



7.2.10 Educational Psychology Service – Early Years Offer to Settings

What are Educational Psychologists (Eps) and what do they do

- EPs apply psychology to help others understand how children develop and learn, as well as how they think, feel and behave.
- EPs work with pre-school children, school age children and young people up to the age of 25 years.
- EPs provide assessment, consultation and joint problem solving to help others plan support for children, and to review their progress over time.
- EPs are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers, setting staff and other professionals, to better understand and meet the needs of children.

Types of Early Years Support Offered by the Educational Psychologists

The work of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is embedded within the Graduated Approach to meeting children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice. Under this umbrella, the EPS offers a range of services to Early Years (EYs) settings:

- Early Years Consultation Meetings, with EIO colleagues
- Preventative direct involvements with children, following a problem-solving model
- Statutory involvements with children, involving detailed assessment and the production of psychological advice reports, for EHC needs assessments agreed by the EHCP Team.

Additionally, EPs also contribute to Inclusion Support Funding / Transition Supporting Funding panels and engage in project work with colleagues from the Early Years Team.

The Early Years VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) contains detailed information on the range of EP services offered to EYs settings, but a summary is provided below of the services that EYs settings can request.

Early Years Consultation Meetings

The Early Years Team and the Education Psychology Service offer joint problem-solving consultations and information/signposting to Early Years settings in the form of **virtual** and face-to-face, **outreach** Consultation Meetings.

The meetings provide Early Years Practitioners with an opportunity to meet with an Early Intervention Officer (EIO) and an Educational Psychologist to discuss children who are presenting with more complex and challenging additional needs and who are already the subject of a SEND Support plan.

Through joint discussion and problem solving, settings will be able to identify the right strategies and access sources of information to further support the child through the Assess, Plan, Do and Review process.

A Consultation Meeting can be requested for children of any age, although more typically they are for **children in their pre-school year, or the year prior to this**.

If an EIO has recently given a setting advice about a child, there is an expectation that the setting will have implemented and reviewed this advice, prior to requesting a Consultation Meeting for the child. Consultation meetings are not appropriate where setting staff are seeking to make an immediate EHC needs assessment request for a child, without first implementing any agreed actions in a SEND Support Plan.

Virtual Consultation Meetings are bookable one-hour slots, during which it is possible to discuss one child. The full schedule of Early Years Consultation Meetings for each academic year is outlined on the VLE. Settings can book a Consultation Meeting slot by telephoning the Early Years Team on 01454 863355. Bookings are made on a first-come-first-served basis and capacity is limited. Booking closes on the Friday lunchtime before each week of meetings.

Face-to-face, outreach Consultation Meetings provide an opportunity for the Early Intervention Officer and an Educational Psychologist to visit a setting, to discuss a number of children causing concern. This avoids block booking of the virtual meeting slots. A three-hour visit would allow three children to be raised. If settings would like to take up the option of an outreach Consultation Meeting, then they should discuss this first with their Early Intervention Officer.

Note that a **SEND Support Services Referral and Consent** form must be completed and signed by the setting and the parent/carer, and uploaded to their VLE locker, before a child can be discussed by name at a Consultation Meeting. Without this consent, children can only be discussed on a no-name basis and no written summary report can be provided.

The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals

Request for Direct EP Involvement

For children with more long term, complex or acute needs, perhaps spanning several areas of the SEND Code of Practice, it may be helpful to request the direct involvement of an EP.

This would involve the EP visiting a setting, talking to members of staff and the parent/carers, observing the child and possibly completing some informal or formal assessment work. The EP would then engage in some joint problem solving to better understand the child's strengths and areas of need and to identify desired future outcomes and actions, which will inform the child's next SEND Support Plan.

Note that requesting direct EP involvement is not appropriate for children with lower-level needs that can be explored through EIO involvement, or through an Early Years Consultation Meeting. For children who have been recently discussed with an EIO, or at an Early Years Consultation Meeting, a request for direct EP involvement would not be appropriate until the previously agreed outcomes and actions have been implemented and reviewed, with an indication that EP involvement is then required. Similarly, a request for direct EP involvement would not be appropriate where setting staff are seeking to make an immediate EHC needs assessment request for a child, without first implementing any agreed actions in a SEND Support Plan.

Settings can make requests for direct EP involvement for children of any age, although typically they are more appropriate for **children in their pre-school year, or the year prior to this.**

Requests for direct EP involvement for a child are made using the **SEND Support Services Referral and Consent** form, accompanied by supporting documents and information.

Requests can be submitted through ART (accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk) or through one of the locality Business Support teams:

South: southpreventativebusinesssupportteam@southglos.gov.uk

North: BSNL@southglos.gov.uk

Requests for direct EP involvement are considered at regular CASEY allocation meetings, generally on the first Wednesday of each month. Note that requests for EP involvement must be received by the Friday two weeks before a CASEY meeting to be considered at that meeting.

Statutory Involvements with Children, through an EHC Needs Assessment

Where a setting has submitted a request for an EHC needs assessment of a child and this has been agreed by the EHCP Team's Statutory SEND Panel, an EP will automatically be allocated to assess the child's special educational needs and to produce a psychological advice report. Liaison with the child's setting will inform the EP assessment, and no direct request for EP involvement is required by the setting in these circumstances.