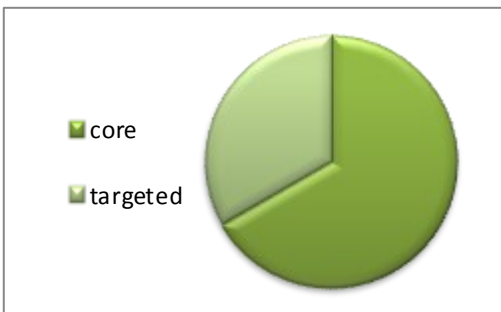


In May 2017, the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) was subject to a validated self-evaluation (VSE) by Education Scotland. The opportunity to undertake this in-depth evaluation and reflection along with our stakeholders provided the EPS with a refreshed and ambitious programme for change and modernisation for its service delivery. This brief report outlines the 4 key priority areas within which our action plan was formulated along with our most recent updates around progress.

Priority 1: Communication Strategy

Our focus within the communication strategy was to collaborate with key stakeholders in the development and implementation of a new service delivery model to provide a more effective balance between individual case work and development work. Our initial task therefore was to reduce the overall level of individual case work to better manage capacity whilst also affording the EPS an effective balance to further establish its role in development work.



As part of the new model of service delivery we have categorized our individual case work involvement at two levels: **1) core work**, which involves short term cycles of involvement delivered via our direct links to individual schools, and **2) targeted work**, which involves longer term involvement when there is some level of ongoing complexity and an ongoing role for the EP is considered appropriate. Along with key stakeholders the EPS has now reduced its overall levels of case work by two thirds. Of the cases that remain open two thirds have been allocated to **core work** and around one third to **targeted work**.

In order to maintain our collaboration and information sharing with all of our stakeholders our Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) has progressed with a number of direct meetings in order to update and seek feedback on the development of our new service delivery model. To date this has included representatives from SBC senior management team, schools, allied health professionals, and our partners within social work and children's services. A meeting to update parents will be explored at a schedule meeting with the Parent Council Chairs Forum around March 2018.

Following collaboration with our stakeholders our new service delivery model was agreed and implemented in November 2017. In order to progress our role in development work the EPS has also established its base at council headquarters on a Monday and Friday to better link with education colleagues and support developments in line with national and local priorities - specifically around '**closing the gap**' and '**inclusion**'. Discussions are ongoing with senior management within SBC to further identify the role the EPS will take in supporting initiatives around these priorities.

As part of our new service model the EPS has revisited its use of consultation as method of service delivery. The consultation approach features EP facilitated collaborative problem solving meetings in order to apply psychological knowledge and skills to explore solutions and bring about positive change. The EPS will be piloting the use of this approach across the remainder of this academic year and evaluating its impact over time.

'Consultation involves focussed collaborative discussion in which people who share concerns work together to identify ways forward. Consultation is about joint investigation, joint solution building, joint planning, intervention, evaluation and review.'

An additional strand to our communication strategy is the development and use of our web site. The site has recently been updated and can be accessed using the following link - <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/EPS>. We will be seeking feedback from stakeholders next year to support and further develop the most effective use of the site.



Priority 2: Quality Assurance Strategy

One of the key outcomes within our quality assurance strategy is to further embed self-evaluation within our service delivery model. The EPS team have begun to explore what mechanisms would offer a suitable and user friendly approach to ensure that feedback data on service performance is systematically gathered and used to inform future service developments.

Within our revised consultation approach to service delivery we will be exploring the use of feedback within the context of a consultation meeting and have updated our consultation record keeping format to facilitate this level of discussion. We are also exploring additional feedback mechanisms - including web based options - to capture impact data on an annual basis from all of our key stakeholders. It is planned that this level of data will be instrumental in informing not only our ongoing involvement at a case work level but also in relation to supporting ongoing national and local priorities in the context of our development work with the wider education team.

Linked to our communication strategy a member of the team is currently exploring updates to our service leaflets for 'Children and Young People'. This has involved focused discussion with young people and school staff which will inform a revision of the leaflet or potentially alternative methods to support communication with children and young people.

Priority 3: Professional Development Strategy and Programme

Our professional development strategy and programme focuses upon building and extending professional practice for all EPs within the team. Our strategy and programme will allow us not only to build upon individual EP skills and strengths - but to ensure that our CPD needs are also aligned and informed by national and local priorities which are identified and prioritised in collaboration with our key stakeholders.

Our focus around this strategy began with all EPs undertaking their PRD interviews with the PEP at the start of the academic session. This exercise enabled the team to identify and begin to prioritise a range of CPD needs relating to service delivery across both individual case work and development work. As such, the EPS has identified consultation as a key area for ongoing development for the whole team which will support the ongoing development and implementation of our new service delivery model. Collaboration with our stakeholders is ongoing with regards to our CPD needs in relation to emerging priorities for authority wide development work.

Within the EPS we have also recognised the importance of developing a model of peer supervision to support and promote the development of EP practice across the team. To date the team have explored and agreed upon a model of supervision which will be implemented in dyad pairs on a regular basis throughout the year. The EPS have also identified associated CPD needs in order that the whole team can further develop and consolidate the knowledge and skills associated with effective supervision.



Priority 4: PEP Support for VSE Action Plan Implementation

In leading on the implementation of our VSE Action Plan the PEP has been very active in promoting the leadership of people, policy and change around the EPS. This term our PEP was very visible in promoting a wider understanding of the role of the EPS and the associated changes being implemented regarding our new service delivery model. In relation to our communication strategy this message has been shared and feedback invited across a broad range of stakeholders in education, social work and health.

Direction and support has also been given to the EPS team to further promote opportunities for leadership - with individual EPs taking on responsibility for progressing key task within the overall VSE Action Plan.

Leaderships has also been welcomed by the EPS team in the ongoing development of a coherent and reflective approach to our ongoing CPD programme.

This service information update is the first in a series of termly updates regarding progress around our VSE Action Plan. It is hoped that this approach can be used not only for service information but as a way of sharing key research ideas and concepts within psychology to further promote discussion and professional developments within learning and teaching.