

The logo for ASPEP, consisting of the letters 'ASPEP' in a bold, white, sans-serif font inside a blue rounded rectangle.

ASPEP

THE ASSOCIATION OF SCOTTISH
PRINCIPAL EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGISTS

The background of the cover features a photograph of students in a classroom, overlaid with a geometric pattern of blue and white triangles. The students are focused on their work, with one student in the foreground writing in a notebook.

Improving Local Authority Educational Psychology Services in Scotland

A Self-Evaluation Framework

Update December 2025

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	3
Background.....	3
Purpose of self-evaluation	3
Principles of effective self-evaluation	3
Implementing effective self-evaluation	4
Using the self-evaluation framework.....	5
Service delivery and the five core functions	6
The Six Point Scale	9
The Framework	10
The Quality Indicators	10
The Themes	11
Appendix 1 Psychological Theory Outline	38

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Introduction

Background

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000) set out an improvement framework which required education authorities to set and report on local improvement objectives which were explicitly linked to national priorities. It was within this legislative context that the Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland was published in 2002, making a number of recommendations, including the need for EPSs to have '*...a more formal framework of evaluation which incorporates self-evaluation, peer evaluation and inspection...which takes full account of the views of children, young people and parents.*'

It was within this legislative context that 'Quality Management in Educational Psychology Services' ([Quality Management in Local Authority Educational Psychology Services 1: Self-evaluation for Quality Improvement](#)) was developed and implemented, specifically to support EPS to prepare and plan for inspection by His Majesty's Inspector of Education (HMIE), and also to ensure that their improvement priorities were nested within Local Authority priorities, and therefore contributed to national priorities for improvement.

The form and function of external scrutiny and validation for EPSs has evolved over time, including participation in wider Education Authority inspections (INEA), the Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) process ([Guidelines for Validated Self-Evaluation - Support and challenge for educational psychology services in driving improvement](#)), and most recently in Scottish Attainment Challenge authority inspections. The culture of self-evaluation for both local and national improvement is welcomed, valued, and well embedded in EPSs.

Purpose of self-evaluation

The aim of this framework is to provide an updated and systematic structure which will support local authority EPS in their drive for continuous improvement through self-evaluation.

EPSs offer unique support to local authorities through a wide range of functions, to enhance the teaching, learning and wellbeing of all pupils, with a specific focus on improving outcomes for those young people with a need for additional support.

Self-evaluation of EPSs is central to effective continuous improvement and should assist in the creation of learning systems that enhance practice. High-quality self-evaluation within psychological services should support organisational learning and focus on improving the impact of the service for *all* children and young people. This is achieved through the delivery of five key functions outlined in the [Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland \(Currie Report\)](#).

Principles of effective self-evaluation

Effective self-evaluation must be owned by the service, be flexible to the context, build on existing good practice and lead to targeted action. Good practice in self-evaluation suggests that to be effective, it should be:

- embedded into the culture of the organisation
- rigorous, comprehensive, systematic & transparent
- focused on identifying strengths and areas of development
- based on a wide range of evidence
- a process that involves a wide range of stakeholders and service staff

- a process that leads to targeted actions and improvements
- recorded and reported
- a continuous systematic process as opposed to a one-off event.

It must also be clear about the questions it is trying to address.

This framework is built on best practice from a range of sources, including previous iterations of EPS self-evaluation structures, and the structure of the 2015 Education Scotland framework, [How Good is our School – 4th edition \(HGIOS 4\)](#).

The 2007 self-evaluation framework for Educational Psychology Services, Quality Management in Local Authority Educational Psychology Services (HMIE, 2007) set out a set of six high-level questions to evaluate the performance and quality of the work undertaken:

- What key outcomes have we achieved?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
- How good is our delivery of key processes?
- How good is our management?
- How good is our leadership?
- What is our capacity for improvement?

No single source gives sufficient evidence to be used in isolation.

HGIOS 4 translates this into three themes for schools:

- How good is our approach to leadership and approach to improvement?
- How good is the quality of the care and education we offer?
- How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?

Each of these themes are underpinned by a number of Quality Indicators, which in turn are supported by a series of highly effective practice statements which are used to structure the gathering of evidence, in terms of quantitative data, feedback from stakeholders, and observation of practice.

Implementing effective self-evaluation

Continual improvement is central to the work of an EPS and should be a systematic process that is embedded within the work of the service. It should involve all key stakeholders and employ a variety of method of collecting data. This triangulation of data and the analysis of what this means should provide a clear link to service improvement actions.

The key questions underlying any approach to self-evaluation are:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

To support EPS to systematically address these questions, this self-evaluation framework will build on the models above, and ultimately focus on: 'What is our capacity for continuous improvement?'

This will be addressed through three key themes:

- Leadership - how good is our approach to **leadership** at all levels?
- Service Delivery – how good is the quality of service we provide to all stakeholders through our service delivery **processes**?

- Successes and Achievements – how good are we at improving **outcomes** for children and young people?

As with HGIOS 4, each of these themes include a number of Quality Indicators, and the Quality Indicators have a range of good practice statements to support the gathering of evidence.

EPS can apply the psychological theories which underpin their service delivery to the process of self-evaluation, including social learning theory (Bandura), and social interactionist theory (Vygotsky), and practical participatory evaluation theory (Cousins & Earl, 1992). A knowledge of organisational psychology theories of change, building on the early work of Kurt Lewin also supports this approach. Brief outlines of these theories are outlined in Appendix 1.

This evidence should be used to support the service to look inward, outward, and forward, and can be gathered from four main areas of evidence:

- Performance data
- Relevant documentation
- Stakeholders' views and feedback
- Direct observation

Vital to this concept is that self-evaluation is an ongoing improvement process rather than a one-off event, and that this can only be effectively done through collaboration.

Self-evaluation should be embedded into wider local authority systems; the importance of participation and collaboration with Educational Psychologists (EPs) within the service, schools, and partners both within education and from the wider multi-agency community cannot be underestimated.

Services should consider how they meaningfully engage with children/young people, parents, and carers to seek their views, systematically gather feedback, and agree how to use this feedback to inform service improvement within this model. This can be achieved using a variety of methods and the data received should be analysed alongside relevant service data.

In terms of supporting continual improvement, the six-point scale introduced in Quality Management in Local Authority Educational Psychology Services remains relevant, and is included here in an updated, more succinct form. This should support services to internally audit themselves against the Quality Indicators, in the spirit of identifying areas of focus for service improvement (looking inward), as well as being a shared mechanism across EPS to identify areas of relative strength and enable joint work across services to focus on areas for improvement (looking outward). This should also enable services to evaluate over time the progress that they make, relative to previous evaluations, and through this to have a focus on looking forward, thus demonstrating their capacity for continuous improvement.

Using the self-evaluation framework

This document has been designed to support robust self-evaluation and continuous improvement for EPSs in Scotland. The “Making a difference to excellence and equity for all: The future of educational psychology services in Scotland Report” (Education Scotland, 2019, p11) noted that “self-evaluation for improvement and leadership of change is crucial to support continuous improvement in relation to the quality of services provided by EPs to children, young people and their families, particularly vulnerable groups such as those experiencing care.”

ASPEP (2019) noted that services currently undertake a range of self-evaluation activity, and this framework is designed to further enhance work in this area.

It is anticipated that it could be used in the following ways:

- To support ongoing self-evaluation over time within a service, as above in an embedded and proportionate way with existing partners and stakeholders, i.e. specific quality indicators are built into a planned calendar of activity.
- To support a service to take a closer and more detailed look at a theme or challenge as identified within the cycle of self-evaluation, above.
- To support a collaborative improvement approach, where partnership and engagement from other services is negotiated to support self-evaluation.
- Potentially to support the further development of a more formal collaborative improvement approach.
- To support a thematic review within a service, regionally or nationally, as appropriate.
- Potentially to further inform the development of a national scrutiny model for EPS.

