wellbeing offer to schools) throughout the year. This work (along with the work outlined in sections 5.7.4-5.7.6 below) is undertaken by our Assistant EPs (under close EP supervision). More than 80% of schools have received at least one targeted wellbeing training and an intervention from the EPS and, where requested, a number of schools have received several wellbeing training and interventions.
- 5.9.4 All of our secondary schools have received training on either emotion regulation (delivered jointly by the EPS and Community Psychology), trauma-informed approaches, attachment, or resilience.
- 5.9.5 The EPS is also able to provide whole school staff wellbeing training and group staff wellbeing interventions in order to support staff wellbeing.
- 5.9.6 The EPS routinely assesses the impact of the targeted and specialist wellbeing interventions that we deliver through analysis of baseline and post-intervention measures. These analyses highlight a significant improvement in pupil wellbeing measures post-intervention. Further details of the training and wellbeing intervention on offer to schools and impact data can be found in Scrutiny Report 828: 'Pupil Welfare Support Provided to Schools since the Pandemic'.
- 5.9.7 The EPS also line manages the School-based Counselling Service (SBCS). Through WG funding we have been able to extend our school-based counselling provision (from years 6-13), to include years 4 and 5 of primary school and our EOTAS settings. We have also increased the amount of counsellor time dedicated to primary schools in response to the level of need that we are seeing and have extended the range of therapeutic support on offer to pupils. Pupils can now access Music and Art therapy in addition to talking therapies and online therapy as well as face to face therapy. The SBCS is highly valued by schools and SBC intervention results in a significant improvement in pupil mood post-counselling, as assessed by the YPCore measure (this is the measure that the WG requires SBCs to use to evaluate impact).
- 5.9.8 The EPS provides support to the Caerphilly Schools that are taking part in the WG whole-school approach to wellbeing framework and is working alongside the Healthy Schools Team to support the implementation of this framework through the delivery of wellbeing training and/or interventions.

5.9.9 The EPS also provides critical incident support to schools. This support aims to help schools to both coordinate their response to the incident and identify (through the use of the Circles of Vulnerability activity) which pupils and staff are most likely to have been affected by the critical incident. The EPS then supports the school to develop an action plan of support for these pupils and staff.

5.10 Senior members of the EPS also contribute to the following LA activities:

- (i) Engagement with LA reviews (e.g., Behaviour Support Service, School reviews to support them in readiness for an upcoming Estyn Inspection and Schools Causing Concern meetings);
- (ii) Introduction of the new B-squared assessment tool for specialist settings in collaboration with Trinity Fields;
- (iii) Line management of ASD Lead Officer and oversight of Action Plan around ASD Code of Practice;
- (iv) Representing the LA at Panel meetings (e.g., ALN Panel, Complex Needs Panel, TOG – Transitional Operational Group Panel, ISCAN Panel, Emerging Needs Panel, ALN Panel) and Steering groups (Gwent Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Steering Group, Regional SPACE-Wellbeing Steering Group, Trauma Stress Wales children and Young People Steering Group);
- (v) Support schools' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to WG guidance around bullying, discriminatory incidents and equalities issues;
- (vi) Attendance at Head Teacher working groups (e.g., on Early Years Provision, ALN Professional Learning, Effective Deployment of Teaching Assistants etc).

5.11 Conclusion

A key responsibility of the EPS is to support and empower schools to support children and young people with additional needs. The EPS undertakes this responsibility through the use of its phased model of service delivery (which comprises of consultation, individual pupil assessments, direct intervention and support for children and young people and the development and delivery of training and interventions). The EPS employs a time allocation model to ensure equity of EP provision to schools and regularly consults with school senior leaders to ensure that we continue to provide a responsive service that meets school needs. The EPS also supports the implementation of LA and WG initiatives and works closely with its partners in health and social care through attendance at Steering Group meetings and multi-agency panel meetings.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 In considering the recommendations the following assumptions have been made:

The EPS has a key statutory responsibility, in line with the ALN Act and Code, to support schools and education settings to meet the ALN of children and young people aged 0-25 years. The EPS facilitates this support through the implementation of an equitable time allocation and phased model of service delivery. Given that this is a key statutory duty of the Council, this must be reported to scrutiny to ensure that members are kept informed.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report provides information and therefore an integrated impact assessment has

not been completed at this time.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Staff costs to deliver staff training and interventions have been funded through access to the following WG funding provided in the LA Education Grants since 2021:

- (i) ALN Learner Development grant 21-22: £442,375
- (ii) WSA to Wellbeing grant 21-22: £163,878
- (iii) Covid Recovery Grant (Wellbeing and learning element) Feb 2022- end Aug 2022: £556,454
- (iv) ALN Implementation – learner provision 22-23 £564,946
- (v) WSA to Wellbeing grant 22-23: £240,750.

8.2 WG have confirmed a 3-year cycle of support for the WSA to Wellbeing grant, of which the year 2022/23 was the first year of the cycle. WG have advised indicative funding for ALN of £14.1m a year across Wales. The programmes for ALN are part of the LA Education Grant. The longer-term position remains unclear at present.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The EPS would be reliant on the continuation of WG funding to continue to finance the expanded SBCS and the Assistant EPs who deliver the wellbeing training and interventions under the supervision of the EPs and cognitive behaviour therapist.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The report reflects with views of the consultees.

11. STATUTORY POWERS

11.1 Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Education Act 1996
Equality Act 2010
Social Services and wellbeing Act (2014)
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Armed Forces Covenant (Wales)

Author: Kyla Honey, Principal Educational Psychologist

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Jo Rao, Vice Chair Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Achievement
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer

Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager
Nicola Hooper, Finance Officer
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion and ALN
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager
Adelaide Dunn, Lead for Wellbeing and Equity (EAS)
Nicola Chapman, HR Service Manager
Ceri Jenkins, HR Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services