



**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR**

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

## **Educational Psychology Service**



# **Assessment, Roles, Responsibilities and Referral Process**

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## 1. Summary and Aims

This document describes the assessment process engaged in by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in order to support the ongoing work of the team who are working with the child or young person (from birth to age 25). It aims to provide a summary of the national and local context in which children and young people's needs are assessed, as well an indication of the types of assessment the Educational Psychology Service may undertake for certain types of need. In addition, an educational psychologist's roles and responsibilities are described.

## 2. The Context of Assessment and Intervention

The work of the Educational Psychology Service involves collaboration with key adults (e.g. Learning Support Teacher, Head Teacher, parent, social worker, auxiliary, class teacher, therapist, etc.) in the assessment of needs, planning and evaluation of interventions and direct contact with the young person when appropriate.

Assessment and intervention are conducted in accordance with national guidance described in [Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland](#) published by the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP) and the British Psychological Society's Scottish Division of Educational Psychology (SDEP) in 2014.

As noted in the Comhairle's **'Meeting Needs, Supporting Learners' Handbook**, assessment is an ongoing process which involves the gathering of information/evidence about how a child or young person is doing in their learning and how they are feeling.

Information/evidence should be gathered:

- from a variety of sources
- in a range of settings
- over a period of time

This process involves the child/young person, their parents/carers, teachers, and any other professionals concerned. The purpose of assessment is to inform future intervention. It encompasses cognitive, emotional and social factors. Effective assessment aims to limit barriers to learning and to promote the inclusion of the child/young person.

Assessment plays an important part in the teaching-learning process at all levels of education and helps to build up a picture of a child's strengths and areas where there may be difficulties. **It is a continuous process rather than a discrete activity.** It occurs as good practice for all children, but is particularly important when addressing pupils' additional support needs and as part of the process of Staged Assessment and Intervention.

Assessment is not separate from intervention; it is part of the on-going cycle of planning, action and review.

## 3. What is the Role of an Educational Psychologist?

Educational Psychologists use their training in psychology and knowledge of child development to help others understand about:

- child development
- how children learn
- how children behave and manage their emotions
- how children develop positive relationships with others

### 3.1 How is the Educational Psychology Service Organized?

We work in different Learning Community areas, within which a cluster of schools is assigned to an educational psychologist.

We work in partnership with schools and the authority to improve children's experiences of learning. Educational psychologists and schools work to the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) to ensure that all children and young people are safe, healthy, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.

Educational psychologists work at 3 levels:

- child & family
- school
- local authority

They may do this in a number of ways:

- Provide training for people who work with children, on how to help children learn and develop.
- Provide advice in partnership with those who know the child best, on methods or strategies to help a child learn more effectively. Strategies may include teaching approaches, advice on curriculum materials and promoting positive behaviour and relationships.
- Provide assessment or intervention for a child when further information is required.
- Keeping up to date with recent research relating to how children learn and develop to inform local authority policy and practice.
- Being involved in, and advising, local authority groups considering additional support for learning needs.
- Project work in schools such as promoting nurturing approaches or developing literacy skills.

### **3.2 How do Educational Psychologists get Involved with a Child?**

A staged intervention process is used in schools to help identify a child's support needs and to ensure that a child's needs are being met. An educational psychologist works within this staged process.

A Team around the Child (TAC) may request involvement from an educational psychologist or in some cases when a child has not yet started school, a child's needs' can be discussed at an early year's multi-agency assessment team, which an educational psychologist may contribute to.

There needs to be a clear reason for an educational psychologist to become involved. This should be around promoting the wellbeing and learning of the child and in relation to the teaching delivered by school staff.

Prior to involvement from an educational psychologist, the parent/carer must provide consent.

If a parent is concerned about their child's learning, they have the right to ask their education authority to find out whether their child has additional support needs and to request a specific assessment (which can include an educational psychology assessment)

### **3.3 How do educational psychologists assess a child?**

An educational psychologist usually joins the assessment process after the people who work directly with the child have gathered information and have provided and reviewed the success of strategies used. Children who have been identified as having Severe and Complex additional support needs should be referred to the Educational Psychology Service by the Principal Teachers of Learning Support at the earliest opportunity.

An educational psychologist's role in the assessment process is often agreed through consultation or a collaborative discussion with parents/carers and others who work directly with the child and may involve either direct or indirect involvement with the child, or a

combination of both. An educational psychologist will use an approach that is the least disruptive for a child.

An educational psychologist's assessment may involve:

- talking to the child's teachers; parents/carers; child
- observing the child in the classroom
- looking at the child's work
- analysing existing assessment information
- questionnaires or specific assessment materials
- considering information wider than the child such as the impact of an event at home

An assessment will identify the child's strengths, difficulties and solutions to overcome the difficulties.