To support the use of the framework, and in particular guide services in gathering evidence within the quality indicators, other self-evaluation tools can be used, including the [Anti-Racist Self-Evaluation tool](#) and the [ASPEP Guidance on Implications of the National ASL Review](#).

Service delivery and the five core functions

The unique contribution of Educational Psychologists is delivered through the framework of 5 interrelating core functions which operate at three levels: child and family, the school or establishment and the educational authority or council.



1. Consultation

Consultation is defined as discussion about a problem, usually with someone who has expertise, with a view to decision-making. When engaging in consultation, EPs apply their training in theoretical models and research skills to develop this activity into a more meaningful and transparent process which promotes systemic learning as well as addressing the specific issues under discussion.

EPs use their expertise in problem solving methodologies to bring transparency and structure to consultations, organising complex problems to enhance the ability of all involved to identify priority tasks, and implement effective interventions.

The underlying application of social learning theory and social constructivism, characterised by learning through and with others, supports the consultee to develop their skills in reconceptualising complex

issues, empowering those closest to the issues to coherently share, identify ways forward and evaluate the impact. Through this, the EP evolves consultation to become both assessment and a method of intervention.

2. Assessment

EPs have a unique contribution to the assessment of children and young people's needs and this is reflected in the statutory requirement for local authorities to provide a psychological service (Education (Scotland) Act, 1980 and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004).

Educational Psychology assessment is a dynamic process that involves information gathering from a variety of sources in a range of settings over a period of time. It involves children and young people, parents/carers, teachers, and wider professionals and is underpinned by an ecological model of assessment, ensuring a holistic approach where class and school, home and community variables are considered, in addition to individual factors.

The aim of educational psychology assessment, as outlined in the ASPEP and SDEP position paper [Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland \(2014\)](#), is to inform intervention, and it should wherever possible empower the child or young person, to learn and develop, identifying and building upon their strengths. It also should empower adults who know the child best to support them to learn and develop in the contexts around them, directly informing the learning and teaching approaches for the child. Assessment will build upon and inform the ongoing cycle of assessment, planning, intervention, and review. Assessment can involve direct and indirect approaches to gathering information, and educational psychology involvement in the assessment process will have a clear rationale, meaning that involvement may end when a concrete piece of work has been completed, which informs the ongoing cycle of intervention, as outlined in the 2014 position paper Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland

3. Intervention

Educational psychology training has a focus on child and adolescent development which supports EPs to consider the most effective *interventions*, at an individual or wider systems level, to improve outcomes for children and young people based on current research. EPs are specifically trained to consider the factors likely to impact on the effectiveness of implementing evidence-based interventions in particular contexts. This includes directly with individual children or families, with groups of young people or staff, at a whole school level and through strategic authority wide developments, along with key partners. This specialist knowledge helps ensure that interventions are implemented appropriately, increasing the likelihood of sustainability and impact over time. The EP is in a unique position through their day-to-day role working across levels with children and families, schools, partners and the wider local authority to bring about meaningful change by supporting the implementation and evaluation of effective interventions.

4. Training

EPs aim to support learning and development across all aspects of the Education system to promote an effective and confident workforce to meet the needs of all learners. They play a unique role in developing and delivering professional learning opportunities for education leaders and practitioners as well as partner agencies. Following robust and effective implementation and improvement models, this ranges from bespoke support to implement, embed and evaluate whole establishment practices and systems in a sustainable and inclusive way, to training on evidence-based intervention programmes for targeted populations. Training provided by the Educational Psychologists helps to ensure robust and effective staged intervention processes and supports are embedded across education services with psychological theory and practice at its foundation.

5. Research

EPs are uniquely placed to contribute to, and indeed to lead, local, national and international research. The application of research skills in diverse educational settings is required to meet many local and national directives (Topping & Lachlan, 2013). EPs are highly trained in a range of robust research methodologies which can be effectively utilised to find local solutions to complex problems, through the application of research-evidence and psychological theory. EPs have skills in supporting systematic change that makes a difference to children and young people. They are regularly involved in developing systems to support inclusion of young people in their learning environments, using implementation science to bridge the gap between research and practice (Boyd et al., 2021; Odom et al., 2021). Furthermore, EPs can develop and enhance the culture of enquiry throughout the education system by directly supporting education staff with their own research, within their own context, therefore building the capacity and engagement of key stakeholders in meaningful research.

The Six Point Scale

The six-point scale can be used to evaluate quality against six levels of performance, either for the purposes of internal EPS audit, identification of areas of improvement focus, collaborative assessment with local partners, and for participation in external scrutiny activities.

Identification of a specific evaluation is not a technical process and should be arrived at in collaboration with key partners, and based on qualitative evidence such as outcome data, stakeholder feedback, and review of documentation. This should be a formative process, encouraging ongoing and collaborative improvement, rather than a summative judgement.

The quality indicators for each of the three high level themes are designed to be used in conjunction with the six-point scale which can be helpful to evidence continuous improvement.

Excellent – an outstanding standard of performance where the experiences and outcomes for stakeholders are very high quality. It exemplifies highly effective practice which should be shared nationally. Systems and processes are in place to ensure sustainability.

Very good – a high standard which should be attainable by all. There are major strengths, and few areas for improvement; these areas do not significantly negatively impact on experiences or outcomes of stakeholders.

Good – important strengths which have a significant positive impact and outweigh areas for improvement, but these areas for improvement diminish the experiences and outcomes of stakeholders.

Satisfactory – strengths just outweigh weaknesses; stakeholders have access to a basic level of service. The strengths will have a positive impact on the experiences and outcomes of stakeholders, but the weaknesses will have a substantially negative effect on these outcomes.

Weak – there are some strengths, but there are important weaknesses. The strengths are not enough to mitigate the negative impact of the weaknesses on the experiences and outcomes of stakeholders. There is the need for structured and planned improvement action by the service.

Unsatisfactory – major weaknesses which require immediate action. The experiences and outcomes of stakeholders are at significant risk. There is the need for structured and planned improvement, involving education service management. Working with partnership with staff from other areas of the local authority or agencies beyond the authority may be necessary.

The Framework

The Quality Indicators

Effective self-evaluation requires taking a closer look at how well specific aspects of the service are working to promote inclusion and equity.



The Themes

Effective self-evaluation requires taking a closer look at how well specific aspects of the service are working to promote inclusion and equity. The themes within each of the quality indicators support this process.

1 Leadership at all Levels How good is our leadership?	
Quality Indicator	Themes
1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation ▪ Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data for improvement ▪ Ensuring impact on stakeholders' successes and achievements
1.2 Leadership of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the service and its community ▪ Strategic planning for continuous improvement ▪ Implementing improvement and change ▪ Policy development and review
1.3 Leadership of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building and sustaining a professional staff team ▪ Communication and involvement in decision making ▪ Staff wellbeing and pastoral support ▪ Development of staff
1.4 Management of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management of finance ▪ Management of resources ▪ Health and safety

2 Service Delivery How good is the quality of service we provide to all stakeholders?	
Quality Indicator	Themes
2.1 Consultation and advice, assessment, and intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range and appropriateness of consultation, assessment, and intervention to meet the needs of all stakeholders ▪ Staff skill, knowledge, and expertise in the provision of consultation and advice, assessment, and intervention
2.2 Professional learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range and appropriateness of professional learning to meet the needs of all stakeholders ▪ Staff skill, knowledge, and expertise in planning and delivering effective professional learning to stakeholders
2.3 Research and strategic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range and appropriateness of the research and strategic development to meet service and authority priorities ▪ Skill, knowledge, and expertise of staff in the participation and undertaking of research and strategic development activity
2.4 Partnerships and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development and promotion of partnerships ▪ Joint planning with partner organisations and services for improvement ▪ Impact on stakeholders

3

Successes and Achievements

How good are we at improving outcomes for all our stakeholders?

