

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & RECREATION SERVICES

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE

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1 Introduction

The Psychological Service in Orkney comprises of two full-time chartered psychologists working within the Pupil Support sector of the Department of Education and Recreation Services.

Duties of the Psychologists

The Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) is a member of the Education Department's senior management team and also provides Psychological Services to a patch of schools with their related caseload.

The Senior Educational Psychologist has a patch of schools and responsibility for delivering the Solution Oriented Schools programme across the county.

Both psychologists also undertake 'community' work, as requested by the Community Social Work Department and the Children's Reporter, as well as responding to direct requests for involvement from parents.

Local context

It is unusual for a PEP to have such a large caseload.

During the current academic year there has been a period of two months' unanticipated absence within the psychological service. Cover for urgent cases were provided by the PEP.

2 The Evaluation Exercise

2.1 Background

In a meeting with the Director of Education reflecting on the Service, plans were made to gather evidence from service users and colleagues to inform future plans. It was decided to survey stakeholder's views about the service through a series of questionnaires and focus groups.

2.2 Methodology

Questionnaires were based on those used in formal inspections of Psychological Services by HMIE and sent to five target groups:

1. Staff working in schools (sent to all schools in Orkney under a covering letter to head teachers).
2. Parents of children and young people known to the Service (sent to 20 parents).
3. Children and young people (sent to 20 individuals as a structured interview with a member of staff, under a covering letter to their head teachers).
4. Staff of services external to education (sent via managers of health and social work services).
5. Local authority staff within the education directorate (sent to education officers, including Service Improvement Officers, Link Officers, and colleagues in Pupil Support).

Focus groups were held separately for parents, school staff, local authority staff, and staff from external services. These were discussion groups led by the psychologists on issues covered in the questionnaires. All of the parents, external agency staff, and local authority (Education Directorate) staff sampled in the questionnaire exercise were invited to attend the relevant focus groups. 20 members of staff from a range of schools and a variety of roles were invited to the focus group for school staff.

3 Results

3.1 Parents

Completed questionnaires were received from seven parents out of the 20 sent out. One parent attended the Focus Group (the weather had been severe enough to close the schools that day, so a poor turnout was not surprising). See Appendix 1 Table 1, and Appendix 2d.

Parents' responses about the service were overwhelmingly positive. All responses indicated that the psychologist:

- Had put them at ease,
- Took time to ask their views,
- Listened carefully,
- Did what they said they would do,
- Also, involved other services when necessary.

All responses also showed that parents:

- Took an active part in decision making;
- Were satisfied with the psychologist's contribution to meetings;
- Would be happy to contact the psychologist again if needed.
- Said the psychologist's involvement was helpful to their child.

Most parents (86%) were kept informed about actions taken and said decisions made and actions taken at meetings led to a clear plan for their child. One said "Sometimes yes, sometimes no".

Most parents (86%) felt well prepared by the psychologist for any other additional meeting. One did not.

Criticisms:

- Most parents did not know that there was written information about the service available.

One comment was made regarding the service and how it could be improved:

I've been very impressed with the way [EP] gets reports/minutes from meetings out to parents: quickly, in sufficient detail, clearly laying down who is responsible for each action in the action plan and setting a review date. Results of any tests are also sent, in written form, with explanations of what scores etc mean.

Is it possible for this to be done also for all [name of school] pupils using the service? It is so helpful for me as a parent; verbal reports are easily forgotten – written ones can be referred to when needed. Thank you.

Suggestions for improving the service:

- Ensure both psychologists have time and administrative support to get minutes/reports out promptly (within 2 weeks).
- Ensure an updated leaflet about the service is provided to parents on first meeting a psychologist, as well as through schools and other agencies.
- Ensure that any planned follow up meetings are discussed with parents to clarify their purpose and the parent's anticipated contribution.
-

3.2 Children and Young People

Completed questionnaires were received from ten children/young people out of the 20 sent out.

Again the responses were overwhelmingly positive (see Table 2). **All but one** of the respondents said the educational psychologist explained what she was going to do. **Almost all** the respondents also said they:

- Understood why an educational psychologist was involved.
- Were listened to and taken seriously.
- Were able to trust the psychologist with information about themselves and their family.
- Would ask to see a psychologist again if they needed to.

Most respondents said they:

- Felt comfortable with the psychologist,
- Had their permission asked to involve other people,
- Would know how to contact a psychologist,

and that:

- Contact with the psychologist had made a difference,
- They had a say in developing the plan to help them.

One respondent ticked 'don't know' to all except one question. The child who said they were not able to trust the psychologist with family information explained that they only give this information to people they know really well.

Criticisms:

- Two respondents said the psychologist did not do what they said they would.

Comments made by the children and young people were:

Asked how the psychologist could have made a bigger difference:

- Got harder work for me
- **I could of done more writing**

Asked in what ways they would have liked to be more involved in the plan:

- Speak to the teacher too

Suggestions for improving the service:

- Ensure that children and young people clearly understand what will happen next, and how long it will take for things to change.
- Ensure that psychologists clearly indicate what actions are under their control, e.g. promise to talk to a teacher, not that they can make the teacher do things differently.

3.3 School Staff

Questionnaires were received from 47 school staff (5 HTs, 1 DHT, 4 SflTs, 3 guidance teachers, 3 SflAs, 22 teachers, 9 not stated, and 1 EY worker).

