



Education & Cultural Services

Policy: Psychological Service - Consultancy Procedure

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Introduction

This brief guideline sets out the content and scope of consultation, the circumstances in which it might take place and the procedure and documentation through which it should be recorded. It should be read in conjunction with the Policy ‘Psychological Service - Referral Process’, as both documents relate to the Psychological Service response to the West Lothian Continuum of Support. (West Lothian Council, 2005).

Our model of consultation in West Lothian places emphasis on working jointly to generate hypotheses, formulate an action plan and measure outcome and effectiveness. Review is built into the process, and further actions are agreed and implemented where required. We do not advocate any one consultation model, but psychologists are expected to be familiar with a number of models (e.g. Monsen, Wagner - see reference list) Our model articulates with the West Lothian Continuum of Support.

The table below summarises, the links to the Continuum of Support, the type of consultation which can be carried out, whether parental agreement is required and the method of recording the consultation undertaken.

Outline of Staged Intervention for the Psychological Service

Continuum of Support Level	Type of Consultation offered by EPS	Parental/child/YP Agreement	Recording process
Level One	General consultation about whole school / whole class issues	No requirement for parental/child/YP agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of visit form and / or school to keep record for their information / action
Level Two/ Level Three	General Consultation about un-named children / young people ----- Consultation about a named child (May include an observation)	No requirement for parental/child/YP agreement ----- Parental agreement required for consultation & observation School to obtain Also child/ YP agreement where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of Visit Form (e.g. note that consultation took place about P? pupil) School to keep a record for their information / action ----- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of Consultation form to be completed. School to keep in PPR or EPS School Folder. Psychologist to keep in their individual school file
Level Three/ Level Four	Formal referral (extended consultation or assessment/ intervention/ planning)	Parental agreement / engagement required. School to obtain consent and discuss involvement with parent. School also to gain child/ YP agreement where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological Service Referral Agreement form. File opened

(*The Service will also consider self-referral from older pupils)

A Record of School Consultation Form (Appendix 1) has been designed to use for consultations about a **named** child. When completed, a copy should be kept by the school (either in child's PPR or in the School File) and a separate copy kept by the psychologist in their own school file. The completed form should be transferred into a psychological service file if the consultation proceeds to a formal referral.

A formal referral (see Policy 'Psychological Service - Referral Process' - Referral Agreement Form) is necessary where the psychologist agrees to become actively involved in assessment, planning or intervention. However, where consultation is extended from psychologist and school staff, to involve meetings with parents and other professionals, and/or a body of reports / written information has been obtained in order to inform consultation, it may be necessary to negotiate a formal referral. This will ensure that a file is opened and we have a record of work carried out and reports collected. (see Policy 'Psychological Service - Referral Process') Referrals are also logged onto our database by our office staff.

It should be noted that in this model a referral to psychological service may involve the psychologist in extended consultation only, and not all referrals will result in individual work with the child.

Individual psychologists are best placed to decide when consultation should move on to formal referral. However, advice can be sought from line managers during support and supervision.

While in most cases formal referral will be preceded by consultation, in a small number of cases, psychologists may agree to move to formal referral without 'named pupil' consultation having taken place. This is acceptable, as it is important to have some flexibility within the model. Again the individual psychologist is best placed to make this decision in negotiation with school staff, parents etc.

Purpose of Consultation

Consultation means 'to consider jointly'. In some circumstances this may include advice from the Psychological Service. A consultation might involve an individual, class group or particular area (e.g. assemblies, playgrounds). While the majority of requests are likely to come from schools, the procedure applies to all other potential sources (family/carers, Health, Social Policy, etc.).

Consultation takes place where there is need for clarification of the nature of an issue/need and consideration of ways forward, or there is an agreed need for a systematic, thorough exploration of concerns in relation to an individual child or young person. In many cases an individual assessment (of whatever kind) is not appropriate/desirable, and psychologists follow the principle of minimum input to ensure effective intervention. A process of structured consultation often provides the best way forward.