Quality Indicator	Themes
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wellbeing▪ Fulfilment of statutory duties▪ Inclusion and equality
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Holistic attainment including literacy and numeracy▪ Overall quality of learners' achievement and experiences▪ Equity for all learners
3.3 Improvement in performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Performance data and measures showing trends over time▪ Performance against national, local authority and EPS aims, objectives and targets

SELF-EVALUATION FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Themes:

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data for improvement
- Ensuring impact on stakeholders' successes and achievements

This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for strong leadership and robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data as essential features of effective continuous self-improvement. A key factor in this indicator is demonstrating the impact of self-evaluation in relation to outcomes for key stakeholders. The active participation of stakeholders in self-evaluation is therefore essential.

Level 5 illustration:

▪ Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation

All staff understand that self-evaluation is an integral aspect of our approach to continuous improvement. There is a well-developed culture of support and challenge across all aspects of the service. We use a range of effective approaches to ensure all staff, partners and stakeholders are actively involved in our ongoing self-evaluation activities. Leadership at all levels supports empowerment and reflection by individuals, groups of staff, and with partners across the service. Participation of children and young people is a strong feature of our approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Through regular and effective collaboration our stakeholders have a shared understanding of the service strengths and improvement needs. We have developed very effective mechanisms to consult with stakeholders and can show how their views inform change and improvement.

▪ Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data for improvement

Within our service we engage regularly in effective quality improvement and moderation activities and have agreed standards and expectations. All staff analyse and use evidence very well to ensure a clear focus on those priorities which will have greatest impact. We have developed systematic approaches to gathering and analysing stakeholders' views and the results are used to identify issues for further investigation and action. We gather a range of data and information to monitor and track progress of key objectives. We regularly interrogate data, making use of digital technology to support this where relevant and appropriate. We have taken steps to ensure all planning, monitoring, tracking, and evaluating is manageable and relevant for all involved. We use a wide range of local, national, and international advice and research to reflect on current practice and evaluate any new initiatives, ideas and changes which have been introduced. We actively seek out and share good practice within and beyond the service and local authority and can demonstrate improvement as a result.

▪ Ensuring impact on stakeholders' successes and achievements

Our self-evaluation focuses on key aspects of successes and achievements for key stakeholders. We can show clear evidence of improvement based on actions taken as a result of self-evaluation. The information from performance data and stakeholder views are used to set priorities and targets for improvement. These targets are included in service and improvement plans and result in effective action. The service rigorously evaluates the effectiveness of its improvement strategies in relation to their impact on children, young people, families, and wider stakeholders.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- Self-evaluation is integral to how we work within our community and is an ongoing feature of the work of the service.
- All staff and stakeholders are fully involved in improving service delivery.
- Across the year, there is focused attention on monitoring and evaluating outcomes and to taking improvements forward.
- Staff work effectively as a team. There is a strong ethos of sharing practice, and of peer support and challenge.
- Documentation is sufficiently detailed, evaluative and has a clear purpose.
- Professional learning activities for all staff are clearly linked to the results of self-evaluation and identified areas for improvement.
- All staff understand the need to be outward and forward-looking in their evaluation and improvement activities.
- Staff make effective use of up-to-date research/data from Scotland and beyond to inform their interventions and developments.
- There is an effective system to evaluate outcomes and feedback from stakeholders which leads to further investigation and action.
- There is a culture of support and challenge across all aspects of the service.
- There is a clear and accessible system in place to report publicly to stakeholders on performance standards.

Challenge Questions

- What measures does the service take to involve all staff in improvement planning?
- How well do all staff know and understand the key tools to be used in self-evaluation activities?
- How well do we use digital solutions to support the interrogation of data?
- How do we ensure improved outcomes for children and young people is central to all self-evaluation activity?
- Do all staff and partners have up-to-date knowledge about the local community and understand circumstances affecting children's lives and learning?
- How well do we take action to remove barriers to success?
- How well have we identified our whole-service and individual strengths and areas for improvement through self-evaluation?
- How well do we involve all stakeholders in self-evaluation and planning for improvement?
- How well do we provide opportunities for staff to be involved in and lead aspects of service improvement?
- How well do we encourage staff to reflect on and share their own practice?
- How effective are we at ensuring an inward, outward, and forward focus in our evaluation and improvement activities?
- How do we know that the changes we have made have improved outcomes for children and young people?
- What procedures does the service have in place for auditing the planning, design, and delivery of interventions?
- How well is evidence from audit and self-evaluation being used to drive forward change?

Themes:

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the service and its community
- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change
- Policy development and review

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the service and its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood, reflected in policy development and review, and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact across stakeholders. Leadership of change supports good practice in promoting equality, inclusion and diversity, and targets areas of concern.

Level 5 illustration:

- **Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the service and its community**

We are committed to ensuring that we achieve the highest possible standards and success for our stakeholders. All staff show commitment to shared educational values and professional standards. Senior leaders provide strong leadership which has enabled our service to develop, promote and sustain an aspirational vision which underpins our continuous improvement. Our vision, values and aims evolves through ongoing reflection and debate across the service and are appropriate and coherent with corporate and community vision values and aims. As a result of active collaboration, the service has ownership of the vision, values and aims. These are shaped by our clear understanding of the social, economic, and cultural context in which children, young people and their families live alongside very good awareness of current policy and practice. Through effective leadership at all levels, our service works with partners to turn the shared vision into a sustainable reality.

- **Strategic planning for continuous improvement**

Leadership at all levels and empowerment of all staff creates conditions where staff feel confident to initiate well-informed change and are committed to collective responsibility in the process of change. We ensure proposed changes demonstrate the interconnectedness of the service within the wider local community in improving outcomes for children and young people through an effective service delivery model. We effectively guide and manage the strategic direction and pace of change. We take good account of assessment of risk to ensure we follow through on strategies for achieving change. We protect time for professional dialogue, collegiate learning, and self-evaluation, so that all members of our service can contribute to our plans for continuous improvement. We are engaged in joint planning with partner organisation and services to embed key initiatives.

- **Implementing improvement and change**

All staff take responsibility for implementing change and promoting equality and social justice across all their work. Across the service we promote and support innovation, creativity and practitioner enquiry which lead to positive change. We work collaboratively to develop a clear rationale and choose appropriate approaches to effectively facilitate change leading to greater equity across service delivery. We continually reflect on and develop our practice taking account of our self-evaluation and vision for continuous improvement. The service, with partners, engages

regularly in critical and creative thinking. Practitioner enquiry and creative approaches are integral to the thinking and practice of the service and partners. We have effective strategies in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of changes on outcomes for stakeholders and the work of our service.

▪ **Policy development and review**

We have a systematic and well-documented approach to leadership and management. This is supported by a range of effective policies and advice that inform and impact on practice throughout the service, which in turn are linked to wider local and national policies and guidance. These policies provide clear strategic direction and help to ensure consistency in practice across the service and improve outcomes for children, young people, and families. Our work is directed by a straightforward policy framework which covers all main areas of activity and responsibility. This policy framework sets clear expectations for effective service delivery. Individual policies are supported by specific information about roles, responsibilities, procedures, expectations of quality, outcomes, and evaluation processes. The range of policies provides clear guidance to staff and helps to ensure consistency in practice across the service and achieve continuous improvement. The links among cross-cutting policy initiatives, and the service's contribution to these, are indicated clearly and are reflected in policy and practice at all levels. Policies are regularly reviewed and updated taking into account the views of stakeholders, to ensure the promotion of equality, inclusion and diversity.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- All staff are involved in the creation and ongoing review of the vision, aims and values of the service.
- There is coherence with corporate and community statements of vision, values and aims.
- The vision, values and aims of the service relate to national priorities and expectations for children, young people, and their families.
- Leaders at all levels motivate and inspire others to sustain collective commitment to the shared vision through daily actions.
- All staff are committed to change which results in improvements for children and young people.
- Senior leaders carefully guide the strategic direction and pace of change to ensure changes are sustainable and result in improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Strategic planning covers the wide range of work undertaken and reflects both local and national priorities.
- There are opportunities for partner organisations and services to be actively involved in joint planning.
- Careful consideration is given to effective implementation approaches to take forward priorities.
- All staff are involved in the process of change and in evaluating the impact of improvements.
- Senior leaders create conditions to support creativity, innovation, and enquiry.
- Opportunities for staff to engage regularly in critical and creative thinking are embedded.
- The service's contributions to cross-cutting policy initiatives are clearly reflected through service policy and practice.
- Policies are regularly reviewed and updated to take account of stakeholder views and relevant national policy and legislative change.

