



**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

## **Service Level Agreement details**

**Valid from April 2022**

# **West Northamptonshire Educational Psychology Service**

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### **1. Terms and Conditions with respect to the provision of services from West Northamptonshire Educational Psychology Service (EPS)**

#### **Definitions of Terms**

**EPS practitioners** – this includes all members of the EPS providing a service: Psychology Assistants/Assistant Educational Psychologist, 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** – this refers to the schools/settings/services who are commissioning the EPS.

**Educational Psychology Service or EPS** - this is the West Northamptonshire 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** – this means those activities described in Section 5 of this 'SLA details' document.

**The Educational Psychologist's professional judgement** – this refers to the professional judgement of the Educational Psychologist applied in relation to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) regulations and core principles, standards of conduct, performance, and ethics.

## **2. Nature of SLA**

This SLA describes the level and type of Service that will be provided to the commissioning Organisation between the dates specified on their online request form (i.e., a financial year or academic year).

The Service will be provided by the West Northamptonshire EPS, who will be responsible for the clinical supervision and quality standards of their practitioners.

EPS practitioners may include Trainee Educational Psychologists supervised by a named Educational Psychologist.

Organisations structured around the academic year which commit funding by **1<sup>st</sup> June** will have their Service prioritised within the academic year starting 1<sup>st</sup> September. Requests made later in the academic year will only be accepted if staffing is available.

Organisations structured around the financial year which commit funding by **28<sup>th</sup> February** will have their Service prioritised within the next financial year starting 1<sup>st</sup> April. Requests made later in the financial year will only be accepted 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 Headteacher should be identified as responsible for negotiating and agreeing the commission.

## **3. Essential criteria for service delivery**

The child or young person is within the age range birth to 25 years and, if of statutory school-age or above, is on roll at a school or college. Commissions will be taken only from Organisations and not from individual citizens, including those acting on their own behalf.

The Educational Psychologist's professional judgement will be used to consider all requests; agreement for service delivery is through negotiation between the commissioning Organisation and the EPS, with reference to the EPS'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, as appropriate (please refer to the online Request for Support form guidance).

Work with those in care to a local authority requires signed consent from the Social Worker.

Commissions will not be accepted from parents/carers either directly or indirectly via an organisation. Any parental requests for commissioned work will be redirected to the website of the Health and 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 Support from schools who pass on the costs of the commission to parents/carers.

#### **4. Current Local Authorities priorities for the EPS**

The Local Authority (LA) has agreed a SLA with the EPS for a range of priorities, funded centrally. Access to this support is exclusively through LA officers. For example, this includes:

- Children for whom the LA requests Statutory Psychological Advice
- Participation in First Tier Tribunals and other legal functions requiring formal SEND Expertise
- First Day Responses to critical incidents (with further support through commissioning)
- Support to West 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 LA
- Requests from the LA regarding consultation and/or assessment of Children in Care
- Children referred by the LA through the Early Years Panel (Specialist Support Service Panel) meeting local criteria for involvement
- Other work as directed by the LA

Work requested by schools and other settings, including training & development and child assessment work, will require commissioning.

#### **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. West Northamptonshire EPS promotes a consultation-based service delivery model. Further information for schools/settings and families about consultation is available on the EPS website.

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

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

- Provide consultation, psychological assessment, interventions (including therapeutic interventions) and recommendations for individual children and young people
- 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 their work with individual children
- Contribute towards multi-agency meetings about children and young people, as appropriate

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

- Provide psychological interventions aimed at developing specific skills for small groups of children and young people (e.g., social skills; emotional regulation; managing anxiety; thinking skills)
- Provide psychological interventions and advice that focuses 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/carer workshops and programmes in schools or other suitable settings (e.g., training for foster carers and prospective adoptive parents on attachment and promoting resilience)
- Provide professional supervision and / or coaching to staff in schools and settings regarding individual, group, or whole class issues
- Provide professional supervision and / or coaching for staff working in the Children's Trust or other LA services for service-related issues
- Provide joint problem solving, solution focused consultation at the individual, group, and systems levels, including to staff and senior management group

