

## How educational psychologists support children and young people with SEND

Educational Psychologists (EPs) work within the Local Authority in partnership with education settings (early years, schools, and alternative provision and further education colleges), families, and other practitioners to help children and young people (CYP) have an improved experience of education by achieving success in their learning and their social and emotional development.

Education settings are responsible for ensuring that the educational needs of CYP with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) are met. This involves early identification of need, assessing and supporting them towards achieving identified outcomes. Education settings are required to take action to remove any barriers to learning (which includes making reasonable adjustments) and to put in place special education provision to help the CYP make progress. Education settings are expected to record and monitor progress through a Termly Support Plan (TSP) which should be developed in partnership with the CYP and their parent/carer.

If, despite this action, the CYP still does not make the expected progress then specialist support, such as that provided by an EP may be requested.

EPs play an important role in providing support to the CYP, their parent/carer and the education setting. This support can take a variety of forms based on direct and/or indirect involvement with the CYP. The EP will help the education setting to review the existing support that is in place, offer advice about teaching approaches, interventions and appropriate adaptations that might be needed to support the CYP's progress.

If the education setting feels that the CYP has significant difficulty with learning and or social and emotional development, and may require an education, health and care needs assessment leading towards an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP), they can make a formal request to the local authority, and demonstrate the action they have taken through the CYP's Termly Support Plan. If the local authority agrees to the assessment, then the EP will be called upon to provide information and advice to help the local authority decide whether an EHCP is required.

### **What is the role of an Educational Psychologist in the education health and care needs assessment?**

The EP will provide psychological advice for the local authority. In order to do this, the EP will consider what psychological assessment information is already available about the CYP and then decide whether additional psychological information is needed.

EPs use a range of assessment approaches and must make sure that their work meets expected professional standards. Further information about this is below.

### **What is the role of an Educational Psychologist in annual reviews and interim reviews?**

The local authority must review the EHCP at least annually. The meetings are led by the education setting as they are in the best position to know the CYP as they have the closest contact with them and their family, as well as the most up to date information about progress and next steps. These meeting must focus on progress towards achieving the outcomes listed in the EHCP, and on any

changes to be made to the outcomes or support needed to help the CYP continue to make progress.

In preparing for review meetings, education settings should be discussing the CYP's progress with parents/carers. If progress is not being made then the education setting should consider whether further school based assessment may be needed to help identify any additional support the CYP might need.

If there are worries that the CYP's needs have significantly changed, or that the provision may no longer be meeting the CYP's needs, then the education setting should request the involvement of an EP. This request should be made before the review meeting to give time for the EP and the education setting, along with the parent/carer to agree how best to involve the EP.

This involvement may be to attend meetings, undertake assessment work, clarify the CYP's specific needs and advise on additional support that might be needed. Details of the EP's involvement should be included in the education setting's annual review paperwork.

The annual review process ensures that the EHCP remains relevant and appropriate to the needs of the CYP. If, at the annual review it is agreed that the needs of the CYP have changed significantly and/or the provision is no longer able to address the CYP's needs then the local authority will be asked to make a decision about updating the EHCP and/or exploring more suitable education provision. Occasionally, the local authority may require additional information in order to make its decision and may call upon the EP to provide updated psychological advice.

## **What Assessment Approaches are used by an Educational Psychologist?**

EPs use a range of assessment approaches, including:

- Speaking with teachers, parents/carers and practitioners involved
- Speaking with the CYP person to find out their views (what is working and not working with regards to their education and what support they feel they need)
- Observing how the CYP responds in the learning environment – looking at how they respond to the demands of the learning task, and their social interactions with others.
- Looking at the CYP's school work
- Using questionnaires and rating scales to investigate how the CYP thinks, feels, and behaves.
- Questionnaires and rating scales to assess the learning environment (for example, the physical layout of the classroom, the social interactions and how the class and lessons are organised).
- Looking at school-based assessments - or developmental profiles for young children
- Dynamic assessment methods that look at the CYP's approach to learning, their response to different teaching approaches and their capacity to learn.
- Psychometric assessment which looks at how the CYP's skills, knowledge and development compares with other CYP the same age.

The assessment approach that the EP uses should seek to give clarity and develop a holistic understanding about a CYP's strengths and needs and should take into account all the information that is already known about the CYP (i.e. information from the educational setting, parents/carers, and other practitioners). The assessment should be effective, efficient and use the least intrusive approach to gathering information in order to provide high quality psychological advice.

## **What is important about how Educational Psychologists work?**

All EPs are registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council which confirms the high standard of their professional work. At all times EPs:

- Act in the best interests of the CYP with their views being at the centre of the process.
- Ensure that informed consent is obtained by all those providing assessment information.
- Respect the confidentiality of those providing assessment information, whilst working within safeguarding policy.
- Act in a non-discriminatory manner.
- Work in partnership with others and aim for a shared understanding of the psychological advice provided
- Ensure effective communication with those involved in the assessment process – including liaison with other practitioner psychologists.
- Maintain clarity regarding their professional role.
- Use high quality, evidence-informed assessment methods and approaches.
- Monitor interventions over time to inform assessment.
- Ensure a range of factors are taken into consideration during the assessment process e.g. the learning environment, the context in which the CYP lives and learns and the perspectives of the CYP and those around them.
- Clearly identify assessment information which is reported by others, and make clear which assessment information is based on their own direct involvement with the CYP.
- Maintain clarity around interpretation of assessment information and recommendations made and exercise a duty of care to all those with whom they work.

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