

Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

Inclusion service

Portsmouth educational psychology team



The Portsmouth educational psychology team is part of the inclusion service. We work with staff, parents and children and young people from 0 - 25 years old in nurseries, mainstream and special schools, as well as colleges. We use our psychological expertise to create positive change.

We take a holistic approach, supporting all areas of development, helping children and young people to reach their full potential.

Our core purpose is to use psychology to listen to, learn with, and support growth and change in children, families and their educational communities.

Our work is underpinned by principles of relational practice which is child centred, and collaborative. We work with others, rather than doing to, or doing for others. We seek to build capacity in education through work at a systemic level, supporting reflection to bring about change to belief systems, policy, and practice.

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How to make the most of your Educational Psychology Service Level Agreement

We encourage schools and EPs to work together collaboratively to consider how they can best use their hours, especially when it feels like there are so many competing demands. The following are a guide as to how EP time could be used.



Time allocated is based on the complexity of the work that is commissioned and the level of involvement required. In some cases, more than six hours will be required.

Early intervention, consultation and assessment

Early intervention:

Evidence shows that intervening early is an effective way of addressing needs because it allows for timely identification and support, which can prevent issues escalating. By intervening early, professionals can provide targeted assistance that addresses the root causes of problems, leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes. A proactive approach not only leads to better long-term results but also reduces the overall level of input required over time.

Educational psychologists can support schools to identify needs of pupils as soon as possible, to put in place support when it is first needed.

Early intervention can involve working with children at SEND support level but can also involve staff training and supervision.



Consultation and assessment:

A key part of EP assessment involves sharing a psychological perspective of the child or young person's needs and the necessary approaches and interventions that will lead to better outcomes for them. All assessment work will only be carried out with parents/carers consent.

We believe that consultation and assessment should involve:

- **Working together:** actively involving the child or young person and those who know them best, for example parents/carers and school staff
- **Assessment over time**: bringing together information about what has been tried previously and how the child or young person has responded
- **Reviewing the context:** taking account of the wider factors that may be influencing the child or young person's progress
- **Forward looking:** looking ahead to plan relevant strategies and actions

The specific strategies used will be chosen within a collaborative process where those involved work together to establish a shared understanding of the child or young person.

What assessment techniques might educational psychologists draw upon to assist them?

Consultation: Assessment may primarily involve EP contact with adults who know the child or young person well. This way of working makes particularly efficient use of time and can be equally as effective as spending time directly with the child or young person.

Observation: When the assessment involves the EP meeting the child or young person, this may consist of observing and working alongside them on a task they are currently working on in class.

Standardised assessment: Sometimes we use tests that assess skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes. This will allow us to compare against others who are of a similar age. Where this is so, the EP will explain the meanings of test scores and the limits of what can be concluded. This will be included in our reporting of assessment outcomes.

