



Scottish Borders Council

Educational Psychology Service

Self Evaluation Report

May 2017

Local Context

The population of Scottish Borders was estimated to be 114,030 in 2015 (National Records of Scotland). The September 2016 School Census recorded 6392 secondary and 8,171 primary pupils. Nurseries are not part of the school census however during the week of the census there were 1296 children in Local Authority and Partnership Providers (total = 15,859 children and young people supported across all these provisions).

These children and young people are educated within 61 primary schools and 9 secondary schools. 36 of the primary schools are classed as rural with 32 primary schools having a roll of less than 100. Two of the secondary schools are also classed as rural.

There is one new stand alone special school, the Leader Valley School which opened in March 2017 and provides specialist level support for primary age pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) or pupils who would benefit from this type of provision. A specialist secondary provision will be developed within the recently announced intergenerational learning campus in Jedburgh (to be delivered by 2020 and to fulfil the Council's commitment to delivering positive destinations for our young people with severe and complex needs). In addition, there are 4 generic support centres for primary aged children, and 4 associated Language and Communication Support Centres. There is also a primary and secondary support centre for children and young people with social-emotional needs (Wilton, SEBN Provision) and a secondary provision for pupils from S3 onwards with complex needs who require additional support transitioning from secondary school to post-school destinations (Howdenburn). Four of the 9 secondary schools in Scottish Borders are designated as providing enhanced provision for pupils with more complex needs. A high level of support is provided to children and young people in schools supported by a two tiered 'exceptional needs' resource allocation process and a staged assessment and intervention framework.

14.0% of children in Scottish Borders were living in low income families in 2014, below the Scottish average of 18.4%.¹ However, there are 28 data zones of the 143 in the Scottish Borders (2011 based) where over 20% of the children live in low income families. Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016 (SIMD2016²), the Scottish Borders has 6 data zones that are within the 15% most deprived of Scotland. These data zones are located in the Langlee area of Galashiels and the Burnfoot area of Hawick.

The National Records of Scotland projections for population changes between 2012 and 2037 predict that Scotland will increase in population by 8.8% over the 25 year period. Based on both projected natural change and net migration the total population of the Scottish Borders is not expected to change. However, there is expected to be a decrease in the population of children (-7.5%) and working age people (-10.1%), and an increase in the numbers of people of pension age (28.7%). (Source: NRS 2014).

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-tax-credits-children-in-low-income-families-local-measure-2014-snapshot-as-at-31-august-2014-30-september-2016>

² <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

Children & Young People's Services

The context of the Children and Young People's Service is set within the Scottish Borders Council Corporate Plan 2013 - 2018 which sets out the strategic policy driving forward the work of the council. The Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), led by the Service Director, has a key role in delivering on a range of the corporate priorities outlined within the plan but particularly:

- **Priority 2:** improving attainment and achievement levels for all our children and young people, ensuring an inclusive approach
- **Priority 3:** Providing high quality support, care and protection to children, young people, adults, families and older people.

The Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership also provides the CYPS Directorate with a strategic vision to ensure that outcomes set nationally are delivered locally. A range of work across the Partnership is focused on the key priority of reducing inequalities and the CYPS is a key member of the Children & Young People's Leadership Group which sets the strategic direction for the wider delivery of integrated Children & Young People's Services within the Scottish Borders.

The CYPS plan for 2016/17-2018/19 highlights that the service should focus on: *Improving the learning experience and opportunities for our children and young people through early intervention and prevention, a sustainable school estate and more integrated and streamlined operational structures.*

CYPS self-evaluation, informed by data, indicates improving outcomes in terms of attainment and sustained destinations, more inclusive practice and earlier intervention. In 2017/18 the plan for CYPS is to continue to build on these positive trends and further develop the quality of universal provision and work in partnership on *Closing the Gap*, thereby reducing the requirements for targeted interventions. A key strand within the plan will be the continued focus on improving the quality of leadership at all levels and embedding a culture of improvement through self-evaluation and performance analysis.

A key group for support from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is our looked after children and young people, as of 1st February 2017 there were 239 looked after children from the Scottish Borders. Of these, 42 children and young people are placed in purchased placements, 39 of which are located out with the Scottish Borders.

Educational Psychology Service

The aim of the Scottish Borders Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is:

'To work in partnership with children, young people, parents, carers and agencies in an integrated way to improve the well-being and achievement of children and young people through the ethical application of psychological skills and knowledge'.

The EPS will achieve this by:

- applying psychology skills and knowledge to support the well-being and achievement of all children and young people
- working in an integrated way with multiagency professionals and communicating appropriately to deliver an effective service for all children, young people and their parents and carers
- applying psychology in an integrated way to promote holistic working at a range of levels. Psychologists emphasise the value of directly seeking the views of children and young people. Psychologists emphasise strength based approaches and the importance of working, collaboratively with parents and others who know the child or young person are best placed to introduce positive change
- supporting national and local policies and agendas through service development processes. The EPS adapts as required in order to continue to apply psychology in working environments that involve ongoing challenge and change
- emphasising the importance of obtaining active and informed consent and emphasising clients' rights to privacy and self-determination
- actively maintaining and developing high standards of competence in order to contribute to ongoing service improvement
- operating a minimum intrusiveness policy with regard to assessment and intervention which recognises that direct involvement may not be the most appropriate method for assessing and intervening
- Practising within all professional regulatory and legal requirements.

Every education establishment in Scottish Borders and several additional teams and provisions have a link Educational Psychologist (EP). The link EP supports them to meet the needs of a wide range of learners through the provision of 5 national core functions for Educational Psychology Services; consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research and development. The service is delivered through a time allocation model whereby all 70 SBC schools receive a pattern of regular visits linked to school roll and weighted for level of deprivation and early intervention. Partnership providers and some other service providers (Pre-School Home Visiting Service, Wilton Centre, Enhanced Provisions, Leader Valley, Wheatlands Children's Unit) receive an allocation. The time available for partnership providers in particular, as with some smaller schools, can be restricted due to low rolls. In practice, the EPS responds to needs in partnership provisions as they are identified. A review of how best the EPS can serve children and families through the 5 functions within the context of the Scottish Borders is now being considered and expected to change the way EP time is allocated and how the EPS operates during school session 2017/2018.

Service Structure and Staffing

Two years ago the EPS was incorporated into a new Children & Young People's Service (CYPS) comprising Education, Community Learning and Development (CLD) and Children and Families Social Work. EPS team members have been based within locality offices across the Scottish Borders which has enabled partnership working. The vision is to work in a more integrated way to improve outcomes for children and young people across Scottish Borders. At the time, each arm of the service underwent a re-structure with the EPS service sitting firmly within the new CYPS. In the new service the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) reports to the Service Director, whilst maintaining direct line-management for all Educational Psychologists (EPs).

In 2016, a Joint Inspection of Integrated Children and Young People's Services was carried out by the Care Inspectorate. It recognised, despite the infancy of the new service, a significant improvement in some areas and identified a strong capacity for improvement moving forward. Building on the progress made so far and recognising the ever-changing needs of the service, a further review of structures in Social Work and Education is currently underway. The staffing structure of the EPS and the wider Children and Young People's Service is found at appendix 1.

Service Planning Structures & Development

The EPS reviewed its Service Improvement Plan (SIP) and identified new business plan goals and cross-cutting objectives as part of a wider CYPS exercise in March 2016. These business plan goals and objectives are currently being embedded in the Children and Young People's Business Plan which addresses prioritised Council Corporate priorities and is, in turn, nested under the Children and Young People's Partnership Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement. The EPS business goals and objectives have provided the core developmental focus for the work of the EPS over the past year. Included in the business objectives was a commitment to review the work of the EPS to align the service within the wider re-design of the CYPS. As part of this exercise comprehensive stakeholder feedback would be obtained.

Stakeholder surveys were developed and issued to a comprehensive range of stakeholders earlier this session. Data has been analysed and summarised from the following stakeholder groups:

- Scottish Borders Council Schools
- Scottish Borders Practitioners including colleagues in Children & Families Social Work
- Parents and Carers
- Children and young people
- External Schools
- Administration staff
- EPs.

The EPS has regularly revised and developed its structures to prioritise opportunities for EPs to meet for collegiate discussion and reflection through team meetings, working groups and regular development days. The EPS collates activity data relating to both individual work and training. Service self evaluative activity over the past few years has been informed by analysis and reflection on activity data, collated EP feedback from Performance Review Development (PRD),

service ethos and supervision questionnaire exercises and service user focus groups. The service has used some of the Quality Indicators (QIs) from *Quality Management in Local Authority Educational Psychology Services (QMILAEPS)*. The service also led a consultation with a range of stakeholders in relation to dyslexia. EPs are encouraged to engage in self evaluative activity and tools developed by the EPS are provided to support this. In addition the EPS has been involved with a range of development work.

In August 2015 the EPS moved to a Social Work managed electronic file management system, Frameworki, with facilities for integrated data sharing and collection/reporting.

Service Self Evaluation Summary

What key outcomes have we achieved?

Where are we now?

- The EPS is focussed on improving outcomes for children and young people through the provision of 5 core functions (assessment, intervention, consultation, training, research and development) across 4 levels (children/young people, schools, EPS and Local Authority). Stakeholder data strongly suggests that EPs relate to parents, pupils and staff in a sensitive, fair and respectful manner and emphasise inclusive practices. The data suggests that the EPS is a generally valued service, providing effective consultation and advice to parents, pupils and staff, making a useful contribution to assessment and intervention and an effective contribution to positive outcomes for children and young people. The EPS provides a range of training and development work designed to build stakeholder capacity, particularly with education staff (e.g. whole school staff (Primary, Secondary), Support for Learning Teachers, local authority (LA) level, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's), Supply Teachers, Specialist Service Staff groups including staff within the residential unit, Wheatlands). (For content areas see below.) Much of this work has been negotiated at individual establishment and locality level. More recently, there has been greater emphasis on development work designed to develop capacity across the LA. Nevertheless, feedback from schools and other stakeholders suggests that the role of EPs in training and development work is not consistently valued relative to individual work and that a more focused and consistent approach for EPs to wider systemic work is an area for development.
- EPs are lead professionals for children and young people supported in external education only placements and have a key role in the planning and review of education for children educated out-with the Authority. EPs directly co-ordinate and manage the Co-ordinated Support Plan processes for all children and young people placed externally. In session 2015-2016 there were 20 CSP's for these children and young people. In the same session the total number of CSPs contributed to by EPs was 117. Formal feedback from out of authority schools and informal feedback from SBC colleagues indicates EPs work effectively with pupils, parents, teachers and other professionals to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people placed externally.
- The move to Frameworki as a data management system in 2015 supports integrated working at a range of levels across the EPS. This new system implemented has been reviewed and revised since implementation to reduce administrative burden for EPs. The overall EPs' view is that the new system enhances communication and partnership working with Social Work colleagues. This system is due to be upgraded to Mosaic, going live on 15th May 2017.
- The EPS has undertaken significant work to develop a model to support consistency of practice across the EPS whilst continuing to operate a contextualised model of service delivery. A range of tools including service practice notes and tools to support staff to engage with self-evaluation and obtain stakeholder feedback at an individual level have been developed. Cross locality peer supervision groups have also been developed to support consistency of practice. Training and development work conducted by EPs reflects a theoretically coherent and empirically informed approach to the application of psychology. The EPS has facilitated

collaborative working in the preparation and delivery of training across the team to support consistency of message.

- EPs provide consultation and advice to a range of LA multiagency groups. These include, the Foster Panel, Early Years Steering Group, Corporate Parenting Operations Group, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) leads group, the Learning Disability Transition Steering Group and associated Learning Disability Tracking Group. Feedback from Practitioners indicates that 73% agree that the EPS makes an effective contribution to working groups (excluding those who were unable to provide feedback on this aspect of service delivery the adjusted figure is 91.25%).
- The PEP chairs the Additional Needs Multi-agency Management Team (ANMaT) which oversees all LA CSPs, referrals from health for early years support and requests for repeat and advance years. The PEP also chairs the Psychology of Parenting Project (PoPP) operations group. The PEP provides consultation and advice to senior colleagues and undertakes commissioned pieces of work as requested. These have included a review of evidence on outcomes and effectiveness of the use of Additional Needs Assistants (ANAs) and implications for the resource allocation model. The PEP presented the findings to the directorate and then delivered to Head Teachers. The PEP supported the implementation of a revised model with senior colleagues. The PEP provides consultation and advice to a range of other advisory groups including the Central Overview Group (COG) which oversees internal specialist placements and Placement Overview Group (POG) which provides a similar role for external placements. In the past year the PEP chaired a multi-agency project group to support authority decision regarding Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) contract. The PEP also oversees the Resolve (Independent Mediation) contract.
- The EPS business and overarching objectives have provided a focus for integrating the EPS service plan and development activity with the priorities of the wider CYPS. The EPS has restructured working groups to align with the LA strategic Head Teacher groups. EPS participation in these groups has begun. This is providing a strong focus for embedding key areas of EPS development work into the LA strategic development plan. The EPS has contributed significantly to other strategic developments through the application of psychological theory and research. Key pieces of EPS development work linked to current LA strategic priorities are as follows:
 - Dyslexia: The EPS has led on the development of the LA policy on dyslexia. This has involved working in partnership with a team of teaching staff to provide guidance on assessment and early identification of literacy difficulties and to disseminate research based evidence on literacy interventions. The EPS co-ordinated consultation with a wide range of stakeholders regarding the policy, analysis of feedback and revision of the policy. The EPS has provided training and support for a wide range of staff including focussed training and review of progress regarding implementation with SfL staff.
 - Better Relationships: The EPS has made a significant contribution to the development of a relationship focused policy to promote well-being at the universal level in schools. The EPS contribution has included significant re-conceptualisation of previous behaviour focused practice and provision of supporting materials. This has been built from long standing areas of practice

development EPs have provided in areas such as attachment, nurture, restorative approaches.

- Closing the Gap: The EPS has been involved in a multiagency project to support the attainment challenge priorities in the Scottish Borders initial Scottish Attainment Challenge Primary School. This has involved provision of consultation and advice to the project management team and ongoing staff training in the principles of attuned communication and language and literacy intervention which has in turn had a significant impact upon the LA 'closing the gap' strategy which has been a feature of Headteacher training and strategic policy development on 'closing the gap' and PEF plans during 2016/2017 for 2017/2018.

Overarching Strengths

- The EPS has a strong values base which emphasises inclusivity, respectful relationships and ethicality. This is recognised in feedback from all stakeholders. Team members have provided a chapter on ethics in Educational Psychology practice to a published inter-disciplinary book on professional ethics. The EPS has a democratic ethos with distributed leadership which enables EPs to be involved in decision making processes within the service.
- Parents/carers have positively evaluated the support they receive from the service. Their feedback indicates that EPs facilitate parents /carers to actively participate in decision making and enable children and young people to have their views listened to and taken seriously.
- SBC schools value the EPS contribution in supporting them to meet the needs of a wide range of children and young people with additional support needs. Stakeholder feedback indicates that most parents/carers, children and young people and colleagues view the work undertaken by EPs as being effective in improving outcomes for children and young people. There is, in almost all cases, positive feedback in relation to work undertaken by EPs working with high profile, challenging and vulnerable individual cases on a sustained basis to provide assessment, intervention and consultation. In such cases feedback from colleagues supports the view that EPs provide high quality assessment and contribute critical analysis to planning for individual needs. For example, colleagues from Children & Families Social Work report that the EPS provides highly valued and effective quality assurance and management of educational placements for vulnerable children/young people placed out-with the Authority for education and/or care.
- The PEP contributes strategically to key authority priorities through participation in the Directorate and through consultation and advice to a range of LA and partnership groups. This structural positioning of the PEP within the wider management structure is a positive asset in promoting the further strategic engagement of the EPS.
- The EPS provides a role to the LA in conceptualising commissioned papers and policies (e.g. Literacy and Dyslexia Policy, Better Relationships Policy, effective use of additional needs assistants) and delivering training within the LA. This demonstrates EPS strengths in developing practice guidance underpinned by sound psychological theory and evidence.

- The EPS has supported strategic development in early years. The PEP chairs the Psychology of Parenting (PoPP) Operations Group. This partnership project is designed to support positive wellbeing outcomes for children and young people at high risk through sustained and targeted work with parents and carers. Nationally co-ordinated data³ available demonstrates positive outcomes and reach achieved by this partnership initiative in Scottish Borders:
 - 68% of children whose families have completed a PoPP parenting group have improved behaviour reported by parents / carers (against the national target of 66%)
 - 49% of children have moved from high risk range to normal range; 19% from high risk to medium range
 - Parents and carers report improved parenting skills and confidence and better relationships with their children and within their families
 - Over 50% of referrals are from Health Visitors, compared to 18% nationally, demonstrating the strength of this as a partnership project
 - Families engaged have been recruited from across Borders, including remote rural areas, with 51% of families recruited coming from areas with highest deprivation (top 15% SIMD). Additionally, 93% of children reached through the programme are identified as being high risk, against a national average, of 66%. This demonstrates strengths in the reach of the project.

- There is a strong culture of professional learning ,development and research within the EPS team which encourages innovation :
 - Linked to the PoPP initiative, two 2 EPs have been involved in the delivery of Connecting with Parents' Motivations (CwPM) training to early years practitioners. The aim of this training is to support the quality of professional engagement with parents /carers and to support positive and timely participation in PoPP interventions; namely Incredible Years and Triple P. Training undertaken to-date on CwPM has been positively evaluated at point of delivery. Although still a small data set, 100% of participants have stated that they have developed and improved their skills and knowledge in ways that will enable them to more effectively engage with parents.
 - The EPS encourages the use of video as a tool to support intervention and training. This includes application of Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) at a casework level and the use of Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP), and /or the associated principles, to develop attuned interactions and reciprocal relationships in, for example, classroom contexts. Currently the service has one EP who has VIG trainee supervisor status and several others are progressing at different stages. One recently retired colleague has continued to provide ongoing supervision. One EP has two publications in relevant professional texts and has contributed to initial VIG training. Consultation has been provided by one EP to support LA strategic development in the use of video for professional learning. A paper was developed by the service to support this which has been shared with the management group and also directly by the EPS with two schools. One school requested and received follow up training which was jointly delivered by an EP and a class teacher who has been involved with a previous EPS project. Video including VIG has also been used in several projects to support staff interaction and assessment with children and young people with complex needs in a variety of mainstream and specialist settings at primary and secondary stages.

³ Data to July 2016

- The EPS can document professional knowledge and skills in the area of dialogic practice. One EP has contributed via EP initial training, various national conference papers, and training to another EPS and has several peer reviewed publications in this area (and has been asked to peer review other articles). The most recent paper is an empirical paper on dialogic practice based on small scale exploratory research conducted in Scottish Borders. More generally, the EPS has supported a number of local projects in various ways eg provision of consultation and then a project plan to increase frequency and quality of pupil dialogue and pupil - teacher dialogue during critical literacy lessons.

Key Challenges

- Education has made significant progress in improving outcomes for children and young people as referenced in the Children's Services Inspection report in 2016. As part of this improvement agenda significant progress is being made in embedding the strategic work of the EPS within the CYP improvement priorities. The focus for the strategic work of the EPS needs to be on building more capacity within universal services over time. EPS is in high demand, particularly in relation to work to support individual pupils, and there is a need to configure the service to maximise use of the collective resources of the EP team and reduce demand for individual work over time.
- The focus for both individual and strategic work for the EPS needs to be on supporting situations in which psychological knowledge and skills can be most effective in improving outcomes for children and young people. Stakeholder data relating to EPS activity to support individual pupils indicates that whilst overall evaluations are generally very positive sometimes sizeable, minorities disagreed. In relation to consultation and advice (an area of activity which has grown in recent years as a proportion of overall activity), the service reflection, is that large multi-professional meetings where the EP has not had an ongoing role are not necessarily the most effective use of EP time. This requires further exploration to identify the implications for how most efficiently to focus service capacity to support positive outcomes.
- The range of and amount of current EP involvement in individual and developmental work increases the challenge of maintaining effective communication with stakeholders. The increasing centralised position of the EPS within the broader education structure and the agreement of strategic focus across the service will itself help to support and reinforce awareness of EP roles and functions. However, the EPS will need to be clearer in articulating where service requests are not in line with EPS priorities or capacity. This is evident from stakeholder data which indicates that the EPS needs to improve communication with all partners to more clearly communicate the roles and functions of Educational Psychology and to improve ongoing communication about work undertaken including ease of contact.
- The EPS needs to develop more robust self- evaluation methodology that is more systematically embedded in everyday practice and informs service development and planning.

Areas of strong practice

- **High profile casework:** As noted above EPS holds feedback that its work with high profile, challenging, vulnerable individual cases is highly valued by LA stakeholders and is considered to make a significant contribution to improving positive outcomes for children and young people. LA strategic partners report that the LA has a strong track record of resolution of the most complex cases; that levels of dispute are low; that the numbers of external placements are reducing significantly; that children are returning to the LA and that, overall, there is strong evidence of much more inclusive practice in LA schools. For example, it is noted that exclusions have significantly reduced. In the view of LA strategic partners the embedded EPS contribution within these processes to management of the most complex cases is of particular value.
- **Respectful and Participative Practice:** Stakeholder feedback strongly and consistently indicates that EPs actively promote children and young people, parents and carers to express their views and to have them listened to and taken seriously.
- **Literacy and Dyslexia Policy Development:** The EPS has had a lead role in supporting the development, with partners (including the Scottish Borders branch of Dyslexia Scotland) of the policy and procedures for children and young people with literacy difficulties including dyslexia. The EP role included the application of research knowledge in order to operationalise the national definition of dyslexia. The quality of the documentation developed has been independently endorsed by the Education Scotland lead for Inclusion and Dyslexia. The EPS led a comprehensive public consultation which engaged with a range of stakeholder groups. The EPS has provided substantial amounts of training at a range of levels to a range of groups, sustained consultation and support to develop practice in schools and has evaluated progress in implementation of the policy with SfL Teachers.
- **Promoting positive health and well-being of children and young people at a universal level:** The EPS had a lead role in the development of the LA Better Relationships Policy. This reconceptualised the historic Behaviour policy through a psychologically informed emphasis on the importance of positive relationships and belonging for well-being. The new policy was developed with key stakeholders and built on work undertaken by the EPS including the Nurture Training provided within the central CPD programme, and service consultation and training on theoretically compatible approaches and interventions including attunement, restorative, solution-orientated approaches, pupil participation, philosophy for children (P4C) and wellbeing sessions for NQT's. This psychologically informed emphasis on the importance of positive relationships underpins the work undertaken by the EPS to support individual children and young people either through consultation or intervention. Recently the LA has committed to rolling out the Growing in Confidence training as a large scale project to support the Better Relationships Policy by building capacity across universal services to ensure resilience in young people and develop positive emotional wellbeing.

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

The EPS aims to provide a service to all the children and young people attending Scottish Borders schools, ELCCs and Partnership provisions by working closely with them, their teaching and support staff, their families and a wide range of other agencies and third sector organisations. Additionally, the EPS provides a service to support children and young people from Scottish Borders who attend external schools. In recent years the EPS has developed closer working relationships with social work colleagues through locality and management co-location and an integrated records system. The new wider service management structure incorporates Social Work Services for children and young people and thus continues to provide a structure in which these working links can be maintained. The high rate of returns from children and family social workers in a practitioner stakeholder survey conducted in the last year indicates that very good progress has been made in recent years in achieving positive partnerships with social work colleagues. The overall priority now in terms of service improvement is to further develop working arrangements with Education colleagues within this new organisational structure as the CYP Service aims to further reduce inequalities, 'close the gap' for the most vulnerable and build capacity within families, communities and universal service provision.

Where are we now?

- The EPS has a visit pattern in place for all 70 SBC schools and partnership providers informed by a weighted time allocation model. The EPS allocates additional time to support SBC pupils placed outwith Scottish Borders, those attending primary enhanced provisions for pupils with additional support needs, Howdenburn and Wilton SEBN secondary provisions, Pre-School Home Visiting Service and Wheatlands Children's Unit. The EPS provides consultation as the basis of its service delivery. All casework or development work begins with consultation. Subsequent direct work with individual children and young people which involves assessment or intervention is discussed and agreed with relevant stakeholders during consultation. Where direct work is undertaken, the exact nature of the direct work is specified, and explicit advance consent is required. Over the course of session 2015-2016 the EPS actively supported **790** individual children and young people - through consultation only (616) or consultation plus direct work (174). The equivalent figure in session 2012-2013 was **519** - through consultation only (328) or consultation plus direct work (191). The EPS receives consistently high demand from stakeholders for work to support individual children and young people. In the past few years the EPS has made a concerted effort to reduce the number of open but inactive cases and in the past four years the percentage of inactive as a proportion of overall open cases has decreased significantly from 51% to 22%. During each of the last four years the percentage of all open cases which are consultation only (level 2 in service activity data notation) has positively increased (from 31% in session 2012-13 through to 61% in session 2015-16). Over the course of the last four years the proportion of active cases which are consultation-only has increased from 63% to 78% whilst the proportion of active cases where EPs provided both consultation and direct work has decreased from 37% to 22%. The highline message here is that over the last four years the service has supported a significantly greater number of children and young people by increasing the number of children and young people supported via consultation. This supports the vision for the CYPS for capacity building in universal

provision and developing resilience in families and community which in the long term will be of benefit to the young person's development as an independent lifelong learner.

- Over the last session 2015-16 the number of active cases supported by EPS was 790. The percentage activity for different age groups has remained fairly constant over the last four years but with some trends; specifically
 - 0-5 years: reduced from 7%-5%
 - P1-P7: has ranged from 65% - 60% (62% in session 2015-16)
 - S1-S4: risen from 25% to 29%
 - Post school age: risen from 3%-5%

The percentage of EPS activity for different sectors demonstrates, as would be expected, that the vast majority of children and young people supported by the EPS attend SBC schools (over 90%). Whilst the number of children and young people supported by the EPS attending independent sector schools is reducing the numbers supported by the EPS attending external LA schools has increased. The level of activity with Partnership providers in terms of absolute number of cases is very low, reflecting small time allocations. This potentially raises issues for follow-up, specifically:

- SBC LA school: the percentage of EPS activity ranged from 91-95% over last four years (93% in session 2015-16)
 - Independent schools: the percentage of EPS activity progressively reduced from 6%-3% over last four years
 - Partnership Nurseries: the percentage of EPS activity reduced from 1% to 0% over last four years which reflects the introduction of the Early Years Teacher Team which was established in August 2015, providing support and working with staff to develop strategies to support children's learning through regular visits to partner settings.
- External LA school: increased from 1-2% over last four years. The reducing EPS involvement with external independent schools reflects overall placement

data trends; the increased involvement with external LA schools implies greater joint engagement by social workers and EPs to support LAC .

- The stakeholder survey returns indicate the majority of parent/carers report EP's involvement was helpful to their child (59%) although a sizeable minority (21%) disagreed and a further sizeable minority was unsure (21%). A large majority (84%) positively evaluated the extent to which EPs had involved them in making decisions and in seeking and listening to their views (81%). A large majority (85%) indicated they would be happy to receive further support from the EPS. This data pattern prompts further questions regarding the explanation for those unsure or disagreeing regarding whether EP involvement was helpful. In the qualitative data, 50% of respondents, in response to 'what has been helpful?' highlighted provision of effective professional advice and actions which met pupil needs such as realistic goal setting and transition planning. Further analysis and follow-up regarding outcomes from EP involvement would be helpful. Interrogation of EPS activity data linked to stakeholder returns may be a helpful starting point. One possible explanation to explore is that low parent/carer contact (eg one-off parental consultation or professional consultation only) is more likely to lead to low satisfaction especially if there is coupled with poor communication regarding EP activity and outcomes achieved.

- Stakeholder survey returns indicate that overall, children and young people report high satisfaction with their involvement with the EPS. This is consistent with general feedback from children and young people received by EPs during consultations.
- Stakeholder survey returns from all SBC schools and Partnership Providers with experience of the EPS indicates a very strong majority positively evaluate the ethical stance and practice of the EPS. In relation to impact data, school staff overall report a fairly high level of satisfaction with the service that they receive as follows:
 - EPs overall makes an effective contribution to positive outcomes for children and young people (67% agree; 20% disagree).
 - EPs make a useful contribution to assessment and intervention for individual children and young people (66% agree; 23% disagree)
 - EPs work effectively with children, parents, carers, staff and other professionals to achieve positive outcomes (70%; 20% disagree)
 - EPs provide effective consultation and advice to parents, pupils and staff (77% agree; 17% disagree)
- There was greater disagreement about the effective contribution made by the EPS to the areas of schools strategic planning and staff professional development in the school returns. Organisationally, the means to address this role structurally and culturally is being actively developed. In the school survey, there was active agreement by approximately 50% of respondents that EPs supported schools to achieve aspects of its strategic improvement planning (47% agreed; 50% disagreed) and that EPs made a valued contribution to CPD of staff which aids staff in improving outcomes for children and young people (54% agreed; 36% disagreed). The recognition of the role of EPs to make a valuable contribution to research and development leading to better outcomes for children and young people was significantly less (27% agree; 33% disagree; 40% don't know). This reflects the service self-evaluation that the overall service profile in research and associated practice development is least developed. However significant progress has been made in 2016/2017 and very clear expectations have been set for greater impact in this area during session 2017/2018. Overall, practitioners in education and partner agencies indicate EPs work effectively with them to improve outcomes for children and young people (78%; 12% disagree). They report that the EPs provides them with high-quality advice and information (75%; 4% disagree) and that the EPs makes an effective contribution to working groups which support development of LA policies and practice (73% agree; 7% disagree). A very strong majority positively evaluate the ethical stance and practice of the service. As with parent-carer responses this stakeholder survey data highlights communication as an area for improvement. The second area for improvement is making a more effective contribution to practitioner professional learning and practice development. In relation to this second area, for example, a SWOT analysis from one of the HT groups –the Inclusion group- highlights as an opportunity from this, 'working more closely with educational psychologists'. Further consideration is now beginning to be given to systematic and targeted EPS involvement in large scale staff training programmes linked to strategic priorities which could potentially help to build on this.
- Stakeholder survey returns from EPs and follow up activity and discussion linked to this data and other data generated by the service indicates communication is effective between PEP and the team. The team consider they work hard to promote and maintain good

relationships within the wider community and that the EPS takes account of national context in planning and delivering services. Ethos questionnaire data and collated service strengths from PRD reviews emphasise the democratic management of the service and the mutually supportive ethos. The core service area for improvement identified the need to be clear about strategic direction and prioritisation of areas of focus. There were also comments linked to professional isolation in the context of the challenge of being locality based. In the EP stakeholder survey, although all EPs agreed that they enjoyed working in the service no EP strongly agreed. Team reflections indicate that whilst there is a strong sense of purpose within the team this is not reflected by the broader organisational context. EPs consider that there is not the opportunity to practice the 5 EP functions equally; in particular whereas there is 100% agreement that there is opportunity to practice consultation only 38% agree that there is equal opportunity to contribute to research and development. EPs noted that a crucial requirement for progress is the need for the strategic role of the EPS to be consistently recognised by education managers coupled with sustained clarity regarding focus. EPs have recognised the progress made in clarifying the focus for EPS and improved inclusivity of the EPS within the CYP Directorate and HT groups. The EPs see further development of this as crucial in supporting the wider strategic role of EPs; in particular, through development of Senior Lead Officer (SLO) links.

- The EPS undertakes a considerable range of non-casework training and development activity including programmes delivered through the LA's central CPD programme. Some of this activity is co-developed and delivered with partners outwith the EPS. However, rather than being centrally commissioned, this work is generally negotiated directly by the service or members of the service with schools and other partner agencies/or practitioner groups. In the EP stakeholder survey, all EPs indicate that they undertake training whereas only 54% of schools indicated that the EPs contribution to staff CPD is valued and aids staff in improving outcomes for children and young people. The apparent inconsistencies in stakeholder evaluations require further exploration; training evaluations at the point of delivery (and, in some cases, repeated deliveries over time) are overwhelmingly positive but questions remain regarding the reach and impact of this training. There is a need to realign training capacity of the EPS to more closely focus on and address LA strategic priorities. A sound basis for this lies in the development work undertaken by the EPS to support emergent LA policy and practice, for example, in the areas of inclusion and better relationships, dyslexia and the implications of research evidence for maximising teacher assistant impact. This work has received a number of positive evaluative comments from senior LA stakeholders; in particular, SLOs and Service Director. This feedback which includes more indirect feedback (eg from DHTs, Education Scotland Lead for Inclusion and Dyslexia) relates to development of draft policies and guidance as well as EPS contributions to the linked HT working groups (Teaching & Learning, Inclusion and Closing the Gap). This provides a sound basis for progressive collaborative engagement by the EPS to support the strategic priorities of the LA.
- The locality model has led to some service benefits for the EPS; in particular, increased partnership with social workers. In education, the introduction of the locality model and schools under shared headship has facilitated the EPS to develop some work across schools and to specialist teachers who work across school clusters.

- The consultation provided by the EPS to the Wilton Centre has been assessed by a School Review process as providing valuable advice and guidance.
- Some SBC schools have indicated that they dislike having part-time EPs. This feedback is linked to implications for reduced flexibility for schools to set meeting dates over the course of the week. This is one factor to be considered in relation to the EPS service review. This needs to be considered in relation to other factors such as what expectations from schools re EP capacity to respond immediately are reasonable, service challenges with recruitment and the overall structure for service delivery which will best support the EPS to deliver all agreed priorities, including, in particular developmental and strategic work.

How do we know?

The EPS recurrently collects and reviews activity data for work with individual children and young people and training. This is enhanced by reflective dialogue and supplemented by feedback received from stakeholders regarding the impact of EPS work on outcomes for children and young people.

Current EPS sources of evidence include:

- Questionnaire surveys from SBC Schools, external schools, Parents/carers, children/young people, practitioners, administrative staff and EPs.
- Casework Activity data
- Activity Data for non-casework (Training, Development, Research)
- Stakeholder feedback regarding systemic/development activity (eg) Dyslexia Policy Consultation & subsequent practitioner surveys
- Feedback surveys from training and development activity
- PEP feedback from Head Teachers, ASN manager, other SLO's, Chief Officer Schools, Social Work Managers and Service Director and partnership managers and staff
- Ongoing feedback from parents, children and young people received by EPs during EP engagement with them as part of the ongoing assessment/intervention processes
- SBC School Review reports
- SWOT analysis from Inclusion Group
- Complaints received from stakeholders
- Ongoing discussion regarding service delivery models with VSE core group.
- Reflection on practice by individual EPs, reflection on practice in peer supervision, ongoing discussion and review of EPS practice in EP Team meetings and Development Days.

What are our strengths?

- EPS practice is considered by stakeholders to be highly inclusive, respectful, participative and ethical.
- The EPS promotes inclusive practice and delivers support, valued by stakeholders in consultation and, in prioritised cases, direct work for a high number of individual children and young people with additional support needs, mainly in mainstream SBC schools. Embedded use of consultation as a first step ensures EPS capacity is maximised and ensures participation of parents and young people is foregrounded from the beginning.

- The EPS has extended its links with children and family social work through locality working and shared information management systems. The EPS has increased its joint work with social workers to support some of the most vulnerable young people including those in mainstream external placements. The EPS is also involved in supporting the operational planning group for LAC. Joint training with social work colleagues, explicitly linked to LA planning and priorities (eg We Can & Must Do Better training in support of learners who are LAC, is also provided. This work is positively valued by partners.
- The EPS has engaged in strategic and ongoing developmental work which is valued by relevant education managers across a range of practice areas noted above. The dyslexia policy development work is an example of this.
- The EPS, drawing upon its knowledge of psychological theory and research, has demonstrated it can deliver (and in a number of areas on a sustained basis) training that is positively evaluated at the point of delivery. The EPS is responsive to CPD requests identified by schools/practitioner teams. Exemplar areas where EPS has delivered sustained and substantial training over several years and across contexts in a number of areas, include:
 - Dyslexia / difficulties with Literacy development
 - Supporting learners with identified Additional Support needs - particularly learners with ASD, ADHD, learners who are Looked After
 - Practitioner Enquiry
 - Uses of video-based approaches to support assessment, attunement, professional reflection and pedagogic practice
 - Attachment, Nurturing Approaches, Resilience, Supporting learners who have experienced Trauma
 - Participation, Person Centred Planning
 - Peer mediation / Peer support
 - Solution-focused approaches
 - Lego Club (to support social communication/interaction).

Where are our challenges?

- The service is very widely deployed to address a very wide population of individual needs in a high number of educational settings. Capacity is limited but demand remains consistently high. The service has increased the number of individual children and young people being supported. However, analysis of the stakeholder data has raised questions for the EP team regarding whether the current approach to service delivery represents the most effective use of EP time. There is a need for further follow up to identify/collect data and analyse/reflect in relation to comparative outcomes. Moreover there is also a need to ensure there is sufficient capacity to deliver consistently and in a sustained way identified strategic priorities and to develop an EP structure that can ensure this.
- The service has developed a range of data linked, in particular, to service activity in relation to individual children and young people. Analysis of this data poses a number of questions. There is a need to progress and extend the analyses further by triangulating the data obtained and seeking additional stakeholder feedback where necessary. It is apparent from activity data and stakeholder data that there are differences between EPs regarding the patterns of activity, particularly with regard to direct work regarding individual children and young people.

- It is not demonstrable that the current data held adequately explains expressed views. There is a need to consider structural change that will enhance consistent positive stakeholder feedback whilst fostering greater consistency of service delivery across a decentralised EPS team where individual EPs work with a large number of establishments which differ significantly in terms of their needs and priorities for service involvement.

What are our next steps for Improvement?

- To re-locate the EPS centrally to enhance team working and mutual-support and support development of strategic and operational links with SLO's. This will facilitate EPS engagement in strategic development work and support consistency of EP knowledge, skills and practice.
- To continue to embed the work of the EPS into the LA wide strategic HT groups.
- To work with senior management team to agree EPS priorities (informed by LA data and strategic plans) and update the EPS plan to be included within the wider C&YP Service plan, associated plans and outcome monitoring systems as appropriate. Clear priorities for delivering training at scale, and the mechanisms required to achieve this, should be included in the plan.
- To follow up from stakeholder and activity data:
 - Partnership cases where children and young people require intense and sustained support. There is a need to establish what contributions from EPs are most valued and how these lead to positive outcomes for children and young people.
 - The EPS needs to communicate more clearly the nature/scope of our mutually agreed role(s) to all stakeholders.
- Agreement at LA level regarding the role of EPs in supporting School Improvement Planning. Review the current EPS processes and materials for supporting this and implement eg by developing a clear structure for incorporating these discussions with schools into regular EP planning meetings perhaps on a cluster basis for efficiency.
- The EPS is not currently able to robustly evidence impact of training upon professional practice or upon positive outcomes for learners. The EPS needs to develop more systematic approaches to gathering and evaluating data regarding impact of training and development work.
- Review the EPS Service Self Evaluation & Improvement policy in the light of the above and implement.

