

Introduction

Educational Psychology Services in Scotland have three statutory duties outlined in the 1980 Education Act. These are:

- The study of children and young people with special educational needs
- The giving of advice to parents and teachers about appropriate strategies to meet the needs of such children
- The giving of advice to a local authority within the meaning of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 regarding the assessment of the needs of any child.

In a West Lothian context the aim of the service is to promote achievement for all children through the development of effective learning and teaching strategies. The service is committed to inclusive practices and in supporting others to achieve such goals.



The Staff

The service is managed by a Principal, a Depute Principal and two Senior Psychologists. Together they make up the Senior Management Team. A further two Senior Psychologists have specific development and service support remits for Inclusion and Early Years. One psychologist also works jointly with Social Policy on Looked After Children and another will shortly be appointed to develop services to the 15-24-age range. All other psychologists (7 FTE) have a generic remit which involves working with schools, other agencies, and in strategic planning for the council.

All educational psychologists must have an honours degree in Psychology, or equivalent, and a Masters (MSc) in educational psychology that enables them to be recognised as Chartered Psychologists by the British Psychological Society. Many will also have had substantial prior experience of working with children and young people.

Main Aims of the Service

The service aims to promote learning and teaching opportunities for all pupils. Psychological service staff will work with children and young people, their parents/carers, school colleagues and those in other agencies to promote attainment and achievement. They have five key roles:

1. Consultation
2. Assessment
3. Intervention
4. Training
5. Research

All five of these roles can relate to individual pupils and their families, to whole school establishments, to cluster groups of schools and their community and to council initiatives. In relation to direct work with children and young people the psychologist may be looking at, for example:

- the delivery of curricula in both mainstream and special educational settings
- assessment of the needs of individual children and young persons
- the development of Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs).

The service is also involved in strategic planning within the Council's Education Services, evaluating new initiatives and advising on new approaches to learning and teaching.

Age Range

Psychologists work directly with children and young people in the 0 – 19 years age-range, and on their behalf with:

- parents/carers
- staff in nurseries and schools
- staff in other agencies.

Recent guidance from the Scottish Office may extend this age range to 24 years.

Partnership with Schools

The majority of a psychologist's work is school-based, working with other agencies and through School staff. Time is allocated to schools on the basis of school roll and audit ratings. The psychologist will visit the school on a regular basis and will plan with the Head Teacher their input for the year using the Practice Level Agreement (PLA). The PLA defines the following areas of work as the principal foci:

- individual based work
- development, preventative and consultative work
- research and evaluation
- policy development.

Evidence based work is fundamental to all of our work in the above areas.

Supporting the council's policy "Succeeding Together" through direct advice to staff and other agencies, publications related to learning and teaching topics, and staff training are important developmental areas for the service.

Working collaboratively within the psychological service team is an important part of our service delivery. No individual psychologist can have the necessary expertise across the wide range of activities with which we are involved. However, within the team, of 14 FTE's there will be a wealth of knowledge and experience. It is important that schools, and other agencies get access to this potential. As such psychologists are encouraged to consult with their colleagues and to deliver joint in-service training, to contribute to schools within their area team, and to work on publications, research and development work across geographical areas. In this way, the community can benefit from the full range of activities offered by the psychological service.

For further information contact

Liz Gajjar
Ogilvie House
Ogilvie Way
Knightsridge
Livingston

Tel: 01506 775800



Information for Schools

