

**Scotland's Looked After Children and Young People in
Out of Local Authority Placements**

**A Framework for Educational Psychologists' Practice
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**ASSOCIATION OF SCOTTISH PRINCIPAL
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

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1. Introduction

Children and young people who are looked after and accommodated can be moved by Social Work Services from their own local authorities to reside within other local authorities for both care and educational placements. These children and young people can be vulnerable individuals who require clear and effective communication and support from both home and host¹ Educational Psychology Services. Education and Social Work Services work together as the Local Authority 'corporate parent' to ensure positive outcomes for this group. In keeping with the principles of GIRFEC and ASL legislation, it is also essential that Educational Psychology Services across Scotland work together to support positive transition arrangements and minimise delays in the provision of suitable education programmes for these children and young people.

2. Purpose of Framework

This document provides a practical framework for Educational Psychologists (EPs). It outlines key guiding principles of good practice rather than explicit and/or exhaustive procedures describing what to do in every instance. The framework places an emphasis on identifying the barriers to learning experienced by individual children and young people and working cooperatively both within and across agencies, and across different local authorities, to overcome them.

3. Key Principles of Best Practice

- (i) EP practice should be in keeping with current legislation and national guidance including:
 - (a) Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
 - (b) Additional Support for Learning legislation (2004 & 2009) and the associated yearly reports on implementation
 - (c) Developments across Scotland's Children's Services and Health Services relating to Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
 - (d) Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence developments
 - (e) Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000
 - (f) Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
 - (g) The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
 - (h) The Promise 2020

- (ii) The best interests of the child/young person are paramount and central to all authorities involved. In pursuit of this EPs in both home and host authorities should facilitate and support effective planning and communication regarding any children/young people who are looked after cross-authority in accordance with the GIRFEC national practice model which provides explicit structures and frameworks for multi-agency working. It is expected that models of staged intervention are in place and that educational needs are considered within the wider context of care planning. Educational Psychology Services are not expected to be involved with all children and young people who are looked after.

¹ Operational definitions:

Home Educational Psychology Service/EP: Educational Psychology Service/EP who works for the local authority where the child is from, and which is ultimately responsible for the care and wellbeing of the child.

Host Educational Psychology Service/ EP: Educational Psychology Service/EP who works for the local authority where the child is placed.

- (iii) Social Work is normally the lead agency for the child, and the home authority is the “implementation authority”. It is Education Services within the home authority which has responsibility for the multi-agency plan/child’s plan and Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP). EPs in all authorities act as agents of their authority - joint corporate parents - and EPs in the host authority may be in a good position to support school staff in their planning for teaching and learning.

It is important that Educational Psychology Services across Scotland work together to assist in the coordination of assessment, planning and implementation. As part of our shared commitment to integrated working, information sharing, and improved outcomes, it may be appropriate that record keeping is in individual case files opened by EPs in both home and host authorities.

- (iv) Negotiation and cooperation between home and host EPs should aim for ‘common sense’ agreements based on responsibilities, travel time, costs, and which EP has best knowledge of local contexts.
- (v) The views of the child or young person must be sought, recorded, and taken into account. A discussion as to who is best placed to do this would be undertaken with the school.
- (vi) There should always be a clear rationale for Educational Psychology involvement, this should focus on the promotion of wellbeing and on the learning and teaching of the children or young people concerned. It should build on information already available, with a strong emphasis upon contextual assessment as an ongoing and collaborative process linked to a cycle of planning, intervention, and review.
- (vii) EP assessment involves “considering information beyond the level of the individual including the impact of events and circumstances in the surrounding environment and the development of the necessary interventions, supports, procedures and strategic planning required in order to provide effective learning environments across any local authority” (ASPEP, Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland Position Paper 2014).

In respect of this:

- The child/young person’s needs are considered holistically (emotional needs, learning needs, and both mental and physical health and wellbeing)
- EP assessment is contextualised and supports the principles of ‘least intrusive intervention’ and presumption of mainstream.
- The case EP’s contribution to collaborative assessment should aim to avoid crossover with the roles of other professionals e.g. Social Work, Head Teacher.
- EPs take into account up to date research which informs their understanding of the needs of children and young people who are looked after, and they apply this knowledge to practice e.g. minimizing transitions and considering the impact that changes of care placement can have.

4. **Key Elements of Planning and Roles**

- (i) For those cases which are known to home authority Educational Psychology Services:

The EP – as the agent of the home authority – should be involved in some or all of the following functions, depending on Education Service structures:

- (a) Where possible, liaise with the host authority Educational Psychology Service or Virtual Head Teacher in advance of any placement - to advise that a child/young person from their local authority will be moving to the host local authority.
- (b) Liaise with host authority Educational Psychology Service or Virtual Head Teacher as appropriate, regarding suitable educational placement and any assessment processes/identification of support that is required.
- (c) Liaise with host authority Educational Psychology Service and agree the respective roles of EPs to be taken. This is likely to be determined by the complexity of need and supports required by the child/ young person, family, and school.
- (d) Assist at points of transition and preparation for these.
- (e) Liaise with home local authority processes regarding any additional support and funding that may be identified through the transition process.
- (f) Attend Looked After reviews where appropriate and practical.
- (g) Be involved when there are high levels of concerns regarding placement, additional supports, and supports required.

- (ii) For those cases which are known to host authority Educational Psychology Services:

The EP on behalf of the host authority should be involved in some or all of the following functions, depending on Education Services structures:

- (a) Support the home authority EP with information regarding educational placements, contacts, relevant local information to placement, any funding implications, etc.
- (b) Liaise with home authority EP and agree respective roles to be taken by each EP.
- (c) Where negotiated in advance with home EP, the host EP may agree to attend review meetings and if necessary/appropriate carry out assessment.
- (d) Request that the receiving educational establishment provides the home EP with any updates/alerts regarding significant changes for the child/young person.
- (e) Contact the home authority EP if they have any concerns regarding the child/young person or the capacity of the placement to meet the child/young person's needs.
- (f) Provide consultation, advice, and support for school staff.
- (g) Liaise with home authority EP where there are high levels of concerns and, if required, advise on resources available within the host authority including the protocols for accessing such supports and any funding implications.