Challenge Questions

- To what extent does our service have ownership of our vision, aims and values?
- How effective are our processes for involving stakeholders in the ongoing review of our vision, aims and values?
- What strategies do we employ to translate our vision, values, and aims into daily practice across our service?
- How well do we use our vision, aims and values when making decisions about future improvement priorities?
- How effective are we at nurturing creativity and innovation?
- What strategies do we use to guide the strategic direction and pace of change? Is this carefully planned to ensure sufficient time for embedding improvements?
- How well do we create collaborative conditions for staff to learn with and from others through critical enquiry?
- How effective are our approaches to evaluating and monitoring the impact and sustainability of our professional learning?
- How effective are our approaches to planning for continuous improvement including a continued focus on improvements in outcomes for children and young people?
- To what extent are partner organisations and services actively involved in joint planning?
- To what extent are our tools for change impacting positively on staff and improving outcomes for children and young people?
- To what extent are clear procedures in place for the coherent development and review of individual policies?
- To what extent are policy reviews and updates undertaken regularly, taking in to account the views of stakeholders as well as national policy and legislative change?

Themes:

- Building and sustaining a professional staff team
- Communication and involvement in decision making
- Staff wellbeing and pastoral support
- Development of staff

This indicator highlights the importance of sound governance and fair and proper recruitment and selection of staff. It focuses on accountability, responsibility and shared values as important features of building and sustaining a highly professional staff team. To provide a high quality service to its stakeholders, the service needs a clear understanding of its human resource requirements and effective procedures in place to recruit, retain, support and develop its staff to a high level. Effective empowerment of staff, through provision of development opportunities with due regard to wellbeing and positive relationships, is a key feature of a successful professional team.

Level 5 illustration:

- **Building and sustaining a professional staff team**

We use effective and transparent recruitment, selection and performance management procedures consistent with current legislation and local and national agreements. Safeguarding procedures are clearly understood and implemented by managers with responsibilities for the recruitment of staff. Our appointment procedures give due regard to the skills, aptitudes and experience required for the post. We have supportive induction policies and procedures for all staff. We have well developed professional review and development processes. We have highly effective arrangements for supporting staff on an ongoing basis, for example through coaching, mentoring and supervision. Staff actively engage in professional learning activities to improve their effectiveness, in line with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) requirements. Staff capability, capacity and leadership are well developed to support effective service delivery. Staff development and career-long professional learning is well coordinated and provides meaningful opportunities to learn from each other as well as with partners locally and nationally. Development of staff has a direct and positive impact on outcomes for children and young people.

- **Communication and involvement in decision making**

An ethos of team working has been established within the service. We have a clear structure and task-focused approach. Clear staff deployment, lines of communication and accountability define the service's approach to team working. We regularly monitor team and individual deployment and performance against achievement of agreed priorities, outcomes, or targets. Our team(s) meet regularly to monitor and evaluate performance. Staff are very positive about the frequency, sufficiency, and quality of information available. They feel appropriately involved in major issues which affect their working practices. Staff feel that they have good opportunities to raise concerns or offer constructive suggestions which are taken seriously by colleagues and managers within the service and beyond.

- **Staff wellbeing and pastoral support**

Clear policies and procedures are in place to ensure pastoral support and wellbeing of staff. These are shared with staff and well understood. The culture and ethos of our service is positive and focused on the needs of all staff, stakeholders, and partners. We actively promote equalities for all, and embrace diversity so staff feel confident in the workplace. Our staff feel empowered and motivated to take decisions and lead aspects of service improvement. We have clear guidance for

setting high professional standards of conduct as outlined by regulatory bodies, national policy, and local agreements. All staff take responsibility for ensuring our approaches to communication are wide, varied, and effective. Opportunities to consult, share information and raise concerns are well established and understood by all staff. Lines of accountability are clear. All staff share information effectively, listen to others and respond positively to ideas and issues raised with them. We have established an ethos of positive recognition and celebration of achievement within which all staff are encouraged and supported to do their best. Achievement and success are appropriately recognised.

▪ **Development of staff**

We have developed a clear and equitable professional development framework for all staff. The service fully complies with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) requirements for continuing professional development. We have translated the framework into clear and user-friendly procedures and processes, all of which are well supported by relevant documentation and initial training for staff at all levels. The review process leads to the identification of staff strengths, skills, and development needs. The service demonstrates a clear commitment to developing its entire staff. Training and development programmes arise from formal identification of staff development needs through the professional development processes, and from authority-driven developments aimed at achieving national or local priorities. We can evidence that we work collaboratively with relevant partners through joint training and development opportunities to meet agreed objectives and improve outcomes for children, young people, and families.

1.3 Features of Highly Effective Practice

- A governance framework clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of all staff and governing bodies.
- Senior leaders are approachable and operate an open-door policy for staff.
- All staff make effective use of digital communication and balance this well with opportunities for face-to-face discussions and collegiate time.
- The service monitors its responses to the range of complaints it receives.
- Recruitment arrangements are outlined clearly in policy and procedures documents.
- The service is proactive in tackling prejudice-based discrimination so all staff feel able to be themselves in the workplace.
- A “dignity at work” policy is in place and shared with all staff.
- All staff have current membership of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.
- Lines of communication and accountability within the service are clear.
- All staff understand the role they play in the wider local authority.
- There is an ethos of teamwork within the service.
- Service managers regularly consider team and individual deployment and performance against achievement of agreed priorities and outcomes.
- The service has developed a formal professional development and review framework for all staff in accordance with professional guidance.
- Trainee educational psychologists are well supported to increase their confidence and develop sound practices.
- Local policies and procedures to manage staff discipline, attendance/absence and grievance are clear and implemented appropriately.
- Staff feel consulted on issues which affect their working practices.
- Training and development opportunities arise from stakeholder needs, staff development needs and from authority wide developments aimed at achieving national and local priorities.

Challenge Questions

- To what extent do our governance arrangements promote a quality culture?
- How well do all accountable groups and individuals contribute to high-quality delivery of services?
- How well can we demonstrate that we learn from complaints?
- How well does our implementation of recruitment and selection policies result in the best candidate for the post?
- How effectively do we monitor and track PVG Scheme membership including retrospective checking?
- To what extent are our approaches to induction and mentoring supporting recently appointed staff?
- How well do Professional Review and Development (PRD) and service improvement planning bring about improved outcomes for children and young people?
- How well do we keep staff informed and reminded of expectations of their conduct?
- How well do we promote staff rights and responsibilities?
- To what extent are staff appropriately empowered, challenged, and supported?
- How well do staff understand their contribution to the service plan and the role they play in the wider local authority?
- How well does service documentation serve new staff?
- Are our health and safety and risk assessment procedures appropriate and implemented systematically?
- To what extent do service managers regularly monitor team and individual deployment and performance against achievement of agreed priorities and outcomes?
- To what extent do staff consider that they have genuine opportunities to raise concerns with or make constructive suggestions to service managers?
- To what extent do staff consider service managers to be visible and accessible?
- To what extent are PRD related processes clear, user-friendly and relevant to the job?
- To what extent is there a link between the service priorities, the staff review process and staff development opportunities?

