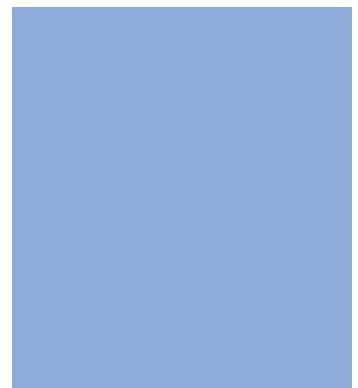




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Educational Psychology Service

Standards and Quality Report

2023-2024

Education and Learning

Introduction

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has statutory duties to advise on educational needs and delivers on this through the nationally agreed framework of five roles encompassing consultation, assessment, intervention, training and development work and research. These roles are enacted at the level of a child or young person, group or school, and authority wide. This work includes support and quality assurance work in relation to children and young people placed in schools outside the authority, as well as supporting schools when critical incidents occur.

During 23-24 the EPS welcomed new staff while also carrying staff absence for most of the session. Development work aligned with the ECS priorities of relationships and behaviour, ASN transformation and professional learning, with relationships and behaviour becoming a key focus for Strategic Equity Fund work from April, in line with the increased national prioritisation of this area. In order to respond to the challenge of increasing demand from schools and rising requests for change of educational pathway, against the background of frequent extended staff absence, self-evaluation activity took place using the draft national framework for educational psychologists, in order to begin to identify key areas for improvement. In addition, data about casework activity is starting to be considered, in order to identify themes and implications for practice. EPs have continued to be supported through embedded supervision mechanisms, adherence to HCPC Professional Standards, monitoring of wellbeing, regular team meetings, and opportunities for collaborative development work and shared professional learning activity. The latter allows for emerging areas of practice to be considered; one such area for 23-24 was anti-racist practice within EPSs.

This report is presented under the five headings of the National Improvement Framework to represent work in relation to ECS priorities. The 'Organised to Deliver' section looks at self-evaluation and service delivery for the core delivery of a support service.

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

CIRCLE – Excellent Inclusive Practice

2023-24 was the 4th year of a 5 year implementation plan for CIRCLE. In recognition of the good practice in CIRCLE implementation in Perth and Kinross, Education Scotland interviewed the Depute Principal Psychologist and a secondary DHT (Support) for inclusion in national training resources.

An audit of practice in June 2024 identified the following:

- In 67 schools, the majority of staff had received training in the Inclusive Classroom Scale, had the opportunity to complete the scale and made an associated plan
- In 49 schools, use of the CICS had become embedded in school processes
- In 55 schools, the majority of staff had received training in the Participation Scale, had the opportunity to complete the scale and made an associated plan
- In 43 schools, use of the CPS had become embedded in school processes

Work is required during 24-25 to provide targeted support to those schools not on track for CIRCLE to become embedded as well as ensuring sustainability across schools beyond this session.

Materials for parents and carers on CIRCLE approaches have been developed and shared with the ASN Parent Forum. Finalised text will be included in a wider suite of communications for parents and families around inclusion.

Work began on developing young person friendly versions of the CIRCLE tools, with a pilot taken forward in a number of volunteer settings. A MS form of the Participation Scale for young people will be shared at the start of 24-25, with a version for younger children to follow.

Termly collaborative conversations continued to be offered for CIRCLE leads in schools to share practice. One of these focused on sustainability beyond the term of the implementation plan, and an action plan has been developed as a result.

ECS Panel contribution and outwith authority placement work

EPs, DPEP and PEP each contribute to the work of the Inclusion panels. The PEP chairs the Transitions Panel which over the course of 24/25 covered 88 referrals to nursery – primary and 90 referrals to primary – secondary over 24 panels.

Part of the statutory duty of an Educational Psychology Service is to respond to placing requests by analysing the documented needs and reviewing the preferred placement in respect of these. This has included 23 placing requests to transitions panel over this period.

Should placing requests not be granted and be appealed, Educational Psychologists will then often be a witness to the authority's position. An EP was witness in one appeal

tribunal in 24/25, other EPs were involved in the preparation of documentation for situations that did not then proceed to ASN Tribunal.

ASN Transformation Programme

The PEP has supported the Service Manager and Programme Manager in the initial phases of the ASN transformation programme and development of the four areas of activity. Work over the session included participation in the stakeholder forum and reviewing the programme aims as a result of that event. The PEP will be a project sponsor for the Place project work, encompassing the project on inclusive environments and the project on intensive level provisions.

EPs participate in ASN Transformation subgroups, including the Professional Learning Group and Inclusive Environments.

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

The Educational Psychology Service has funding for 1 day a week of one EP's time in relation to the Pupil Equity Fund, used to promote literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing evidence-based interventions to support narrowing of the poverty related attainment gap.

Evidence-based Literacy and Numeracy Interventions

EPS is no longer involved in professional learning in Wave 3, Hi 5 and Precision Teaching, having built capacity in other areas of the system to deliver this as part of the literacy and numeracy frameworks. However, various factors have meant that no training has been offered to school staff this year, and so sustainability will need to be considered for 24-25.

Despite this, the interventions continue to be used in schools, with impact on learners evidenced via Closing the Gap tool entries.

High 5	5 settings	83 learners, P5-S1
Wave 3	15 settings	71 learners, P2-P6
Precision teaching - literacy	10 settings	144 learners, P1-S3
Precision teaching - numeracy	8 settings	103 learners, P2-S6

Self-Regulation in Action Training 2023-24

21 practitioners participated in the Self-Regulation in Action training, from a range of roles, e.g. PSA, ECP, CLA, CLW, PPST, teacher. Four participants were from early years provisions, 14 were from primary schools and three were from secondary schools.