It is important that we are able to measure outcomes and establish if our input has resulted in positive change. The action plan is the key to this (this is part of the School Consultation Form) and summarises the actions agreed, establishes the success criteria, identifies who will carry out specific tasks and sets the time-scale. This will provide information with which we can measure impact. The Action Plan should be reviewed and the plan developed as required. In agreement with those involved the input from the psychologist could be continued or discontinued. In some cases it may be necessary to move to a formal referral.

Consultation is a mechanism for helping to clarify issues or problems, set goals and develop strategies for their achievement. Discussion is structured around a set of questions/headings and ideas are generated to improve the situation, it is then agreed which ideas will be prioritised in terms which are practical and agreed to be achievable by all parties.

The consultation procedure should be applied in a way which has regard to the specific needs of those affected, including any needs arising from age, gender, culture and race, religion and belief, disability and sexual orientation.

Points to Note:

1. Consultation, regarding a named pupil, is subject to the same guidelines regarding permissions, confidentiality and access as any other circumstance in which personal information is sought:
2. Parent/Carer consent must be obtained by the school

3. The views of parents/carers and (where reasonable and practicable) children/young people must be sought.
4. Impact and outcomes can be measured using the Action Plan Targets
5. All documentation related must be kept securely and conform to the Council's policy on Open Access
6. Papers should be retained in the PPR (in the case of individuals) or School File. Any other copies held by the EPS should be destroyed after a reasonable period of time.

The basic tool for collecting information during a consultation is the "Record of School Consultation Form" (appendix 1) and this should be completed by either school staff or the psychologist. In most cases, it is envisaged that this level of consultation would have taken place before a formal referral to the service. It is therefore important to record this information in order to support future work that may be required.

Psychologists are also involved in consultation during their attendance at regular meetings organised by the school, e.g. JATs, IEP/MASP meetings. It is important not to duplicate record keeping and it is acceptable for our input to be recorded on the proformas which schools have developed to support these processes. Again, it will be possible to monitor outcome using targets/action plans contained within this process. It is not expected that a School Consultation Form will be completed in addition to this.

Quality Management

A sample of Record of School Consultation Forms and related papers will be reviewed as part of the existing quality management procedures for Service and School files.

References

Monsen, J. (1998). *Problem analysis and professional training in educational psychology: an accountable model of practice*. Educational Psychology in Practice, **13(4)**, 234-249.

Woolfson, L., Whaling, R., Stewart, A. & Monsen, J. (2003). *An integrated framework to guide educational psychology practice*. Educational Psychology in Practice, **19(4)**, 283-302.

Wagner, P. (1995). *A consultation approach to the educational psychologist's work with schools*. Educational and Child Psychology, **12(3)**, 22-28.

Wagner, P. (2000). *Consultation: developing a comprehensive approach to service delivery*. Educational Psychology in Practice, **16(1)**, 9-18.

Appendix 1 – Record of School Consultation Form



Psychological Service
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Ogilvie Way
Knightsridge
Livingston
EH54 8HL

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE RECORD OF SCHOOL/NURSERY CONSULTATION FORM

This form can be used for Consultation about an individual pupil or for Consultation about a whole school/class topic.

School:

Date:

Meeting Attended by:

School topic or name of pupil for consultation:	
Parental consent obtained?	yes/no
Pupil consent (where appropriate) obtained by school/nursery staff	yes/no
*see guidance note on consent of parents/YP	

Strengths in the situation? (Positive achievements/skills)
--

Statement of concerns

Assessments/interventions to date (where appropriate) in class/outwith	By whom?	When

What has been effective?

What improvements would indicate a successful outcome? (How will we know this consultation has been helpful?)

Pupil's view? (if appropriate)

Family circumstances/parental view? (if appropriate)

Hypothesis discussion/advice given:

Action Plan

Identified Needs:

-
-
-

Agreed Actions	Success Criteria	By Whom	By When	Evaluation (complete at review)

Date of Review: