

## **Aberdeenshire Educational Psychology Service Review and Planning Analysis Session 2017-2018**

Aberdeenshire Educational Psychology Service (EPS) engage in review and planning meetings with their schools during three key points within the academic year. The purpose of these meetings is to allow the EPS and schools to jointly reflect upon and evaluate their work together over the given period. This enables them to consider where things have been going well, what improvements could be made and to identify next steps to provide a focus for their future work together.

The current summary draws together the key points derived from the collated May/June 2018 review and planning meetings.

### **Analysis process**

A thematic analysis was used to identify key themes emerging from the review and planning meetings

### **Participating Schools**

Responses were received from 82 of the 171 schools across Aberdeenshire. The analysis that follows therefore reflects a total response rate of 48%.

#### **Question 1: What has gone well in our work together this year?**

Responses to this question were themed as:

##### **Collaborative working:** mentioned on 89 occasions by 74 schools

- This theme included multi-agency working, informals, child and parent involvement, positive relationships. A number of comments focussed on the link person-EP relationship being open and trusting, and of having shared values. A number of comments also focussed on the appreciation of EPs' knowledge and familiarity with their school context

##### **Capacity building:** mentioned on 58 occasions by 51 schools

- This theme included training/development work, sharing of ideas/resources, cluster input, support and challenge within conversations (many schools value the learning possible within informal conversations with their EP), policy/procedural advice.

##### **Direct Work:** mentioned on 47 occasions by 45 schools

- This theme included: consultation meetings, assessment/observation, support with individual planning (within this theme, there were 10 comments noting the change in quality of a child's meeting e.g. more solution-focused, positive, offering a different perspective)

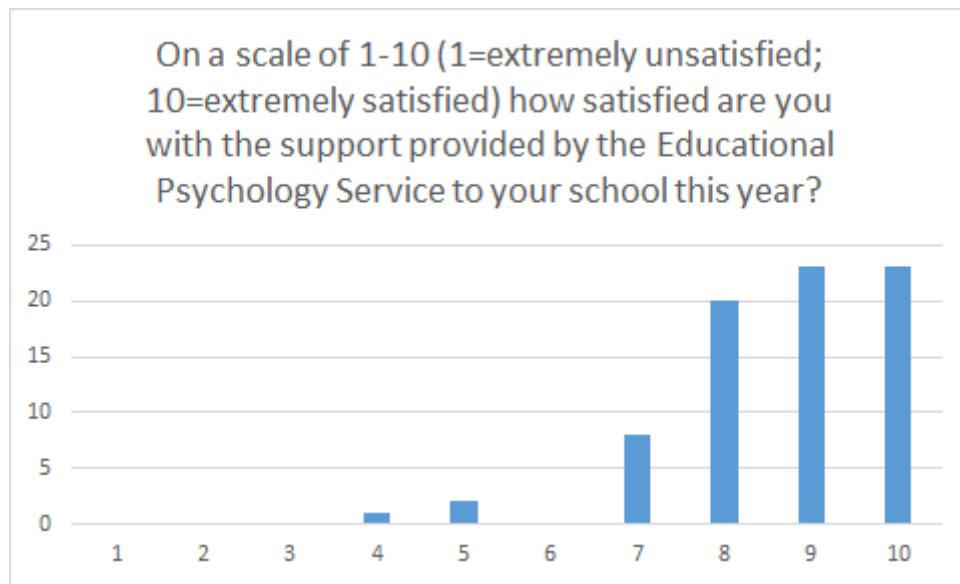
**Organisation:** mentioned on 69 occasions by 60 schools

- This theme included comments mainly describing visit planning/timetabling and prioritising, defined roles and responsibilities, availability/responsiveness/flexibility

**Question 2: On a Scale of 1-10 (1= extremely unsatisfied; 10= extremely satisfied) how satisfied are you with the support provided by the Educational Psychology Service to your school this year?**

Responses ranged from 4-10, with the majority being 8, 9 or 10.

Ratings from 5 schools were not available



**Question 3: How could our work together be more effective?**

A significant number of responses mentioned a wish for more time and more visits from EPS. A significant number also expressed a desire for consistency of EP and the benefits this gave in terms of building relationships and familiarisation of the EP with school staff, pupils and the needs of the school in general. This related in part to the need for cover arrangements this session due to staff absences. A small number of schools highlighted that they would like 'more of the same'.

On 2 occasions schools mentioned that work had been 'skewed' by the arrival in school of new pupils with significant additional support needs or by work required for tribunal preparation.

Other responses were themed as follows:

**Making time for informal consultation:** 17 responses by 17 schools highlighted the value of information consultations and the need to make time for this in EP visits. 3 comments suggested the use of skype calls for informal consultations between school visits. There was a recognition that informal consultations can support early intervention. The need to review informal consultations was mentioned by some respondents e.g. 'consider revisiting informals as a matter of course'.