### **3.4 Do parents have to give consent for an educational psychologist to be involved with their child?**

In keeping with the additional support for learning legislation, the views of parents and carers must be sought and taken account of in the assessment process. Any direct work with a child should be done with the full consent of a child's parents or carers. The views of children and young people themselves should also be asked and taken account of.

### **3.5 How do educational psychologists support schools?**

Educational psychologists work with schools to help them look at the needs of the whole child so they are able to be included fully in class, school and community life.

They provide advice to head teachers and school staff where needed and provide training to help staff to develop skills to support children with specific needs and enhance all children's learning.

They provide advice on target setting for children's learning plans. They are not responsible for drawing up or implementing plans in schools. They help schools to communicate about a child's needs and support them to fully involve parents.

### **3.6 Do educational psychologists only work with school age children?**

No. Educational psychologists do not just work with children and young people in school. They work with families with very young children in early years settings and in planning for young people leaving school and moving on to employment or further education.

### **3.7 Do educational psychologists decide which school a child attends?**

No. Educational psychologists work for the local authority providing their analysis of children's needs and how these can be met in particular environments. They may be involved in discussion, and consultation with parents, relating to which type of school placement would best meet a child's educational needs. The final decision about where a child is placed lies with the local authority.

Parents have the right to make a placing request for their child to attend a particular school and to appeal this if refused

## **4. Referral Process**

Psychological Services within the Western Isles offer a variety of services to schools, families, young people and our professional partners. The main functions of the service can be summarized as consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research. These are offered at a variety of levels, including nationally, at a local authority level, within individual schools and other settings, and also for individuals. When involvement from Psychological Services is required for individuals, the guidance and procedures outlined in the Comhairle's [Getting it Right for Children and Young People in the Western Isles](#) Policy should be followed. As such, it is

expected that a [GIRFEC Referral Form](#) would be submitted in accordance with the authority's Staged Intervention and Assessment and Referral Procedures. Only in exceptional circumstances would there be involvement from Psychological Services without a referral form having been received (i.e. a critical incident).

To support those completing the GIRFEC Referral Forms some brief guidance is offered at [Appendix A](#) in the form of a check list. This should be read alongside the '[Guidance for completing the Inter-Agency Referral Form](#)' provided in [Getting it Right for Children and Young People in the Western Isles](#). Please note that this guidance is intended to assist the Referral Panel in determining whether a graduated response to the child's needs has taken place, and also to allow the Educational Psychologist who receives the referral to determine if the necessary preliminary assessment and interventions have been carried out. Some of this information will be included in the referral form itself, and, to reduce the duplication of information, some can be appended to the form.

## **5. Assessments Relating to Specific Areas of Concern/Types of Need**

### **5.1 Assessments relating to Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSP)**

During the Education and Children's Services Department's consideration of whether a pupil requires a CSP, parents have the right to request an Educational Psychology assessment. However, the Educational Psychology Service may not necessarily be involved.

### **5.2 Reports to the Reporter for Children's Hearings**

There is a statutory requirement for Educational Psychologists to respond to requests from the Children's Reporter. These may be delivered verbally or in writing. This is subject to a Service Level Agreement between the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and the Educational Psychology Service. In addition, the Educational Psychology Service has a Practice Guideline on Reports to the Children's Reporter.

### **5.3 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder**

Initially, teacher(s) should already have put in place best practice strategies for helping children with attention and/or over-activity levels, and should have allowed sufficient time (approximately two months in school) for the strategies to begin to be effective (see [Useful Resources](#) for ADHD/ADD strategies). If concerns continue to exist after this period, teachers should move to next step by completing a Classroom Observation and write-up, focusing upon attention, concentration, activity levels, and task completion.

A request may then be made to the Educational Psychologist, via the Principal Teacher of Learning Support, for Conner's Parent and Teacher Rating Scales (Revised) to be sent to the child's home and school respectively. These forms, once completed, should be returned to the Educational Psychologist for scoring. If sufficient evidence of ADHD or ADD is found, the Principal Teacher of Learning Support should submit a referral, enclosing appropriate evidence, to the Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist for a potential diagnosis, meeting with the child and family, and recommendations to be offered. The Educational Psychologist will consult with the Principal Teacher of Learning Support to offer additional strategies for support in school.

### **5.4 Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Asperger's Syndrome**

Initially, teacher(s) should already have put in place best practice strategies for helping children with social and communication difficulties, and have allowed sufficient time (approximately two months in school) for the strategies to begin to be effective (see [Useful Resources](#) for ASD/Asperger's Syndrome strategies). If concerns continue to exist following after this period, teachers should move to next step by completing a Classroom Observation and write-up, focusing upon social skills and interaction, communication style and skills, sensory sensitivities, and observed behaviours. A Social Communication Assessment Questionnaire should also be completed, paying particular attention to the final page, which

asks that priority concerns are specified. The completed Classroom Observation and Social Communication Assessment Questionnaire should be submitted to the Principal Teacher of Learning Support who will consult with Educational Psychology to determine whether sufficient evidence indicative of potential autism exists. Where this is the case, the school will be asked to make a referral to the Social Communication Team. The child will then be placed on the Social Communication Team waiting list for a comprehensive assessment of potential autism spectrum disorder.

