



Education & Cultural Services

Policy: Psychological Service - Referral Process -

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Introduction

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the service guidance on consultation (2007) as both documents relate to the Psychological Service response to the West Lothian Continuum of Support. (West Lothian Council, 2005)

NB: for the purpose of ease of reading all references to children and young people are subsumed in the phrase ‘child’, references to any school and/or nursery by the term ‘school’ and references to parents and/or carers by the term ‘parent.’

Referral Process

The referral process 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.

For children who are not yet in educational establishments (usually 0-3 age group) referrals will be accepted from any stakeholder. The referrer should submit a request in writing to us and should previously have obtained parental permission. An acknowledgement slip will be sent to the referrer.

For children who are in nursery/school, referral should come via the Head Teacher. This ties in with West Lothian Continuum of Support Guidelines and also the Scottish Executive Code of Practice for meeting additional support needs. In addition, as our model of service delivery is

based on a formula of time allocation to individual schools, this enables Psychologist and Head Teacher to prioritise work within each school.

Following consultation with school staff about a particular child (as outlined in the Psychological Service Consultancy Procedure Policy), it may be agreed that there is a direct / continuing role for the Educational Psychologist within the team working with the child.

The nature of the concerns will be discussed and a specific action plan for the input from the educational psychologist will be agreed. This will normally take place within the context of a planning meeting which will include relevant staff, parents and, where appropriate, the child. At this meeting the Referral Agreement form (Appendix 1) will be completed by school staff and a copy provided for parents, relevant staff and / or the child. A copy will also be held by the psychologist and this will be used to open a Psychological Service file.

Where it is not possible to hold a joint meeting with parents, the designated member of school staff should seek parental permission to hold a planning meeting. When parental permission has been provided, this meeting can take place and an action plan drafted. This plan can then be shared with the parents by the relevant member of school staff and their consent sought.

At the planning meeting, a Referral Agreement form (Appendix 1) will be completed when appropriate. A copy of this will be provided for everyone involved. Good practice would suggest that the school talk this form through with the parents in advance of the meeting in order to prepare them for the discussion. This form will provide details of the work which has been agreed and will indicate how the involvement will be reviewed. An information leaflet about the Psychological Service will also be provided for parents (and where appropriate to the child) providing them with basic information about the Service.

This information leaflet will outline the relevant legislation covering the confidentiality of any information held. The leaflet will also inform parents that from time to time, HMIE may request to see their child's file as part of the routine inspection process if requested to do so. These issues should also be discussed with parents and the child (where appropriate) at the initial meeting to agree the nature of Psychological Service involvement.

Administrative Procedures

Opening a file

The purpose of a Psychological Service file is to keep a record of service involvement with a child. A file will therefore be opened by Psychological Service office staff upon receipt of a completed Referral Agreement form or at the request of an educational psychologist.

Period of Involvement

During the period of time when a Psychological Service File is open, information gathered through the psychological assessment and intervention process will be recorded within the file. Each file will contain the following headings: Correspondence, Case-notes, Reports / Minutes, Assessment Information and Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) documentation.

Information will be held in the file in date order with the most recent items to the top in each section.

A diary sheet should be kept up to date at the front of the file. Office staff will note basic details of correspondence. Psychologists will note other main actions as they take place eg. Home and school visits, phone calls etc.

Active Psychological Service files will be stored within the Psychological Service office and will be held by individual psychologists. It is recommended that files be arranged alphabetically and by alphabetically ordered school as preferred. This is for ease of access by others as required in case of psychologist absence.

All information held by the service will be done so in accordance with the West Lothian Council Records Management policy.

Closing a File

As Psychological Service files are opened for the specific purpose of storing information on service involvement with children, there will come a time when this level of involvement is no longer necessary.

It is envisaged therefore that Psychological Service files should be closed when there is no longer direct and continuing involvement taking place or planned. This would usually take place within 6 months of active involvement coming to an end. At this point, the file will be closed. The educational psychologist will inform the office staff who will then amend the database accordingly and arrange for the closed file to be stored centrally / archived. The psychologist will however, continue to be available for consultation in schools or at meetings as required.

Should it be felt at a later stage that the Service is required to become involved again, the file can be retrieved from the Archives Department. This would require further discussion with school staff, parents and the child (where appropriate) about the nature of the concerns at that point.

If a file is to be retrieved from the Archives Department, psychologists should fill in a request form (available on the shared drive). If the involvement of the service is to be formally re-established, office staff should be informed. They will then amend the database accordingly.

At the end of each academic year, all open and active case files will be reviewed by the psychologist with a view to establishing the current or predicted level of psychological service involvement. It is expected that in any case where there has been no involvement for 6 months and where there is no anticipated involvement in the short term, the file will be closed.

Once it has been decided that a file should be closed, a standard letter will be sent to the parents, school and child (where appropriate). (This refers only to those files opened following the implementation of this policy)

The office staff will arrange for the file to be stored with the Archives Section. It is kept with the archives section for 5 years following the young person's school leaving age. It is then destroyed.

