

TITLE OF REPORT: Primary Fair Access Education Psychologist

Purpose of the Report

1. To bring to Schools Forum the request to de-delegate funding from maintained primary schools to fund the post for the fair access panel (FAP) education psychologist (EP)

Background

2. Every local authority is required to have in place a Fair Access Protocol (Schools Admissions Code 2012 article 3.9), developed in partnership and agreed with the majority of its schools, in which all schools (including Academies) must participate since it is binding on all schools.
3. The purpose of Fair Access Protocols is to ensure that, outside the normal admissions round, unplaced children/young people, especially the most vulnerable, are found and offered a place as quickly as possible to minimise the time they are kept out of school.
4. Following the introduction of the Primary Fair Access Protocols in June 2014, in November 2014 Schools Forum agreed to de-delegate funds for an Educational Psychologist to work to the primary Fair Access Panel (PFAP).
5. The workload and responsibilities relating to this post have been distributed within the Psychological Service so that all EPs have taken on work relating to referrals coming through from PFAP. In addition to direct work with pupils and teachers (individual assessment with children, consultations with teachers and parents/carers, training for staff in specialist areas, problem solving discussions with groups of staff about individual needs, group work with children, therapeutic work with individuals, attendance at meetings, etc.), the workload and responsibilities of the PFAP EP include:
 - Reading panel papers and attending the Primary Fair Access Panel meeting each month;
 - Coordinating the PFAP EP on-call rota for preliminary involvement/visits;
 - Preparing a monthly update document which is distributed to all primary schools with the minutes of the panel meeting to offer an update on PFAP EP work;
 - Liaising with colleagues from the Education Support Service and from within the Psychological Service regarding casework that comes through from PFAP;
 - Preliminary visits to explore the needs of individual pupils whose paperwork clearly indicates a significant level of SEND (including those at risk of permanent exclusion) prior to these pupils coming to PFAP and;

- Development and coordination of various training packages for primary schools relevant to the PFAP remit.

COVID-19 Global Pandemic

6. The restrictions put in place by the government due to the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact upon schools and the services supporting them during this academic year. However, throughout this time, the PFAP EP has continued to take individual referrals and carry out the necessary work required by each case, alongside developing and delivering an online training programme for schools. Although some adaptations have been made to practice in light of service risk assessments (e.g. moving training delivery, case meetings online and, in some instances, casework carried out online), the PFAP EP role has still been successfully fulfilled despite the restrictions in place.
7. When pupils with additional or complex needs are discussed at PFAP meetings, it is often acknowledged that they may benefit from referral to the PFAP EP once they have settled into their new school placements. To date, the PFAP EP has accepted **128** individual pupil referrals overall, since 2014. During academic year 2020-2021, **10** referrals were still ongoing from academic year 2019-2020 and **16** new referrals were initiated, totalling **26** active cases with the PFAP EP this academic year. A greater number of referrals would have been expected this academic year had the COVID-19 restrictions not been in place.
8. The primary needs of these pupils have been loosely categorised in Table 2. However, please note that it is difficult to categorise very complex children into one category of need only and particularly as some are still undergoing assessment in order to identify and meet their needs.

Table 2: Primary area of need for the 16 pupils referred to PFAP EP this academic year.

| Area of Need | Number of Pupils |
|---|------------------|
| Social, emotional and mental health | 10 |
| Cognition and learning | 0 |
| Sensory and/or physical | 1 |
| Communication and interaction (including ASD) | 4 |

NB: Primary area of need cannot be given in one case as no role for an EP could be identified when the case was allocated. EP involvement ceased immediately as a result.

| Outcome | Number of Pupils |
|---|------------------|
| Pupil's needs identified and being met in mainstream school at SEN support level. | 6 |
| Pupil's needs identified and being met in mainstream school with an Education, Health and Care Plan. | 1 |
| Pupil's needs identified and being met in special school with an Education, Health and Care Plan. | 1 |
| Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment planned / underway. | 3 |
| Assessment in early stages and ongoing. | 3 |
| Education, Health and Care Plan assessment was underway but ceased as pupil moved home to within another local authority. | 1 |
| Closed with no action as no identifiable role for an EP. | 1 |

outcomes of each case referred this academic year are summarised in Table 3, although several cases are still ongoing and so their overall outcome is yet to be established.