Themes:

- Management of finance
- Management of resources
- Health and safety

This indicator highlights the importance of sound risk assessment which puts the needs of children and young people at the centre of decisions about financial and other resource management. The promotion of equity is a shared responsibility held by all staff, partners, and stakeholders. The service's management of resources should result in building a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

Level 5 illustration:

- **Management of finance**

We have effective systems for financial stewardship and management to ensure best value and sustainability. We make innovative use of the finances available to allocate resources to take forward our improvement priorities and planned developments. Our available budget is used very effectively to deliver on service priorities. We understand our responsibilities for effective financial management. We are pro-active in seeking funding from a range of sources to support specific aspects of our work. We work together to ensure transparency and equity in the use of our financial resources. We take account of local and national advice in our financial management, seeking support from those with financial expertise as appropriate. Financial expenditure is carefully planned to improve outcomes for children and young people. We systematically monitor and can evidence the extent to which our use of financial resources leads to improved outcomes for children and young people. We have established fully effective working practices with officers in the authority's finance department. This results in a two-way flow of reliable, accurate financial information to enable key decisions to be taken as appropriate. Fully effective financial and administrative procedures have been developed to plan and manage budgets. These procedures allow both planned and committed expenditure to be tracked.

- **Management of resources**

We make the best use of available resources, including digital technologies, to deliver services effectively. We ensure sustainable, transparent and equitable allocation and use of resources to support service delivery. We manage allocated resources proactively and efficiently to meet planned service development priorities. In consultation with relevant stakeholders, resources are sourced, allocated and used efficiently and effectively to meet organisational, local and national priorities and the needs of the people we work with. We use data and evaluations of the impact of previous planning priorities and learning programmes to inform future resourcing decisions.

- **Health and safety**

We diligently implement relevant health and safety legislation and are vigilant in ensuring the security and safety of all users and visitors. As a result, any health and safety issues arising in our working environments are identified and addressed promptly. All staff involved in delivering services to stakeholders clearly demonstrates a commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of stakeholders. The service has in place comprehensive health and safety guidance providing staff with clear guidelines governing the engagement of stakeholders, the deployment of resources and all relevant aspects of operations. Our staff have engaged with appropriate health and safety training, including generic aspects arising from legislation and established best practice.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- Pro-active approaches to financial stewardship and management ensure finances are available and used most effectively for both short- and long-term priorities.
- Senior leaders ensure the use of financial resources are transparent and ensure equity for all.
- Expenditure decisions are made in line with the service's aims and vision to achieve planned priorities.
- Financial reports on the effective use of budgets are available to enable local authority managers to monitor budgetary performance.
- Procedures for accessing support from those with financial expertise are in place and used effectively.
- There is clear and measurable impact of financial expenditure on improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Staff have a shared understanding of what impacts on child poverty and make effective use of currently available data to ensure equity.
- The service monitors resources and equipment on an ongoing basis and takes appropriate steps to update reference and professional materials to deliver better outcomes for stakeholders.
- The impact of new resources is carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure a positive impact on service delivery. Evidence is used to support future resourcing.
- The service approach to health and safety is consistent with service policy, council policy and addresses the needs of staff and stakeholders.

Challenge Questions

- How effective and efficient are our approaches to financial management?
- What procedures do we employ to ensure transparency and equity in the use of our financial resources?
- How effective are our systems for managing shared budgets to ensure a clear focus on promoting equity?
- How effectively do we allocate resources to sustain improvement priorities?
- To what extent do our approaches to resource acquisition and allocation improve outcomes?
- To what extent do we know that the resource and facilities meet the needs of all staff and stakeholders?
- How appropriate are our plans to manage and develop resources?
- How effectively do we use our resources to ensure equity?
- How effective are our health and safety procedures and are they proportionate and enabling?
- Are service managers applying health and safety and risk management procedures effectively?
- How rigorous are our auditing processes to enable us to effectively plan, monitor and manage our resources?

Themes:

- Range and appropriateness of consultation, assessment, and intervention to meet the needs of all stakeholders
- Staff skill, knowledge, and expertise in the provision of consultation and advice, assessment, and intervention

This indicator focuses on the effective delivery of high-quality consultation, assessment, and intervention practices that link clearly to the service vision, values and aims to improve the learning experiences for all children and young people. A service delivery model is in place that most effectively meets the needs of stakeholders within your local context. It highlights the importance of placing the needs of the child or young person at the centre of the approaches being used, requiring a development of strong staff skills, knowledge, and expertise to deliver a range of appropriate consultation and advice, assessment, and intervention.

Level 5 illustration:

- **Range and appropriateness of consultation, assessment, and intervention to meet the needs of all stakeholders**

The service is successful in sustaining the quality of its consultation, assessment and intervention services at a high level and can demonstrate that it has a clear strategy which is based on its vision, values and aims, and planned approaches for improvement. A comprehensive range of highly appropriate evidence-based consultation, assessment and intervention approaches and tools are implemented. The structure for the delivery of consultation, assessment, and intervention services within individual teams and at practitioner level is very well planned and includes aspects of innovative practice. A service delivery model is in place that provides effective consultation, assessment and intervention services to children and young people, families, and other key stakeholders and regularly seeks feedback from service users in terms of the impact of the service and outcome measures. Service staff take full account of the cultural and situational context of the child and young person in their choice of consultation, assessment and intervention tools or approaches. The service works effectively in partnership with others to provide an integrated assessment of the needs of children, young people, and families. The service makes a significant contribution to the development of the authority's policies and practice on consultation, assessment, and intervention.

- **Staff skill, knowledge, and expertise in the provision of consultation and advice, assessment, and intervention**

The service provides regular and appropriate training with clear guidance on all aspects of its work regarding the provision of consultation, assessment, and intervention services. The training and guidance is reviewed and revised using a systematic analysis of stakeholder views, best practice, service impact and outcome measures. The service is actively involved in joint training and development with stakeholders and partner agencies to improve the quality of integrated and collaborative consultation, assessment, and intervention within the authority. The service follows guidance provided by the British Psychological Society.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- The service makes clear links between the vision, values and aims, and the nature of the of the consultation, assessment and intervention practices being used.
- The service has a well articulated and understood service delivery model that effectively meets the needs of stakeholders.
- The service is clear and consistent in which context a consultative approach is used and this is outlined in service delivery guidelines.
- Staff provide a wide range of innovative and creative approaches in the delivery of consultation, assessment, and intervention practice.
- Staff can clearly demonstrate well-planned, evidence based and least intrusive approaches to service delivery through consultation, assessment, and intervention practice.
- Consultation, assessment, and intervention practices take account of the range of cultural and situational contexts and are non-discriminatory to ensure they meets the needs of all stakeholders.
- The service has systems and structures in place to ensure partnership working to provide a collaborative and integrated approach to consultation, assessment, and intervention.
- The service can demonstrate the significant contribution they make to the development of local authority policies and practices on assessment and the development of authority wide intervention approaches.
- The service has a clear process for communicating the range of, and processes for accessing consultation, assessment, and intervention.
- Data analysis is used to capture the impact and outcomes of consultation, assessment and intervention from stakeholders and this is used to inform the development of service delivery.
- Regular development opportunities are provided to staff to ensure they maintain and enhance their skills, knowledge and expertise in consultation, assessment, and intervention.