Participants reported an increase in knowledge and understanding of self-regulation and an increase in confidence in terms of their practice in this area. During the course, they carried out and reported the findings of their independent action research projects which included topics such as naming emotions and using strategies to reduce peer conflict, using soundbites to support regulation during transitions and lunchtime, increasing inhibitory control, adapting the classroom environment to support self-regulation and supporting secondary pupils' self-regulation through the use of soundbites.

The impact of the action research projects on children, young people and families included increased capacity to self-regulate, reduction in the number of "difficult" days, reduction in the number of restorative conversations needed, better relationships with peers, increased engagement in learning, increased confidence and exam readiness, and a decrease in off-task behaviour.

Strategic Equity Fund

The Educational Psychology Service has funding for 1 EP 3 days a week from the Strategic Equity Fund.

Staged Intervention Framework for Attendance 2023/24

This year the focus has been on continuing to embed the framework and expand the resources available to schools. This has involved developing further training to support whole school approaches and strengthen assessments. The updated attendance guidance and staged intervention guidance was launched this session and SIFA reflects these updates to support a consistent approach. A new intervention guide can support schools to identify the most appropriate intervention based on a thorough assessment. Parent resources have also been expanded to include suggested scripts, building on the principle of calm and consistent language. SIFA has been part of the information shared at the Attendance Forums which took place this session.

In order to support an ongoing dialogue with schools, share practice and jointly problem solve there have been termly collaborative conversations which have helped shape developments.

Relationships and Behaviour

The focus of SEF was extended to include work in the area of Relationships and Behaviour; this included organisation and delivery of senior leader sessions on restorative approaches, consideration of a means to audit approaches and programmes used in schools and to identify any gaps, and development of a process to access young people's views about the link between wellbeing and deprivation. All of these areas will continue to develop in 24-25.

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

Relationships and Behaviour – Nurturing Relationships framework and steering group

The PEP has led this work through the second year. The overall aim over the past two years has been:

To bring together all elements of nurturing and relational approaches, embed current and recent programmes and guidance and give clear strategic direction for continuing to drive forward excellent relational practice within education.

The Relationships and Behaviour statement and guidance was completed and launched in September '23, with infographics illustrating the Perth and Kinross approach completed and shared in January '24. Actions have included work on good practice in terms of PSE, with the commencement of tests of change with Breadalbane and Crieff HS, to look at effective practice of involving young people and partners in PSE design, based on place standard conversations, and development of a Social and Emotional Learning toolkit for primary schools. In terms of professional learning, consultations highlighted the need to focus on the 'how' and the need for a coherent generic introduction for all CLPL in this area. Work also began on mapping current CLPL against the themes in the infographic and. The 'Building Relationships in Practice' (BRiP) materials were completed, this has included editing of the first 4 and production of a padlet to explain the programme.

Approaches and programmes development work highlights:

- All Bounce Back in secondary school materials now on SharePoint site
- Restorative Approaches training for school leaders delivered and evaluated
- MVP -3 days of training for staff in MVP completed, leading to 20 more staff across Tayside trained to deliver MVP in their schools.
- Whole School Nurture - Additional 13 schools enrolled onto phase 4 of the Nurturing Relationships programme, taking the total of schools engaged to 50%,
- Needs analysis of any gaps in respect of approaches and programmes scope drafted and work commenced – due November '24

Audit feedback:

In May 2024 all schools were asked to complete a survey to look at take-up of the guidance and gather some feedback. Of the 69 responses:

- 56 have a relationships policy
- 36 of these developed over the last 2 sessions
- 27 had used the new guidance
- 27 intend to use over 24/25 and 10 over 25/26
- 26 had accessed the BRiP materials with 19 intending to do so over coming year

The audit will be reviewed and the steering group will be supported to write actions for the 24/25 session, which are likely to include measuring impact on practice.

Bounce Back

Bounce Back whole school resilience programme has been used in varying capacities within PKC Primary and Secondary Schools since 2010. Implementation within the secondary sector has continued this session with individualised development within their own context. One Secondary has adapted S1/2 materials in line with their school values and aims and plan to continue this roll out with each upcoming S1 year group. They positively noted the level of detail & variety of activities within the shared resources, with pupil feedback to date supporting this. Another secondary school has begun its roll out of BB resources across S1 to 3 this session following staff discussion & planning utilising the Bounce Back SWAY.

Curricular materials for S3 focusing on a problem solving framework were added to the EDMS site, as part of a suite of progressive curricular materials to be used as part of PSE.

PKC Nurturing Relationships Programme

The PKC Nurturing Relationships programme has now completed its third year, with 41 schools engaging at various levels within phases 1-4 (49% of schools in PKC). Phase 4 school leads have received their training and the first of two whole school core training sessions has been delivered. As per the implementation plan, the next delivery of the core training sessions will be on the August inset days to allow phase 4 schools to begin gathering their base line data to inform their next steps at the start of the next academic session. Any new staff joining a school within phases 1-3 are also welcome to join.

In terms of accreditation, 6 of schools involved in phases 1-3 have achieved level one accreditation, and 1 has achieved level two. 10 schools presented at the practice sharing session in May 2024, sharing a wide range of good practice examples, including:

- Use of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to inform a readiness pyramid.
- Wellbeing superheroes.
- Development of a 'Cosy Coup'.
- Inclusion of Emotion Works.
- Whole family nurture sessions.

- Design and building of a nurture garden.
- Ringfenced time for play for all pupils P1-7.
- Pupils teaching pupils skills in Makaton.

In terms of the whole school core training, phase 4 attendees rated this training **4.3 out of 5**, which is the same as phase 3 and an increase from phase 1&2 (**4 out of 5**).