How good is our leadership?

Where are we now?

- The EPS is nested within the CYPS Service .The LAN and the Children’s Services Inspection comment positively on the quality of leadership and the rate of improvement .There is evidence that the quality of leadership is good with very good capacity for further improvement .The new structures in Education and Social Work will further enhance the strategic leadership capacity of the CYPS Service.
- The PEP is line managed by the CYPS Service Director. This has allowed the PEP to contribute to the CYPS Directorate evidenced by PEP participation in, and leadership of, a range of strategic and operational groups and project work. Feedback received suggests that the work undertaken on behalf of ANMaT and PoPP, for example, is highly valued.
- In relation to PoPP, the Clinical Nurse Manager within NHS Borders who has responsibility for Health Visiting, School Nursing and District Nursing Manager values the leadership provided by the PEP and his role in bringing together personnel from both NHS Borders and SBC to take forward the PoPP programme in the Borders. The longer term preventative impact and outcomes of the PoPP programmes which are well documented are now being identified within local evaluation of the programme. The Nurse Manager has indicated that the PEP acts as a conduit between strategic boards, middle management and frontline staff, supporting the strong direction and commitment regarding partnership working in the Borders set out by strategic leaders. This has led to the continued success of the programmes in the Borders in terms of reach and uptake.
- On EP questionnaire data all EPs indicate that communication between PEP and team is effective (six strongly agree) and well led (5 strongly). Four of eight EPs spontaneously identified the management support and professional knowledge provided by the PEP on the open-ended question asking about service strengths. All EPs felt they had opportunities for joint work with other EPs and were involved in decision making within service. Two EPs did not agree that service priorities were achieved effectively; this was explained in terms of a lack of stable context to work in. The EPS ethos questionnaire data indicates that the top descriptors identified for the service are ethical, supportive, democratic, client focused, respectful, caring, friendly, busy, crisis driven, welcoming and professional. The service summary in relation to crisis driven indicates that this was a reference to multiple priorities and changing structures and procedures. Whilst EPs have felt disengaged from wider LA strategic priorities and a majority have felt they lacked opportunities to engage in research and development these issues are now being addressed through agreement with the Service Director of long term strategic priorities for the EPS and the continued successful development of the Inclusion for All strategy .
- The PEP has had a lead role in a number of key strategic developments undertaken by the service including the dyslexia policy (chaired the working group) and the better relationships policy (acted formally as professional adviser). The PEP has long established a team ethos which is consistently identified by team as democratic and mutually supportive. The small size of the Service necessitates distributive leadership skills and distributed leadership roles are well embedded.
- The PEP has actively involved team members in the key strategic developments undertaken by the service and each of these developments has led to EP involvement in HT groups.

Team members have responsibility for chairing team meetings, contributing to development days, leading professional reading activities and cascading training within the Service. All members of the team contribute to Service improvement planning and area(s) of service development.

- The PEP communicates service needs to Service Director and the PEP is responsive to LA requests for service. EPS working groups have been re-structured to align with newly formed HT groups to support strategic involvement by EPS with wider service priorities. This is providing a helpful focus for the development work of the service.
- The EPS has a core vision, values and service aims supported by a range of policies and support materials designed to support consistency of EP practice. The service, supported by the PEP, brings a strong theoretical and empirical coherence internally which is reflected in individual pieces of commissioned work.
- Team meeting and development structures have been revised on an ongoing basis to address the challenges of a decentralised team. Changing frequency of meetings and developing service working groups and peer supervision structure embedded in team meetings are examples of this. Case studies and journal article reviews currently are two means regularly used to support a focus on the development of psychological skills and knowledge. The PEP led on the development of a substantial piece of service work on consistency of practice which has led to the development of a number of service tools and materials. Joint working and partnership across the team is actively encouraged eg joint delivery of training and development work etc.
- Individual Performance Review and Development (PRD) plans are linked to Service priorities to take forward the wider priorities and objectives of the Service and the Local Authority. The PEP collates service level data from PRD's to feed into team development and planning activity.
- The PEP provides accessible line management support for members of the team. The PEP has provided training and developed and provided a model for practice coupled with, and informed by, staff supervision questionnaire data repeated over time. All EPs participate in group peer supervision. Mutual support and challenge is embedded within the supportive team culture.
- The PEP has led the stakeholder survey generation and analysis of casework activity data and team reflection arising from both data sets including in relation to individual variations in practice. Individual EP data is generated and shared to support reflection and support greater consistency of practice.

How do we know?

- Team meeting agendas/minutes
- Development day documentation including agendas, support materials, presentations, self-evaluative data, products and summaries .
- Questionnaire surveys from EPs and from SBC Schools, external schools, Parents/carers, children/young people, practitioners, administrative staff.
- EPS policies, guidance and support materials
- Individual PRD plans and reviews
- Supervision training materials and evaluation data and summaries.

What are our strengths?

- Service values reflect EPS service aims and are evidenced in practice which is consistently evaluated by stakeholders as respectful and inclusive. This reflects the corporate vision of the wider service and drives sustained involvement in complex and challenging cases.
- The collegiate and supportive leadership of the service is consistently recognised by EPs. Maingrade EPs lead and support development activities within and outwith the Service. For example, externally:
 - leading training and CPD activities at school, cluster and Authority level on a wide range of subjects
 - leading contributions on behalf of the service to LA Policy and practice development activity e.g. activities linked to Dyslexia policy, Better Relationships policy.
 - Representing the EPS on LA level planning groups (eg CPOG, foster panel, GIRFEC Leads Group, HT Themed Groups etc)
- The PEP contributes to a wider leadership team within CYPS and consistently facilitates the involvement of the EPs in key LA strategic priority areas.
- Members of the team maintain strong working relationships with schools and other council services and partner agencies. Links with children and families social work are particularly strong

Where are our challenges?