Following the Social Communication Team's decision to place a child on their waiting list for assessment, school staff will also be asked to complete an in-depth questionnaire regarding the child's communication skills.

An Educational Psychologist will participate in a multi-disciplinary process of assessment of the child which may then lead to diagnosis, and further intervention and consultations within school.

### **5.5 Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**

Initially, teacher(s) should already have put in place best practice strategies for helping children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (see [Useful Resources](#) for relevant strategies). In the case of children with significant behavioural issues, a Behavioural Support Plan (BSP) should be written, involving the Principal Teacher of Learning Support, the Educational Psychologist (if staff feel psychological expertise is required), the teacher, and the parent(s). Sufficient time (approximately two months in school) should be allowed to ascertain whether or not the BSP is sufficient to help to address the behavioural concerns, or whether additional assessment may be required. A Behavioural Support Plan template is provided at [Appendix B](#); a Behavioural Support Plan exemplar is provided at [Appendix C](#).

Should additional assessment be indicated, following consultation between the Principal Teacher of Learning Support and the Educational Psychologist, a Classroom Observation should be done using the Behaviour Checklist and the Timed Observation Sheet (Appendix 4.1) in the **'Meeting Needs, Supporting Learners' Handbook**.

The Educational Psychologist may then ask the Principal Teacher of Learning Support or Learning Support Teacher to complete other questionnaires. These may include:

- Beck's Youth Inventories, which look at emotional areas such as self-esteem, depression, anxiety, etc.;
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires, which look at attention skills, behavioural skills, peer relations, emotional skills, and a range of other assessments that investigate family relationship patterns, self-esteem, etc.; and/or
- Resiliency Scales, which measure the personal attributes of the child that are critical for resiliency.

If further, more in-depth assessment is required, the Educational Psychologist may use the Roberts Apperception Test for Children, The Family Relations Assessment, assessment of children's drawings and artwork, and other kinds of psychological assessments.

### **5.6 Cognitive and Developmental Assessments**

If concerns exist regarding a child's cognitive functioning, the Principal Teacher of Learning Support should assess the child using a British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) Test.

If the child is not able or willing to participate in the process of completing a BPVS, then a Parental Involvement Project (PIP) questionnaire, which assesses developmental levels in five different areas, should be completed by both parents and school/nursery staff. This instrument can provide an estimate of cognitive or intellectual capacity.

For adolescents with significant learning difficulties, or severe and complex difficulties, it may also be worthwhile to use the Pathways to Independence questionnaire, which is the next level on of the PIP, and assesses self-help, personal and social skills.

If more in-depth understanding of the different areas of cognitive ability is required, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Revised (WISC-R) or McCarthy’s Scales of Children’s Abilities may be used. These assessments offer information regarding a child’s verbal, perceptual or visual processing, working memory, and processing skills. There are occasions when the use of the Raven’s Progressive Matrices is selected, due to limited expressive language, or bilingualism.

### **5.7 Standardised Academic Assessments**

The following standardised academic assessments are generally used either by Principal Teachers for Learning Support or Learning Support teachers:

- Wechsler Objective Reading Dimensions (WORD)
- Wechsler Objective Language Dimensions (WOLD)
- Wechsler Objective Number Dimensions (WOND)
- Neale Analysis of Reading
- Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB)
- Dyslexia Screening Test
- Special Needs Assessment Profile (SNAP)
- Wechsler Individual Test – Third Edition (WIAT-III)

## USEFUL RESOURCES

<b>Educational Psychology</b>	For more information read <a href="#">Educational Psychology Assessment in Scotland (2014)</a>
	British Psychological Society's <a href="#">Code of Ethics and Conduct</a> (2009)
	<a href="#">Disability Discrimination Act (1995)</a>
	<a href="#">Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)</a>
<b>Local Guidance</b>	<a href="#">Getting it Right for Children and Young People in the Western Isles</a>
<b>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder</b>	<a href="#">Teaching Students with ADHD</a>
<b>Autism Spectrum Disorder/Asperger's Syndrome</b>	The Autism Education Trust's <i>Do You Have a Child with Autism in Your Class? A <a href="#">Guide for Teachers</a></i> can be downloaded from their website.
	<a href="#">The Autism Education Trust's Transition Toolkit</a>
	Copies of the Autism Education Trust's <i>Tools for Teachers – Practical Resources for Classroom Success</i> are available on request from the Educational Psychology Service
<b>Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties</b>	<a href="#">Understanding Why</a> – Understanding attachment and how this can affect education with special reference to adopted children and young people and those looked after by local authorities
	The Centre for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation's <a href="#">Facilitating Individualised Interventions to Address Challenging Behavior Toolkit</a>
	Copies of the <i>Building Bridges in Managing Attachment Difficulties Handbook</i> produced by the St Andrew's Children's Society Limited are available on request from the Educational Psychology Service

**Appended to the Inter-agency Referral Form (tick box)**

Previous minutes which demonstrate (a) involvement of the parent and child in the decision-making process, and (b) an ongoing process of evaluation in relation to the provision in place.