Practitioner questionnaires completed at the beginning and end of the 2023/24 session showed: (figures shown are averages across phases 1-3 combined).

Felt levels of nurture within classrooms.	69% to 84%
Confidence in delivering a nurturing approach.	58% to 83%
Understanding of the nurture principles.	55% to 84%
Knowledge of the nurture principles.	55% to 83%
Understanding the ethos & values underpinning nurture.	67% to 87%

A presence on social media has been maintained this session with weekly posts linked to the programme, local and national context as well as shining a spotlight on good practice. This has brought about an 54% increase in followers. The programme team are to continue with their weekly twitter presence with new summer and winter series planned for 2024/25.

In the 2024/25 session we will continue to support our newest cohort of 13 schools (phase 4) as well as supporting the phases 1-3 network. Within the second term recruitment will begin for phase 5 with space for a further 20 schools on the programme.

Mentors in Violence Prevention

In session 2023/24, MVP has continued to be delivered in PKC with 9 out of the 11 secondary schools having staff trained in the model. PKC now has a further two staff trained as trainers, and two training events have been delivered, reaching a total of 15 staff from PKC and Angus Council, education staff as well as partner agencies including Police Scotland.

The MVP Network has continued to meet on a termly basis, and hopes to organise a conference in November 2024, during the 16 days of activism. The conference is to focus on positive masculinity and changing the narrative around young masculinity in Scotland. The conference aims to include a call to action for services to consider what is within their power to change to support the shift in cultural views of men and boys.

Focus for 2024/25 will be on the evaluation of MVP within PKC following the Independent Strategic Review in June 2023. An evaluation strategy will guide the process, with surveys to be sent out to school senior managers to enquire into current practice and consider how best to support implementation moving forward.

Restorative Approaches

Professional learning for school staff at beginner and refresher levels was planned in collaboration with Education Scotland and new training materials developed.

Unfortunately, none of these sessions went ahead, apart from 2 sessions on “Being Restorative” for probationer teachers, due to low uptake; a survey of school leaders indicated that this was largely due to a difficulty releasing staff from school to attend training. Training for school leaders was commissioned and delivered by Mark Finnis.

This was very positively evaluated. Leaders were surveyed on training needs and a delivery model for school staff; this will be taken into account in planning for 24-25.

Circles of Connectedness

This year 20 practitioners, Community Learning Assistants (CLA) and Community Link Workers (CLW), completed the second part of their training through a reconnect session, which considered implementation, measuring impact, and familiarisation with a manual, updated following previous feedback.

The intention to extend the training offer to staff in schools, focusing primarily on schools in which the CLA/CLW’s had implemented Circle of Connectedness interventions was not realised due to no nominations being received from those trained. However, as a Service we have been looking at how our training offer reflects current adult learning principles, and so are now in the process of (a) preparing to review the current Circle of Connectedness training to ensure it aligns with the agreed model of professional learning and (b) considering which schools to approach to deliver training. This will inform further implementation in 24-25.

Social and Emotional Learning – Resource Guide

During 23-24, the content of the Resource Guide was completed, following a review process involving colleagues from the Educational Psychology Team and the Service Manager – Primary Education.

The Guide is in 4 sections:

- (1) Background and context: what social and emotional learning is and why it is important
- (2) Auditing and planning: a tool to assist schools to audit current provision for supporting the social and emotional learning of their pupils and a framework to help planning to enhance provision
- (3) Assessing social and emotional learning: resources and advice to help schools effectively identify and assess social and emotional learning of individuals
- (4) Interventions: advice and resources to help schools provide universal supports and targeted interventions to address any identified social and emotional needs.

The Resource Guide will be launched as a stand-alone resource in 24-25 and will also be linked to the updated Health and Wellbeing Framework which will be developed next session.

Engagement in Secondary Schools

Progress in this area was affected by staff absence, although professional learning was organised and delivered to a multi-agency audience in Person Centred Planning, as a tool to support engagement of young people by putting their voice at the centre. Follow up in the form of a network to share implementation stories is planned for 24-25.

A meeting took place with Education Scotland, conceptualising engagement as part of the same continuum as attendance, rather than separate. The Depute Principal attended one of the Behaviour Summits and fed back on the Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research outcomes to Service Managers and the JNCT. Ongoing actions in relation to engagement will be reviewed for 24-25 as part of the Nurturing Relationships framework.

Peer Mediation

A pilot project, developed in collaboration with Scottish Mediation, and funded by the Gannochy Trust, focused on delivering peer mediation training to schools from the Crieff and Kinross clusters. Funding is on a year-by-year basis and the ambition is that Scottish Mediation will secure additional funding for the next 2 years, enabling all schools within Perth and Kinross to receive training by 2026.

In November 2023, schools from the 2 clusters were invited to a 1-hour virtual information session hosted by Scottish Mediation. This gave schools an opportunity to find out about peer mediation, ask questions and express interest in being involved in the pilot project. 17 people attended.

Scottish Mediation also offered a 1-day 'Training for Trainers' session in January 2024 for staff interested in supporting the implementation of the project within their cluster. 5 staff attended.

Peer mediation training was delivered to primary and secondary pupils separately. Each delivery involved 2 days at an identified host school and could accommodate a maximum of 24 pupils. For primary this was P5/6 pupils and for secondary, S4/5/6 pupils. An accompanying member of staff from each represented school also attended.

In total, 5 schools have received training with a further three being trained in Autumn 2024. At the end of the pilot phase, 8 of the 14 schools within the two clusters (57%) will have been trained. The schools that did not receive training cited difficulties with staffing shortages, clashes in dates or other priority areas within their improvement plan.

Emerging themes from evaluation data so far are that after training, both primary and secondary pupils reported a greater understanding of what peer mediation is, how it

works, why it is important, and feeling more confident about being a peer mediator. Furthermore, pupils felt happy and confident having attended the training.

