



Northamptonshire County Council

## SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

**SLA details**  
from April 2018

# Northamptonshire Educational Psychology Service

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Northamptonshire Educational Psychology Service.... Bringing positive change  
and growth from the application of psychology through innovation and excellence

*help observe consult assess focus advise encourage appreciate develop*



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### 1. TERMS AND CONDITIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FROM NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

#### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

“EPS practitioners”	Includes all members of the EPS providing a service: Psychology Assistants, Trainee Educational Psychologists, Educational Psychologists, Specialist Senior Educational Psychologists, Senior Educational Psychologists, Principal Educational Psychologist.
“EPS Senior Managers”	The Senior Management Team of the Educational Psychology Service (the Principal and Senior Educational Psychologists).
“Organisation”	The body named above.
“Educational Psychology Service” or “EPS”	This is the Northamptonshire County Council Educational Psychology Service.
“Organisation Senior Staff”	This refers to the relevant managers within organisations able to commission services.
“The Service Level Agreement (SLA)”	This agreement.
“Service”	Means those activities described in Section 5 of this ‘SLA Details’ document
“The Educational Psychologist’s Professional Judgement”	The professional judgement of the Educational Psychologist applied in relation to Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) regulations and core principles, standards and conduct and ethics.



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### 2. NATURE OF SLA

- This SLA describes the level and type of Service that will be provided to the Organisation and between the dates specified, as set out in Section 2 of the separate 'Commission' part of this Service Level Agreement.
- The Service will be provided by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS), who will be responsible for supervision and quality standards.
- EPS practitioners may include Trainee Educational Psychologists supervised by a named Educational Psychologist.
- Organisations structured around the academic year which commit funding as part of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) **by 1<sup>st</sup> June** will have their Service prioritised within the academic year starting 1<sup>st</sup> September of the same year. Requests made later in the academic year will only be delivered if staffing is available.
- Organisations structured around the financial year which commit funding as part of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) **by 28<sup>th</sup> February** will have their Service prioritised within the next financial year. Requests made later in the financial year can only be delivered if staffing is available.
- The pricing for Services which have been procured for a period of greater than a year, shall be as specified above for the whole term of the SLA. SLAs may be agreed for periods of up to 3 years.
- Where organisations work together as a consortium or cluster, a lead manager or head teacher must be identified as responsible for negotiating and agreeing the commission.
- For spot-purchases, the delivery dates will be identified as soon as possible from the date of the SLA, subject to the priorities of the local authority and the school.

### 3. ESSENTIAL CRITERIA FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

- The child or young person is in the age range birth to 19 years and attending school, or if subject to a current Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP), to 25 years and engaged in education or recognised training.
- The Educational Psychologist's professional judgement will be used to consider requests; agreement for service delivery is through negotiation between the



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commissioning agency and the EPS, with reference to the EP Service's core principles and priorities.

- EPS practitioner involvement with individual children / young people requires informed and signed consent either from those with parental responsibility or from the young person, if 18 years or older. For work with those in care to the local authority requires signed consent from the social worker.
- Commissions will not be accepted from parents. Any parental requests for commissioned work will be redirected to the web-site of the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) and/or the British Psychological Society (BPS). These sites provide registers of private practitioners. Parents are advised to discuss their concerns with their child's school prior to seeking any commissioned work, to ensure that this would not be more appropriately commissioned by their child's school or other education setting. The EPS cannot accept Requests for Involvement from schools who pass on the costs of the commission to parents.

#### 4. CURRENT LOCAL AUTHORITY PRIORITIES FOR THE EPS

The local authority has agreed a Service Level Agreement with the EPS for a range of priorities, funded centrally. Access to this support is exclusively through LA officers and generally comprises work at Levels 3 and 4 of the council's Thresholds & Pathways document. For example, this includes:

- Children for whom the local authority requests Statutory Psychological Advice
- 'First Day Responses' to critical incidents (with further support through commissioning)
- Support to Northamptonshire pupils placed in out-authority, independent special schools at risk of placement breakdown
- Contributions to decision making for High Needs Block funding and other panels, as requested by the local authority
- Participation in First Tier Tribunals and other legal functions requiring formal 'SEN Expertise'
- Requests from the local authority regarding consultation and/or assessment of Looked After Children (costs shared equally with schools)
- Children referred by the local authority through the Early Years Panel (Specialist Support Service Panel)
- Other work as directed by the local authority

Work requested by schools and other settings, and notably that which falls within Levels 1 and 2 of the Thresholds & Pathways document (including training & development and child assessment work), will require commissioning by schools, settings and other organisations.



