

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
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Title:	Hampshire Educational Psychology (HEP) - Peer Challenge
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Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Summary

1 The purpose of this paper is to brief the Children and Families Advisory Panel on the process and outcomes of Peer Challenge which focused on Hampshire Educational Psychology (HEP). The peer challenge programme, developed by the South East Children's Services Authorities, is a sector-led approach to service improvement through learning from peer challenge and self-assessment. HEP was identified as the focus for the visit to bring challenge to work that was already underway and to provide support to answering the question 'How does a public sector educational psychology service balance the provision of core and sold services'? The peer challenge process was undertaken in two parts with an initial visit in March 2012 and follow-up in December 2012.

1.1 The process was a positive experience for Children Services and HEP and endorsed the development work that has been, and continues to be undertaken.

1.2 This paper seeks to

- set out the background and process to the peer challenge project;
- provide an overview of the impact that peer challenge has made with regard to areas of strength observed, areas for consideration, key actions, impact and outcomes.
- Present areas of future development for HEP.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1 Peer Challenge uses appreciative enquiry techniques and where possible triangulated evidence to support a process of service/provision review. The process uses a rigorous, challenging, respectful and inclusive approach.
- 2.2 The process is most effective when it complements a programme of work already underway. Hampshire Children's Services identified Educational Psychology for its first departmental peer challenge to complement work which was already well under way in relation to balancing the provision of core and sold activity.
- 2.3 HEP, as part of Hampshire's sold services development is engaged in the process of transforming from a core service, funded by the local authority to one where a significant range of activity is sold to schools, academies and others in Hampshire.
- 2.4 In 2011 schools in Hampshire were offered the opportunity to purchase services from HEP through a service level agreement (SLA). 48% of schools took up the offer in 2011 and the peer challenge process has supported the ways in which the offer of sold services is developing alongside maintaining high quality core services to schools, academies, parents and carers.
- 2.5 The visiting peer challenge team was led by a Director of Children's Services as part of their 'time bank' contribution to support sector-led improvement. The team also included an Assistant Director and two staff at team leader/practitioner level, In total four other south east Children's Services were represented.
- 2.6 The initial two day programme during March 2012 involved: individual interviews with officers; staff focus groups; interviews with partner agencies; interviews with service users; as well as meeting members of HEP senior management team and reviewing a range of written information provided to them. At the end of the two day process the team met the Director of CSD, the Assistant Director, Children and Families and HEP senior managers to share their observations, summarising the strengths observed and areas for consideration. A follow up visit in December by the team leader Director Children's Services aided the process by reviewing progress against the considerations identified.

3. Outcomes of Peer Challenge Process

- 3.1. The initial visit of the peer challenge team highlighted a number of areas of strength which endorsed the wide range of activities which HEP delivers. These are set out below, in addition a number of areas for consideration where highlighted which provided the focus for service development between end of March and December. This report summaries these activities.

3.2. Areas of strength as written by the visiting team:

- HEP is a huge asset to Hampshire and an incredible resource. It is universally regarded as high quality, expert and professional. It is a service with great depth of specialist expertise. It has professional and administrative staff of high quality. It is a reflective service which disseminates and supports good practice. This and the high regard with which HEPS is held by schools and other stakeholders mean it has great capacity to develop to meet future challenges.
- The Service develops its own capacity for the future through its training of future EPs (and is enriched by them) as well as developing capacity in other services through its deployment of expertise to support others.
- HEP provides an ambitious and rich range of different activities and services to schools and other stakeholders
- Within the Core offer, the bookable learning and behaviour consultations system and SENCo circles are innovative and highly valued by schools.
- The Core offer to other Children's Services, such as services to Children Looked After and adopted children are pioneering and a great strength. The traded offer for Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) is universally well regarded, as are other traded training offers.
- Those schools who purchase the Service Level Agreement (SLA) value it highly.

3.3. **Areas for consideration raised by the peer challenge team following four broad themes.**

- Communication and clarity of HEP Service offer;
- Parental confusion/concern regarding the link with SEN statutory processes;
- Ease of access to HEP for schools and vulnerable children;
- Funding structure and cost analysis.

3.4. As a consequence of these considerations HEP has undertaken a number of activities, these have included:

- Revising HEP website to link to the sold services website and make more explicit the core/sold service activity difference.
- Attendance at primary Headteachers' conferences across the county
- Ensured educational psychologists new to the service have a full understanding of our revised processes and can communicate these.
- A review of the take up of the telephone contact line and revised timings of sessions.

