



Educational Psychology Service Delivery: Modernisation and Collaboration with Schools.

Consultation Briefing

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Introduction

The Educational Psychology Service is consultation on the approaches for modernising service delivery in 2018/19. This paper provides a rationale for the proposed models of service delivery and outlines each option. The consultation is an online consultation and readers of this paper are asked to provide their views by clicking on the link.

Background

The Educational Psychology Service following Validated Self Evaluation in October 2018 is modernising its service delivery.

“Commendably, they were focused at all times on the difference which educational psychology could make to outcomes for children and young people.”

“Action Point 1. Better use of data to inform service delivery and interventions.”

[Education Scotland Report](#), page 3 and page 4.

The key aims of service re-design are to

1. That we are data informed about where and how we provide a service
2. Ensure when we provide a service to children and families it is:
 - i. for those that would need and benefit from this most; and
 - ii. of high quality
3. Ensure that when we provide targeted capacity building (training and development work) it is:
 - i. Focused on agreed priority areas
 - ii. Addresses needs of children and staff.
 - iii. Delivered in partnership with key partners.
4. And that we can demonstrate that the Educational Psychology Service has made a difference in improving outcomes for children

One of the features of the valuation exercises was that there was a “desire for more service delivery time” from partners, school staff and service users. We recognised then that efficiency of Educational Psychology Service time would arise from enhancing our partnership work and modernising our service delivery approach.

We were identifying that the model of working through schools and asking school managers to prioritise the children with whom we would work was not sufficiently targeted for the limited resource available.

From January 2018 we trialled a new approach termed the “Interim Service Re-design”. This had 4 distinct features of service delivery. We analysed the performance of these elements and asked for views in a survey. The [report on these results](#) is available online.

Table 1. Features of service delivery, purpose and effectiveness

Service delivery	Purpose	Evaluation
Telephone Consultation	First line and early intervention	73% agreed or strongly agreed that it was an effective approach 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed
Cluster Consultation	Overview for prioritising and identifying capacity building areas	46% agreed or strongly agreed that it was an effective approach 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed Provided triangulated evidence on the key priority areas
Team Around the Child/substantial involvement of Educational Psychologist	Targeted Educational Psychologist involvement for those children that need it and would benefit from it most	63% agreed or strongly agreed that it was an effective approach 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed
Digital Service delivery	To provide advice, guidance and materials to clarify expectation of the service and for practitioners to use such that they may not need to involve the Educational Psychology Service	Across the two websites there were 2400 views in 5 months. Twitter impressions increased to 4.3k per month from zero in January 2018.
Training and development work undertaken in partnership with closer alignment to strategic priorities	Teachers and educationalists develop skills, knowledge and practice in priority areas. Priorities identified in early 2018	Implemented August 2018 to June 2019.

Proposed Change

The Educational Psychology Service has identified 5 different options to work alongside the Telephone Consultation, Team Around the Child level work and digital content. This is to work at the level of Cluster Consultation. The original aim for this strand of service delivery was:

- To provide a collaborative method for how to prioritise the Educational Psychology Service
- To collaboratively develop knowledge and local action on the key themes for capacity building and training

We have previously met this aim through negotiation with a school manager on the key priorities themes and children (prior to 2018) and since January 2018 through a new approach – Cluster Consultation where it was successful in providing triangulated data for training and development priorities. The Educational Psychology Service is not in a position to provide the model of service delivery where priorities are discussed and identified at individual school level.

The 5 options are:

- i. None - pick up themes/practice sharing through other means
- ii. Themed groups or networks – school staff opt in for sessions on specific themes

- iii. Neighbourhood groups or networks – schools are grouped by poverty indicators and discuss themes and practice for capacity building and training
- iv. Partnership approach with priority schools – Multi-agency partnerships for “priority schools”
- v. Keep Cluster Consultation - focus on themes for capacity building

These modes are described in more detail in the appendix.

Conclusion

It is imperative the Educational Psychology Service identifies in partnership with schools a sensible and appropriate service delivery model for the future. It is clear that this needs to be data informed and that ways of working in the past are no longer sustainable or viable.