A written summary of an observation of the individual in question that summarizes needs and makes recommendations in terms of supporting the child.

Copies of previous assessments and evaluations of the interventions that followed.

Copies of the child's current and historical IEPs. If the child has a CSP or a Child's Plan this should also be included.

Any assessment information specific to the referral (e.g. if the referral is questioning whether Autistic Spectrum Condition is an underlying need, the Social Communication Team Assessment Questionnaire (Revised) should be included).

**Specific Guidance Related to the Inter-agency Request Form**

It should be clear what the individual needs are that give rise to the referral, but also how they have been supported by class teachers, Learning Support, the involvement of the Principal Teacher of Learning Support or a Children and Families Social Worker (if this is not already made clear in the appended information).

In addition to the information regarding the well-being indicators, it would be useful to outline the specific types of support that you would like from Psychological Services (e.g. attendance at a Core Group Meeting, assessment of social skills, or advice regarding intervention to support a child with ADHD). This is useful to help identify the time commitment required for each referral.

Psychological services operate within the ethical guidance provided by the Health professions Council (HPC) and the British Psychological Society (BPS). Before Psychological Services can get involved in a case it is necessary to satisfy the requirement that both parent(s) and child (dependent age and cognitive level) have given informed consent for our involvement.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Behaviour Support Plan

Written by: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete one or more targets, depending on numbers of behaviours requiring change

- 1. Target behaviour: (specific and precise description)
- 2. Target behaviour: (specific and precise description)
- 3. Target behaviour: (specific and precise description)

4. Known triggers:

5. List what we will do to avoid or prevent incidents:

- a
- b
- c
- d
- e
- f

6. List how we will respond to incidents (when he/she does \_\_\_\_\_ ), we will

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

7. How we will help \_\_\_\_\_ to function positively, and to cope with challenges

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

8. How will progress be monitored?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of plan \_\_\_\_\_

Date of review \_\_\_\_\_

## Behaviour Support Plan

Written by:

Complete one or more targets, depending on numbers of behaviours requiring change

1. Target behaviour:

Running away from staff - \_\_\_\_\_ needs to be first off the bus and into school on return from outings.

Known triggers:

Returning to school from outings - \_\_\_\_\_ wants to be the first off the bus and becomes anxious if he thinks anyone else is going ahead of him.

List what we will do to avoid or prevent incidents:

- Use a visual sequencing prompt.
- Take \_\_\_\_\_ off bus first as far as possible.
- Build in tolerance to let someone else be first at discretion of class manager.
- Interact with him to keep his attention

List how we will respond to incidents (when he does)

we will

- ask \_\_\_\_\_ to wait and to walk nicely;
- remain calm;
- be consistent;
- step back and allow him to get to class;
- reduce/remove verbal instruction;
- be clear about staff roles;
- not overdo praise when he does re-join/cooperate.

How we will help \_\_\_\_\_ to function positively, and to cope with challenges

- Look for opportunities in the morning when \_\_\_\_\_ appears less anxious and is better able to accept not being first.
- Use his choice board.

How will progress be monitored

Record using observation/behaviour monitoring sheets.  
Monitor monthly.

2. Target behaviour:

\_\_\_\_\_ to attend to tasks other than those of his own choosing.

Known triggers:

May be demand avoidance.

List what we will do to avoid or prevent incidents:

Continue with activity/routine and allow \_\_\_\_\_ to opt in or out.  
Do not press timetable use.  
\_\_\_\_\_ should be offered "later" board.

List how we will respond to incidents (when he does)

we will

- give less attention;
- not keep asking him to join in;
- allow his natural curiosity to develop;
- remain focused on task;
- remain calm;
- be consistent;
- reduce/remove verbal instruction;
- be clear about staff roles;
- not overdo praise when he joins in/cooperates.

How we will help \_\_\_\_\_ to function positively, and to cope with challenges

- Use choice board - when \_\_\_\_\_ is interested he will usually enjoy activities.

How will progress be monitored

Record using observation/behaviour monitoring sheets.  
Monitor monthly.

Date of plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of review: \_\_\_\_\_