

Merthyr Tydfil's Educational Psychology Service (EPS) Policy Statement

What do we mean by Educational Psychology?	What do we do?	The Wider Team	Accessing the Educational Psychologist	Identification and Assessment
<p>Educational Psychology is the study of children and young people's wellbeing, relationships, learning and development.</p> <p>EPs have a first degree in psychology that is recognized by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and professional post graduate doctoral training in educational psychology.</p> <p>In order to practice in the UK, EPs must also be registered with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC). This regulatory body oversees the continuing professional development of EPs and ensures that all practice applies to relevant codes of conduct.</p>	<p>We apply psychology to help children and young people (YP), teachers, parents, carers and others to understand the strengths, difficulties and needs that children experience. Our aim is to work together, with those most concerned, to bring about positive change, by considering all aspects of a child/YP's life and factors that can impact on their progress and development.</p> <p>We work in preschool settings, schools, colleges, the community and with a range of other professionals and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>We use a consultation approach to work with those who best know the child/YP, to achieve jointly agreed outcomes. We use a person-centred approach to establish what is most important to and for an individual to make positive progress.</p> <p>We also provide advice on request for the local authority in order to contribute to Individual Development Plans (IDPs).</p>	<p>Merthyr Tydfil EPs work closely with other LA professionals, including the ALN & Inclusion teams, School Wellbeing Team, Children Looked After Education team and the School-Based Counsellors. There is good communication and joint work with Children's Services and Communities First colleagues.</p> <p>We work closely with health professionals, including the paediatric and therapy teams and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The team contributes to Neurodevelopmental (ND) diagnostic forums.</p> <p>We have strong links with neighbouring LAs contributing to collaborative project work and training. An example of this is the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) project, delivered within the Central South consortium and enabling 200 teaching assistants annually to be trained to support young people's wellbeing in schools across South Wales.</p>	<p>All parents, carers & settings can access initial EP advice and support by requesting a call-back on our EP Support Line, run every other Monday.</p> <p>Each preschool and school in Merthyr Tydfil has a named EP. The EP is usually attached to a cluster of schools and where possible works across primary to secondary to achieve continuity.</p> <p>The service allocates core EP time to every school, to ensure regular presence in settings. Additional time is allocated for complex casework, as needed. Allocation and prioritization of EP work is decided by the school team at planning meetings each term.</p> <p>Pre-school referrals are completed by pediatricians, health visitors or other specialist agencies, following developmental assessments.</p>	<p>Schools and settings request EP consultation according to their priorities and these are discussed at a planning meeting. EP involvement comes as part of a graduated response to a child or YP's learning needs. Settings and schools will have sought to address any identified difficulties through a play plan, an individual education or behavior support plan. Discussion with the class teacher and sharing school-based assessments are an important part of the information gathering process.</p> <p>Before an EP discusses any individual child or YP, the school will have shared concerns with parents/carers and sought written consent.</p> <p>Observations in social contexts and within the learning environment, direct work and sometimes assessment with the child or YP can all be important to gain a comprehensive view of the child's needs. Discussion with the child or YP and their parents/carers is crucial in this process.</p>
<h2>Supporting Schools & Settings</h2>	<h2>Supporting Families</h2>	<h2>Supporting Children and Young People</h2>		<p>Reports are sent to home and school/setting and these describe the information gathered and recommendations that have been agreed together.</p> <p>When appropriate, a follow up consultation may take place to review progress and update recommendations.</p> <p>When an IDP is in place, we are asked to provide further information about the complexity, severity and exceptionality of a child or YP's additional learning needs.</p>
<p>We work in a variety of ways to support schools & preschool settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We carry out consultations, individual work and assessments. We work with groups and classes of pupils to address learning, emotional and social needs. We provide group consultation to clusters of schools. We provide strategic support and training to develop approaches in many areas such as emotion coaching, trauma-informed approaches, dyslexia, attachment difficulties, and neurodevelopmental conditions. We contribute at ALNCo good practice forums. We provide regular group supervision for emotional literacy support assistants (ELSA). We provide guidance and can be available to support schools at short notice following any critical incidents that may unfortunately occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EPS is committed to working with parents and carers to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Parents and carers are always invited to consultation meetings in school, and consent is always sought before any involvement. We are able to offer advice to parents and carers through home visits and we offer parental 'drop in' sessions in many of the Merthyr Tydfil schools. We work with young children, not yet at school, who may have identified additional learning needs and we can support parents and provide advice. We can support and provide advice on managing transitions. We attend the multiagency TAF/Early Help Hub. 	<p>We support Children & YP in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early identification of difficulties, responding to school priorities, and supporting a person-centred approach to ensure that children's views are central in planning to meet identified needs. Using therapeutic techniques such as personal construct psychology, solution focused work and motivational interviewing to engage and help us understand the child or YP's needs. Undertaking direct work with individual children, small groups and classes to help manage periods of difficulty. Provide 'Solution Circles' to those working with young people in need, through Group Supervision, ELSA supervision and the ALNCo forum. Providing therapeutic letters to children that outline the discussions that have taken place. Individual observation and assessment to determine strengths and weaknesses and help schools plan evidence-based interventions that support any particular areas of difficulty. 		