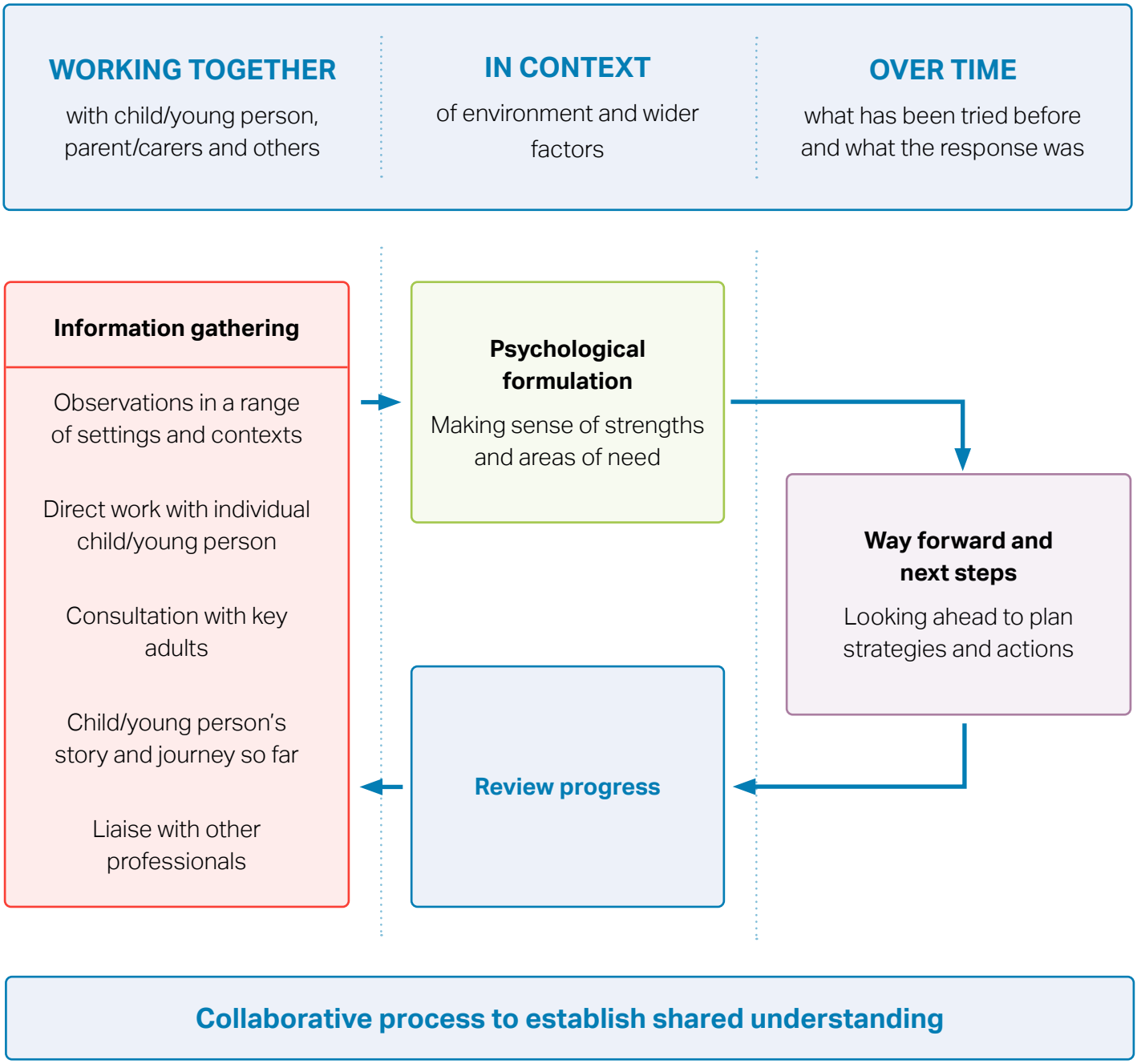
Dynamic assessment: Increasingly, when EPs are working directly with a child or young person, they may adapt the assessment during the session and intervene, providing help as needed. This can help to understand, not only what the child or young person was able to achieve independently but also what they could be enabled to achieve, when given the appropriate type and amount of support. EPs will always be happy to discuss the details of such dynamic assessment approaches, how they have been used and what it tells us about teaching approaches.

Whatever assessment technique is most suited to the individual's circumstances, we always seek to use assessment tools that are sensitive to ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We also must consider how our own beliefs, values and attitudes may affect our assessment of children and young people and their learning context.

What will happen next?

The EP will produce a record outlining their involvement suggesting ways to change things for the better. They might advise that the child or young person, or adults at home or at school, do some things differently. It is always good practice to build in a review after a period of time to assess progress.

Educational psychology assessment



Training

The educational psychology team can provide training and workshops for continuing professional development (CPD) in a range of areas for both teaching and support staff. Whilst we can provide pre-recorded presentations and share them with you via Teams to enable your staff to access them as needed, we strongly encourage face to face training wherever possible as we believe it to be more effective. You can find examples of training that EPs are skilled in delivering below. However, we are equally happy to create bespoke packages in line with a school's individual needs. Please consult with your named link EP in the first instance.

Precision teaching:

This approach is for children making little or minimal progress with their literacy or maths, who require daily 1 to 1 bespoke and tailored interventions, to address gaps in their knowledge such as number bonds or high frequency words.

Supporting literacy needs:

This training provides schools with support to ensure they can meet the literacy needs of children in their classroom and apply evidence-based practice to supporting children in small group or 1 to 1 literacy interventions.

Executive functioning and meta-cognition:

This training provides an understanding of the components that underpin cognitive processes, such as attention, working memory and impulse control. It provides helpful strategies to support pupils with poor executive functioning.

Social stories and comic strip conversations:

This covers two approaches to supporting children with neurodiversity in understanding and navigating a range of complex social situations.

Maximising the impact of teaching assistants:

This provides a helpful summary of the latest research and guidance on how teachers and teaching assistants can work in partnership, ensure quality assessment for learning and make use of specific scaffolding strategies to foster children and young people's independence.

Emotion coaching:

A useful framework and evidence-based approach to providing children with the tools they need to regulate their own emotions.

How to provide support during sad or traumatic events:

The educational psychology team will offer free support to help staff in educational settings support their community through traumatic events, ensuring immediate care and fostering a resilient, compassionate workplace.

Nurture training:

Nurture-based principles support staff in educational settings with running interventions. This includes key steps, activities and structures as well as exploring a range assessment and review processes to support improved outcomes for children.

Enabling staff to support children with social, emotional and mental health needs

The EP team believes that all behaviour is a form of communication motivated by children (and adults) trying to get their needs met. We can offer psychological advice to schools to put in place support plans for children. Plans will be based on what the behaviour is communicating, what adaptions we can make to the child or young person's immediate environment and what additional skills need to be taught, alongside more typical reinforcement strategies that might help motivate and shape behaviour.