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### 5. NATURE OF SERVICE PROVIDED THROUGH COMMISSIONING

The Service will constitute the activities set out in this section. EPS support will be made available for a range of work aimed at promoting inclusion, psychological well being and raising standards across the full range of age and abilities.

The focus of the work may be at any or all of the following levels: individual level; group and class level; strategic systems and organisational level.

5.1 At the **individual level**, EPS practitioners will be able to:

- Provide psychological interventions (including therapeutic interventions), assessment and recommendations for individual children.
- Provide psychological interventions and advice that focus upon narrowing gaps in attainment and improving academic progress at the individual level.
- Provide psychological interventions with families as part of the individual child interventions.
- Contribute towards multi-agency meetings about children and young people as appropriate.

5.2 At the **group and class level**, EPS practitioners will be able to deliver services that:

- Provide psychological interventions aimed at developing particular skills of small groups of children (e.g. social skills; thinking skills).
- Provide psychological interventions and advice that focus upon narrowing gaps in attainment and improving academic progress (e.g. study skills; literacy and numeracy attainment; memory skills/understanding).
- Provide support to small groups of staff in managing a particular issue (e.g. bullying).
- Provide parent workshops / programmes in schools or other suitable settings.
- Provide professional supervision to staff regarding individual, group or class issues.
- Provide Joint Problem Solving and / or Solution Focused Consultation at individual and systems levels, including to staff and senior management groups.



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5.3 At the **strategic, systems and organisational** levels, the EPS practitioner will be able to:

- Provide psychological support for schools in developing strategies and systems around whole school matters (e.g. policy development). This may include advice and recommendations with reference to current Ofsted inspection requirements.
- Provide Continuing Professional Development for staff on a wide range of topics with a psychological, learning and child development basis.
- Provide support for and/or deliver project development and research work (e.g. around transitions; evaluating interventions; participation in school development work).
- Provide professional supervision to staff (including heads and senior teachers; specialist staff such as SENCos and staff in 'designated' roles (e.g., safeguarding, Looked After, Mental Health)) regarding strategic, systemic and / or organisational issues.

## 6. EPS RESPONSIBILITIES & SERVICE DELIVERY

- The Educational Psychology Service has a duty to ensure that assessment and intervention practice is compliant with Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of proficiency and code of conduct/ethics regulations. This information is available online at [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)
- As county council employees, the EPS management will ensure that all practitioners have successfully undergone all necessary pre-employment checks, including that they:
  - are appropriately qualified for the work undertaken;
  - have received enhanced DBS disclosures (Disclosure & Barring Service), as required, appropriate for regulated activities, including regular contact and unsupervised working with vulnerable children and adults and those who work with them;
  - have and will display for inspection their County Council employer's photo-ID badge.
  - and that they are fully covered by the council's insurance for this work.



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- The EPS operates within the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Board [NSCB] Safeguarding procedures and will take actions, when required, in accordance with these procedures.
- The EPS practitioner providing the additional service may not be the school's link Educational Psychologist; the EPS reserves the right to identify the educational psychologist most appropriate for the delivery of the commission.
- All work carried out as part of this commission will be chargeable. This includes writing of reports and/or consultation records and all other case-related record keeping, research, scoring and other activities integral to the service commissioned, much of which will be completed off-site.
- Multi-agency / professional liaison time and contact with parents (including telephone consultation / liaison and home visits, where required), will be included as part of the time bought by organisations, including when delivered off-site, such as home visits or visits to other professionals' bases.

## 7. PLANNING

The Service will be planned and negotiated in consultation with the relevant Senior Staff of the Organisation.

