

**Our ref: EPS August 2019****Contact:****Tel: 01506 283130****[www.westlothian.gov.uk/](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/)****EducationPsychologyService**

## **West Lothian Educational Psychology Service**

### **Service Standards**

West Lothian's Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is an integral part of the Education Service serving the needs of children and young people of the Authority. The purpose of this document is to outline the ways in which the Educational Psychology Service of West Lothian Council delivers the nationally agreed core functions of Educational Psychology Services within the context of the local authority.

### **Vision Statement**

The vision of the Educational Psychology Service is to improve the wellbeing and educational outcomes of all children and young people in West Lothian through the practical application of psychology.

We aim to achieve this by:

- placing the needs of children and young people at the centre of everything we do
- identifying and addressing barriers to learning
- working collaboratively with our partners
- building capacity at individual and systemic levels
- operating within a context of continuous improvement

The following section outlines the ways in which the service puts these aims into practice.

### **Principles of Service Delivery**

Working within the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework, The Children and Young People's Act (2014), West Lothian's Raising Attainment Strategy and Continuum of Support, we consider our Service to be an important part of the holistic assessment and support framework in place for all children and young people in West Lothian.

The Educational Psychology Service is also a key partner in the Education Services Moving Forward in Learning framework and is represented in relevant working groups within this framework.

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In this way, we ensure that the Educational Psychology Service is contributing to the authority and national priorities as outlined in the National Improvement Framework and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Our Service Improvement Plan is revised annually and is linked directly to both local and national priorities. Information about the ways in which the Educational Psychology Service contributes to improved outcomes for children and young people can be found on our website: <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/EducationPsychologyService>

Collaboration with partners is integral to achieving maximum success for children and young people to improve wellbeing and educational outcomes. We work collaboratively with our partners who include: parents/carers and wider families, teachers, education support staff, social policy colleagues, allied health colleagues, voluntary agencies and any other relevant people involved in the life of the child/young person.

Informed parental consent will always be sought before engagement with the service commences. For children who are 12 years and over, and considered to be able to do so, consent for involvement with the EPS will also be sought.

The sharing of information about our work with our partner agencies for the benefit of the child/young person will be undertaken in partnership with parents/carers (and child where appropriate) and in line with Scottish Government guidance on Information Sharing. In circumstances where there are Child Protection concerns, the council guidance in this area is followed.

We actively involve children and young people at an appropriate level in all of our work with them. We seek to ensure that they understand why we are involved and provide information about what we do in advance of our work with them.

We always seek to ensure the most effective, least intrusive intervention. We therefore operate within all levels of West Lothian's Continuum of Support providing the majority of our input through consultation to support early intervention, and to build the capacity of colleagues and families. Our consultation role extends to development, planning and evaluation at both school and authority level.

We seek to ensure that all Educational Psychology Service activity is evaluated for the direct impact that it has on the lives of children and young people and to ensure that high impact work is prioritised. We promote only evidence based practice.

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## **Range of Service Delivery**

Every Local Authority Educational Psychology Service in Scotland has statutory functions as outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act, 1980. Our main statutory duty involves the giving of advice to parents, schools and local authorities regarding children with additional support needs.

In reality our role is much wider than this and, as determined by the Review of Provision of Educational Psychology (2002), we also ensure that the nationally agreed core functions are delivered effectively. These core functions are:

- Consultation
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Staff Development / building capacity in others
- Research and Development

### **1. Consultation**

Consultation and advice is our primary source of effective service delivery at all levels of the Continuum of Support regarding individual children and young people and at wider authority level through involvement in key strategic working groups. It is often the case that issues can be explored and progressed effectively through a Consultation process without the need for direct input.

- Effective Consultation follows a recognised process in order to fully explore the background, existing issues and potential sources of improvement.
- While no single format is used for Consultation, the Service operates in line with a solution focused approach, always seeking to identify possibilities for positive change.
- The ultimate goal of the Consultation process is to work with others to help and support them in thinking about an issue, and to then develop solutions jointly to move things forward. The Educational Psychologist's role is to support the adults to improve the wellbeing and educational outcomes for children and young people.
- Consultation provides the opportunity for a comprehensive consideration of an issue with a view to establishing an action plan for taking things forward in a positive way. It is very much in line with the local authority and national agendas of early intervention.
- Consultation also promotes capacity building in the consultee as it allows them to consider how to move things on for themselves within the context of a supportive professional dialogue.

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Examples of consultation:

- Consultation with school staff about meeting the needs of individual children or young people, where schools have already tried implementing some support strategies
- Consultation with family and/or with multi-agency partners
- Consultation with school staff about a group of children, e.g. relationships within a class
- Consultation at a whole school level, e.g. development of a relationships policy; supporting a new Support for Learning teacher; gathering evidence to support the evaluation of support for Looked After Children as part of the Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) process.