The EP team can also provide therapeutic intervention and support for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs as well as support for the wellbeing of school staff. This support can come in the form of direct work with children and young people, indirect work supporting members of school staff, parent/carers or those who utilise the whole school system.

Each piece of work can be commissioned through consultation with your named school link EP, to identify the most appropriate approach and to identify the length of involvement that is likely to be required. You can find several examples of therapeutic interventions that EPs are skilled in delivering. If you require further information, please discuss this with your school EP.

Motivational interviewing:

An approach aiming to elicit behaviour change.

Narrative approaches:

Using creative approaches to capture an individual's strengths in order to help them identify positive steps forward. This can include Beads of Life, Therapeutic Story Writing and the Tree of Life.

Social skills support:

Small group work to improve social skills and communication. This can include interventions such as Talk About or Lego therapy.

Circle of friends:

An intervention to provide social support.

Staff supervision:

Small group supervision sessions co-facilitated by an educational psychologist to provide a safe and reflective space. This allows for challenges and complex issues to be shared and discussed, providing peer to peer and professional support.

Person centred planning:

Circle of adults and PATH meetings use large scale visual representation to facilitate forward planning for a young person supported by people who are important to them.

The Emotional Literacy Support Advisor (ELSA) Programme

Emotional literacy support advisors are required to complete six days of training provided by the educational psychology team. As part of our commitment to ensuring high quality practice, it is essential that all the training days are attended and that ELSAs receive half termly supervision, provided by the educational psychology team.

ELSA supervision provides:

- casework support through the application of psychological perspectives
- supports ELSAs in setting and reviewing appropriate targets through case studies and group discussion
- enables additional training and discussion in areas of interest by ELSAs
- facilitates distribution of information about useful resources
- gives access to peer support
- facilitates shared problem solving
- protects ELSAs by ensuring that they work within their area of competence and expertise whilst escalating more complex casework to the relevant trained professional



Ways of working

Portsmouth educational psychology team and schools - working together

EPs have agreed ways of working with schools, to ensure that EP time is utilised well and to produce the best outcomes in relation to supporting children and young people. The below summarises what you can expect from us and our expectations of schools when it comes to working in partnership together.

Our part	Your part
Support, negotiate and guide planning of EP involvement for children and young people at planning meetings at the beginning of each term.	Complete all relevant sections of the request for involvement/parental consent forms, including gaining signed consent from the person who has parental responsibility for the child and email to the EP **a minimum of 1 week before planned EP involvement**. This gives us time to plan what we are going to do with the child/young person and pick up the resources we need for the work.
Support, negotiate and guide planning of EP involvement for children and young people at planning meetings at the beginning of each term.	Notify EP of any changes (e.g. child or young person is not in school, staff are not able to be released, parents cannot come in etc) before the EP comes into school and when possible, **a minimum of 1 week before planned visits**.
Consult with staff and parents and carry out assessment work for agreed pupils to help you to understand the needs of children/young people and identify the best way forward to support them. Work collaboratively ensuring that pupils, parents/ carers and school staff have the opportunity to be involved in EP consultation and assessment work.	Release staff to meet with EP for **a minimum of 1hr per child or young person**, have a private room available for EP to work in, invite parents in to meet with EP and school staff together.
Provide a written record of involvement within four weeks of completing work. Please be aware that this time frame may be affected by times of high demand on EP team's capacity.	Share and discuss records of involvement with relevant school staff. Update individual learning and behaviour plans as appropriate. Notify EP in plenty of time if a record of involvements will be needed by particular dates.

Please note: EPs can only work with children and young people where discussion with staff has taken place and signed parental consent has been gained. EPs will not always be able to accommodate last minute changes and when a week's notice of any changes is not given to the EP, they may not be able to rearrange the visit, and the school may forfeit the time purchased.

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Helpful questions for staff to consider before the EP visit:

1. **What is the problem you would like to consult the EP about?**
2. **What are your priority concerns (be specific)?**
3. **Who would be the best person to consult with the EP (who is best placed to be the agent of change)?**
4. **What steps have you taken to make sure you have a clear picture of the problem situation (i.e. assessment)?**
5. **What strategies have you already used to address these concerns?**
6. **What changes have you noted as a result of your actions?**
7. **How have you involved parents in this process?**
8. **What are their views?**
9. **How have you involved the child/young person in this process?**
10. **What are their views?**
11. **How would you like things to change?**
12. **What do you hope to get from working together?**

Contact details

For more information, please contact the educational psychology team on:

Portsmouth educational psychology team
Portsmouth City Council
Floor 4, Core 1
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth PO1 2EA
educationalpsychologyservice@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Produced by Portsmouth educational psychology team

Principal educational psychologist: Victoria Parker
victoria.parker@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

You can request this information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 023 9268 8781

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