



BIRMINGHAM EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY INFORMATION AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT 2024-25

Description of the Service

Birmingham Educational Psychology Service (EPS) provides professional psychological services for children, young people and families in a wide range of educational and community settings across the city. We are a large team of HCPC Registered Educational Psychologists with multiple specialisms and, as such, we have up to date knowledge of psychological evidence-based theory and research. Trainee Educational Psychologists and Assistant Psychologists are part of the team to support delivery of services.

Our Values

Birmingham EPS aims to improve the educational outcomes, emotional well-being and personal development of children and young people in our city. We have strong and positive relationships with the local authority, with schools and partner agencies. We are well integrated into the broader systems of support for vulnerable children and young people and their families. We apply psychology in our approach to consultation, assessment and intervention and are fully committed to operationalise our co-production goals. There are 5 core values which underpin the work of the EPS:

Inclusion- We respect all people, value diversity and are committed to promoting equal opportunities for all.

Integrity- We strive to be honest and authentic and to do no harm. We apply evidence-based psychology to support positive outcomes for those we work alongside.

Empathy- We work with kindness and compassion. We are approachable and curious.

Collaboration- We recognise, value, and promote the active participation of all stakeholders. We are adaptable and approachable.

Advocacy- Children, young people and their wellbeing are at the centre of all we do. We aim to empower those we work with and enable them to share their views..

In line with these core values those who work for Birmingham EPS;

- Place welfare and well-being of children and young people in the city at the heart of everything we do.
- Work closely with parents/carers/ families and understand and promote strengths-based nurturing approaches.
- Operate wherever possible within the principles of early intervention and prevention.

- Respect and celebrate diversity both within our own organisation and in the communities we serve. As an organisation we want to work towards eliminating discrimination through critical self-reflection and supporting those we work alongside to do likewise.
- Are an advocate for inclusion and inclusive practices and actively challenge when we see inequality.
- Support our staff and promote their mental health and well-being.
- Continuously improve our service, using the feedback provided by service users to shape our practice and delivery.

How we Operate

Birmingham EPS have a core commission from Birmingham City Council to carry out statutory EHC needs assessment for children and young people with SEND. We also support other statutory and strategic activities for the local authority such as providing consultation for Tribunals and Critical Incident Support.

We offer preventative and early intervention support to schools in the city through our traded services. Settings can purchase an annual subscription package for a visiting Educational Psychologist. This service is on offer to all maintained settings, academies, and free schools within the Birmingham Local Authority. We can also offer bespoke subscription or project packages to other educational establishments or organisations dependent upon service capacity.

Birmingham EPS are a consultation-based service through which we promote purposeful collaborative problem solving to create appropriate plans and support implementation and review. Through agreed actions our EPs will typically engage in a range of work at the individual, small/ whole group, staff, parent, or systemic level depending on our co-agreed formulation of needs and intervention plan. The scope of activities will support settings with their graduated response and approach. This might include for example;

- Staff/ parent process consultation
- Direct observation and assessment with the child/ young person
- Attending multi-agency meetings and working closely with colleagues in allied services
- Providing staff training and intervention planning and monitoring.
- Systemic work in schools might include direct work with a whole school setting or via the range of city-wide initiatives to promote systemic change in schools we are presently involved in.

Service Delivery

Birmingham EPS will:

- Provide an ethical and professional service underpinned by HCPC and BPS guidelines and policy.
- Provide our services in a courteous, responsive, and timely manner.
- Keep you fully updated in the event of unexpected absences or sickness of a named EP.
- Work with settings as partners, providing a high-quality service at all times.
- Provide a named EP for the delivery of services.
- Maintain and develop professional EP practice based on local, regional, and national developments.

- Be well informed about the LA policies and procedures for SEND.
- Be up to date with recent relevant legislation and evidence-based practice.

We expect trading partners to:

- Identify a named member of staff for liaison and as a point of contact.
- Ensure informed consent with parents/ carers to allow our involvement- see further information below.
- Actively promote and facilitate parent/ carer attendance at consultation/ meetings and ensure parents/ carer (s) and staff members are given time to meet with the EP as agreed/ necessary as part on ongoing casework.
- Prepare children/young people where appropriate prior to direct EP involvement by telling them what to expect.
- Provide access to relevant school information/documentation (such as individual plans, progress, and attainment data).
- Where possible provide advance notice of visit cancellation.
- Plan effectively and collaboratively to ensure that activities are spread evenly across the trading year.
- To always treat our staff with care and respect.

The consultation service delivery timings for agreed activities will be organised with the most relevant person or stakeholder.

As a consultation service Birmingham EPs will provide visit feedback generally via short consultation record summaries and very occasionally a longer report when requested and with a clear and agreed rationale. The scope of this is factored into the time allocation and the costs of packages to the subscriber. Consultation records and reports produced are for the consultee only (i.e. the setting who commissioned the work) and should not be shared without our express consent or where previously agreed as part of casework contracting.

Feedback from EPS activity in your setting could also be shared verbally and visually via process consultation or as part of a multi-agency group contributing to the production of a SEND Support Provision Plan, for example.