**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 (CPD) 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 and / or coaching to staff (including Headteachers and senior teachers; specialist staff such as SENDCOs and staff in

designated roles for safeguarding, Children in Care, and mental health) regarding strategic, systemic and /or organisational issues

## **6. EPS responsibilities and service delivery**

The EPS has a duty to ensure that assessment and intervention practice is compliant with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of conduct, performance, and ethics. This information is available online at [Health and Care Professions Council website](#)

As LA employees, the EPS management will ensure that all practitioners have successfully undergone all necessary pre-employment checks. West Northamptonshire EPS is a Safer Recruitment organisation, and all staff will:

- be appropriately qualified for the work undertaken
- have received Enhanced DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) disclosures, 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 Council employer's photo-ID badge
- be fully covered by the Council's insurance for this work
- have undertaken mandatory training for working with vulnerable children and adults, including safeguarding and data protection

The EPS operates within the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership safeguarding procedures and will take actions, when required, in accordance with these procedures.

The EPS practitioner providing the service may not be the school's named 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 the commission will be chargeable. This includes the 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, including during school holiday periods, when necessary. Multi-agency / professional liaison time and contact with parents/carers (including telephone consultation / liaison and home visits, where required), will be included as part of the time bought by the Organisation, including when delivered off-site.

Work may be carried out face to face or virtually in negotiation between the EP practitioner and the Organisation. Where work is carried out virtually the EP practitioner will discuss expectations for virtual working such as using a secure connection, etiquette, and safe practice. During the Covid-19 pandemic all work delivered must be compliant with current EPS, West Northamptonshire Council, Department for Education and wider governmental rules and guidance. In addition to this, EPS practices must be in agreement with the advice to EP practitioners from their professional organisations. All EPS staff visiting schools, settings, and homes, if deemed appropriate according to

EPS Risk Assessment, will wear Personal Protective Equipment and follow social distancing and hygiene measures during the Covid-19 pandemic. EPS staff will follow the requirements set out in Risk Assessments for the Organisation when visiting. Some EP practitioners may hold their own individual Risk Assessment due to their specific needs and these must be shared with school / setting staff prior to a visit.

## **7. Planning**

The Service will be planned and negotiated in consultation with the relevant senior staff of the Organisation.

## **8. Arrangements for the circulations, recording and storage of records and documents**

EP practitioners aim to produce written reports, records of consultation and action plans within four weeks of their final contact.

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 Support 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 West Northamptonshire, the storage of records and documents will be organised through the usual EPS processes in accordance with LA and EPS policies. All documents stored are subject to access under the 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, the EPS is a Professional Provider and consequently, the LA (as EPS employer) is a joint data controller with the school or setting. Data retention within the EPS would be aligned with the requirements of the LA.

For independent schools within West Northamptonshire and other organisations outside of West 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 all children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) maintained by West Northamptonshire Council, records will be held following the usual EPS processes in accordance with Council and EPS policies.

## **9. Managements, 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 are very challenging and EPS 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 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.

Should the Organisation cancel an EPS appointment at short notice (less than 48hours) 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. Postponed appointments will not incur any penalty charges.

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 and settings**

In order to make the most efficient use of EP commissioned time 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 face to face and / or virtual appointments and in 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. Please refer to online Request for Support guidance and consent form
- 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 an appropriate safe quiet space for the EPS practitioner to work, including individual work with the pupil and for family meetings, when required
- Provide access to relevant records
- Gather data to support collaborative assessment, as required
- Ensure that all staff commissioned independently of the LA 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

## **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 Senior Educational Psychologist for the area (see below), who may convene a three-way meeting to try and resolve the concern. This will occur within the LA's policies and procedures. If the intervention of the Senior Educational Psychologist does not resolve the matter, then the commissioner may escalate their concern to the Principal Educational Psychologist.

Schools will be invoiced regularly following service delivery at a minimum of three times per year. The final invoice of the financial year may 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 Organisation.

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