

6th May 2016

ASPEP Main Meeting- Chair's Report

The past 6 months has been a very busy period for ASPEP and my report will try to capture some of the key developments that we have been involved in.

Firstly the publication of the Workforce Planning Survey for 2015, which was compiled by Linzi McCorkidale and written jointly by ASPEP / SDEP and Education Scotland. This was the first "independent" survey that was commissioned by the National Scottish Steering Group for EPs. ASPEP continues to have 3 representatives on this group which is looking at how we secure the future of training EPs in Scotland.

The WFP survey was well received by all and has resulted in a number of Parliamentary questions as well as the Cabinet Secretary taking a keen interest in future training and the supply of educational psychologists across Scotland.

January saw ASPEP involved in the joint planning and delivery of a conference at the Norton House Hotel. This 2 day conference focused on workforce planning as well as the future direction of the profession. It was very well attended by ASPEP and the Thursday sessions were an opportunity for us to share thoughts and discuss future possibilities. This was very well supported by colleagues from Education Scotland. What came through from the Thursday was the high level of agreement from services across Scotland on priorities but also challenges to the profession.

The Friday session saw ASPEP working with stakeholders and members of the SDEP on activities around scoping and scanning for the future. All the data gathered from the 2 days is being worked on by the planning group and is being distilled into an action plan that will be shared with all who attended the conference.

The ASPEP Executive committee met with the SDEP Executive for the annual joint day at Airth Castle in February 2016. This led to the Joint Development Plan being reviewed and priorities agreed. This will be available on the ASPEP website.

A working group of Alison Crawford, Carol McGarry and Tracey Colville, along with Bill O'Hara developed the Disputes Resolution Paper. In addition they organized a seminar at Raploch on the 30th March 2016 for ASPEP members as well as Education colleagues from local authorities. There were 2 keynote speakers Elaine Falconer from Aberdeen City and Derek Auchie, Convenor to the ASNTS. Their presentations focused on Disability Discrimination, Preparing for Tribunals and the ASNT procedures. This led to some excellent discussion and question and answer sessions. Thanks to all who contributed to organizing this event.

VSE for Educational Psychology Services has continued to progress with half of services across Scotland completing a VSE. As the VSE process has developed the feedback from services has been positive and the opportunity for Associate Assessors to be involved in VSE has been very well received.

The WFP sub group from ASPEP – Carolyn , Frank and I have been working with Education Scotland and SDEP to ensure that the survey is completed for this year. Although the data researcher post was lost when Linzi started on the Strathclyde MSc Course, Education Scotland agreed to continue to gather data supported by ASPEP.

A central database was developed that is now held by Education Scotland and an admin officer has been identified to support this. The WFP survey went out on 15th April 2016 and returns are now coming in and the database should have all returns in by the end of May. This will be presented at the NSSGEP on 2nd June 2016 and a full report available by August.

It is probable that we will run the survey every 6 months so we can monitor changes in staffing. Services will be able to request reports on their staffing and how this has changed over time.

Can I ask that if you have not completed the survey can you do so as soon as possible. The importance of completing accurately and returning the survey cannot be emphasized enough.

ASPEP has also been involved in working with Education Scotland and SDEP in developing an Action Enquiry programme that will start in June 2016. This is an opportunity of psychologists to work collaboratively across service on the themes of Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. A steering group has been established and this will look at the submissions from services and select which services should work together. The aim is to produce literature reviews or pieces of research that can then be hosted on the National Improvement Hub. This is a real opportunity for educational psychologists to showcase their research skills and have it published.

We have been involved in planning the Annual Conference for EPs in Scotland which will now be on the 30th September 2016 in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. The title is Looking Inward, Outward and Forward – How Educational psychology Services in Scotland deliver quality and equity. Thanks to Nick Balchin and Yvonne Bushnell who are part of the conference planning committee.

Other things ASPEP has been up to:

ASPEP members continue to represent the profession nationally on a range of bodies including QRG, BISSR, AGASL, Education Scotland External Reference Group and Scottish Government Consultation Returns (to name but a few). Nick Smiley and Jacqui Ward responded to the consultation on the revised Mental Health Strategy. We have established working groups looking at the Content of the Training Courses and also how the profession takes forward self-evaluation.

We have been actively involved in the selection process for the Dundee M.Sc. Course. The Roles & Responsibilities Paper provides much more detail on the many groups we currently contribute to. Many thanks are due to all those who provide representation on our behalf.

In summary this has been a very busy time for ASPEP with many ongoing developments. Over the next 6 months we plan to look at developing a position paper on Seeking the views of Children and Young People. We are also about to meet with Policy Makers in Scottish Government to discuss the role of educational psychology and the potential benefits of having EPs contributing on national policy initiatives.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the membership numbers have never been so high and the Executive Committee continues to work very well as a team.

Barry Syme

Chair of ASPEP