## 2. Assessment and Intervention

West Lothian Educational Psychology Service views assessment as one of the core elements of its service delivery. We believe that assessment is inextricably linked to intervention and that the assessment process will therefore lead to recommendations about ways in which situations can be improved.

The Service does not operate under a prescriptive framework of assessment. Rather, a range of approaches to assessment is encouraged. In all assessment activities, West Lothian Educational Psychology Service follows the guidance provided in the Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) provided by the British Psychological Society and the Standards of Practice of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The Service fully endorses the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP) Position Paper (British Psychological Society, 2014) which states that in all Educational Psychology assessment work in Scotland:

1. There should always be a clear rationale for educational psychology assessment. This should be directed to promoting the wellbeing and improving the teaching and learning of the children or young people concerned. It should build on information already available.
2. Assessment techniques and approaches are based on an understanding of current psychological theories, methodologies, evidence-based practice and research. Psychologists should be clear about the theory and evidence underpinning their practice.
3. Prior to assessment, parent(s)/carer(s) consent for educational psychologist involvement must always be obtained. For children who are 12 years and over, where they are considered to be able to do so, their consent must also be sought in line with the Additional Support for Learning Act (2017 amendment).

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4. It is essential that educational psychologists advise about the most appropriate and embedded educational procedures, which will facilitate the views and participation of children and young people, as core features in assessment processes. Parent(s)/carer(s) may also require support and advice to help facilitate their views and participation.
5. Assessment acknowledges that children and young people develop as a result of an interaction between themselves and their environment.

Assessment should therefore be:

- conducted over time and taking account of different contexts;
- minimally intrusive, whilst achieving the best outcome for the child/young person;
- inextricably linked to intervention in such a way that the assessment is formative and provides results that inform any required intervention;
- built upon and inform the ongoing cycle of assessment, planning, intervention and review. In terms of best practice, be negotiated within a multi-agency, staged intervention framework;
- collaborative and working in partnership with parent(s)/carer(s), the child or young person, and those who work most closely with the child or young person; and
- mindful to consider and promote the young person's strengths for learning.

Examples of assessment and intervention:

- Gathering and analysing existing information from different sources (eg. Curriculum based assessments, specific learning assessments)
- The use of checklists/schedules to provide additional information.
- Observing a child in a school, nursery or at home
- Working individually with a child, including structured assessments such as Dynamic Assessment
- Group work to support a range of wellbeing concerns

The Educational Psychology Service is also involved in the development and delivery of interventions at an authority level. This involvement is delivered through service representation in key authority planning frameworks. Full details of this involvement can be found in our Service Improvement Plan on the Educational Psychology Service web-site.

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### 3. Research

Through our dedicated Research Assistant post, we are able to offer high quality evaluation support to key improvement initiatives. This is one of the core elements of the research work within the service.

The research function of the Educational Psychology Service has particular importance within West Lothian and we have a legacy of strong research contribution within the authority.

As a result of their training, all Educational Psychologists are able to offer general advice and consultation to schools and partner agencies about general approaches to research and evaluation.

In all research related work, we follow the British Psychological Society and HCPC guidance on Ethics and Consent.

Examples of research:

- Supporting school staff to carry out Practitioner Enquiry in conjunction with related training and development opportunities (eg Whole School Nurture)
- Evaluation of the impact of Anxiety groupwork programmes with young people
- Evaluation of authority wide programmes of intervention, eg LAC Scottish Attainment Challenge, Language and Literacy Practicum
- Regional Collaborative research projects

### 4. Staff Development / Building Capacity in others

Staff development and Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) is a core function for the service and we are involved in supporting schools and partner agencies with key areas of improvement through the delivery of bespoke training in line with their improvement planning processes.

The service also works closely with Education and multi-agency partners to deliver training jointly whenever possible and appropriate.

The priorities for training and development work are identified and delivered through our Service Improvement Plan which is influenced by local authority and national priorities for education.

All training is evaluated and analysed through the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) process. This information is fed into the planning process for future staff development work. Key development priorities for the Education Service are supported by the service through involvement in strategic planning, delivery of training and the development of approaches to key areas of learning and teaching.

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### **Service Development through Self-Evaluation**

In line with the West Lothian Council Improvement Strategy, the Educational Psychology Service operates within a context of continuous improvement. As part of this, we operate a robust self-evaluation process whereby the views of key stakeholders are gathered and considered on a regular basis.

Information gathered from these sources is then used to plan the way in which the service is delivered as part of our ongoing improvement planning cycle. Further details regarding this aspect of our work can be found in our annual Service Improvement Plan and Standards and Quality report. Our self-evaluation data is also incorporated into the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) performance management process and is reviewed regularly.

