



National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists

Educational Psychologists (EPs) are doctorate level trained professionals and are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council. EPs work with children, families, educational & community settings and at a strategic level (local, regional and national) applying psychological expertise, using consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research at all levels of the system so that children are included, achieve and have good lives.

EPs working across the system: promoting inclusion

5 areas of EP delivery

Consultation & Review

3 levels of EP delivery



Child and Family

EP Consultation is more than a meeting.
It is a psychological process and is indirect assessment where the EP meets with the parent(s)/carer and teacher/practitioner to:

- Provide a safe and containing time and space that supports engagement and collaboration.
- Prioritise the safety of children, families and staff.
- Support and challenge implementation of a learning support plan through careful listening and skilled questioning that strives to make sense of a child's strengths/needs and gets at the root why an intervention has worked or why it has not.
- Create an opportunity to reinforce or reset the learning support plan.
- Collect practice-based evidence bespoke to the child.
- Support identification of teacher/wider staff continuous professional development needs.

EP consultation takes place in the setting and/or home with interpreters where needed so that parents/carers can be fully involved.

Whole school/setting/group/cohort using consultation skills to:

- Provide advice, guidance on programmes for individual and groups of children.
- Inform decision-making on selecting/continuing with evidence-based programmes.
- Review practice-based evidence with SEND, pastoral and senior leadership teams.
- Inform the setting's SEND development plans & policies.
- Inform future investment in workforce development ensuring efficient and effective use of resources backed by implementation science.



School or Setting

EPs lead and/or are members of partnership boards, strategic planning and operational workstreams, e.g.,

- Principal EPs, Senior EPs and EPs are strategically positioned across the system to support breadth of understanding of inclusion and SEND issues and apply psychology to the group dynamics e.g., risk of 'group think' and 'power threat' dynamics, maintaining advocacy for the child.
- Challenging racism in education, EBSNA, exclusion and promoting trauma informed/relational practice.
- SEND Partnership Board, Youth Justice Strategic Management Board, Early Help Partnership Board, Designated Safeguarding Lead network, SENCO networks, Senior Mental Health Leads networks, etc.



Local Authority / Local Area / Regional / National (DfE)

Assessment

Psychological assessments enable early and accurate understanding of a child's presentation through:

- Applying a holistic, interactionist and problem-solving approach to consider the child within the context of their biological, familial, educational, community, and health environments.
- Consultation (indirect assessment).
- Psychological observation.
- Dynamic and standardised assessment approaches that account for and respect the child's unique cultural background and lived experiences.
- Having a rationale for chosen methodology (quantitative, qualitative, mixed) and subsequent methods: dynamic, standardised, personal construct psychology etc.
- Adding value/insight to what is already known.
- Respecting teacher/practitioner/setting's accumulation of knowledge of the child over time.
- Respecting parent/carer knowledge.
- Accessing and amplifying the child's voice.
- Multi-agency discussions and supporting referrals onto specialist services (e.g., Early Help, CAMHS).
- Triangulating and synthesising all assessment information and providing a psychological and ethically grounded formulation that is accessible, meaningful and free from jargon.

Assessment / Audits

Leading on the development and/or implementation and review of audits supporting settings to undertake self-assessments on whole setting approaches to promote inclusion using psychologically informed frameworks, e.g.,

- Implementation of trauma informed practice and emotional wellbeing approaches.
- Promoting Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools

EPs lead and contribute to assessment & decision making through:

- Multi-disciplinary local area teams, e.g., neurodevelopment assessment clinics.
- Multi-agency local area decision making panels, quality assurance processes, e.g., SEND Panels, Placement & Provision Panels, Tribunal Panels, Fair Access Panels, sufficiency place planning based on changing cohorts, joint commissioning, etc.
- Reporting on progress relating to a range of local area strategies through action plans and self-evaluation documents.
- Developing and contributing to national and regional audit/benchmarking exercises providing compare and contrast data.

Intervention

Providing psychological led/informed intervention for children with a range of needs.