Scottish Mediation has organised and is overseeing the collection of data throughout the year – mostly focused on gathering information from pupils following peer mediation sessions, and also monitoring school-based behaviour data (i.e. number of exclusions). All trained schools can access ongoing support by Scottish Mediation either by email or through virtual meetings.

Scottish Mediation is preparing an evaluation report for the Gannochy Trust which will inform a decision about additional funding for Year 2. Assuming funding is available, future discussions will focus on determining whether training will continue on a school cluster basis or whether a different model should be adopted (e.g. sector-based, geographically-based).

Selective Mutism

Perth EPS have continued to chair the Tayside Selective Mutism Working Group. A Sway for parents has been developed by Dundee and Perth and Kinross have focused on the Preschool Awareness Raising and Intervention webinars.

EPS are linking with Early Years Managers regarding strategic roll out. The hope is that all preschool establishments will watch the Awareness Raising Webinar and then follow up with the Intervention Webinar if appropriate. After trialling interventions, EPS or SLT can offer consultation and support if necessary. In addition, Perth and Kinross EPS and SLT are offering 3 collaborative conversation drop ins throughout next session further to watching the webinars.

The initial focus has been on the preschool sector as research highlights the length of time it can take to identify children in the preschool period. Next session the working group are going to begin creating resources for the Primary Sector.

Self Harm

Over 2023-24 the Self Harm Working Group progressed work with two pilot secondary schools through whole-staff surveys (October 2023), followed up by pupil and staff focus groups (November 2023). The themes derived from analysis of the data were fed back to schools through detailed joint discussions with the Depute HTs for Support in each school and working group colleagues from Lighthouse, CAMHS and school nursing.

Each school agreed to a plan of engagement with professional development opportunities, including generally available offers through CAMHS such as their professional monthly book group as well as bespoke offers of whole-staff training and parent workshops. Both pilot schools experienced some barriers to engagement in the plan including change of key staff (both schools had a new DHT Support start in post)

and pressures on school time. An in-person session (delivered by EPS and Lighthouse) was delivered in Breadalbane Academy in August 2023. Attempts to arrange a subsequent session (in November 2023) were unsuccessful due to school priorities/scheduling difficulties. It was not possible to progress work further with Perth Academy due to staff absence and staff changes.

Although the EPS were not directly involved in producing the materials, the CAMHS Mental Health Education Officer team liaised with the service around their development of a one-day Self-Harm session for school staff based on the Skilled Level TURAS materials.

In parallel with the work with the pilot schools, two Microsoft Sways have been created hosting information on decision-making around referrals and support for young people who are at risk of or displaying self-harm behaviours and linking to advice and professional learning resources. A third Sway includes four short video interviews, providing practitioners with insights into the way in which different services can support young people at risk of self-harm. All Sways have been sent out to schools and to date (July 2024) there are a total of 345 views over the three Sways.

Termly live webinars on Understanding Self-Harm were included in the ECS Learning Hub calendar over the course of session 23-24, the first three sessions did not go ahead due to low numbers. As a team we have reflected on reasons why uptake may have been low, including publicity and marketing, time pressure in schools, and ease of application for the courses. With a more pro-active marketing approach (email reminder to schools at beginning of term) the fourth planned webinar went ahead in May 2024. While the number of participants was low, the session was highly rated. For example, all participants rated the session as Excellent or Good, and all participants rated its relevance to practice as Excellent. Room for improvement was identified in terms of time for discussion, and it was noted that face-to-face sessions may be preferable.

To expand the work on self-harm to a wider group, discussions took place this year with key partners in professional learning and mental health to plan for input to all guidance teachers in Perth and Kinross, with an initial session planned with Blairgowrie HS to be co-delivered by EPS and Lighthouse during the April INSET session. Unfortunately, this required to be cancelled due to a critical incident.

Next steps

- Continue to promote online resources and learning materials and edit in response to feedback.

- Offer session/s for wider education workforce in collaboration with the mental health delivery group / Lighthouse.

GIRFEC

The PEP has co-chaired the 'Assessment and Planning' sub-group of the GIRFEC steering group and been supported in the work by a further EP. The group was tasked with making recommendations for a single framework to better support a co-ordinated approach to assessment and planning. The group began by the development of a set of principles to guide the work, the principles then informed an audit phase of the assessment and planning processes of each of education, health and social work. Towards the end of the session the group made draft recommendations in respect of a single point of analysis and overview of actions relating to different plans, these details were then put out for wider consultation.

Critical Incident responding

There were 2 critical incidents this session involving direct, continuing on-site support for the school community. Both involved the death of a child or young person. Consultation support was offered to school management in relation to 3 other incidents.

A Critical Incident 'Grab Bag' was finalised in both electronic and physical form, containing information and resources to support the EP response to critical incidents.

Staff Wellbeing

Over the course of this session the PEP worked with the Inclusion and Wellbeing officer to support the contracting and delivery of an online support project, delivered by Barnardo's. The stated aims of the project were the provision of a safe space to reflect on the impact of the role and the approach to it. This service involved the offer of both group sessions to support future sustainability and then one to one individual virtual support sessions for staff following on from the commencement of group sessions.

7 groups were mapped out, comprising of 27 staff members who signed up with participants grouped appropriately according to role and target theme. Across the groups, of the 27, 13 attended the first session and this dropped to 5 who attended the last. 7 of these attendees then took up the offer of one to one work.

Themes from the discussions were self-care, work life boundaries, job stress and finding and sharing solution focused practical ideas. Evaluative feedback was that the themes reviewed in the group session were addressed according to the specific needs of a group and the participants found the sessions really helpful;

"The sessions made me feel valued and gave me time to reflect with another teacher in a similar role. It was good to have time to think about some of the things that I already do to manage the job and consider other coping strategies."