## 8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CIRCULATION, RECORDING AND STORAGE OF RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS

- Reports about individual children / young people will be sent by e-mail, when appropriately protected through the 'egress system', and/or letter post to both the commissioning school and those named in the Request for Involvement as having parental responsibility. It will be the responsibility of the Organisation to notify the EPS of the address(es) of all those with parental responsibility to whom the report should be sent.
- For children / young people attending early years' settings, and state-funded education establishments in Northamptonshire, the storage of records and documents will be organised through the usual EPS processes in accordance with Northamptonshire County Council and EPS policies. All documents stored are subject to access under Data Protection Act requirements and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). They should be considered open to scrutiny by the subject of the file or those with parental responsibility. Handwritten notes are securely destroyed once their essence has been incorporated into more formal typed reports. For the purposes of the GDPR,



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the EPS is a Professional Provider and consequently, the Local Authority (as EPS employer) is a joint data controller with the school. Data retention within the EPS would be aligned with the requirements of the local authority.

- For independent schools within Northamptonshire and other organisations outside Northamptonshire, reports will be sent to those identified as having parental responsibility and the commissioning organisation. For young people of 18 years and older, the report will be sent to the young person and the Organisation. For these non-state-funded commissions, no records will be kept within the EPS and local authority systems. No copies will be available for subsequent circulation or re-sending.
- For all children and young people who have Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) maintained by Northamptonshire County Council, records will be held following the usual EPS processes in accordance with Northamptonshire County Council and EPS policies.

### 9. MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

The SLA will be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis through consultation between the Organisation and the EPS. This may include information gained through questionnaires and/or discussion between Organisations and EPS practitioners.

### 10. ABSENCE LIABILITY (INCLUDING SICKNESS AND HOLIDAYS)

The professional context is that there is a national shortage of educational psychologists. Recruitment and covering for absent colleagues is very challenging and service capacity may run below the levels hoped for at certain times (such as following the departure from the service of an EP). Nevertheless, service capacity is under continual review and every effort is made to provide levels of service requested.

- Depending upon the service agreed, EPS practitioners are available to provide support throughout the calendar year, by agreement with the commissioning organisation.
- The EPS will endeavour to cover any short-term EPS practitioner absences. Longer term absences may have to be reflected in a reduction in charges / support, unless other cover arrangements can be identified by the EPS.
- The EPS will use reasonable endeavours to make up time 'lost' by adverse weather or circumstances beyond control, but this cannot be guaranteed.





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- Should the Organisation **cancel** an EPS appointment at short notice (less than 48 hours) then there will be a 50% charge of the cost allocated for that appointment. For **postponed** appointments, while the EPS will arrange another appointment, this cannot be guaranteed to be within the same school-term.
- In the case of training being cancelled by the EPS, it shall be at the sole discretion of the EPS either to provide an alternative date for the training or to provide a full refund.

### 11. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOLS / SETTINGS

The Organisation shall:

- Identify a senior member or members of staff for consultation, liaison and planning of EPS work and activities.
- Work with the EPS in arranging appointments and promoting pupil and parent/carer attendance.
- Liaise with parents/carers to ensure that all those with parental responsibility have given consent to the involvement of the EPS practitioner.
- Ensure appropriate access to children and young people and staff for interview and observation.
- Ensure the EPS is informed of pupil absence, including as soon as possible on the day of the absence.
- Provide appropriate space for the EPS practitioner to work, including for parental meetings, when required.
- Provide access to relevant records.
- Gather data to support collaborative assessment, as required.
- Ensure that all staff commissioned independently of the local authority have successfully undergone all required pre-employment checks, including that they are appropriately qualified, that their professional development has been maintained so that they are capable of assessing and responding to any risks identified in the course of their work and that they carry full professional indemnity.



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### 12. GENERAL SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

- If the Organisation is unhappy with any aspect of the Services provided by the EPS, discussions should occur with the EPS practitioner in the first instance.
- If the discussion with the EPS practitioner does not resolve the matter, then the issue should be referred to the EPS practitioner's line manager, usually the area's Senior Educational Psychologist, who may convene a three-way meeting to try and resolve the concern. This will occur within Northamptonshire County Council's policies and procedures.
- If the intervention of the Senior Educational Psychologist does not resolve the matter then the commissioner may contact the Principal Educational Psychologist.
- Schools will be invoiced regularly **following** service delivery at a minimum of three times a year. The final invoice of the financial year will include a prospective element, based on estimates of service delivery during March. Any discrepancies will be rebalanced through the next invoice period, or by individual negotiation with the commissioner.

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*End of SLA details*