

## Educational Psychology Service

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, and a graduated response to need across schools and settings in Rotherham. The service has strong links both locally and regionally in supporting and contributing to the children and young people's wellbeing agenda. This may be through individual casework and assessment, family and group work, staff training, parent workshops, and the development of whole school approaches. It also links to research and developments carried out by the team, along with more strategic involvements in the development of policies and plans at senior level.

The EPS is involved with children and young people from birth to 25 years. This includes the management of the Portage Service at pre- school level, with a commitment to the inclusion and support for children in their local primary schools, as well as involvement with colleges, further education settings and providers. The EPS is partly traded, and there is a high take up from schools and settings locally for the service and additional training packages. We also have commitments at a statutory or LA level relating to a range of issues, linking to the promotion of emotional wellbeing for children and young people.

The service may contribute through consultation and advice, as well as individual assessment. We have strong multi-agency links and are able to provide holistic learning assessments, involving the contexts of school, home and family. We promote a cycle of intervention, evaluation and review, and may become involved in restorative practice approaches where relationships appear to have broken down, in order to look at positive ways forward. The service is able to contribute to joint developments with schools and groups of schools in looking at whole school policies around mental health and wellbeing. Training packages may be linked to individual or wider school issues, and tailored to need, aiming to encourage child/person centred thinking. We will support staff to work with groups of pupils, for example, relating to anxiety, social skills, bereavement and loss, and through nurture groups, promoting inclusion and resilience. We have also developed training packages linking to the management of stress, both for pupils, and in relation to staff wellbeing (the latter linked to local EP research). We offer a solution focussed, problem solving approach, and are strongly committed to the involvement of young people and their families in developing ways forward. EPs also provide training and ongoing supervision for accredited approaches to meeting need – examples include Emotion Coaching and ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants).

The EPS works with children and young people having complex and varying needs. This can include those at risk of exclusion or disengaging from education. We currently also second two half time experienced EPs to the Virtual School. Work undertaken is linked to the development of 'attachment friendly schools' and the promotion of approaches and understanding of meeting the needs of some of our most vulnerable children and young people.

The EPS offers immediate support to schools and settings following a critical incident, working to support and enable staff to respond to individual situations and contexts. We have strong links with Public Health colleagues largely through the Area Specialist EP for Social and Emotional Mental Health. This colleague works within a multi- agency forum, including South Yorkshire Police, for example linking to suicide prevention and response. Experienced EPs support young people, as well as developments, in local specialist provisions in Rotherham.

A group within the EPS has recently developed a model (REFLECT) to support emotional wellbeing across all ages within schools and settings. A pilot has been very positively received, and this is being further refined in order to secure the joint involvement of parents and carers/family in meeting need for children and young people. A group of colleagues have also been involved in research relating to the voice of children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds in relation to their aspirations and perceptions of school. This has been developed into a tool for capturing the voice of young people who may find this process more difficult, enabling their involvement in the development of interventions designed to meet their needs. The voice of children and young people, and of their families/carers is integral to our way of working. We use a variety of approaches and interventions to encourage involvement, suited to individual need.

The EPS is committed to the promotion of whole school/organisation inclusive practice and emotional wellbeing at a systemic level through child/young person/parent carer/staff involvement and voice – the EPS has been integral to the setting up of Genuine Partnerships and the development of the nationally acclaimed Rotherham Charter, continuing to have an active role. The work focuses on creating a positive ethos in which wellbeing flourishes and is one of genuine co-production through the 'Four Cornerstones', which are now promoted through the LA as a model for inclusion, wellbeing, child/young person and parent carer engagement. The service has a positive relationship with Rotherham Parent and Carers Forum, and colleagues attend monthly drop in sessions to provide information and relevant advice.

The Co-Principal EPs have recently been invited to become involved with the successful bid for the Trailblazer project in Rotherham. The format for this project was already developed and agreed, with training for appointed EMHPs currently under way. The PEPs are aiming to promote and encourage the linking up with work described above in providing understanding and interventions in meeting emotional and mental health needs within designated schools. This includes attendance at local (as Chair) and joint Trailblazer meetings, liaison with newly appointed staff and other stakeholders, and attendance at a recent meeting for schools and EMHPs involved. The intention is to further share information with our colleagues, and arrange a joint session for EMHPs to meet relevant EPs. Promotion of an integrated approach to meeting need will be key. The EPS is not funded for specific

involvement in this project, which is different to some models adopted. However, we are keen to support as far as possible.

The EPS is well established in Rotherham and has a good understanding of the changing needs and circumstances of our educational settings. We can be involved with children, young people and their families from infancy to adulthood. We are familiar with relevant services and processes within Education, Health and Social Care, and play a significant, statutory role in contributing to EHC Assessments. We have also contributed to workforce development in training Health and Social Care colleagues in the SEND Code of Practice, and the Graduated Response to meeting need.

The core mission of the Educational Psychology service in Rotherham is to work together with schools, settings, agencies and families, to remove barriers to children and young people's learning and emotional wellbeing.