

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. A significant proportion of children who come through the PFAP have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The Primary Head Teacher Cluster Representatives felt strongly that schools who agree to admit these pupils should have as much support as possible. As such, in April 2015 all Primary Head Teachers agreed to de-delegate funds for a full time Educational Psychologist (EP) to work into the Primary Fair Access Panel to address the need for assessment, training and support when individual children are being placed in schools.
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:
 - Representing the Psychological Service at the Primary Fair Access Panel. This includes reading panel papers, contributing to discussions, preparing monthly update documents detailing the PFAP EPs work to be distributed with the minutes of each panel meeting and monitoring the use of PFAP EP time.
 - Coordinating the PFAP EP on call rota to ensure frequent EP availability for preliminary involvement/visits at short notice and then undertaking this work as it arises.

- Liaising with colleagues from the Education Support Service and from within the Psychological Service regarding casework that comes through from PFAP, including monitoring and evaluation.
- Individual casework. This can include direct assessment with pupils, consultations with teachers/parents/carers, bespoke training, problem solving discussions, group work with pupils, therapeutic interventions with pupils, attending case meetings, report writing, etc and;
- Development and coordination of various training packages for primary schools relevant to the PFAP remit.

Individual Pupil Referrals: Accepted Referral Data

6. 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 **154** individual pupil referrals overall, since 2014. During the academic year 2021-22, **9** referrals were still ongoing from academic year 2020-21 and **26** new referrals were initiated, totalling **35** active cases with the PFAP EP this academic year.
7. The primary needs of these pupils have been loosely categorised in Table 1. 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 1: Primary area of need for the 26 pupils referred to PFAP EP this academic year.

Area of Need	Number of Pupils
Social, emotional and mental health	7
Cognition and learning	9
Sensory and/or physical	0
Communication and interaction (including ASD)	10

8. The outcomes of each case referred this academic year are summarised in Table 2, although several cases are still ongoing and so their overall outcome is yet to be established.

Table 2: Outcomes of each case referred to the PFAP EP this academic year.

Outcome	Number of Pupils
Pupil's needs identified and being met in mainstream school at SEN support level.	5
Pupil's needs identified and now 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.	3
Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment planned / underway.	7
Assessment in early stages and ongoing.	10

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 access 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. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in academic year 2021-2022, the training programme moved online via the Services for Schools platform. Services for Schools logged last year's training package to have been accessed **269** times at the point of data retrieval (packages were still available beyond this). The training could have been accessed by individuals, small groups or whole schools so this number represents a minimum number of attendees.
12. This academic year the Psychological Service continued to offer pre-recorded online training as it proved popular with schools, as staff did not have to be released to attend and they could access this at their own convenience. The training topics selected as pertinent to the ongoing issues in schools, particularly in relation to those children placed with them via PFAP, were:
- Anxiety: Early identification and effective intervention.
 - Somatic Quietening: Taking back control of big emotions.
 - Transitions: Supporting children and young people to thrive in a new school.
 - Promoting Independent Learning Skills.
13. This training was again available via the Services for Schools platform, which was able to track the number of individuals who signed up to gain access to the course content. However, it is not possible to track the exact number of staff who watched each video and/or accessed the associated resources beyond this. As such, the numbers below represent a minimum number of attendees.

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

Training Video	Number of Views
Anxiety	28
Somatic Quietening	34
Transition	16
Promoting Independent Learning	26
	Total: 104

14. 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.

15. 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 2022.
16. Overall, feedback received has indicated that the PFAP EP role continues to be highly valued by schools, both in terms of individual casework and the training programme. The PFAP EP working at both the individual and systemic level in this way also hopefully supports our mainstream primary schools to better understand and meet the needs of their complex pupils in general, not just those placed via the Primary Fair Access Panel.

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 2023/24.

Proposed de-delegation values are: -

- Fair Access Educational Psychologist £5.50 per pupil (primary only) (2022/23 £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.

CONTACT: Naomi Mellor ext. 8563