

## **ASPEP Main Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

### **Chair's Report**

#### **Reflections on 2014**

*'Never under estimate the difficulty of changing false beliefs by facts'*

*(Harvard economist)*

ASPEP has had a busy and, at times difficult, year. The membership and ASPEP Executive members have been involved in many activities to support the profession. We have contributed to a number of national groups including:

- National Literacy Strategy
- National ASD Strategy
- Doran Review developments
- Code of practice & developments linked to the Children and Young People Act (via the AGASL Group & the GIRFEC seminar)
- ASD Toolbox revision/update
- Standing Advisory Group on Relationships & Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS)
- Seemis developments
- Revision of Autism SIGN Guidelines

We have provided a number of inputs to Scottish Government consultations including the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and evidence to Parliamentary Committee regarding Looked After Children.

We have continued to liaise with the BPS and contribute heavily to the accreditation of services, probationers and the training qualification itself. This also includes the ongoing links to the training courses, the support to trainees through our practice tutors and our contribution to the selection processes to recruit new trainees onto both Dundee and Strathclyde training courses.

We have participated in, and are continuing to participate in, the design & development of Validated Self-Evaluation for the profession.

In September the National Conference was one of the best attended ever with excellent poster displays, copies of the new Assessment Position Paper were made available on the day, not to mention the starring role a number of individuals had in the making of the *Talking Heads* video...soon to go viral perhaps?

The website has, I think been highly successful in cutting down email traffic but also I think you'll agree it is a useful, accessible and practical resource – we are indebted to Barry for his work with this.

So a lot of time and effort from a committed profession – this is before mention is even made about the work done on behalf of the profession regarding our negotiations with the Scottish Government regarding work force planning. The joint paper developed between ASPEP/SDEP & EIS outlining the general direction of travel is already available on the ASPEP website. There will be a selection process for a working force planning data researcher later this month (21<sup>st</sup> November). The project management team (Barry, Sarah, Frank, Carolyn from ASPEP/SDEP), Lynn Carter (Scottish Government) & Laura-Ann Currie (Education Scotland) will oversee and direct progress with this development and liaise with the profession on an ongoing basis.

### Next steps

The past two years have seen ASPEP & SDEP Executives sharing a joint day together in January to discuss priorities and plan ahead. January 2015 will be no exception, with plenty issues to consider:

- Data gathering & processes for workforce planning
- Next steps regarding VSE for psychological services
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and implications for practice
- The ongoing challenge for the profession to raise its profile, make itself more visible and claim ownership of the range of work that it does in supporting local authorities

The profession still has a visibility problem. The work of educational psychologists does still go relatively unseen and unacknowledged due at least

in part, to the nature of our work. It is possible to conjecture that this was the reason more than any other that the profession got its funding cut. There is an argument to be made for example that psychological services have a significant preventive impact on children's emotional health and well-being via their work with schools. There are notable exceptions regarding our profile eg literacy and autism. We must build on these while we continue to explore how to enhance our profile further. On that note I'll finish with another aphorism in keeping with the theme I've just outlined:

*'Never tell your problems to anyone, 20% of people don't care, and the other 80% are glad you have them!'*

Carolyn Brown

ASPEP Chair