Challenge Questions

- Does the service have a policy statement or guidelines linking their vision, values and aims to the consultation, assessment and intervention practices being used?
- How well is the service delivery model understood?
- In which contexts will consultative approaches be employed? (e.g. in multi-agency meetings, advice to school staff, advice to parents)
- Do all staff demonstrate well-planned and innovative approaches to consultation, assessment, and intervention?
- Does consultation, assessment and intervention take full account of the range of cultural and situational contexts of the family, child, or young people?
- Is there a comprehensive range of assessment and intervention tools and is delivery is well planned?
- Does the service adopt assessment and intervention practices which are appropriate, evidence-based, well-resourced, and least intrusive?
- Does the service work to ensure partnership working to provide a collaborative and integrated approach to consultation, assessment, and intervention?
- Does the service make a significant contribution to the development of the authority's policies and practices on assessment?
- How are stakeholders informed of the range of the approaches to consultation, assessment, and intervention?
- How is feedback on impact and outcome obtained from stakeholders?
- What evidence is there that regular and appropriate development takes place to ensure staff maintain and enhance their skills, knowledge and expertise in consultation, assessment, and intervention?
- What measures does the service take to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Equal Opportunities legislation, British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct, etc?
- What are the arrangements for review, taking account of stakeholders' views, best practice, service impact, outcome measures and BPS guidance?

Themes:

- Range and appropriateness of professional learning to meet the needs of all stakeholders
- Staff skill, knowledge, and expertise in planning and delivering effective professional learning to stakeholders

This indicator aims to capture the success of services in providing effective, high-quality professional learning opportunities to stakeholders to improve the learning and achievement of children and young people. The emphasis is on the range and quality of opportunities offered with clear links to the service vision, values and aims and local and national priorities. This indicator highlights the importance of robust service structures and processes to ensure the development of staff skills and knowledge to provide effective delivery of professional learning opportunities.

Level 5 illustration:

- **Range and appropriateness of professional learning to meet the needs of all stakeholders**

The service has an extensive portfolio of effective professional learning and development activities which very effectively meets the needs of stakeholders. The service can demonstrate that it has a clear professional learning and development strategy, based on service and authority priorities. The support, planning, delivery and evaluation of professional learning and development activities are very good and include aspects of innovative practice. Service practitioners ensure that professional learning and development activities complement the work of other stakeholders and partner agencies and are delivered in a planned and coordinated manner. The service makes a significant contribution to the professional learning and development undertaken across the authority.

- **Staff skill, knowledge, and expertise in planning and delivering effective professional learning to stakeholders**

The service provides regular and appropriate support, and clear guidance on all aspects of its work regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of professional learning and development activities. The processes and structures for providing effective professional learning opportunities are reviewed and revised using a systematic analysis of stakeholder views, best practice, and service impact and outcome measures. The service is actively involved in the joint delivery of professional learning and development activities with stakeholders and partner agencies to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The service follows guidance provided by the British Psychological Society

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- All staff demonstrate well-planned and innovative approaches to professional learning.
- A range of professional learning topics and materials are developed and delivered by the service.
- All the materials used in professional learning provided take full account of the range of cultural and situational contexts of the family, child, or young people.
- The service adopts a clear and appropriate implementation process for all professional learning which links to its vision, values and aims.
- The service has structures and processes in place to ensure effective partnership working to provide collaborative and integrated approaches to professional learning.
- The service can demonstrate the significant contribution made to the development of authority wide professional learning opportunities.
- Clear structures and processes are in place to inform stakeholders of the content, and process for accessing a range of professional learning opportunities.
- Data analysis is used to capture the impact and outcomes of professional learning from stakeholders, and this is used to inform the development of service delivery.
- Regular training opportunities are provided to staff to ensure they maintain and develop the skills and experience to deliver effective professional learning.

Challenge Questions

- Do all staff demonstrate well-planned and innovative approaches to professional learning?
- Is there a comprehensive range of professional learning topics and materials delivered?
- Does the material used in professional learning take full account of the range of cultural and situational contexts of the family, child, or young people?
- Does the service adopt an appropriate implementation process for all professional learning provided?
- Does the service work to ensure partnership working to provide a collaborative and integrated approach to professional learning?
- Does the service make a significant contribution to the development of authority wide professional learning opportunities?
- How are stakeholders informed of the range of opportunities in the professional learning provided?
- How is feedback on impact and outcome obtained from stakeholders?
- What evidence is there that regular and appropriate training takes place to ensure staff maintain and develop skills, knowledge and expertise in providing professional development?
- What measures does the service take to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Equal Opportunities legislation, British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct, etc?

Themes:

- Range and appropriateness of the research and strategic development to meet service and authority priorities
- Skill, knowledge and expertise of staff in the participation and undertaking of research and strategic development activity

This indicator focuses on the effective delivery of high-quality research and strategic developments that align clearly to service vision, values and aims and local and national priorities. It emphasises the importance of ensuring staff skills, knowledge and expertise to contribute to the implementation of a range of high quality research and strategic developments, with a process to disseminate findings to inform service delivery and improve learning and achievement of children and young people.

Level 5 illustration:

- **Range and appropriateness of the research and strategic development to meet service and authority priorities**

The service has an appropriate and well-planned programme of research and strategic development which effectively takes account of the needs of stakeholders. The service can demonstrate that it has a clear research and strategic development strategy which is based on both service and authority priorities. The support, planning, delivery and evaluation of the research and strategic development programme is very good and include aspects of innovative practice. The service regularly participates in the national professional development programme for educational psychologists. The service publishes its research findings in professional journals, and presents regularly at conferences. Service staff ensure that the research and strategic development programme complements the work of other stakeholders and partner agencies, and is delivered in a planned and coordinated manner. The service's research and strategic development programme makes a significant contribution to the policy development and objectives of the authority.

- **Skill, knowledge and expertise of staff in the participation and undertaking of research and strategic development activity**

The service provides regular and appropriate support and clear guidance on all aspects of its work regarding research methodology and strategic development activities. It reviews and revises this support and guidance through a systematic analysis of stakeholder views, best practice, and service impact and outcome measures. The service reviews its research programme with stakeholders and partner agencies on a regular basis to improve the outcomes for children, young people and families. The service follows guidance provided by the British Psychological Society.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- The service has clear and appropriate systems in place for mapping research and strategic development activities on to national, local and service priorities.
- All staff can demonstrate well-planned and innovative approaches to research and strategic development.
- The service takes full account of the range of cultural and situational contexts of the family, child, or young people in its approach to research and strategic development.
- Clear and appropriate systems are in place to ensure the needs of identified stakeholders are used to inform research and strategic development activities.
- The service can demonstrate the significant contribution made to the development of authority wide research and strategic developments.
- The service can demonstrate effective involvement in a broad range of research and strategic developments across several topics and themes.
- Structures are in place to ensure findings from research and strategic developments are appropriately disseminated and inform the development of service delivery.
- Regular training opportunities are provided to staff to ensure they maintain and develop the appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake effective research and strategic development activity.

Challenge Questions

- What system does the service have in place for mapping research and strategic development activities on to national, local and service priorities?
- Do all staff demonstrate well-planned and innovative approaches to research and strategic development?
- Does the service take full account of the range of cultural and situational contexts of the family, child, or young people in its approach to research?
- What system does the service have in place for mapping research and strategic development activities on to the identified needs of stakeholders?
- Does the service work to ensure partnership working to provide a collaborative and integrated approach to research and strategic development?
- Does the service make a significant contribution to the development of authority wide research and strategic development?
- Is there a comprehensive range of involvement in research and strategic development activities?
- What systems does the service have in place for disseminating the findings from research and strategic development activities?
- How is feedback on impact and outcome obtained from stakeholders?
- What evidence is there that regular and appropriate training takes place to ensure staff maintain and develop skills, knowledge and expertise in research and strategic development?
- What measures does the service take to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Equal Opportunities legislation, British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct, etc?

Themes:

- The development and promotion of partnerships
- Joint planning with partner organisations and services for improvement
- Impact on stakeholders

This indicator aims to capture the service's success in developing and maintaining partnership approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people and to inform the development of service delivery. Strong relationships with partners, with each bringing their unique contribution, are integral to ensuring highly effective service delivery.