For the individual sessions there were 12 staff members who signed up. Two then declined the service when the therapist contacted them with one ending the service

halfway through. The most common 'key challenges' worked on were 'work support' and 'self-care'. Scores between the beginning and end did improve on average, for work related and for self-care.

"Counselling offered by Barnardo's therapist (name) was excellent. I believe this has ensured I have not been absent from work, unwell and been more able to cope with the complex challenges of families, pupils and school staff. Thanks".

This project work will be reviewed for the considerable learning it has brought forward for this area. This learning is being collated alongside of supported discussions at LMG meetings with HTs over supports for their wellbeing. As a result of analysis of these discussions, actions have been agreed including: wellbeing will be on agenda for all termly meetings with Headteachers, the corporate wellbeing input being part of the induction programme and should be considered going forward as part of the leadership offer, and consideration of an offer to LMGs, for training of volunteers from within the LMG group of HTs, for facilitation in group support formats. The aim of this would be for a self-sustaining network of support within the LMG, with the potential for the activity to take place as part of an LMG meeting. This will be taken forward next session.

Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

Literacy

It was agreed to produce an implementation guide outlining evidence-based literacy interventions, in addition to Wave 3, Hi 5 and Precision Teaching. Evidence based reading interventions were added to the Education Interventions Tool, following a literature review, with details about purpose and group with whom they should be used.

A focus group was held with four Primary Pupil Support Teachers (PPSTs) and the PPST Principal Teacher (PT) regarding implementation of literacy interventions. Key findings included:

- a range of literacy interventions in use by PPSTs
 - some of which did not have an established evidence base
 - some which were not being used with fidelity
- consistent interventions not being used as standard to support reading/ writing/ listening and talking across PKC
- evidence-based interventions such as paired reading and reciprocal reading were viewed as universal interventions that should be implemented at classroom level (rather by PPSTs). Feedback indicated that a more detailed implementation guide of some of these evidence-based reading interventions (e.g. reciprocal and paired reading) was required for schools.

An agreed next step was the creation of a tool to support the assessment of literacy difficulties, which would support evidence-based and needs-led identification of PKC recommended intervention for individual pupils. This work will be led by the educational psychologist, in collaboration with the PPST PT and three PPSTs. As part of this process, it will be important to ensure that all PPST's are trained in the importance of the fidelity and implementation of these interventions. In addition, the educational psychologist will extend the literature review from reading to spelling in terms of evidence based practice.

Dyslexia Pathway

EPS have a representative on the Perth and Kinross Dyslexia Pathway working group. The group continued to develop and streamline the primary sector identification pathway which is currently being piloted. It is now focusing on the identification pathway for secondary schools.

A new working group with a range of secondary pupil support and subject teachers has been created. This group is currently focusing on questionnaires for pupils and parents and optimum ways to collect information from subject teachers.

Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

Optimising Student Success 23/24

Twelve participants, from 3 Primary schools, 1 Secondary school and 2 from ECS, took part in training this session. Utilising an action enquiry model, the sessions outlined the effective classroom implementation of Retrieval Practice, supported evaluation of impact for their learners and provided a forum for sharing this learning with fellow participants. Feedback from participants highlighted the relevance of the use of Retrieval Practice and supported its continued use by practitioners.

One secondary school reported using the Exam Anxiety materials this session with approximately 150 of their S4 and S5 pupils. Due to staff absence, the wider sharing of Exam Anxiety materials with all PKC secondary schools across Universal and Additional levels of staged intervention was not taken forward. This will be actioned within the 24/25 session, along with exploration of alternative materials that could be used at the Intensive level of staged intervention and the development of an OSS EDMS site to share available resources with PKC schools.

Organised to Deliver

Evaluation of Service Delivery

The team trialled the use of the new Self Evaluation Framework for educational psychologists, identifying current strengths, sources of evidence for those, and potential gaps in practice. Actions arising were categorised in terms of importance and ease of implementation, and these will influence the Service Improvement Plan for 24-25, as well as being brought into critical friend discussions with neighbouring EPSs.

School Evaluation 2023/24

The annual school evaluation was carried out in conversation between the school and their link EP. An online proforma was used to collate responses. 42 responses were recorded. This is a 46% return rate which is a 16% increase on last year's school survey rate. There was representation from 35 primary and 6 secondary schools and Fairview. All respondents had accessed the service during the session.

Due to the qualitative, conversational nature of the evaluation, direct comparisons with last year's survey were not possible.

Schools were asked how they had engaged with EPS and they ranked as below

- Link EP consultation (42)
- EP assessment and intervention (37)
- Local authority training (21)
- Consultation phone line (18)
- Bespoke training (8)

Other included involvement in tribunal preparation, wider development planning, piloting resources, ITM, attendance forum and critical incident support.

Impact on professional practice was wide ranging but showed clear themes which valued professional advice and support, training opportunities which led to meaningful change, sharing of psychological knowledge and feedback to affirm practice.

Impact on individual learners focused mainly on improved understanding of a child's needs from robust assessment involving the EP, then an improved ability to meet individual needs through appropriate support and intervention.

Impact on school improvement priorities emphasised the role that EPS has in helping to identify next steps to expand and cascade from training. Some are areas where EPS lead but also a number of other improvement aims, the common theme being that the link EP is a key partner in these discussions and consultations.

Schools most valued the relationship with their link EP. A number of schools valued the professional advice and the support of individual pupils. Schools also valued EP input with parents which in turn aided the partnership working between parents and school. Schools were all positive about communication with EPS describing it as accessible, responsive and flexible. No areas for improvement were noted except for an ask for more EP time. In terms of hybrid working most schools felt there is a good balance.