Five models of working have been proposed for one aspect of service delivery that is intended to provide a methodology for collectively prioritising the work of the Educational Psychology Service in order that it is most focused on the children that need the service and that capacity building work is focused on the areas likely to have greatest impact. The Educational Psychology Service recognises that these are interlinked with the other elements of service delivery.

We are interested in the views of practitioners. Please take time to provide your views by clicking on the link: <https://glo.li/2O9ckMp>. The consultation will close on the 18th of December 2018.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/epspractitioners/consultation-on-eps-approach/>

Appendix – Options for Service Delivery

The aims of service delivery that these five options address are:

- To provide a collaborative method for how to prioritise the Educational Psychology Service
- To collaboratively develop knowledge and local action on the key themes for capacity building and training

None

How it would work:

The Educational Psychology Service will identify themes/practice sharing through other means rather than collaborative groups of school managers. Educational Psychologist would monitor service contact and usage by individual schools accessing the service for children through Telephone Consultation and Team Around the Child level work. We would then analyse the way the service is being deployed against expected or predicted level of contact. This data would then be used to identify capacity building areas of work such as training and development. Educational Psychologists could make proactive contact where data at school level was showing an over or under usage of the service.

While the Educational Psychology Service would not routinely meet with schools as a cluster or collective group, the data from analysing the casework delivery could be triangulated against an analysis of school improvement plans.

Potential Advantages

- EPs devoting time to other service delivery areas
- Frees up school time
- Avoids schools being seen as similar by virtue of their geographical cluster or needs being dominated by individual voices
- Alternative ways to gather themes possibly may lead to innovation in the future

Potential Disadvantages

- Loss of discussion around shared priorities
- Loss of relationship between school staff and link Educational Psychologist and less face-to-face contact with school managers
- Loss of emergence of cluster themes with the owners of those themes
- Loss of opportunity to share and discuss aspects of EP service delivery with multiple schools
- Educational Psychology Service would inaccurately synthesise needs that they perceive without means of co-creating, collaborating on this.

Themed group consultation/networks

How it would work:

Schools would opt in to a one-off meeting or series of meetings at the offer of EPs to facilitate thinking & action about a identified themed areas linked to improvement priorities identified through analysis of telephone consultation, Team Around the Child level work, Educational Psychology Service evaluation data and school improvement planning.

School staff and or managers would self-identify to participate. The forums would be focused on elaboration of the shared concern, problem solving and sharing practice. The purpose would be to both identify and try new ways of working. The Educational Psychology Service would

identify an Educational Psychologist to lead the discussion around the area/theme and would be expected to engage the school staff to critically & collaboratively problem solve.

Potential Advantages

- Would align with areas in the Educational Psychology Service plan
- Would support engagement of 'schools that are sector leading' & needing support working together
- Consultation forum for EPs - supporting process of change
- More active engagement impact on positive relationships, transparency of Educational Psychology Service contributions
- Would enable more contact with teachers/staff other than management team
- Would enable sector specific focuses (eg. Early years, Enhanced Provision)
- School staff would have contact with Educational Psychologists that are not linked to their school.
- Educational Psychologist could facilitate involvement of multi-agency partners in these forums where relevant
- Forums could be used to gather feedback on Educational Psychology Service delivery area in addition to theme focus on occasion

Potential Disadvantages

- Schools may not opt in
- Work demands of schools
- Relationship between school staff and link Educational Psychologist would be more ad-hoc and potentially involve less face-to-face contact with school managers
- Some themes or priorities could have an overwhelming response - how would EPs manage this?
- Some themes or priorities may not be sufficiently high priority for school staff to opt in.

Neighbourhood Groups and Networks

How would it work?

Schools are grouped according to SIMD profile similarities in Neighbourhood Groups. The Neighbourhood groups and an Educational Psychologist would meet, at the invitation of the Educational Psychologist in regular meeting forums (approximately once a term). The focus of the meetings would be broad ranging but involve discussion on emerging themes from schools, local priorities and areas for capacity building. The school would need to send a manager or support for learning teacher, with enough of an overview of the areas of Additional Support Needs in school.