### **Service Development through Professional Development / Performance Management**

With regards to performance management of the service as a whole, the Educational Psychology Service has agreed annual targets for performance as determined within the WLAM approach.

The Educational Psychology Service operates within an ethos of continuing professional development for individual members of the team. All staff members have an annual review of their professional performance in line with the council wide scheme. All staff members also have regular Line Management meetings with a member of the management team within the service in order to provide appropriate support and challenge.

All members of the team are also able to engage in peer support throughout the year in order to further support the development of individual practice within a supportive yet challenging professional dialogue.

This process is linked to the annual Service Improvement Plan so that individual and service priorities can be aligned. These plans are then in turn linked to the Education Service and wider children's services planning processes through involvement of the team in key authority working groups.

In line with statutory guidance, all team members are registered with the HCPC and maintain a regular log of their own professional development in line with the HCPC regulations.

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## Service Delivery Standards - Schools

### Schools can expect:

- To have a named Educational Psychologist for their school
- To have a discussion (in person or by telephone) at the start of the academic year to discuss the priority areas of work for the EP in the school at that time. A Service Level Agreement will be drawn up based on this information and confirmed in agreement with the school
- To be provided with a termly Record of Contact overview for all work undertaken on behalf of the school by the EPS
- To have EP support for all children / young people being considered through the authority transition planning process
- To have access to the EPS for general advice and consultation about any other issue on a regular basis. In the majority of cases, this will take place by telephone
- To receive guidance on how to prepare for consultation discussions
- To have access to consultation meetings with parents when appropriate and following an initial school based discussion regarding the concerns
- To access the centrally delivered development work of the service in line with the current priority project areas
- To receive written feedback for all consultation discussions about named children and young people
- To be provided with service information leaflets for parents and children / young people
- To receive a reply to general communications with the service within 3-5 working days
- To have urgent responses responded to through the Main Office number (01506 283130)

### Schools can assist the EPS by:

- Informing the Educational Psychologist in good time regarding any children or young people within the agreed areas of priority support
- Being clear with parents/carers/professionals about the EPS Service Delivery Model through providing leaflets and outlining the process for accessing consultation and advice
- Gathering consent from parents/carers (and the child if 12 years and over) prior to consultation
- Enabling access to the most appropriate member of school staff for Consultation discussions
- Provide Parents/ Carers (and the young person if 12 years and over) with a copy of the Record of Consultation (school only)
- Providing access to children and young people within school for observation and providing a quiet space for assessment work when appropriate
- Sharing relevant information about the child / young person in line with Getting it Right for Every Child and GDPR protocol
- Facilitating the CPM process where appropriate and providing as much notice as possible
- Completing customer satisfaction surveys with children and young people, where appropriate, on behalf of the EPS.
- Completing annual customer satisfaction surveys for the service in order to enable ongoing improvement

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## Service Standards – Parents

**Parents / Carers of children (or children aged 12 or over who are able to provide consent) where direct involvement from the Service has been agreed can expect:**

- To receive information about the Educational Psychology Service
- To be fully involved in the assessment and intervention process through the giving of informed consent before the educational psychologist becomes involved
- To be informed about the assessment and intervention process throughout the time that the educational psychologist is involved
- To be provided with a way of contacting the Educational Psychologist (telephone and/or e-mail address)
- To have telephone / e-mail enquiries acknowledged within 3-5 working days
- To receive a copy of all Educational Psychology Service correspondence (reports, letters, assessment information) about their child/ the child themselves

**Parents / Carer (child aged 12 years and over when appropriate) can assist the Educational Psychology Service by:**

- Providing consent for involvement swiftly to support administrative processes
- Providing detailed information about the issues affecting their child/them and the family
- Attending meetings that are arranged to talk about the work that the educational psychologist has been doing
- Completing customer satisfaction surveys to provide comments, compliments and feedback on the work of the educational psychology service

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## References

The British Psychological Society Code of ethics and practice (2018):

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct>

The British Psychological Society (position paper) Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland (2014)

[http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/Quals/aspep-sdep\\_assessment\\_position\\_paper\\_2014.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/Quals/aspep-sdep_assessment_position_paper_2014.pdf)

The Children and Young People's Act (2014)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

Education (Scotland) Act, 1980

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/44/contents/enacted>

Additional Support for Learning Act 2016

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/8/contents/enacted>

HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (2016 update)

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/>

Scottish Executive (2002). *Review of the provision of educational psychology services in Scotland (The Currie Report)*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/158375/0042905.pdf>

The Scottish Government: Getting it Right for Every Child

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>

West Lothian Educational Psychology Service: Service Delivery Guidelines  
Internal report, available on request.

Links to reports about the performance of the Educational Psychology Service and the Service Improvement Plan can be found on the EPS website: <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/EducationPsychologyService>



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