Level 5 illustration:

- **The development and promotion of partnerships**

Our partnerships are firmly based on a shared vision, values and aims which put the needs of all stakeholders at the core of our partnership working. We encourage, develop, and secure the commitment of key partners to multi-disciplinary working. Partners understand and appreciate the different contexts in which we work and value the range of expertise from which our stakeholders can benefit. All partners invest significant time and energy to establish and build positive sustainable relationships. Engagement and communication between partners is regular, structured, supportive and efficient. We have a clear strategy for growing our existing partnerships and for establishing new partnerships. We are clear about the purpose of our partnerships. All partners are clear about their roles, responsibilities, and contributions. Our partnership agreements set a framework within which our joint working and shared learning can thrive. All partners demonstrate high levels of commitment to improving outcomes for all stakeholders.

- **Joint planning with partner organisations and services for improvement**

We work collaboratively with community organisations, social and health care professionals to ensure that needs are appropriately prioritised and met, particularly those of groups considered to be at risk of social exclusion. This includes, where appropriate, providing services directly to children, young people and their families. We engage appropriately with partner agencies and community organisations, including the voluntary sector, in seeking to improve services. Service level agreements are established at strategic level and are monitored and evaluated at operational levels to ensure that each has a positive impact. All those involved in partnerships are kept fully informed about the progress and aspects which require further consideration and improvement. There is an effective reporting framework to communicate with the full range of stakeholder groups and partner agencies.

- **Impact on stakeholders**

Through effective partnership working we have improved our service delivery and secured positive impacts for children, young people, and families in our community. Our partnerships have increased parental engagement in their children's learning. Their involvement has a positive impact on raising attainment and achievement particularly in literacy and numeracy. As a result of our effective partnerships all our learners have access to an extended range of learning pathways through which they are developing skills for learning, work and life and securing sustainable positive destinations.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- Partnership work with stakeholders, including parents and carers, the local community, third sector, public sector, and business organisations, is based on mutual trust and respect.
- The service consistently involves parents, carers and partners in shaping policy and services to improve impacts.
- Staff support parents/carers and partners to actively engage in, contribute to and understand children and young people's development, learning, and wellbeing
- The service understands and takes account of key features of the local community within its service delivery.
- Partnerships have clear agreements where the purpose, aims, roles and responsibilities are clear and understood by all involved.
- The service jointly plans and evaluates shared projects with partners.
- The service participates in strategic developments with a range of partners.
- The service and partners share skills, knowledge and experience and take part in joint professional learning opportunities. They learn from effective partnership practice elsewhere.
- Feedback from partner organisations indicates strong and effective relationships with the service.
- The service engages effectively with partners to promote support schools to provide a coherent whole school approach to learning for sustainability.
- The service can demonstrate the impact of partnership working.

Challenge Questions

- How do we ensure that relationships with parents, carers and families, the local community and partners are characterised by trust and respect?
- How well do we enable parents, carers and families, the local community, and partners to contribute to the development of service delivery and be involved in service improvement? What systems do we have to support this?
- How effectively do we support parents, carers, and partners to participate in, contribute to and understand children and young people's development, learning and wellbeing?
- How effectively do we communicate about progress, attainment, and achievement?
- How well do we understand the local community in which we are providing a service?
- How well do we seek out and respond positively to potential partnerships which will lead to better outcomes for the children and young people we work with?
- How clear are the partnership agreements we enter? Do we involve partners at the earliest stages of planning?
- How well do we identify priorities, communicate, plan, monitor and evaluate our work with partners? Are we clear what added value each partnership brings?
- How well do we share skills, information, knowledge and experience across partners and partnerships? How well do we learn from successful partnerships? Do we engage in shared professional learning opportunities with partners?
- What opportunities do our learners and staff have to work with others to contribute effectively to their communities as active citizens?
- What measures does the service take to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Equal Opportunities legislation, British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct, etc?

ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION

Themes:

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality

This indicator focuses on the impact of the service's approach to supporting wellbeing (and mental health) which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for practices and policies to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. There is a clear focus on ensuring all children and young people are present, participating, achieving and supported. This includes ensuring those children and young people with protected characteristics are effectively supported to maximise their successes and achievements.

Level 5 illustration:

▪ Wellbeing

As a result of our approach to supporting the wellbeing of all children and young people and their families, we are improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Our service has a clear strategic approach to supporting wellbeing that involves effective working with stakeholders. We know and can demonstrate that, because of our contribution in the authority, children and young people feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. All staff and partners feel valued and supported.

The service's work promoting positive relationships across educational establishments helps ensure good outcomes for children and young people, with relationships that are positive and supportive, founded on a climate of mutual respect within a strong sense of community, shared values and high expectations. This is impacting positive on the wellbeing for children and young people.

The service considers each child and young person as an individual with his/her own needs, strengths, and rights. We ensure children and young people are active participants in discussions and decisions which may affect their lives.

▪ Fulfilment of statutory duties

The service complies and actively engage with statutory requirements and codes of practice. Our staff and partners know what is expected in these areas and are involved in fulfilling statutory duties to improve outcomes for children and young people. The service's contribution within the staged-intervention approach of the authority is in line with ASN and GIRFEC guidance, ensuring children and young people get the right support at the right time, and a rights-based approach is promoted at all times.

▪ Inclusion and equality

We ensure inclusion and equality leads to improved outcomes for all learners. There is a key focus on ensuring that learners are present, participating, included, and supported. The service works closely in partnership to support an Inclusive approach, at strategic, policy and practice levels.

Children and young people, parents and carers, staff and partners feel that they are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. We understand, value, and celebrate diversity and challenge discrimination. The service ensures that age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil

partnership, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation are not barriers to participation and achievement.

The service supports the authority to have effective strategies in place which are improving attainment and achievement for children and young people facing challenges such as those from our most deprived areas, young carers, those who are care experienced and those with additional support needs.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- The service's universal and targeted work to support mental health is well developed and well-integrated with partners within the local context and is impacting positively on the outcomes for children and young people and the skills and knowledge of key staff.
- Through the service's approach to promoting positive relationships and behaviour, we have supported our establishments to promote an ethos and climate where children and young people feel safe and secure.
- Members of the service have a shared understanding of wellbeing and children's rights.
- All staff and partners model behaviour which promotes and supports the wellbeing of all.
- All staff and partners take due account of the legislative framework related to wellbeing, equality, and inclusion.
- All staff engage in regular professional learning to ensure they are fully up to date with local, national and, where appropriate, international legislation affecting the rights, wellbeing and inclusion of all children and young people.
- Service practice is consistent with GDPR guidance.
- Through our approach to inclusion, children and young people are present, participating, achieving, and supported.
- Our service delivery takes into account the specific needs of care experienced children and young people and is supporting positive outcomes for this group.

Challenge Questions

- What evidence do we have that the work we do to support wellbeing is having a positive impact on children and young people?
- How well do we ensure that all children feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included?
- What is the impact of our work in promoting positive relationships and behaviour in the authority and how do we know?
- How do we ensure there is an ethos and culture of inclusion, participation, and positive relationships across the whole community?
- How well do all staff understand and apply GIRFEC, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?
- How well do we listen to and involve children and young people in making decisions about their wellbeing, their lives, and their future?
- How well do all staff understand their role and responsibility in supporting learners' health and wellbeing?
- To what extent do our service's policies reflect national and local policies and related improvement objectives?
- How well do we ensure that all staff undertake regular professional learning around legislation, statutory requirements, and codes of practice?
- In what ways does the service contribute to and uphold the statutory procedures for children and young people, for example, with regard to additional support needs legislation?
- To what extent do the vision, values and aims of the service set out and deliver clear expectations for equality and inclusion?
- How well have we successfully supported an inclusive learning environment within our establishments? How do we know?
- How well have we supported our communities to celebrate diversity?

Themes:

- Holistic attainment including literacy and numeracy
- Overall quality of learner's experiences
- Equity for all learners

This indicator focuses on the service's contribution to supporting the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment including wider achievement.