Table 3: Outcomes of each case referred to the PFAP EP this academic year.

9. Details of how the PFAP EP has responded to each individual referral can be found in the PFAP EP Record of EP work update documents, produced monthly to detail the active cases being undertaken within PFAP EP capacity. These are attached to the minutes of every PFAP meeting.

Annual Training Programme: Data

10. In recognition that all mainstream primary schools have contributed funding to the PFAP EP post, but that pupils coming through the panel tend to be clustered within certain geographical areas and so not all schools may accessing PFAP EP individual referral time as a result, in January 2016 the panel agreed to roll out a training programme in key areas identified as relevant to pupils placed via the PFAP process.
11. Since then **102** live training sessions have been offered across the authority with **over 2,000** attendees, covering such topics as:.

- Bereavement and Loss;
- Attachment;
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD);
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);
- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD);
- Staff Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing;
- Promoting Positive Mental Health in Children and Young People;
- Supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees;

- Introduction to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy;
- Using Play Therapeutically;
- Inclusive Behaviour Management;
- Social Interventions;
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Resilience;
- Managing Strong Emotions;
- Using LEGO Therapeutically; and
- Introduction to Restorative Approaches.

12. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this academic year the training programme moved online in order to continue to offer this service in a safe manner across the authority. The training topics were selected as pertinent to the difficulties arising in schools, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. They were:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Resilience;
- Bereavement and Loss;
- Managing Strong Emotions; and
- Trauma Informed Practice.

13. The online training programme was pre-recorded and made freely available for eligible schools to access at their own convenience via the Services for Schools platform, with staff able to access this as individuals, small groups or as a whole school, depending upon individual circumstances. The Services for Schools website has the capacity track how many times each training video was viewed (see Table 6), although we do not have data summarising the exact number of staff present and watching each time.

Table 6: Number of times each training video was viewed (by an unknown number of staff).

| Training Video | Number of Views |
|---|------------------------|
| Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Resilience | 58 |
| Bereavement and Loss | 61 |
| Managing Strong Emotions | 111 |
| Trauma Informed Practice | 39 |
| Total: | 269 |

14. Within each course on the PFAP EP Training page additional handouts and other resources were made available for download; school staff did not need to watch the training videos in order to access these materials. Services for Schools recorded that the PFAP EP Training page was accessed **531 times** between going live in October 2020 and 31st August 2021 when the page was closed.

15. It is hoped that, as a result of the ongoing training programme, all of our primary schools will feel better equipped to meet the needs of individual pupils with complex needs, regardless of whether or not they have come through the PFAP system. Going forward into the next academic year, Head Teacher Cluster Representatives at the Primary Fair Access Panel requested on behalf of their clusters that training remain online in the pre-recorded format for both the safety of all involved and ongoing ease of access.

16. A more detailed breakdown of the work of the Primary Fair Access EP can be found in the annual report which was sent to schools in September 2021.

De-Delegation

17. De-delegation is the agreed top slicing of funding from mainstream maintained schools. Services funded via de-delegation must be offered to academies on the same basis at the same as mainstream maintained schools.

18. The calculation for de-delegation for the FAP EP has been calculated on the basis that all mainstream primary schools in Gateshead buy into this service including academies. The de-delegation has been calculated on the basis that primary academies will also buy into this service at the level of £5.50 per pupil.

19. These levels of de-delegation have been calculated on the basis that all primary schools both maintained, and academy schools buy into this service.

Proposal

20. It is proposed that Schools Forum de-delegate funding for 2022/23.

Proposed de-delegation values are: -

- Fair Access Educational Psychologist £5.50 per pupil (primary only) (2021/22 £5.50)

Recommendations

21. That School Forum approves the de-delegation of funds for the Primary Fair Access Educational Psychologist

For the following reasons: -

To ensure that all children and young people in Gateshead receive an education that is suitable and appropriate to their needs and abilities.

To enable schools to receive the support to accurately identify the needs of children and young people and implement support strategies as/when appropriate.

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