

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 31 May 2016

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Validated Self Evaluation of Educational Psychology Service

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the Validated Self Evaluation of Educational Psychology Service by Education Scotland.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to: -
- (i) Note the content of the Education Scotland report (Appendix 1).
 - (ii) Thank the Educational Psychology Service on the good practice identified and positive feedback received from Education Scotland on the Service provided to children and young people in East Lothian.
 - (iii) Note that as a result of the improvement areas identified the Principal Educational Psychologist will be working closely with the Head of Education and Education Service Manager (Additional Support Needs/Early Years) to take forward the recommendations. These will be formalised into an Action Plan which will in turn inform the Service Improvement Plan.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Educational Psychology Service engaged in a Validated Self Evaluation in March 2016 and the report was published in May 2016.
- 3.2 The report noted the following key strengths:
- Good relationships between Educational Psychologist's and educational establishments that were highly valued by school staff.

- Building capacity in staff and partners through bespoke training and targeted follow up resulting in improved outcomes for children and young people in the classroom.
- Offering objective and reflective input to multi-agency teams resulting in improved planning, decision making and outcomes for Looked After and Accommodated (LAC) and young people.
- Highly valued research skills and knowledge that was used effectively to build capacity and develop training packages.

3.3 Education Scotland agreed the following areas for further improvement with the Educational Psychology Service and education authority:

- Extend the role of the Service beyond the traditional ASN population and resource allocation process.
- In partnership with the authority, align service delivery more fully and appropriately with a GIRFEC approach.
- Initiate dialogue with the newly appointed Head of Education to review the balance of service delivery, releasing time for the service to utilise its psychological knowledge and expertise to make a stronger strategic contribution to local and national policy initiatives and strategic priorities.
- Ensure that the Educational Psychology Service builds on opportunities to support the authority's vision, values and aims.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Education Scotland report on East Lothian Educational Psychology Service dated May 2016 (Appendix 1).

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DATE	6 May 2016



Validated self-evaluation

**East Lothian Council Educational
Psychology Services**

May 2016

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1. What is validated self-evaluation in Educational Psychology Services?

Validated self-evaluation (VSE) is an evaluative activity which supports and challenges the work of Educational Psychology Services (EPS) by working collaboratively. It involves a partnership between the education authority, EPS and HM Inspectors, Education Scotland. In EPS the VSE focuses on two key themes.

- Learning and Teaching.
- Partnership Working.

The themes reflect the Scottish Government's national priorities and relate to the contributions made by EPS to raising attainment, addressing disadvantage and supporting and implementing, *Getting it Right For Every Child* (GIRFEC). Both themes also allow EPS to evidence the impact and outcomes of early intervention and prevention across the full range of their service delivery.

In addition to the core themes, services can choose an additional one to reflect their own context. An additional area may relate to the core themes or reflect other quality indicators which impact on the service's ability to improve outcomes for its stakeholders. For example, leadership, or the delivery of the five Currie (2002)¹ functions of consultation and advice, assessment, intervention, professional development and research and development.

2. What was validated self-evaluation in East Lothian Council's Educational Psychology Service?

East Lothian Council Educational Psychology Service (ELCEPS), working closely with key partners, used the VSE process to deepen their existing knowledge and understanding of their strengths and areas for development in a number of key areas of service delivery. Two themes were selected from their self-evaluation evidence which they felt required further investigation. These were:

- the impact on learners of the EPS' role in providing training and building capacity; and
- the impact of the EPS in working effectively with partners to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The service was keen to use the VSE as an opportunity to identify the areas of service delivery which made the greatest impact and which should be prioritised for further development and improvement. Within the teaching and learning theme, their work on capacity building included, Autistic Spectrum Disorder training, and Video Interactive Guidance training and Intervention and Attachment Disorder training. All of the above had undergone rigorous self-evaluation, which had engaged a wide range of stakeholders and partners. There was also a wide range of development work offered to schools including Brain Based Learning understanding and the use of Growth Mindset.

¹ Currie (2002), Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland. Scottish Executive.

The partnership theme explored the EPS contribution to children in the 0-5 years age range with partners. They also considered what schools value when working with the EPS and how their new collaborative processes impact on children and young people. They focused on their role in supporting and improving outcomes for children and young people educated/cared for in out-with provision. Another area considered was how their collaborative processes impact on children and young people, particularly service level agreements and associated paperwork.

The learning and teaching themed group comprised of three partners in the core group. This included a training and development officer, a primary headteacher, and an education officer with the remit for Looked After Children (LAC) and behaviour. The partnership themed group consisted of a primary headteacher, social work development manager and the education department's lead officer for GIRFEC. Each group was led by a member of the ELCEPS and there were a number of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in each group.