- This can include teaching children (and staff in educational settings who work closely with them) how to understand their strengths and needs and use effective strategies to support their learning and emotional needs. EPs provide the training, supervision and coaching to sustain these approaches, e.g.,
- Psychoeducation in the areas of Autism/Attention Deficit & Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)/Emotional Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)
- Identity development work.
- Approaches to build social and emotional resilience, e.g., Homunculi, FRIENDS, PEERS.
- Strength based approaches for children and families (e.g., Tree of Life)
- Mindfulness groups / techniques, e.g. to manage exam stress.
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs).
- Mediated Learning Support Approach (MeLSA).
- Metacognitive strategies/study skills for revising successfully.
- Parent coaching and drop-in support.
- Parenting programmes, e.g. Incredible Years.
- Video Interactive Guidance (VIG).
- Trauma Informed Practice approaches using implementation frameworks.
- Supervision and coaching for staff.

Critical Incident Response

EPs provide strategic support in situations that have the potential to cause disruption and distress to the community as a result of a significant loss, traumatic or sad event through:

- Supporting the setting's Senior Leadership Teams to consider the situation, develop an understanding of the support needs of individuals and groups within the community and guide planning in relation to providing the right emotional support at the right time over the short, medium and longer term.
- Supporting Council staff in Children's Services.
- Providing psychological containment for local area trauma.

EPs leads on and/or are active partners in the development of local area partnership implementation programmes

- These are fully aligned with regional and national initiatives across education, health, social care and the EP profession: underpinned by an evidence base, psychological theory, frameworks and implementation science, e.g.,
- Collaboration and delivery across the early years partnership, e.g., Family Hubs, parent-infant mental health, development and supervision for early years settings and partner services.
- Promoting whole school approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health in schools and settings.
- Leading on relational and trauma informed practice & emotional based school non-attendance (EBSNA).
- Promoting understanding and inclusion of neurodiversity.
- Initial Teacher Training / Early Career Teaching development and supervision.

Training

EP-led training provides a reflective and enriching space for learning, grounded in the principles of andragogy.

- Educational Psychologists invite those who care for children to think psychologically—enhancing their knowledge, deepening compassion, and strengthening connections. This empowers them to make a greater impact across educational, community, and home settings.
- **Training/workshops through the Early Years core offer, e.g.,**
- Prioritising the importance of the wellbeing of caregivers, containing relationships, attunement, talking and playing with babies, toddlers, and nursery age children and how this helps social, emotional development, independence and readiness for learning in school.
- The importance of play and outdoor play on later learning in the classroom.
- **Primary and secondary age workshops delivering training on developmental changes, e.g.,**
- Developmental stages, providing care and setting boundaries.
- Supporting executive function skills at home.
- How to talk to your child so that they will listen and talk to you
- The stages of identity development – stepping stones to successful learning.
- Puberty and SEND.

Training, supervision & coaching for education settings

- The allocated EP develops a deep understanding of the educational setting's professional development needs through a collaborative partnership. This insight informs senior leadership decision-making around staff training, supervision, support, and supporting staff retention.
- Through this scoping process, training is customised to workforce requirements and shaped by evolving thinking in education and psychology, underpinned by local and national research.

Research

Research and action research for families

Conducting action research with families and children to:

- Evaluate the impact of early years/ school-based interventions.
- Listen to children's experiences and making sure that their feedback is acted on.
- Understand the lived experiences by accessing and amplifying the voice of families and children when co-producing services/offers.
- Provide families with digestible research that supports engagement, choice and uptake of interventions.

Research and action research in settings:

- **Action research evidences and informs impact and decision making.**
- Using participatory research method to place voice/experience of the child at centre of the educational setting's leadership planning, e.g., children's sense of safety in/at school/college.
- Effectiveness of EP impact on outcomes for children, e.g., annual satisfaction surveys and stakeholder engagement.
- Effectiveness of whole school intervention programmes.
- Providing evidence for best practice, pastoral care, pedagogical approaches and resource choices by conducting brief literature reviews on relevant topics, e.g., best practice in schools to support children who are experiencing homelessness and temporary accommodation.

Research and action research at a local, regional and national level

- Research is conducted across all levels of the system, emerging from practice-based issues and developed through a continuous, iterative cycle.
- This ground up approach highlights the most pressing and relevant issues, generating data and insight that shape and inform decision-making and best practices, guided by established research methodologies and implementation science.
- This process means that the research is reliable, accessible and practical and can be utilised by parents/carers, educators and system leaders, e.g., understanding the experiences of families who 'opt for EHE' to inform local area response.