

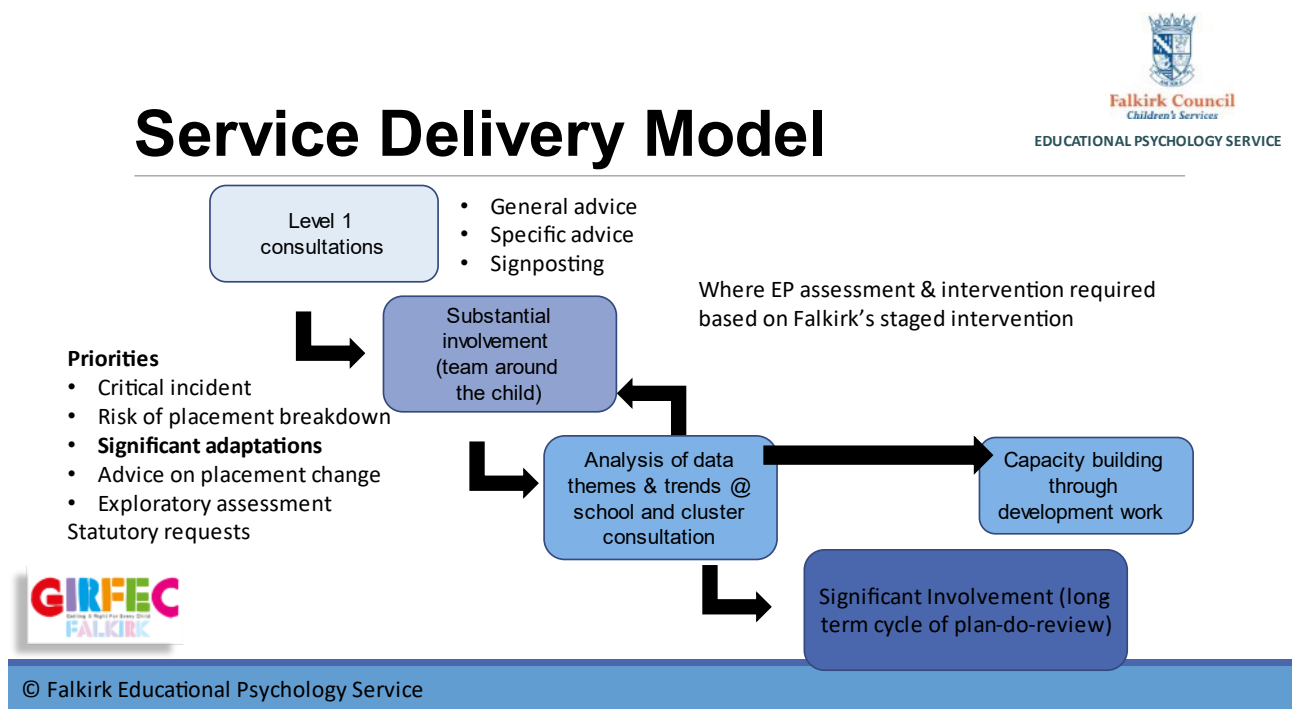


## Educational Psychology Service - Briefing

**"We passionately believe in making the children of Falkirk's lives better. We promote positive educational journeys using the power of psychology and work with parents and others as partners." November 2023**

The educational psychology service in Falkirk has significantly below the national average staffing level for Educational Psychologists. It is ranked 30 out of 32 LAs for staffing per head of population (pupils or aged 0-26) and have consistently been in the bottom three for the past 5 years. We have a core staff of 7.5 fte and additional 1.8 fte funded for project work. The recent ASPEP paper from March 2023 advising a national minimum safe staffing level for all educational psychology services recommends Falkirk Council should have ~12.5 fte, plus additional staff for funded project work where an EP is required. Although there was some initial interest from one school to fund educational psychology work through SAC/PEF this was not possible to deliver at the time due to a national shortage of educational psychologists. No other schools have approached us about using their PEF funding for educational psychology work. Our current service delivery approach is outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Service Delivery model



## Confirmation and clarification of criteria for suitable referrals to EP

Please see [Falkirk Educational Psychology Service Practitioners Pages | Materials, advice and guidance for practitioners](#)  
[Consultation and Service Delivery | \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](#) in particular which states at the bottom:

The Council must comply with Data Protection Legislation as defined by the Data Protection Act 2018. If you supply personal information to us, it may have to be disclosed to the data subject unless there are good grounds for withholding it. You can find out how we handle personal data at [www.falkirk.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/privacy) and [www.falkirk.gov.uk/privacy/schools-education/educational-psychology.aspx](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/privacy/schools-education/educational-psychology.aspx)

Principal Educational Psychologist: Nick Balchin  
Falkirk Council Educational Psychology Service  
Suite 1a, Falkirk Stadium, 4 Stadium Way,  
Grangemouth, Falkirk FK2 9EE  
Telephone: 01324 506600  
[educationalpsychologyservice@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:educationalpsychologyservice@falkirk.gov.uk)  
[www.falkirk.gov.uk](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk)

### **Prioritisation**

*The Educational Psychology Service does not operate a waiting list system. We aim to be responsive as a service and so we do this through a prioritisation system.*

*A. Prioritise with school manager/cluster approximately termly and prioritise as follows:*

- 1. critical incidents*
- 2. children at risk of education placement breakdown*
- 3. children where there is evidence that high levels of adaptation are required*
- 4. assessment in relation to significant Additional Support Needs or placement change*
- 5. exploratory Assessment to identify areas of concern*

*OR*

*B. Respond to statutory requests within agreed timescales*

Statutory requests have to be dealt with within their timescales so sit outside the prioritisation in A.