Again, working with families is a key component of our Core Values and our duties under BPS and HCPC guidelines. Where an EP has received a consultation request from a school/ setting for an individual child/ young person we expect to either meet with a parent/ carer as part of the ongoing cycles of the graduated approach (via a review meeting for example) or to have time set aside to discuss parent/ carer views directly with them via for example a telephone conversation or a face to face meeting. This may occur prior to any involvement or with parental consent post visit, where considered to be more appropriate.

As a consultation service we would routinely expect access to key staff, such as class teachers, for casework information gathering, reflection and ongoing problem solving.

It is expected that purchased hours will be used evenly across the traded year primarily to promote regular contact. It will not be possible to deliver a large number of hours in one term for example. Use of hours should be clearly agreed and monitored between EP and the setting across the traded year.

All work undertaken in your setting would be covered by the purchased traded hours. If the EP is to carry out core commissioned activities for the LA in your setting this will be clearly made known when negotiating the scope of that work.

We reserve the right to renegotiate the requested activities if the consequences of not doing so would lead the school/ setting or EPS in breach of their statutory responsibilities or their duty of care to children, young people or staff.

If your named EP must cancel an appointment due to short-term illness or other unavoidable circumstance, the setting will be notified as soon as possible, and the planned appointment will be rearranged with the named EP. For longer term absence Birmingham EPS, in consultation with you the subscriber, will make arrangements to cover that absence in a manner that is mutually agreeable.

Where a school cancels a visit on the day of delivery, or on arrival at a setting, Birmingham EPS reserve the right to charge one hour of traded time per half day cancellation.

Trainee educational psychologists will participate in delivering agreed activities under the supervision of an educational psychologist. Trainee educational psychologists in their third year of training will work independently in their allocated settings under the weekly supervision of an experienced and qualified Educational Psychologist. Our Assistant Psychologists may also support agreed actions under close supervision by the visiting EP.

We will usually only work directly with children and young people in their educational setting. In very rare cases an educational setting may ask their Visiting EP (from their school hours) to visit a child, for example, in the home setting or attending an alternative provider where the child is dual-registered and attends regularly. A Visiting EP will not undertake work with a child/ young person from another setting not covered by this SLA.

We recognise that some schools may commission both the EPS and a private EP provider. Children and Young People remain at the centre of our decision making in how we provide services and work with others. As an ethical organisation we behave openly and fairly in our relationships with the aim of reducing conflicts of interest, goals, and values, and decrease complexity and uncertainty. Parental consent and GDPR compliance will guide the protocols for the sharing of information. With regard to promoting effective use of resources we need to discuss requests for joint casework and training. SENAR have advised schools that they accept private EP reports for schools to demonstrate their graduated approach and the move towards an EHC needs assessment where required. Where BCC EPs are required to sign the confirmation/ declaration of outside agency involvement for SSPP's where there has non-LA agencies involved, we will reserve the right to charge a minimum of 1 hour of EP traded time where necessary for reading and checking.

Subscription packages can be purchased during the subscription window (usually January-March) in preparation for service delivery from April to March the following year. We operate a tiered package system with current hours 9, 18, 24 and 30 hours of direct delivery. There is an expectation that there would have been a discussion between the setting and EP or service before settings make their official request for a particular level of support. Birmingham EPS reserves the right to reduce the package size at the point of purchase where service capacity means we are unable to commit to the hours requested.

Capacity permitting packages could be bought in subsequent terms but will involve reduced hours on a pro-rata basis in most cases. Birmingham EPS will also consider requests for additional hours on top of existing subscriptions to be purchased within the trading year. Where there is available capacity additional hours purchased throughout the year will be charged per hour.

Subscription covers the period from 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. You have the right to change your mind and cancel a subscription within 14 days from the date we receive your

subscription form. Refunds are not possible beyond that date. Please note that any unused hours from this subscription cannot be carried forward beyond 31 March 2025.

Details of how to subscribe and our subscription costs will be detailed in our trading brochure and subscription forms usually circulated by your visiting EP in January. Schools that do not presently subscribe to our service can make initial enquiries regarding subscription via EducationalPsychology@birmingham.gov.uk

Informed Consent

Our ethical standards informed by the HCPC and BPS are vital in guiding our behaviour and that of our commissioners to ensure that we enable *informed* consent regarding our services.

To comply with GDPR we need to make sure that the conditions set out in Article 7 of the GDPR are satisfied for valid (informed) consent.

In terms of our ethical codes of conduct consent is also referenced. In the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) consent is part of the first principle of “respect”, and links to the statement of values which states: *Psychologists value the dignity and worth of all persons, with sensitivity to the dynamics of perceived authority or influence over persons and peoples and with particular regard to people’s rights (page 5).*

We are also governed by the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC), and in “Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (2016)”, consent is referenced under the first standard of “Promote and protect the interests of service users and carers”. It states in section 1.4: *You must make sure that you have consent from service users or other appropriate authority before you provide care, treatment, or other services. (page 5).* Consent is defined as: *Permission for a registrant to provide care, treatment, or other services, given by a service user, or someone acting on their behalf, after receiving all the information they reasonably need to make that decision.*

Length of time is important when giving informed consent, however under the GDPR no specific time limit is set when processing under consent. The BCC consent guidance states: *How long the consent lasts will depend on the purpose for which the consent was received. The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) has suggested that consent should be reviewed at least every two years;* therefore, ensuring that we seek written consent again after two years if there has not been active involvement with our Service is essential.

