



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Roinn an Fhoghlaim is Seirbheisean Chloinne
Department of Education and Children's Services

Psychological Service

Who We Are and What We Do

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'Ag Amas air Adhartas - Aiming for Advancement'

Purpose

Local Authorities in Scotland have a statutory duty to provide a Psychological Service to offer advice on the education and care of children with support needs. The Comhairle has in place a staged process of assessment and intervention for children who need additional support, Psychological advice and intervention is provided as an integral part of that staged process.

We aim to have in place a sustainable model of service delivery which:

- Meets standards specified in British Psychological Society guidelines.
- Offers equal right of access to all Comhairle education establishments, specialist provision, children and families.
- Takes full account of the proposed reorganization of the Education and Children's Services Department.
- Negotiates, plans and delivers Service priorities at local level with and through Learning Community Management Teams in consultation with all other stakeholders.
- Informs, and is informed by, good practice in other Local Authorities.
- Is responsive to changes in legislation and policy.

Philosophy and Values

As knowledge has progressed over the years, so has our understanding of child development. We now know from a strong evidence base that children develop as a function of significant interaction with adults, siblings and peers. This means that key adults in a child's everyday life, and siblings and peers, can do things which make a significant difference to how any given child feels, behaves, learns and develops. This in turn means that significant others can always do something to help when there is a problem. The task is to work out what that might be and to find ways of doing it.

"Significant others" means any individuals who play an important part in the child or young person's life, often parents, carers, other family members and friends, head teachers and school staff.

Psychologists work with and through the Area Inclusion Managers and Principal Teachers of Learning Support to help significant others to develop realistic solutions grounded in psychological theory and documented research evidence – which can make a difference at school and at home. They also work directly with a small number of children and families where a Psychologist's expertise is required as part of the action plan at any given time.

Organisation

The Psychological Service is currently accountable to the Head of Children's Services and Resources. In the same way that each of the five area learning communities is supported by an Inclusion Manager and Learning Support staff, each learning community and specialist provider has a named link psychologist.

For the session 2011-12, the link psychologist for each Learning Community Management Team (LCMT) and specialist provider is given below:

LCMT 1 – Shannon Finlayson

LCMT 2 – Shannon Finlayson

LCMT 3 – Shannon Finlayson

LCMT 4 – Shannon Finlayson

LCMT 5 – Shannon Finlayson / Iain MacIver (until permanent replacement in post).

Specialist provision for children with high support needs associated with severe and complex difficulties – Shannon Finlayson

Support at Different Levels

Local Authority Psychological Services work at different levels. So, for example, it would be as appropriate for a Psychologist to work together with a school and Area Inclusion staff to develop a whole-school approach to attendance or literacy issues as it would be to join with them to work with an individual child and family. Equally, a Psychologist might work with others at Authority level to assess wider development issues and design, plan and implement interventions to address them.

At each of these levels the Psychologist's contribution will be part of a wider, collaborative commitment to achieve sustainable change. The process is likely to start with consultation in order to begin to tease out the dimensions of a perceived problem or area for development and identify areas for change.

In some cases the Psychologist's contribution will be entirely consultative. In others it will move beyond consultation to include assessment, intervention, training and/or research in any combination. The only stipulation is that involvement of the Service arises from a collaborative commitment to apply a staged approach to dealing with difficulties and to improve systems which support children's teaching, learning and well-being.

The model is based on the premise that effective assessment and intervention is collaborative, contextual and progressive. This means that the Psychological Service is working together with other support services and key adults at home and in pre-school settings to achieve sustainable, targeted change over a period of time.