Within an educational psychology service, this quality indicator includes consideration at the universal level, and for those children and young people the service is involved with (targeted level).

Continuous achievement or sustained high achievement is a key feature of this quality indicator.

Level 5 illustration:

- **Holistic attainment including literacy and numeracy**

Due to the impact of collaborative work across levels, learners make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. There is evidence that attainment and progress is tracked over time. This has contributed to the raising of attainment in literacy and numeracy for all learners.

Where children and young people experience barriers to their learning, the service's support for assessment, and intervention approaches within the authority has contributed to improvements in their achievement and attainment.

- **Overall quality of learners' achievement and experiences**

The service can demonstrate that, through our contributions, learners are supported to be successful, confident, exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the school, the wider community and as global citizens.

The service can demonstrate a significant contribution to the overall learner experience, in our establishments. The service contribution supports learners to have a positive destination post school.

The service contributes to a holistic, strengths-based approach to meet needs for children and young people.

- **Equity for all learners**

We have contributed to the raised the attainment of all our learners and in particular our most disadvantaged children and young people. The service is able to demonstrate its impact in helping to narrow the poverty related attainment gap.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- A focus on supporting the attainment levels in literacy and numeracy for all learners is well embedded within the work of the service
- There is effective partnership working to ensure the impact of our strategic work in this area is maximised.
- The work of the service supports learners who are experiencing barriers to learning to make progress in their literacy and numeracy.
- The service contribution supports young people to be successful in moving on to a sustained positive destination on leaving school.
- The work of the service contributes to an evidence based pedagogical approach for all learners.
- The service promotes a strengths-based approach that helps ensure the holistic achievements of children and young people are recognised and celebrated.
- Our service contributes significantly to interventions which improve attendance and reduce exclusion, at the universal and targeted level, within the authority.
- Our approaches have supported the raised attainment and achievement of disadvantaged groups within the authority.

Challenge Questions

- How well is our focus on literacy and numeracy supporting the raising of attainment across the curriculum?
- To what extent is the service involved in local authority initiatives which raise attainment in literacy and numeracy?
- How well do we know the steps we have taken have improved outcomes for children?
- How effectively does the service support children and young people at times of transition?
- To what extent has the work of the service impacted positively on classroom climate and pedagogical approaches at a universal and targeted level?
- How well do we recognise and value the personal achievements of all learners?
- How well can we demonstrate improved attainment for groups and individuals facing barriers to learning, including poverty?
- How well are we removing barriers to learning and ensuring equity for all?

Themes:

- Performance data and measures showing trends over time
- Performance against national, local authority and educational psychology service aims, objectives and targets

This indicator evaluates continuous and sustained improvement against local and national objectives such as those contained in the authority's Children's Services Plan. Examples of performance data and measures may include measurable outcomes from the authority's strategic and operational plans as well as objectives within the service's own improvement plan, or equivalent.

Level 5 illustration:

- Performance data and measures showing trends over time

Performance data clearly demonstrates high levels of success against both local objectives and, where appropriate, national objectives, for example in social justice, inclusion, wellbeing and mental health and children's rights. Performance trends and standards of performance measured against appropriate benchmarks and comparative data indicate a high level of continuous improvement.

- Performance against national, local authority and educational psychology service aims, objectives and targets

The service makes a significant and comprehensive contribution to meeting the aims, objectives and targets of the authority. There is clear understanding of how service developments support the delivery of key national objectives and local authority outcomes. There is clear evidence of improvement as a result of the contribution of the educational psychology service including achievement of targets for children and young people; improvements following service reviews such as around best value, and; outcomes of research and strategic developments have had an impact on the learning and wellbeing of children and young people.

Features of Highly Effective Practice

- The service uses data effectively over time to analyse trends and plan service delivery.
- The service can demonstrate improvement over time against key indicators.
- The services analysis of the impact of its service delivery on children and young people and wider stakeholders is robust.
- The service makes effective use of long-term impact and outcomes measures when appropriate.
- The service makes a very effective contribution to the provision relating to the statutory procedures for children and young people with ASN.
- The service contributes effectively to the wider improvement priorities of the Education Authority.
- The service work makes an effective contribution to children's service improvement priorities

Challenge Questions

- What outcomes have been achieved and how are they evidenced?
- In what way is continuous improvement measured by the service?
- How confident is the service that improvements have been made to meet the needs of children and young people?
- In what way are trends and standards of performance measured against appropriate benchmarks and comparative data?
- To what extent does the service improvement plan link with the authority improvement plan?
- How is the service involved in giving advice to the authority at different levels and what is the impact of this advice?
- In what ways is there evidence of effective partnership working in the authority?
- How effective is our contribution to children's services improvement priorities?

Various theories are referenced throughout this document. Below are some basic descriptions of those theories. Consideration of the value added of Educational Psychology Services applying theoretical perspectives to practice, is also considered.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) suggests that observation and modelling play a primary role in how and why people learn. Social learning theory provides a comprehensive explanation for human learning by recognising the role of the mediational process. It sees learning as a cognitive process that takes place within a social context. Bandura proposes five essential steps in order that learning take place: observation, attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. Reinforcement can be external or internal and can be either positive or negative.

Social Interactionist Theory

Social interactionist theory is a sociological perspective that considers the role that social interactions have in shaping individual's behaviours and beliefs. Social interactionist theory stresses the functional basis of communication and emphasises the social nature of language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978). The significant role of culture is often considered within social interactionist theories and in that it can support the formulation of meaning according to the given context.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a sociological theory/ philosophical approach of knowledge in which human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Within this theory learning takes place primarily in social and cultural settings and that successful teaching and learning is heavily dependent on interpersonal interaction and discussion. This theory emphasises the active role of learners in building their own understanding and highlights that new learning is built on the foundation of previous learning. This approach emphasises the development of a pedagogy that is initiated from areas of interest and provides the appropriate scaffolding to allow development.

Practical Participatory Evaluation Theory

Practical participatory evaluation is a partnership approach to evaluation (Cousins & Earl, 1992). The evaluator(s) and stakeholders jointly engage in most aspects of evaluation with the ultimate goal of improving service effectiveness, decision making and problem solving. The theory suggests that if the evaluation activities become integrated into the ongoing activities of the organisation, then the process of evaluation becomes a learning system that supports the development of shared values among practitioners. Stakeholders will then use evaluation and research in future decision making to improve the service performance. Practical participatory evaluation also meets the information needs of stakeholders and facilitates improved organisational learning and decision making.

Theories of change

Theories of change are methods for planning, participation and evaluation that explain how a given intervention, or set of interventions, are expected to lead to a specific development. Theories of change tend to draw on causal analyses based on available evidence. Theories of change are often an individualised theory of how and why an initiative works, which can be empirically tested by measurement indicators for each expected step, on the hypothesised causal pathway. Theories of change in service evaluation are often best developed collaboratively with stakeholders and modified throughout the intervention development and evaluation process, through ongoing reflection and exploring changes and how they happen.

Theory to practice

Educational psychologists are agents of change, within the education system, across their five core functions. They are key personnel in understanding the nature of evidence and how it informs practice (Kelly et al. 2016). A key element of this work lies in their understanding of various theoretical perspectives and their implications for practice. This supports the consideration of new perspectives, promotes adaptive and developing environments, clarifies methodologies and assessments, and identifies the key variables for successful intervention. Furthermore, psychologists seek to understand the role of contextual variables through considering our knowledge on effective implementation, as well as the challenges in enabling real world research. This support for the transition of theory to practice should also be applied to the process of self-evaluation both individually and within services. It was acknowledged in the joint 2019 report 'Making a Difference to Excellence and Equity for All' that "almost all Educational Psychology Services provide very good evidence-based practice". In understanding the processes of professional and service development as well as the nature of change, psychological services can continue to develop practice-based evidence, that allows for service improvement and transformative change.

References

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