**Organisation:** Organisational aspects of service delivery featured highly in the responses: 15 comments by 15 schools. Comments and suggestions centred on better organisation of EP visits including prioritisation of meetings EP attends (getting 'smarter about priorities'). Particularly in the academies the need for better diary management by school staff was highlighted. Suggestions included looking at EP diary during pastoral care meetings, planning visits well ahead, agreeing dates for MAAP meetings at the start of the session.

Some comments related to constraints within the school e.g. difficulties in releasing staff for meetings.

**Greater strategic/whole school/cluster focus.** 21 comments by 19 schools related to the need for the EP to have a strategic focus within the school in addition to individual child and family work, and recognition of the need to set time aside for this. Typical comments were 'looking at EP role across the school rather than individual cases', 'more whole school training, upskilling and capacity building', 'EP work building on school and cluster aims.' EPS support for Visible Learning was specifically mentioned by 3 schools.

**Service Delivery:** some comments related specifically to aspects of service delivery: 'more support with higher tariff cases'; 'more observations of children'; 'more advice re: mental health', 'student focus groups to find out more about the learning experience at school'. The importance of pupil voice and including children in meetings was mentioned by a small number of respondents. Some comments highlighted the importance of being clear about the change desired and indicators of success.

Training and development were mentioned: e.g. Practitioner Enquiry, workshops for parents, the need for a 'refresher' for staff on the staged assessment/consultation model.

**Communication and partnership working:** The importance of good communication and partnership working with other agencies was highlighted in a few comments: 'better and more effective channels between EPS and ASL staff'; 'Widening access to EPS beyond guidance'; 'greater understanding of roles in multi-agency working'; 'collaboration with other support agencies in school e.g. IP Teacher'

**Question 4: The EPS operate a consultation model of service delivery. What has been your experience of informal, formal and follow up consultations? (This includes the nature, content and response times of our formal and follow-up consultation records)**

- 68 schools recorded **positive comments** about the use of consultation as a model of service delivery. Including the following:
  - Early intervention (specifically informal consultations) – 25
  - Collaborative problem solving (including sharing strategies) – 20
  - Clarity of next steps/evidencing impact – 15
  - Clarity, accuracy and speed of minutes – 15
  - Timely arrangement of formal consultations - 11
  - Reassuring to those involved – 8
  - Staff development/confidence – 5
  - 6 schools made **no comment or felt they had had minimal experience this year in order to make comment**
- The follow suggestions for **improvements** were made:
  - Increasing understanding of the consultation model - 8
  - More time for informal consultation – 6
  - Improvements to the speed of minutes (balanced with an appreciation about service capacity) - 6
  - Holding more joint informal consultations (with groups of schools/staff) – 3
  - Make more use of consultation (general) - 2
- **Specific challenges mentioned**
  - Concerns around time allocation/staffing impacting on ability to hold follow up consultations – 3

- No mechanism for “tracking” previous informal consultations – 2
- Specific issues around recording/minutes - 2
- Managing different expectations (schools/agencies/parents) regarding the role of the EP
- Informal consultation perceived as unnecessary step in order to get EP formally involved 1
- Model doesn’t always fit with wider system(specifically, the level of need may change at particular points in child’s life but the EP won’t necessarily have been involved on an ongoing basis so may have missed some information)- 1

**Question 5: Looking into the new session, how could the EPS support with any training/development issues emerging from work at the case work level?**

Responses to this question covered the following topics

- Attachment/Nurture (29)
- Visible Learning (27) (of which 7 were specifically feedback)
- Resilience (13)
- Autistic Spectrum Conditions/ASC friendly schools (10)
- Positive relationships/Restorative/De-escalation: 10
- Mindset/Learning Pit (9)
- Early Years Cognitive Skills (7)
- Literacy (5)
- Child's Voice (4)
- Sensory Processing (4)
- Family Learning (4)
- Emotional Literacy (4)
- Numeracy (4)
- Emerging literacy (3)
- Tracking/Monitoring/evidencing impact (3)
- Early Years (general) (3)
- Dyslexia/Dyslexia Friendly Schools (3)
- Little Learners (3)
- Mental Health/Wellbeing/Anxiety (3)
- Person-Centred Organisation Planning (2)
- Talkboost (2)
- Involvement in cluster strategic groups (2)
- Outdoor Learning (2)
- EP/CRH procedures (2)
- Practitioner Enquiry (2)
- memory skills (2)

- Cognitive skills/Metacognition (2)

Other topics were mentioned on an individual school basis but are not detailed above.