



Educational Psychology Service

How educational psychologists support children and young people with SEND

Educational Psychologists (EPs) work within the Local Authority in partnership with education settings (early years, schools, and alternative provision and further education colleges), families, and other practitioners to help children and young people (CYP) have an improved experience of education by achieving success in their learning and their social and emotional development. Information about Bury EPS can be found on our website: [Educational Psychology Service | The Bury Directory](#)

Education settings are expected to record and monitor progress through an individualised support plan (e.g. IEP or similar) which should be developed in partnership with the CYP and their parent/carer and reviewed at least termly. If despite whole school and individual support arrangements a CYP has not made the expected progress, then specialist support, such as the involvement of the [Inclusion Service](#) or an EP may be requested.

For children with complex SEND (special educational needs and disabilities), EPs play an important role in providing support to the CYP, their parent/carer and the education setting. This support can take a variety of forms based on direct and/or indirect involvement with the CYP. The EP will help the education setting to review the existing support that is in place, offer advice about teaching approaches, interventions and appropriate adaptations that might be needed to support the CYP's progress.

What Assessment Approaches are used by an Educational Psychologist?

Bury Educational Psychology Service are a consultation-led service; this approach takes the form of 'conversations that make a difference' with those who know the child or young person best, including their parents or carers, key school or setting staff and other services where appropriate. We have found that this approach has the greatest impact and leads to better outcomes for schools, settings and CYP. It also allows the views and expertise of all those involved to be considered, to support positive change. A consultation guide for school/ setting staff, and guides for parents and carers, are available from the EPS; please contact edpsych@bury.gov.uk for further information.

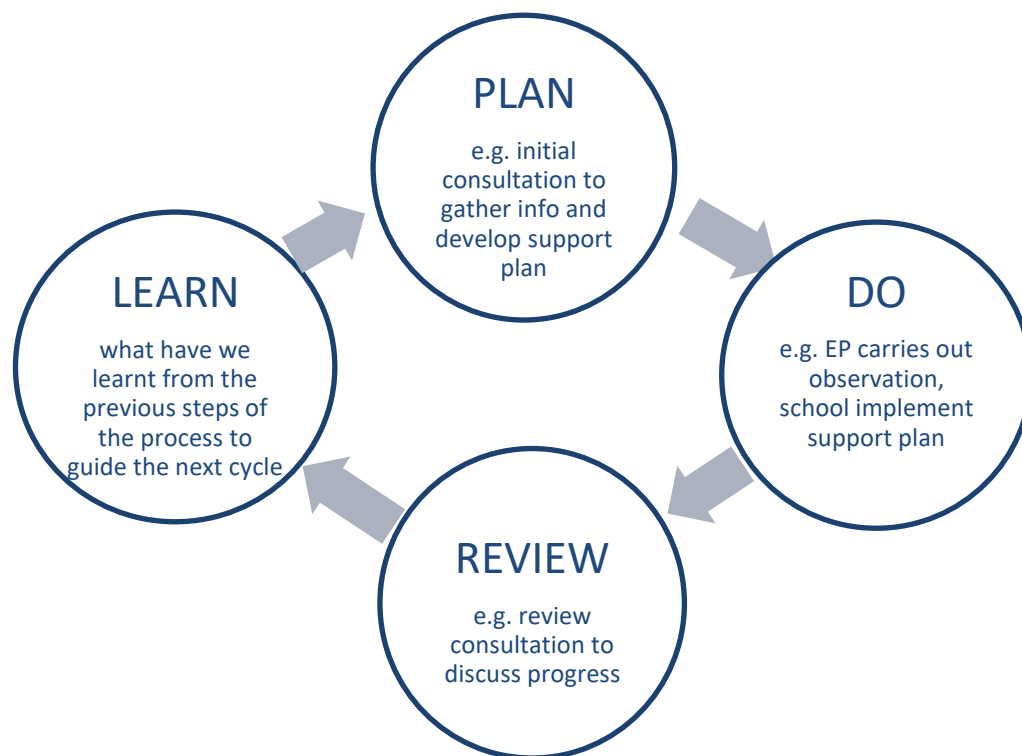
Consultation is a process based on a plan-do-review framework and is used at individual, group, and whole-school levels.

Plan-do-review cycles typically involve:

- Initial consultation with key stakeholders, to discuss strengths, concerns and what has already been tried. The meeting will also involve agreeing and setting actions, with agreement of who has responsibility for each part of the plan and timescales for carrying these out. Consultation is a key part of our assessment approach.
- The 'do' part of the cycle may include assessments carried out by staff or other support services. Or assessment or observation by the Educational Psychologist if this is agreed to

have a clear purpose within the consultation. Assessment is agreed on an individual basis, to gather further information that is needed and to test hypotheses. Examples of EP assessment are included below.

- Actions are 'reviewed' at an agreed time within a review consultation, so that progress towards the identified objectives can be discussed; there can be identification of what has worked or not worked, and what the next steps should be.