It would allow for collaborative problem solving and sharing practice to be more meaningful as the groupings of schools indicates more similar needs and problems. Both schools and the Educational Psychology Service would generate the topics and themes for collaborative problem-solving, sharing practice. More time could be devoted to neighbourhood groups on a priority basis, for example where there is a high level of deprivation or there are common difficulties in supporting inclusive education, or where there is a high priority national initiative.

Potential Advantages

- Would align with areas in the Educational Psychology Service plan
- Authority level work beyond cluster

- In-depth needs analysis across groups of similar schools leading to topic specific data gathering
- Would enable more contact with teachers/staff other than management team
- School staff would have contact with Educational Psychologists that are not linked to their school.
- Forums could be used to gather feedback on Educational Psychology Service delivery area in addition to theme focus on occasion

Potential Disadvantages

- It is an additional forum for school managers and is highly reliant on school buy-in to work outwith cluster.
- Exceptional grouping of practitioners not used to working together.
- Could be many diverse areas to cover.
- Being new groups will require significant co-ordination and time to get functioning
- Educational Psychology Service would need to devote time to the set-up, maintenance and development; advertising and communications
- Clarity of aims and focus of sessions to deliver on expectations and ensure relevance
- Disconnected with cluster development
- School Improvement Priorities may not align

Partnership approach with priority schools.

How would it work?

Priority Schools are identified through a shared risk assessment process with School Improvement, Additional Support for Learning and the Educational Psychology Service. Once schools are identified as a priority school a partnership forum is created with relevant stakeholders and partners joining the school. Educational Psychologists participate in this and assist each Partnership group to develop a shared approach and common purpose. It allows a more individual school focused approach to problem-solving and collaborative action. The forum may or may not be led by the Educational Psychologist, depending on the identified risks.

The Lifespan of group is dependant in progress in addressing concerns or areas for improvement. The methods for improvement would be varied and bespoke to those schools.

Potential Advantages

- Clarity of roles and shared learning across partners
- Relationship building and collaboration would be high as there is a clear and limited focus
- It potentially leads to a higher standard of development work in those schools identified as a priority
- Strengthens support to schools that are at risk
- Should shape and influence the School Improvement Plan

Potential Disadvantages

- It is an additional forum for school managers
- Difficult to evaluate the impact of the partnership group when improvements are not easily identified
- Teachers from the school can feel out of the loop
- It may feel “done to” rather than “done with”
- Coordination and time factors may not easily be overcome

- Schools that are not a priority receive less service or focus which may result in an equity issue

Cluster Consultation

How would it work?

The Cluster Consultation pilot would be extended with a focus on existing clusters of schools. The Educational Psychologist would either attend the cluster HT meeting or create new forum for this purpose at the choice of the cluster. This would not need to be attended by the head teacher. The agenda would be the responsibility of all participants with a focus on themes and wider needs, as well as potential for sharing practice. Purpose of cluster engagement is a move away from individual child discussion to strategic discussion, collaborative problem solving and implementing more localised action. The Educational Psychologist would provide analysis of themes and issues from the Team Around the Child involvement and Telephone consultation data.

Potential Advantages

- Educational Psychologist have already engaged with geographical clusters.
- Relationship building and collaboration would be high as there is a clear and limited focus
- Feedback in evaluation showed an appetite to engage in cluster level discussion with EPS
- Enhances Educational Psychologist links to cluster schools with face to face relationship building
- Links with Education Managers who is also linked to the cluster
- Model has had early adopters on which to establish and strengthen working practice. Other clusters may be in a better position to develop working relationships in new academic session.
- With time this model may become more embedded and work more effectively across the authority
- EPs opinion more valued as working across the cluster and maybe views as having more insight and relevance to the cluster needs/school needs.

Potential Disadvantages

- Some clusters may be reluctant to engage which would result in an equity gap
- Cluster HT Meeting agendas are already full
- Cluster working well established without EP.
- Some Educational Psychologists work across two clusters and some clusters have more than one Educational Psychologist. Educational Psychologist at meeting may not be school link or there is two Educational Psychologists attending meaning a commitment of double time from Educational Psychology Service for some clusters.