The service put in place a programme of activities involving a range of stakeholders and partners to support the VSE process. For example, a parent, early years manager (education), public health practitioner, education managers and a social work team leader. Activities included focus groups, visits to schools, individual and telephone interviews with professionals and parents. Towards the end of each day, the theme groups met to reflect on what they had learnt, and to begin to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The activity leads effectively used a range of person-centred and graphic communication approaches to engage their participants. The themed group leads also met at the end of the day to share their findings across both themes. In this way, themed group members were able to see emerging strengths and areas for further development across and within each theme and in relation to the overall self-evaluation processes. Through such joint evaluative activity, Education Scotland staff were able to assess the rigour of the EPS' self-evaluation processes and the robustness of the evidence used to evaluate performance and service delivery.

3. What did HM Inspectors learn about the quality of self-evaluation in East Lothian Council's Educational Psychology Service?

The service provided a well evidenced self-evaluation report. During the VSE, the Education Scotland team found that the service's range of self-evaluation methods such as the use of focus groups, interviews, interrogating existing data and gathering further data came together as an effective range of evaluative activities. It became clear that ELCEPS was working very well to add value to the education authority's work in capacity building and partnership working. As the VSE process progressed, the service engaged in honest and challenging dialogue with their partners and with the Education Scotland team. Service team members, in their themed groups, demonstrated a move towards more focused and objective analysis of the evidence gathered during the VSE self-evaluation activities.

The open participation and engagement of partners and their ability to reflect on their learning increased noticeably throughout the week. The theme leads created a supportive ethos for partners who were empowered to open up and explore areas for improvement. The service benefited from the challenge and questioning provided by partners and HM Inspectors and responded positively by reflecting deeply on their

practice and the implications for future engagement. Theme leads and EPs asked insightful questions, listened and responded respectfully. Partners commented that they wanted to incorporate some ideas about self-evaluation from the process into their own practice.

The Education Scotland team found evidence of good relationships between EPs and educational establishments which were valued.

A key strength was the impact of bespoke training and targeted follow up from the EPS resulting in improved inclusive outcomes for children and young people in the classroom. The service should now ensure that they are able, through the use of robust data, to highlight better their effectiveness in supporting and maintaining mainstream school placements for children/young people with complex Additional Support Needs (ASN).

The service also demonstrated that they offered objective and reflective input to multi-agency teams resulting in improved planning, decision making and outcomes for LAC and young people. The EPS should extend their assessment methodologies to build capacity in others to help them improve multi-agency decision making about children and young people further. The EPS introduced new and effective approaches such as graphic facilitation to support pupil participation in planning meetings. The service recognised that more opportunity for sampling a wider range of stakeholder views, and in particular that of parents, children and young people would have further strengthened and enhanced their self-evaluation.

Partners valued highly the research skills and knowledge that ELCEPS brought to training and capacity building. This was most highly effective when delivered by EPs who knew the context of the school and could provide follow up support aimed at embedding new learning among the staff team.

ELCEPS identified the need to review its role in ASN assessment and resource allocation and in partnership with the authority, align their service delivery more fully with GIRFEC and other national priorities. They also recognised the need to work more systemically with schools and the authority to apply their psychological knowledge more to impact on a wider range of practice and raise attainment for all. The VSE process provided an opportunity to revisit and reflect on the role of the ELCEPS at a strategic level and engage less in activities which other partners might be better placed to deliver. These are key areas for further improvement.

4. What does the Educational Psychology Service plan to do next?

The service identified strengths and areas for development within each of the two themed areas. These can be found on the ELCEPS website http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/200165/educational_psychology

Education Scotland and ELCEPS agreed on the following next steps.

- Extend the role of ELCEPS beyond the traditional ASN population and resource allocation process.

- In partnership with the authority, align service delivery more fully and appropriately with a GIRFEC approach.
- Initiate dialogue with the newly appointed Head of Education to review the balance of service delivery, releasing time for the service to utilise its psychological knowledge and expertise to make a stronger strategic contribution to local and national policy initiatives and strategic priorities.
- Ensure that the EPS builds on opportunities to support the authority's vision, values and aims.

5. What is East Lothian Council's Educational Psychology Service's capacity for improvement?

The Principal Educational Psychologist has made very good progress in establishing systems and processes for effective self-evaluation which has highlighted strengths and key areas for improvement. As such, Education Scotland validated their self-evaluation. As a result of the improvement areas identified during the VSE and the appointment of a new Head of Education, further engagement by Education Scotland with the authority and ELCEPS will be negotiated through the Local Partnership Agreement and in consultation with the Area Lead Officer, HM Inspector.

Nicola Robertson
Lead Facilitator
6 May 2016

Further information about the EPS VSE reports and self-evaluation can be found on the service's website http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/200165/educational_psychology

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