Schools identified a number of areas of school improvement planning that may be appropriate for EPS support. As anticipated this included development areas which EPS lead on including nurture, relationships and behaviour, self-regulation, restorative approaches and CIRCLE. Other areas mentioned were understanding and support of ASN, wellbeing of pupils and staff, literacy and numeracy.

Looking ahead

Thinking about how we could work more effectively together, most schools felt current practice was effective and should continue. Some suggested improvements included clearer structures for planning and review and increased opportunities for more bespoke training. There were a couple of schools seeking more EP time.

Schools were asked how they would use more EP time to meet the needs of children and young people. The two key themes were around training and work with pupils. Schools felt training which was bespoke to their school, co-delivered collegiates and refresher training would be helpful and several topics were identified. In relation to direct work with pupils schools felt that additional time could be used for observation, assessment and intervention.

The final question was an opportunity to add any additional comments that hadn't already been raised. This again highlighted the importance of developing an effective working relationship and from this being more able to then work more strategically. There were reflections on the balance of providing support and challenge. It was noted that changes in terms of HT, staff and EP impacts the focus of the work together.

Consultation Evaluation 2023-2024

EPs record consultation by school. This is defined as consultation which is not part of casework or part of a meeting which discussed multiple children/young people, such as an ITM.

Consultation figures were returned for establishments, primary schools (associated nurseries included) and secondary schools and specialist provisions. The total number of consultations was 970, about 560 children/young people. This compares to 681 consultations in 22-23, about 443 children and young people, and represents a 42% increase.

There were 637 consultations in primary schools, about 354 children. This is a 38% rise in consultations since 22-23. The number per school ranged from 0-47 consultations, with the average between 9 and 10 per school.

In the secondary sector there were 333 consultations about 206 young people, with the range between 12 and 59 consultations and the average 17 per school. The number of consultations in secondary schools rose by 57% compared to 22-23.

Consultation Phonenumber

The consultation phone line has continued to be available to staff from all PKC learning establishments.

This session a total of 67 consultations were completed, with EP colleagues speaking with 89 members of staff (15 ELC staff, 48 primary & 26 secondary practitioners), from 43 different learning establishments. Within those 67 consultations, 87 children and young people were discussed (12 from ELC, 46 from primary schools & 29 from secondary schools) with a range of outcomes including sharing further information, signposting to other agencies or resources, follow up consultations with the link EP or further discussions about possible development work.

This aspect of EP service continues to be evaluated very positively with the time to talk, discussion around supports and strategies and space to understand aspects of behaviour being rated highly among respondents.

‘Given time to discuss a child in detail and identify possible solutions to explore. The Ed psych was incredibly kind and professional and genuinely wanted to help.’

‘So useful to talk things through and have immediate ideas to try.’

‘Just having an opportunity to provide a context and to ensure that I was getting it right for the child.’

‘An opportunity to talk through issues affecting pupil, to discuss tried strategies and a fresh pair of eyes to look at the challenges and to make suggestions for me to try to improve the current situation.’

Quotes from Phonenumber Feedback Surveys.

While the number of overall consultations is down from last year by 15% (79 recorded consultations 2022-23), the feedback continues to suggest that the phonenumber is meeting the needs of those who are accessing it. The phonenumber continues to provide support for those seeking a timely response or those establishments where the link EP is absent.

Professional Learning

The EPS plans and delivers professional learning as one of its core functions, both through the ECS Learning Hub and through bespoke training for individual schools. The offer continued to be focused around key education service priorities in relation to raising attainment through developing inclusive practice, relationships and behaviour and improved engagement and attendance.

Programmes were delivered in Nurturing Relationships, Self Regulation in Action, and Retrieval Practice. In line with andragogy research about the importance of time for professional reflection and discussion, regular Collaborative Conversations were offered

in relation to CIRCLE and SIFA. An innovative approach to professional learning was taken in the form of Building Relationships in Practice, where EPs recorded a series of short conversations about relationships and behaviour, designed to stimulate reflection and discussion in schools, through associated question prompts.

For the first time, EPS led on Mentors in Violence Prevention training delivery this session. Recorded training materials in relation to managing anxiety and SIFA were updated in order to make them more accessible. 3 training events with external presenters were organised by the service, in relation to Restorative Approaches for School Leaders, and Person-Centred Planning. Other events included Solution Focused Approaches, Understanding Self Harm, and Solution Circles, and contributions were made to INSET days for support staff, Pupil Care and Welfare Officers and probationer teacher training.

175 people participated in training led by EPS (this does not include Self Regulation in Action participants, those for Nurturing Relationships or support staff/probationer training, which are applied for outwith the learning hub process currently).

EPS training continues to be very positively evaluated by participants, with 98% rating the professional learning as excellent or good.

“Learned new a new process and this will be helpful - very well explained and delivered in a relevant way”

“It was very beneficial to hear about the use of retrieval practice across the stages in the school. I enjoyed having a focus which felt very relevant to my practice and personal development in my teaching.”

“I thought it was a fantastic session and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with fellow professionals about the topic and hear it from their experienced views.”

“I think that the combination of research coupled with practical advice on how to work with pupils that experience attachment difficulties and relational trauma was really useful and enlightening.”

In addition, the Depute Principal Educational Psychologist represents the service at strategic level on the Professional Learning Leads group, which oversees this aspect of the Education Plan. During 23-24, the EPS was commissioned to compile a literature review of effective adult learning principles and methodologies, to support delivery of the most effective and impactful professional learning offer possible. This literature review was shared with the strategic group and has had a significant impact on thinking and practice in this area. A presentation was developed which was shared with all central teams in terms of their professional learning offer, and guidelines for trainers have also been developed as a result.

