

Delivering Educational Psychology Services - February 2019

This report aims to update Select Committee Members on issues with regard to staffing, recruitment and performance of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS).

The current context and performance of the EPS

There has been a large increase in demand for Statutory Assessments, some of which can be explained by an increase in population; however, some is as a result of current processes in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) team. The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has organised to meet this demand by (a) employing Associate Educational Psychologists (EPs) who are paid for each Appendix D they produce, and (b) by ceasing pupil and school focused work in order to concentrate on completing outstanding assessments. 9 former Buckinghamshire County Council employed EPs have moved to the associate model.

Currently, there are 115 Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) that fall outside of the 20 week statutory timeline and each month these existing overdue cases are negatively impacting upon the percentage of plans that are completed within the statutory timeline. To address this, the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) and Head of Service (HoS) for SEN have rigorously reviewed where the delays are occurring in order to both push outstanding plans through but also to minimise these identified bottlenecks as contributory factors moving forward. Furthermore, for all plans falling outside the 20 week timeline, the PEP is contacting the assigned EP to prompt immediate completion, with suitable ongoing monitoring by the PEP until the plan is completed as required. As a direct result, in January, the EP Service has completed 47 Statutory Advices as opposed to 31 in December. **That is an improvement of 52%.**

The overall percentage of EHCPs required by children and young people across the County remains at 3.1% which shows that the demand has increased in response to a growth in population but the percentage of plans remains the same. It is important to note that whereas Buckinghamshire had a high percentage of EHCPs, national and statistical comparators are now rising to reflect a similar level of plans.

There has also been a 36% increase in tribunal work. (September – February this academic year as opposed to last.)

Recruitment:

A new advert has now been published and will go into the weekly mailing from the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP). This is the most productive avenue for recruiting Education Psychologists as it reaches 93% of EPs.

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