EPs use a range of assessment approaches, including:

- Speaking with teachers, parents/carers and practitioners involved (e.g. consultation)
- Speaking with the CYP person to find out their views (what is working and not working with regards to their education and what support they feel they need)
- Observing how the CYP responds in the learning environment – looking at how they respond to the demands of the learning task, and their social interactions with others.
- Looking at the CYP's school work
- Using questionnaires and rating scales to investigate how the CYP thinks, feels, and behaves.
- Questionnaires and rating scales to assess the learning environment (for example, the physical layout of the classroom, the social interactions and how the class and lessons are organised).
- Looking at school-based assessments - or developmental profiles for young children
- Dynamic assessment methods that look at the CYP's approach to learning, their response to different teaching approaches and their capacity to learn.
- Psychometric assessment which looks at how the CYP's skills, knowledge and development compares with other CYP the same age. This may include non-verbal assessments which can be completed by teaching staff (e.g. Ravens Progressive Matrices) or the [Additional Needs Team](#).

The assessment approach that the EP uses should seek to give clarity and develop a holistic understanding about a CYP's strengths and needs and should consider all the information that is already known about the CYP (i.e. information from the educational setting, parents/carers, and other practitioners). The assessment should be effective, efficient and use the least intrusive approach to gathering information to provide high quality psychological advice.

Cognitive assessments are one type of assessment that an EP may carry out, this would always follow a discussion through consultation to ensure this would be purposeful and informative, rather than a standalone piece of work. These discussions will establish whether a cognitive assessment would be accessible for a CYP or appropriate at a given time and identify what the most useful type of assessment to provide the required information might be. For example, it might not be appropriate to complete a cognitive assessment if:

- A CYP cannot attend to an adult-led activity for the required amount of time;
- they have English as an Additional Language or identified communication needs which would impact their ability to understand the instructions or tasks; or
- if a young person is presenting with high levels of anxiety which would impact their performance and the experience could be detrimental for them.

Any assessment would be carried out as part of a holistic understanding of the CYP's strengths and needs and triangulated with other sources of information (e.g. views from parent/ carer; CYP's views; information and assessment from the school/ setting or other services).

What is important about how Educational Psychologists work?

All EPs are registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council which confirms the high standard of their professional work. At all times EPs:

- Act in the best interests of the CYP with their views being at the centre of the process.
- Ensure that informed consent is obtained by all those providing information.
- Respect the confidentiality of those providing information, whilst working within safeguarding policy.
- Act in a non-discriminatory manner.
- Work in partnership with others and aim for a shared understanding of CYP's individual strengths and support needs.
- Ensure effective communication with those involved in the consultation and support process – including liaison with other professionals and services.
- Maintain clarity regarding their professional role.
- Use high quality, evidence-informed assessment methods and approaches.
- Monitor interventions over time to inform assessment (as part of plan-do-review-learn cycles).
- Ensure a range of factors are taken into consideration during the assessment process e.g. the learning environment, the context in which the CYP lives and learns and the perspectives of the CYP and those around them.
- Clearly identify assessment information, which is reported by others, and make clear which assessment information is based on their own direct involvement with the CYP.
- Maintain clarity around interpretation of assessment information and recommendations made and exercise a duty of care to all those with whom they work.

What is the role of an Educational Psychologist in the education health and care needs assessment?

If a child or young person has significant difficulty with learning and or social and emotional development, they may require an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment. Educational schools and settings can make a formal request to the local authority and demonstrate the action they have taken through the child or young person's individual support plans (parents/carers can also make a request, but it is usually completed by the setting). If the local authority agrees to the assessment, then the EP will be requested to provide information and advice, alongside other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Community Paediatricians and Social Care to help the local authority decide whether an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is required. When providing their advice, the EP will consider what psychological assessment information is already available about the child or young person and then decide whether

additional psychological information is needed. As detailed above, EPs use a range of assessment approaches and work in collaboration with parents/carers, setting staff and other professionals.

What is the role of an Educational Psychologist in annual reviews and interim reviews?

The local authority must review the EHCP at least annually (every six months until the child reaches the age of 5 years). The meetings are led by the education setting as they are in the best position to know the CYP as they have the closest contact with them and their family, as well as the most up to date information about progress and next steps. These meeting must focus on progress towards achieving the outcomes listed in the EHCP, and on any changes to be made to the outcomes or support needed to help the CYP continue to make progress.

In preparing for review meetings, education settings should be discussing the CYP's progress with parents/carers. If progress is not being made, then the education setting should consider whether further school-based assessment may be needed to help identify any additional support the CYP might need. The Graduated Approach document (being co-produced during 2021-22) provides guidance for settings before, during, and following annual review meetings alongside 'top tips' to help these meetings run smoothly.

The annual review process ensures that the EHCP remains relevant and appropriate to the needs of the CYP. If, at the annual review it is agreed that the needs of the CYP have changed significantly and/or the provision is no longer able to address the CYP's needs then the local authority will be asked to decide about updating the EHCP and/or exploring more suitable education provision. Occasionally, the local authority may require additional information to make its decision and may request an EP provides updated psychological advice.

References:

- The British Psychological Society (Scottish Division of Educational Psychology), Position Paper – Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland (2014)
- The British Psychological Society Guidance for Educational Psychologists (EPs). Department for Education/Department of Health – Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of practice: 0-25 years, July 2015
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- Association of Educational Psychologists (2020). Working remotely with CYP and their families (COVID-19 related)