Evaluation of EPS Casework 2023-2024

This analysis is based on analysis of casework closures over the academic year and samples of casework from EPs reflections that are gathered termly for team discussion.

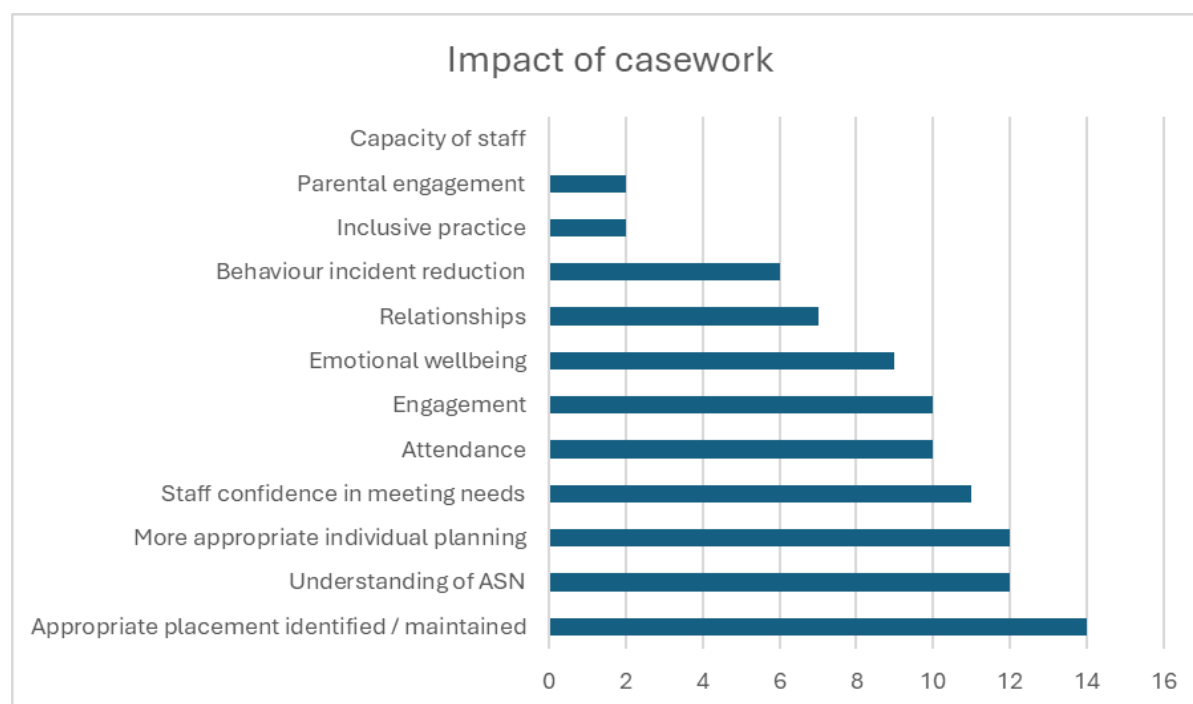
Casework closure analysis:

81 case closure forms from this academic year were available for this analysis. Most closures (n=69) were because the work had been completed. In 3 cases each, the client had moved or there had been no recent active involvement, so the cases had been closed. In 2 cases, the client was deemed to have either refused the service or had not engaged with the support on offer and these cases were closed. Pupil absence had impacted on the work in 1 case and in another, EP absence during which there was a change of class for the pupil, meant the agreed work was no longer required.

Analysis of the aims of involvement showed that over half of all cases opened (n= 51) were to support understanding / assessment of pupil needs. These needs included factors around pupil engagement, anxiety, attendance and questions about neurodevelopmental needs and other barriers to learning. There was an expected degree of overlap with aims relating to social, emotional and behavioural factors impacting on pupil experience and presentation. This illustrates the complexities of the assessment process. Often the EP role is around assessing and intervening to meet the presenting need, but sometimes it can lead to further assessment via onward referral to CAMHS, or other agencies, as noted in 8 cases. In almost a quarter of cases, transition was noted as an area for EP support. This mainly covered major transitions into primary and secondary school, but transitions within primary and post school were noted in a couple of cases. Intervention or support with planning, considering strategies and support priorities was noted in 14 forms.

Gathering pupil views through consultation with them was specifically noted in 17 cases. In 11 cases, the pupil was either in an outwith PKC educational provision (n=3), or there was a question about the suitability of the educational provision / pathway for the pupil (n=8).

Positive outcomes or impact from casework are noted in the forms upon closure and summarised in the graph below. There were often overlapping positive outcomes.



The biggest impacts noted related to the suitability of educational placement, understanding of need, individualised planning and staff confidence in meeting needs. Inclusive practice was a new field added into the forms and although the recorded figures are low, it could be considered a subset of the main areas of impact, which may in part explain the low recording.

Casework evaluation sampling:

As part of EPS quality assurance processes, EPs record their reflections on an active piece of casework on a termly basis. These are discussed anonymously with a group of peers, who can ask questions and support thinking in relation to the EP's own reflections as part of the improvement process. Although these cases are self-selected, usually for the purpose of supporting good practice, they all fit with the EPS casework priorities and represent a cross section of the type of casework EPs are involved in. This provided the qualitative data summarised in this section.

Feedback on the EP role in the process was positive overall. Advice, support, availability, opportunity to reflect on the child's needs and strengths and facilitating discussions were highlighted. One EP highlighted initial tensions within some family work, but later was able to provide feedback to evidence how this had been worked through and the family were much more relaxed and able to engage with the planning process.

