

Delivering Educational Psychology Services - August 2019

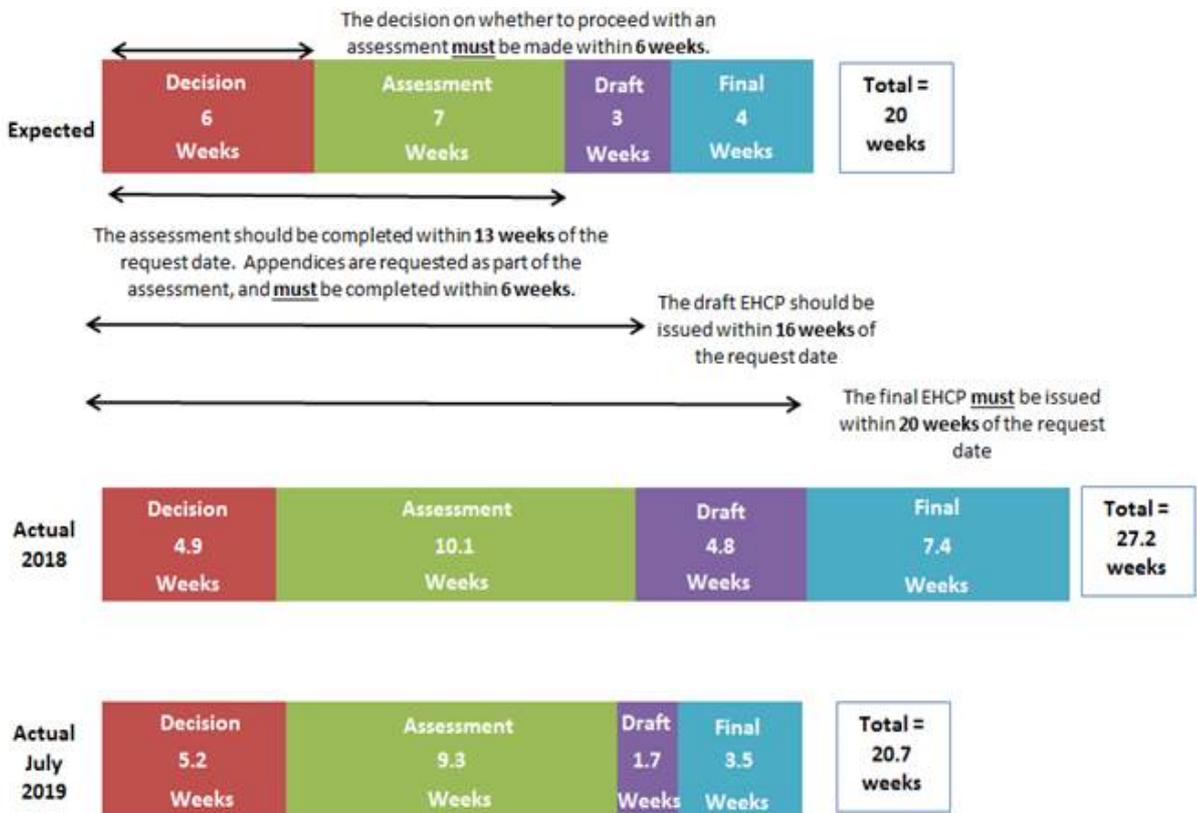
This report provides an update Select Committee Members on issues regarding staffing, recruitment and performance of Educational Psychology (EP) across Buckinghamshire.

Context for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

The statutory deadline that we must adhere to as a Local Authority, and that is reported on annually by the Department for Education, is in relation to the final EHCP being issued to a family (20 weeks). The 'shoulds' that we have included in our 'expected' diagram below, reflect the targets we have set ourselves to ensure all assessments are collated in time to enable us to meet this overall timescale.

As an update to the previous report, the backlog of 123 that we had accrued was cleared in June 2019. Currently, there are 25 plans that are outstanding and some of these will fall into the 'exceptions' category, enabling them to go over 20 weeks as the assessment cannot be completed due to schools being closed. A concerted effort was made by all involved in order to achieve this, and we will be moving into the new structure of the Integrated SEND Service in September 2019 in a much better position in relation to EHC Needs Assessments.

In the diagram below, you will see a breakdown of the various stages in the 20 week process and our expectations as to how long each should take. The timescales we have built in for making a 'decision' and 'assessment' mean that we issue a draft EHCP by week 16 of the process at the latest, allowing enough time to make any amendments and secure an appropriate educational placement, which must be named on the final EHCP. The EPs have 6 week statutory timescale in which in which to complete an Appendix D assessment and this is captured in the 13 week window below.



As an update for this report, we have now included the data for 2019 to the midpoint, to demonstrate our overall average improvement towards the 20 week statutory timeframe. For the purpose of this report, it is important to highlight that we are now completing assessments in an average of 9.3 weeks, compared with 10.1 weeks in 2018. Although this is not at the target that we have set of 7 weeks, it is an improvement and shows a progressive trajectory. The overall assessment is taking an average of 20.7 weeks which is more of a significant improvement compared to the 27.2 weeks it was taking in 2018.

Between May and July 2019, 310 final EHCPs were issued, following the setting of daily targets to address the backlog.

Staffing and Recruitment

EP staffing is currently at 7.1 FTE, with 2 of these being FTE Senior EPs. The new structure indicates that there should be 15 FTE and 3 FTE Senior EPs.

There is currently a recruitment campaign for main grade EPs and one Senior EP being advertised on the Bucks CC website, the AEP website and the Principal EP. The interim Principal EP left in July 2019.

The Head of Service and Director are currently pursuing the increased use of social media designed to promote and attract applicants to the service.

Following the opportunities given to EPs in the summer term as outlined in the previous report, one EP has been offered promotion to Senior EP. We have also managed to successfully recruit one further permanent EP, due to start with the service in September 2019.

Given the difficulties we are having to recruit both EPs and seniors, the turnaround for Appendix Ds remains a challenge.

Associate Model

There are now 15 Associate EPs, an increase of 6 compared to last report presented. In addition, a revision of their contracts has been made to encourage timely completion of reports and this has resulted in the vast majority of Appendix Ds from Associates being returned within 5 days.

Performance against Appendix D and Final EHCP's

Currently, on average, Appendix Ds are taking 8.3 weeks to complete compared to the 6 week statutory timescale.

| Measure | Jan 2019 | Feb 2019 | Mar 2019 | Apr 2019 | May 2019 | Jun 2019 | Jul 2019 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Number of Appendix Ds completed in calendar year | 43 | 93 | 146 | 186 | 245 | 297 | 355 |
| % of Appendix Ds completed in calendar year within 6 weeks | 4.7% | 9.7% | 11.0% | 15.1% | 14.7% | 15.8% | 14.4% |
| Average weeks to complete for 2019 | 8.7 | 8.4 | 8.2 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 8.1 | 8.3 |

The challenges surrounding this area remain the same as previously, and we are working on new ways to encourage recruitment of applicants, with new Senior EPs in place, as we move into the new structure in September 2019.