- The EPS is a small team with a number of members working part time. This provides challenges in providing equal opportunities for engaging all team members equitably in whole service activities and ensuring protected time to allow for collaborative work. Scottish Borders is a large geographical area and EPs are widely distributed across locality offices. This can be fragmenting and isolating for individual EPs and can act as a barrier to the facilitation of joint working. The EPS has recently experienced challenges with maintaining the full staff complement
- The high number of educational establishments supported by the EPS can impact on availability to respond to requests for involvement systemic work.
- The EPS needs to ensure targeted and sustained involvement in an achievable number of local improvement priorities to ensure a meaningful contribution and impact.

What are our next steps for improvement?

- The EPS development plan will be situated within the CYPS plan and must clearly articulate how identified actions within both plans will build capacity in universal service provision consistently across education provisions; enabling all the nationally agreed roles of the EPS to make an equal and effective contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people.
- The EPS needs to sustain engagement with corporately agreed priorities at scale across the service. To achieve this the EPS needs to reduce the breadth of developmental work engaged with and also to more explicitly focus more of its work supporting individual children and young people on building capacity at the universal level.

How good is our capacity for improvement?

Where are we now?

The EPS is located within a significantly and widely recognised improving CYPS Service (as reported in the Local Area Network (LAN) report, the Children's Services Inspection Report, feedback from the Scottish Government and within SBC's own self-evaluation processes) which has strong capacity for improvement owing to the high quality of leadership and commitment from all senior officers and leaders at all levels.

- The schools in the Scottish Borders are demonstrating significant capacity for improvement within a culture of strong leadership, significantly developing self-evaluation processes and professional learning and collaboration at all levels.
- The ASN Service is well led and attitudes towards children with additional support needs have vastly improved. The PEP, the Directorate Management Group and the new ASN Strategic Lead Officer are developing structures and processes which are focused on enhancing inclusive practice, fulfilling ASN legislation, meeting learners needs and improving outcomes for children and young people.
- The EPS service has a committed and professional staff team with a range of professional knowledge and skills. The EPS demonstrates a theoretically coherent and empirically application of psychology. To make best use of this expertise, operational and strategic links with SLOs require to be strengthened. Since March 2011 the EPS has been a decentralised service with EPs based in locality offices. The plan now, building on other recent re-structuring in CYPS is to re-locate the team centrally with touch – down facilities in locality offices to support most effective deployment of staff as they deliver local roles. Building on recent discussion, working arrangements need to be established for how the EPS and SLOs will regularly link operationally and strategically.
- The EPS team is committed to ongoing professional development in line with LA PRD processes, British Psychological Society and Health Care Professionals Council regulations.
- The Service has PRD cycle and this is linked to the Service Improvement objectives. At the next review these should be reviewed to reflect LA priorities for the EPS.
- The EPS is a small team with which has a strong culture of effective distributive leadership and inclusion for all team members and shared, participative decision making within the team.
- The EP service is well led and democratic.
- The Service Improvement priorities have been streamlined to sharpen focus on addressing key areas linked to the LA wider priorities.
- The EPS demonstrates an ongoing commitment to self-evaluation and improvement and has engaged in data gathering exercises from a wide range of stakeholders⁴ and associated self-evaluation activities to support service improvement and meet the needs of stakeholders and the LA.
- The EPS has a service guideline on Service Evaluation and Continuous Improvement. There is a strong and active focus on reflective practice and self-evaluation at all levels. Regular group supervision and informal line management supervision is prioritised at fortnightly meetings.

⁴ seeking feedback from children and young people, parents/carers, partner agencies, SBC and external schools and admin staff

Additional supervision within the team and line management supervision is also available and provided.

How do we know?

- Development day documentation including agendas, support materials, presentations, self-evaluative data, products and summaries .
- Questionnaire surveys from EPs and from SBC Schools, external schools, Parents/carers, children/young people, practitioners, administrative staff.
- EPS policies, guidance and support materials
- Individual PRD plans and reviews and service collations of strengths and weaknesses
- Supervision training materials and evaluation data and summaries
- EPS ethos questionnaire
- Team meeting minutes and records of development and evaluative activity
- Audit of EP knowledge and skills in particular areas of practice which identified CPD priorities.

What are our Strengths?

- A wide range of knowledge and experience within the EP team and a strong commitment to continuing improvement. Established university links through long term secondment of one EP team member. A track record of providing competently theorised and empirically informed psychological advice and strategies
- Supportive and inclusive ethos within the EPS.
- Consistently shared values and ethical and theoretical principles within the team.
- There is effective communication between the PEP and the team.
- There is a focus on collaborative working across the EP team reinforced through working groups and joint collaborative engagement in training. The EPS has a regular cycle of development days to support this activity. This provides a sound basis for development work undertaken and for effective engagement by EPs with strategic leads within the wider CYPS.

What are our Challenges?

- To manage the demands for high levels of support for individual children and young people across a wide geographical area whilst also maximising efficient use of the EPS in building capacity within schools.
- In the light of the above, to prioritise time to address LA strategic priorities via EPS systemic work focusing on raising attainment in relation to dyslexia, literacy and closing the gap and also supporting better relationships and inclusion.
- To improve communication re EPS roles and functions to deliver the above.
- To develop self-evaluation approaches that will allow us to evaluate impact of EPS casework, training and development activities longitudinally and support allied agendas for an integrated approach within the wider service.
- To manage the tension between EP deployment to area offices and the need for greater professional support for EPs from EPs and more effective integration with central LA level systemic working and planning processes and operational decisions.

What are our next steps for improvement?

In order to redesign our model of service delivery with the aim of maximising efficient use of the EPS in building capacity within schools the EPS should:

- Discuss with stakeholders and senior managers the impact of the high level of involvement in individual casework and the barrier this poses for fuller engagement in the range of Currie functions and for supporting schools to achieve aspects of their strategic plans.
- Critically consider the national scanning and scoping cycle for Educational Psychology Services and implications for models of service delivery.
- Scope out more specifically with partners the particular focus for the EPS in relation to the LA priorities for raising attainment in relation to dyslexia, literacy and closing the gap and also supporting better relationships and inclusion. Particular consideration needs to be given to the strategic linkage between Better Relationships and Growing in Confidence.
- Further develop communication processes within the evolution of developing structures, in particular, connections with Senior Lead Officers (SLOs) to support ongoing EPS contribution to local and national priorities
- Explore with partners how the EPS can most effectively contribute to the design and implementation of long-term evaluation in respect of teaching and learning and health and wellbeing developments across the Authority

In addition, and linked to the above, the EPS needs to improve communication with all stakeholders by:

- Communicating EPS role more clearly to parents/carers
- More timeous sharing of information with all stakeholders
- Keeping parents/carers informed about work conducted with their child or young person
- Improving access to EPs to ensure stakeholders know how to contact us

Appendix 1

Children and Young People

People Department