We expect the person commissioning our involvement in schools/ settings to;

- In line with our professional codes of conduct seek to ensure genuine informed consent from families and the children and young people themselves. There is an expectation that schools/settings will give a copy of the EPS information leaflet to all families/young people.
- In accordance with the HCPC ‘Standards of Conduct Performance and Ethics’ and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018), obtain informed parental consent prior to any individual work with a child under 16 years old. The parent/ carer will have signed our consent form and school/ setting will return this to the relevant EP prior to the school visit taking place.
- In accordance with the HCPC ‘Standards of Conduct Performance and Ethics’ and General Data Protection Regulation (2018), obtain a young person’s written informed consent prior to any individual work, if the young person is aged 16 years old or over.
- Sections 1 and 2 of the consent form will be completed by the school/setting.

- Section 3 is where the parent/carer/young person gives their consent through ticking the boxes and signing the form. There is space for them to add in additional information. This might relate to information sharing or give us information regarding when is best to contact them. It is best practice to ensure, where there are two parents with parental responsibility that both parents sign the form or separate forms are signed if this is problematic. Equally seeking both parental signatures should not be a barrier to starting work with the C/YP, and therefore the EPS will accept one parental signature as sufficient.
- Consent conversations should happen in a timely manner prior to school planning meetings with EPs. If the date of the signed consent form is more than 3 months old, the school/setting will need to re-gain consent from the parent/carer/young person.
- Our EPs will email you if they receive a consent form that is outdated or sent with no context- e.g. not raised in a planning meeting or via prior consultation for agreement. We cannot accept this consent form and it will therefore be deleted from our records.
- If a consent form is received by the EP and it is not complete then the form will be returned to the sender with a request for any information gaps to be addressed prior to any initial contact.

Impact Measures and Evaluation

It is essential to Birmingham EPS that we understand how our work is making a positive difference to children, young people, their parents/carers and other key stakeholders. Our EPs use a range of impact measures and evaluation methods within their day to day practice. We wish for those who work with us in schools/ settings to support us in this endeavour. We welcome constructive feedback at any time including positive comments regarding our work. Schools/ settings will be made aware of the ways in which we can receive feedback by your Visiting EP and via our website.

We request each school/ setting we trade with to complete a yearly evaluation (usually around April/ May) to tell us how we are doing in a fair and balanced way. We may also, across the traded year, engage in a professional reflective discussion between Visiting EP and key school/ setting staff to monitor our working relationships to ensure they are working for all concerned.

Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

All staff who work for Birmingham EPS have full enhanced DBS clearance. Staff are issued with a Birmingham City Council ID badge and will have a supporting letter of assurance confirming appropriate checks including the DBS clearance have been taken. Staff will not provide their DBS certificate on arrival at a school or setting. This is in accordance with city council policy.

Resolving Disagreements

Birmingham EPS is committed to providing a high standard of service delivery and treating all our users with care and respect. We also welcome any suggestions you may have on how we can improve our services if you are dissatisfied.

Any concerns about the quality of service should be raised with the named EP/ person directly in the first instance. We expect that the vast majority of concerns can be resolved informally at this stage.

In the event this has not resolved things then you should contact the relevant Senior Educational Psychologist for your area and / or Principal Educational Psychologist to discuss your concerns (contact details below). A complaint can be made via email, telephone or by

letter. If we can, we will sort out your complaint straightaway, but sometimes we may need a little longer to investigate and reply. We will however send a reply within ten working days to let you know when you can expect to hear from us. We will summarise the decision and agreed actions in writing.

You can also use the Council's Complaints Procedure, accessible at <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/complaints>

Data Protection

Birmingham EPS will provide services in this agreement in line with Birmingham City Council policy and will work in a way which is compliant with the Data Protection Act (1998) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018). For the purposes of the GDPR, the EPS is a Professional Provider and consequently, the LA (as EPS employer) is a joint data controller with the school or setting. Data retention within the EPS would be aligned with the requirements of the LA.

We will very often use email to communicate with our schools/ settings. Most educational settings are on BCC's approved TLS list (Transport Layer Security) and therefore there will be no need to use the required Office Message Encryption (OME).

Key Contacts

Birmingham Educational Psychology Service
Education and Skills Directorate
Birmingham City Council
PO Box 17843
Birmingham B2 2JR
0121 303 1792

Birmingham Educational Psychology Website:
<http://www.birminghameducationsupportservices.co.uk/EdPsychService>

Birmingham SEND Local Offer EPs Page:
https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/send_support_services_menu/educational-psychology-service/#

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