**Q: What would be different in a co-created prioritisation system or would another model of delivery be preferable (such as a waiting list system)?**

## **Confirmation and clarification of the assessment tools necessary**

GIREFC paperwork on the child is helpful but it depends on the nature of the issues the school practitioners is seeking advice on. In some (rare) cases school staff don't need any but we generally expect schools (and find it immensely helpful) to have at least involved their own supports (at stage 2 and sometimes stage 3) before asking us to be involved and then providing us with the records (Child's Plan). It certainly means we are better placed to add value to the additional support needs assessment and/or intervention when the existing Child's plan is forwarded to the EP in advance of the first discussion or TAC.

**The Child's Plan seems the best starting place to capture that prior assessment but it depends on what is already there. The educational psychology service has previously worked with a pro-forma asking practitioners to capture some key information prior to our first involvement. Would this be helpful to return to?**

## **Increased understanding for education staff of advice/support that could be available without needing a consult**

Our practitioners website has a range of guidance, materials and online training:

Please see [Falkirk Educational Psychology Service Practitioners Pages | Materials, advice and guidance for practitioners](#)

**Q: What do you find helpful about this range of resources and what do you feel needs to be changed or added?**

## **Flexibility in EPs being available to work with individual pupils/attending TACs/observations etc**

There is flexibility. Just ask the EP. However given the high level of demands from other schools and parents it is unreasonable to expect magical flexibility where an EP is available at the time that suits without negotiation (looking at their online calendar can be a helpful first step but is not a perfect solution). Often our most valuable work is in providing the advice to the adults around the child, such as the parents and teachers as

many children do not have the skills, knowledge, resources and power to make the adaptations required on their own.

**Q: What other ideas are there for making sure psychologists can offer a timely service?**

## Advice/support to support non-school attendance

We already give advice on a case by case basis, and the RIC has developed a resource for non-attendance/truancy. Usually non-attendance is multifactorial in its underlying causes so it is not a straightforward answer here. We also have the anxiety toolkit on our website:

[Anxiety Toolkit | \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.glowscotland.org.uk) and advice for many of the sub-causal factors: [Materials and Practice Guides | \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.glowscotland.org.uk)

There are a range of services who may helpfully have a role here as there are so many different causal factors. Initial assessment by the school staff may help to identify the right pathway.

**Q: What approaches could be applied here to help identify which agency is most appropriate? For example School Liaison Groups or JATs sometimes served this function in the past, are they a helpful approach now?**

## Training for Pastoral/Pupil Support staff on the toolboxes/strategies for common referrals

The EPS is always happy to have a discussion on what the training needs are and what we can do to support those. Training we do provide is either advertised and listed in CPD manager, or advertised through CS Comms. The school can also ask their link EP directly, particularly if they have an idea for bespoke training and we try to help where we can.

From our soon to be published standards and quality report:

*“The Service has delivers the majority of its training and development work as part of the service plan. We have delivered training and workforce development for ~1000 delegates over the past 2 years from nearly all schools and nurseries on the following:*

- *Pedagogy for children with Neurodevelopmental disorders and differences*
- *Anxiety Toolkit*
- *Skills for Learning and Life*
- *Family Learning*
- *GIRFEC and SEBN*
- *Trauma Informed Practice for leaders,*
- *NDD assessment – pathways for referral*

*The service has a role in provide training at other points. In the last two years the service has provided 55 training sessions to over 1000 participants on other topics (2022/23 = 35 and 591 delegates; 2021/2022 = 20 and 436 delegates). The topics include, Autism and specific sessions on related pedagogy such as environmental audits, social stories and SCERTS; Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; conflict resolution and de-escalation; return to education following coronavirus, intensive interaction, arousal cycle, attendance; collaborative action research; inclusion; nurture; AD/HD; solution oriented approaches; challenging behaviour; inclusion; Down’s Syndrome; pathways to school readiness; Decider Skills.*

*The team also get invited to guest lecture at national level which over the last two years has involved topics as varied as: Inclusive education, EP Practice in secondary Schools; Arousal Cycle; Readiness for school; writing at Doctorate Level in applied educational psychology practice.”*

**Q: What specific training needs do we need to prioritise and support?**

Nick Balchin, MA, PGCE, MSC, C. Psychol

**Principal Educational Psychologist**

Falkirk Council Educational Psychology Service

Suite 1a, Children's Services

Falkirk Stadium, 4 Stadium Way,

Grangemouth, Falkirk FK2 9EE

Tel: 01324506600

Mob: 07860778655

[Falkirk Educational Psychology Service | Working in Partnership to Improve Outcomes for Children in Falkirk](#)

[Falkirk Educational Psychology Service Practitioners Pages | Materials, advice and guidance for practitioners](#)

[Privacy notices: Schools & education - Educational Psychology Service | Falkirk Council](#)