Outcomes noted included improved wellbeing, engagement and attendance. Evidence from observations indicated the development of better relationships with peers and support staff. The language used by staff had noticeably changed in one setting, demonstrating an improved understanding of need and impact on behaviour. Where more formal cognitive assessment had been carried out, the clear targets had been received positively and were being used as the basis for the plan going forward. Evidence gathered included the following:

“Well done on what you have managed to support (the pupil) to achieve and the confidence you have instilled in his family; that is the most positive verbal and non-verbal communication I have experienced from (the parents) and everyone seems more relaxed. Great progress to build on”

“The information gathered established clear next steps in supporting the learner in a specific and manageable way. I also really like how measures that are going to be put in place for one learner can be done at a universal level to support all learners and promote inclusivity.”

“He has been in class a lot more and less time in the (base area). He is also coming in at 9am (ish) every morning.”

Casework Statistics

An area for development for the service highlighted for 24-25 is to be more aware of and actively use the available data about our schools and children and young people to guide service delivery. Information about open cases will be analysed in order to explore our involvement at casework level according to deprivation.

During the academic year 23-24, 182 new cases were opened (in addition to those which had remained open from the previous session). 65% of cases opened involved boys, 35% girls. 7% of cases opened were early years, 65% primary and 27% secondary. This gives a baseline on which to compare future years; analysis will also take place of data from previous years in order to identify trends and any implications for service delivery.

Capacity for Improvement

During 23/24 the EPS continued to embed the revised model of service delivery, leading to ongoing hybrid work that has helped support an ability to respond to increased levels of need, as evidenced by greater numbers of consultations. The revised model has also included enhanced service delivery through the weekly phonenumber and enabled a clear focus on the statutory duty to an EPS, as shown through the common case theme of understanding and assessment of educational need.

The EPS had another year of being impacted by staffing absence and this occurred at a time of significant rises in demand, notably within the area of increased parental placing requests and panel activity. The impact on overall effectiveness of service delivery is an aspect that requires review.

Not all areas of development work were able to be taken forward the service did however manage to review its self-evaluation cycle, an action carried forward from the previous year and one which should support the consideration of overall effectiveness in times of changing need. Work on ensuring the sustainability of development and training areas to therefore support consideration of new areas has been instrumental in cementing practitioner support in context key areas such as nurture, self-regulation and attendance and supporting the overall focus on adult learning best practice.

This year saw a renewed priority in respect of augmenting and updating the cycle of self-evaluation, with enhanced quantitative data which will support more year-on-year analysis. This has occurred alongside of increased work on gathering views as part of the more qualitative analysis of casework outcomes.

Working in times of high demand and changing need requires support for the wellbeing and resilience of staff. A focus on this as part of on-going ways of working has continued and a focus for 24/25 will be on enhancing in-house skills in supervision.

Summary - Key achievements and analysis of impact

Over the course of 23/24 the EPS maintained its continued commitment to supporting the progress of the Education Plan through initiating, implementing and supporting key areas of development and professional learning. This has included CIRCLE, Relationships and Behaviour, self-regulation attendance, nurture and the attainment gap.

Key outcomes include:

- CIRCLE inclusive classroom scale embedded in 49 schools and the participation scale in 43
- Positive impact evidenced in use of High 5, Wave 3 and Precision Teaching in helping to close poverty related attainment gaps
- 21 practitioners in the self-regulation programme evidencing impact on improved relationships and engagement in learning for target children and young people
- The 'Staged Intervention Framework for Attendance' augmented with an intervention guide, scripts for use with parents and updated training modules
- Production of Relationships and Behaviour infographics and an education interventions mapping tool
- Half of all PKC schools now engaged in the whole school Nurturing Relationships programme, with evidence of improved belonging and wellbeing for children and young people as a result.
- 9 Secondary Schools now have practitioners trained in Mentors in Violence Prevention
- Support for training in peer mediation in 5 schools, 20 practitioners trained in Circle of Connectedness and the completion of a Social and Emotional Learning tool for Primaries and resources on selective mutism

Outcomes of statutory work includes:

- Responding to 23 placing requests
- Attending 1 ASNTS tribunal
- Supporting the work of the Transitions, ASN, CSP and Home Education panel.

Impact of Educational Psychology practice in respect of individual children and young people and the meeting of additional support needs within schools is evidenced through the cycle of self-evaluation. Highlights from 23/24 include:

- 970 consultations took place over 23/24, and this is a 40% increase on 22/23, with a particular increase within the secondary sector

- 175 staff received professional learning delivered by the EPS (in addition to programmes such as whole school nurture and self-regulation).
- The phonenumber continued on a weekly basis across the year with 89 staff accessing and 87 children and young people being consulted on.
- Analysis of completed casework demonstrates the support for understanding of need along with suitability of placement, support for individual planning and staff confidence in meeting needs.
- Qualitative, triangulated feedback on samples of casework highlights that outcomes from the involvement of Educational Psychology are changes in planning and use of language leading to improved wellbeing, improved attendance with better relationships with staff and peers.
- The feedback from the annual evaluative exercise with schools showed that schools most value the professional relationship, the effective communications and support for individual situations and liaison with parents. It was felt that hybrid working was effective. The views of schools were that impact was seen in the areas of individual learners planning outputs, professional practice of staff and school improvement priority outcomes.

Next Steps in respect of improvement activity

- Continued collaboration with neighbouring services on self-evaluation activity and enhancement of the self-evaluation framework
- Engagement with national anti-racism seminars and professional learning for the EPS team
- Analysis of historical data on open cases in order to identify trends and themes
- Preparation for go live date for MOSAIC casework management system
- Joint professional learning with Angus and Dundee EPSs in supervision, to ensure high quality staff support and promote wellbeing
- Commence review of model of secondary school service delivery
- Collect evaluative feedback on panel work