- Analysis of HEP data as part of a national parents' satisfaction survey
- Monitoring of moderated core casework
- Completing HEP business plan which was signed off by Children Services Management Team in June 2012.

4. Performance

On the return of the peer challenge team leader in December, HEP was able to present the following evidence of service development and service user satisfaction in response to the areas for consideration.

4.1. Service development

- The levels of core casework activity have remained constant and again indicates that school staff understand the process of accessing support from the service. The moderation process for core casework is becoming increasingly streamlined within HEP, with decisions regarding the appropriateness of requests for core support being dealt with speedily. Where a case/situation is not felt to meet the criteria for complex casework support schools are sign-posted to other services, often bookable consultation sessions.
- A detailed analysis of moderation activity during October and November indicates that of the 263 cases moderated only 46 (17%) were signposted to alternative services such as bookable consultation sessions, indicating that both school staff requesting support and EPs are developing a shared understanding of the moderated level of complexity for core activity.
- Analysis of this data also shows that only 22 (8%) cases had previously been brought to the service through a school's SLA. This small number reflects the shared understanding of the core casework threshold and the practice too of making sure that schools with an SLA are not penalised in their access to core service.
- The website is now live; a work in progress and sets out HEP core and sold offer through the link to the Children's Services Sold Service website.
- Over the past two reporting quarters telephone contact use indicates an average of 88 new contacts per month (through the contact line) with a range between community teams of between 12 and 19.
- Work is underway with Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Team (EMTAS) to develop joint approaches for children with English as a second language and who may have special educational needs. EMTAS, whilst Schools' Forum funded, is making significant efforts to develop a sold service offer, other Schools' Forum funded services are not yet at that stage of development.

- HEP is participating with specialist CAMHS in the delivery of the cross-county CAMHS action groups with a view to identifying shared service delivery opportunities. From January bookable consultation sessions for foster carers and adoptive families will be delivered jointly with CAMHS therapist which will 'free up' some service capacity.
- The clarity of funding model and model service delivery capacity has allowed all members of HEP to be clear about the level of service that can be offered. It has also resulted in an increase in internal commissions, notably from Workforce Development Team to develop and deliver training to the Children's Services workforce.

4.2. Service-user satisfaction

4.2.1 Schools and Academies

- There has been increased take up of the SLA indicating that HEP's communication of the benefits of the SLA has been successful.
- A further 32% of all Hampshire schools have entered into an SLA with HEP, which now includes over a third of all secondary schools (including academies). Currently 94% of Hampshire schools and academies purchase additional activity from HEP.
- A telephone contact line satisfaction survey of all schools, (response rate 37%) primarily from SENCOs gave a satisfaction rating of the telephone contact line 3.74, statistical mode 4 (on rating scale of 1-5). Recent unsolicited comments from school staff have included:

Thank you, for the conversation this morning. Just wanted to say that, no matter who I speak with when I call, you are all doing a great job supporting/advising us at this end! I always come away feeling I have been able to clarify thoughts and have an idea of how to move forward – well done all of you, and thank you!!

Secondary school SENCO

- Few of the cases which meet moderation criteria for core casework have originated as SLA activity. During October and November only 8% (22/268) of casework originated as SLA activity. There is little overlap and as understanding grows we will look to reduce the cross-over further.
- It would appear that there is a shared understanding between HEP and schools that SLA casework is addressing the needs of different group of children and young people. As intended, SLA casework is providing **support to schools** to meet the needs of their children at school action/school action plus, not children and young people whose needs meet HEP threshold for complex case work and who may benefit from statutory support.

4.2.2 Parent/carer satisfaction.

HEP has developed and led a national survey (on-going) commissioned by National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists (NAPEP).

From this survey a recent analysis (October 2012) shows that where educational psychologists have been directly involved in casework and intervention planning, HEP compares favourably with the national data in terms of parental satisfaction.

The Educational Psychologist seemed to value my views and take them into account.	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
National response	3%	4%	93%
Hampshire response	2%	3%	95%

I consider the Educational Psychologist provided independent advice.	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
National response	4%	5%	91%
Hampshire response	1%	3%	96%

Responses to the question below, in the context of the positive comments above suggest that in comparison to the national average parents are able to access the service in a timely way.

I would have liked the Educational Psychologist to have been involved sooner.	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>
National response	12%	22%	67%
Hampshire response	14%	26%	60%

Feedback from parents indicates a high level of satisfaction with the quality of service.

5. Future direction

5.1. In December 2012, as a consequence of the evidence of development made available to the peer challenge team leader, HEP was reported to have taken considerable strides in addressing the considerations identified. It was recognised that the move towards a sustainable sold service and core service model is a continuing process and HEP has made good progress.

6. Conclusions

6.1. That the theme of peer challenge, as developed by the South East Children's Services Authorities, be noted;

- 6.2. That the areas of strength observed in HEP, and the outcomes in respect of areas for consideration be noted.
- 6.3. That HEP continue to develop sold services to schools and the wider community in line with Hampshire's Open for Business Plan 2011-13.
- 6.4. That the possibility of joining with other child -focused services to deliver sold services to schools be pursued.

Appendix A

Core activity

Much of the activity undertaken by HEPS is commissioned and paid for by the Local Authority on behalf of the SEN Service and those young people who have severe and complex educational needs. These core activities include:

Statutory assessment and Post-statutory casework.

- The provision of advice to SEN Services on the needs of children and young people who have severe and complex educational difficulties.
- Attendance at statutory annual reviews of children where schools, the LA and/or parents have significant concerns about progress
- Attendance at statutory annual reviews for children placed out of county as above and where placement means that the child/young person is isolated from their local community.

Legal work

- Supporting SEN Services in the preparation of cases to be considered by the SEN and Disability Tribunal
- Attendance as appropriate at the Tribunal

Casework

- Support to parents, schools and early years settings for children and young people with complex educational needs and which meet HEP priorities/threshold for a core service.

Services to schools and parents

1. A daily telephone contact line
2. Bookable learning and behaviour consultations
3. SENCo circles
4. Support for schools, colleges, parents, relatives, children and young people who have experienced a critical incident or sad event
5. Bookable consultations for foster carers and adoptive parents

Services for others

6. Pillars of Parenting: consultation for children in Hampshire's residential children's homes.

Sold Services

Purchasing services from HEP ensures that there is a shared accountability with the school/partnership for the outcomes of activities. All activities are undertaken to meet the HPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics and in line with HEP policy and practice as outlined in the Service Statement.

Services available to purchase by school and local children's partnerships

- Work with and on behalf of individual children and young people where the priorities/threshold for core service is not met.

This may include:

- clarification of an individual learning and/or social emotional needs
- collaborative planning of intervention programmes to meet identified needs
- delivering individual interventions such as motivational interviewing
- therapeutic group work alongside a member of school staff, for example, circle of friends, anger management groups self efficacy groups.

Services available to purchase by school and local children's partnerships and others

- Collaborative problem-solving and consultation
- Whole school and individual strategies for promoting emotional health and well-being
- Reviewing the impact of whole school and individually targeted learning interventions
- Training and staff development
- Work discussion groups
- Individual supervision/ 'coaching'
- Research and evaluation support.

Appendix B

Glossary of terms

Bookable learning and behaviour consultations – Individual open access sessions led by educational psychologists for parents/carers and school staff to explore their concerns about a child and engage in collaborative problem solving to develop an appropriate plan for intervention.

CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Community team – HEP is organised into six community teams lead by an educational psychologist team leader. The team is responsible for providing educational psychology services across a geographical area.

Core Service - activity undertaken by HEP commissioned and paid for by the Local Authority on behalf of the SEN Service and those young people who have severe and complex educational needs

CSD - Children's Services Department

ELSA - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant, employed by schools and supervised by educational psychologist to provide one to one support to vulnerable children identified by the school

EMTAS - Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service

EP - Educational Psychologist

HEP - Hampshire Educational Psychology

HCPC - Health Care Professions Council - which educational psychologists must be member of in order to be able to practice

NAPEP - National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists

Peer Challenge - a programme developed by the South East Children's Services Authorities as a sector led approach to service improvement through learning from peer challenge and self-assessment.

Pillars of Parenting - consultation for children in Hampshire's residential children's homes

SENCo circles - an ongoing joint problem-solving forum for special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCoS) facilitated by an educational psychologist, meeting half-termly.

SEN - Special Educational Needs

SENDIST - SEN and Disability Tribunal

SLA - Service Level Agreement

Sold Service - services available to be purchased by school, local children's partnerships and others (see appendix A for detail)

Telephone contact line – providing open access for advice and support to school staff, parents/carers and professionals. Protected time available every term time day covering each community team area.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes/no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

Equalities Impact Assessment:

7. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

7.1.

8. Climate Change:

9. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

N/A

10. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

10.1. N/A