Psychological Service files for pupils in specialist provision

Specialist Provision within the Authority

Given the requirement for multi-agency assessment when accessing alternative provision within West Lothian Council, it is envisaged that the Psychological Service will have been actively involved in this process in most cases.

Normal practice would therefore suggest that children will have an open Psychological Service file upon their commencement in an alternative provision within the authority.

As the purpose of a Psychological Service file is to maintain a record of active psychological involvement with a child, it should be established whether this level of involvement will be required within the new educational setting.

Where there is agreement that there *is* a direct and continuing role for the Psychological Service in relation to the educational progress of the child attending a specialist provision, the Psychological Service file should remain open for the duration of this involvement.

In line with the procedures outlined above, however, should there be *no* direct and continuing role identified for the Psychological Service, the file should be closed. Again, this is on the understanding that the Service can become involved again at any point should concerns arise.

Outwith Authority

Through the CSP process (West Lothian Education Department, 2007), there is an Authority expectation that the Service will provide a continuing service to children attending provision outwith the Authority. It is envisaged for example that educational psychologists will manage the CSP process within this context. Psychological Service files will therefore remain open for these pupils during their time in attendance at their allocated specialist provision.

Even where pupils outwith the Authority do not currently have a CSP, educational psychologists will continue to monitor the child's developing needs for the Authority. In these cases, the Psychological Service file will therefore remain open. It is likely that input from the Service in such cases will be largely through the school review meeting process.

Educational psychologists will maintain a record of their involvement in the Psychological Service file as per normal practice.

Should the child return to full time attendance within the Local Authority, the nature of involvement from Psychological Service would be negotiated with parents and relevant school staff. The Psychological Service file would remain open should a direct / continuing role be identified for the Service at that point.

If, after appropriate review, there is no direct / continuing role identified for the Service, the file will normally be closed. This would be on the understanding that the Service will continue to provide consultation and can become involved again at any point should direct work become necessary.

Quality Management

This policy will be reviewed as part of the existing quality management procedures for the Psychological Service. Feedback from the psychological team will be used in order to develop best practice.

References

West Lothian Council (September 2005) A Continuum of Support for children with additional support needs in West Lothian

West Lothian Council (June 2006): Records Management Policy. West Lothian Council intranet.

West Lothian Psychological Service Handbook (January 2004) "West Lothian Psychological Service: Communications Working Group, Report and Recommendations"

West Lothian Psychological Service Handbook (April 2007) West Lothian Psychological Service: Guidance paper on Psychological Service Consultation.

CSP Process for Schools outwith the Authority: (2007) (West Lothian Education Department)

Appendix 1 – Referral Agreement Form



West Lothian
Council

Education & Cultural Services

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Psychological Service Referral Agreement

(To be completed by school before meeting)

Child / Young Person _____

DOB _____

Parent (s): _____

School / Nursery : _____

Year _____

Home address:

Carer's address:

Contact telephone: _____

Child's Home Language(s): _____

Child's Place in the family _____

Previous Schools: _____

Educational Psychologist: _____

Date of the Meeting: _____

Other Relevant Information:

Service already involved:

Medical	Education Welfare Officer	Social Policy	Speech and Language Th.	Clinical Psychology	Psychiatry	Reporter	Other?
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Summary of Strengths

Statement of Concerns

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

What has been effective?

(To be completed at the meeting)

Parent's Views

Pupil's views

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

Thank you for meeting with the Educational Psychologist to talk about how our service can become involved in working with your son / daughter. We have agreed that the psychologist will:

-
-
-
-

and a review meeting has been arranged for_____

In order for the psychologist to gather the best understanding of what can be done to support the current situation, they may need to contact other colleagues within the school, health and / or social policy. If you have concerns about this, please let us know.

To keep information about your child together, a file will be opened. Once the work of the psychologist has been shared with you and other relevant adults and it is agreed that there is no further input required, this file will be closed and stored within the education department archives department. The Educational Psychologist for your school will however remain available for consultation as required.

Should you wish to access the information in your child's file, this can be done at any time by contacting the Principal Educational Psychologist.

For your information, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) routinely inspect Psychological Services. As part of this quality assurance function, they will randomly request to view a small number of files. There is therefore a small possibility that your child's file could be requested for this purpose. If this were to happen, you would be informed and your permission sought.

If you have any questions about the work that is taking place, please do not hesitate to contact your school psychologist using the details provided on this agreement.

Child / Young Person: (Print)_____

(sign)_____

Parental Signature: (Print)_____

(sign)_____

School / Establishment Signature: (Print)_____

(sign)_____

Psychologist Signature: (Print)_____

(sign)_____

Date:_____

cc. Parents
Pupil
School
Educational Psychologist

If parents were unable to attend the planning meeting, please complete the following:

Action Plan shared with parents and their agreement provided

Please tick

Date: _____

Signature of relevant member of School / nursery staff

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