The majority of responses were very positive, and on all the returns the few criticisms made were greatly outweighed by the number and strength of the positive statements ticked. Where responses were not positive, they tended to fall into the category of 'don't know'. This was particularly true of class/subject teachers when answering questions about the wider work of the psychologist, for example, contribution to the development plan, evaluation and research. A large number of returns from class/subject teachers from two big schools contained large numbers of 'don't knows', and comments indicating they had never had any contact with the psychologist. For this reason the responses were also analysed according to the person's role in the school to look for useful information (See Tables 3 a-f). By contrast, the focus Group

(attended by 11 staff who had all worked closely with a psychologist) elicited suggestions for widening the service, and building on existing strengths (see Appendix 2a). Four members of staff that were unable to attend the Focus Group sent apologies and asked if there were other ways they could show their appreciation of the service.

The vast majority of respondents (80%) agreed that there is an effective procedure to link with the school psychologist and that the psychologist respects confidentiality (87%). The people who answered 'don't know' to this were not the people who had contact with the psychologist.

The majority of respondents said that the psychologist:

- Keeps the school informed about progress/outcomes (65%).
- Deals sensitively and appropriately with pupils, staff and parents (79%).
- Is committed to continually improving the service to pupils in their school (70%).
- Provides an effective consultation service to parents (55%).
- Provides an effective assessment service which delivers effective outcomes to pupils (61%).
- Contributes effectively to collaborative working practices in school (66%).
- Provides valued individual casework which leads to better outcomes for pupils (51%).

The focus group showed that in addition school staff welcomed:

- Planned visits.
- The quick response to emails.
- Written records (however brief) over traditional reports or verbal feedback.
- Direct work with young people.
- The wide knowledge base and in-depth awareness of particular pupils.
- Communication skills used by EPs with parents.
- The adaptability/flexibility of EPs, e.g., arranging meetings to suit parents needs.
- Sharing strategies and ideas that were realistic, manageable and practicable.
- Feedback on good practice.

Most respondents to the questionnaire did not know whether the psychologist helped the school to achieve aspects of its strategic development plan, or whether the contribution to evaluation and research projects was valued and led to better outcomes for pupils. In the focus groups the EP's contributions were listed, and ideas aired as to how the EPs could influence INSET, research and school development.

Criticisms:

A minority of respondents indicated that the psychologist did not:

- Keep them informed (8%).
- Deal sensitively with pupils, parents and staff (6%).
- Provide an effective assessment service (9%).
- Contribute to collaborative working (9%).
- Provide valued casework (15%).
- Help the school achieve aspects of its development plan (10%).
- Contribute to staff development (20%).
- Provide valued contributions through evaluation and research (15%).

These criticisms came from a range of people across the schools, and were not specific to people carrying out particular roles within the schools.

Comments made by school staff:

The EP provides a 'new look' at situations which is refreshing for staff, and reassuring for staff and pupils.

The time delay between making the initial referral and the meeting with the child was too great – parents have an expectation of progress once they have committed to the idea of a referral. The outcome of the meeting with the child resulted in practical agreed steps which is great! The child, parents and the school are all working together as a result of the visit from the educational psychologist. Well done! (head teacher)

EP has not taken part in any discussions about development planning – this could be rectified. There have been some difficulties this session because of the prolonged absence of EP service. This has seriously interrupted work. I believe that [name of school] could make more use of EP time if it were increased. (head teacher)

Like system in place at present. (head teacher)

It is sometimes felt by teachers that the recommendations of the EP add little to the strategies already in use, or that the EP has little understanding of the challenges facing the teacher in the classroom. (deputy head teacher)

[Visits on the same day each time] are problematic in terms of time for guidance staff and pupils missing the same classes. (PT guidance)

[Improvements would be] more time in school for EP – EP not always in on same day of the week. (PT guidance)

Does the EP need to be involved other than in specific cases? (class teacher)

[Improvement would be] better follow up communication re cases, meetings, etc carried out in short time after the fact. (class teacher)

[Improvement would be] more EP input: more visits to schools and individual pupils (role not stated)

Suggestions for improving the service:

- Provide information to whole staff about the role of the service (e.g. at a staff meeting).
- Ensure that staff are made aware that written feedback is provided to school within a given time, and that they should expect to have relevant documents copied to them within school.
- Maintain a higher profile when in schools e.g., being available in the staff room; ensuring that scheduled visits are flagged up to staff in advance; including class and subject teachers in consultations/meetings.
- Establish clear priorities for use of EP time – for example, where the EP is not actively involved in planning interventions for a pupil, they need not routinely attend review meetings. This needs to be discussed between the EP and senior school staff at the annual planning meeting.
- EPs could raise the question of how they can contribute to the school development plan during the annual planning meeting.
- EPs should raise awareness in the authority as well as in schools that they are interested and able to carry out research projects.
- EPs should use their knowledge about schools and staff members to help the authority plan relevant INSET and ensure that people attend the right training to meet their needs.
- EPs should publish a menu of their skills and areas in which they can offer training.

3.4 Education Authority Staff

Four questionnaires were returned, three from within Pupil Support and one from a member of the Education Directorate (Appendix 1, Table 5). Two members of the Directorate attended a focus group meeting (Appendix 2 b). One assistant director returned the questionnaire unanswered because he felt he did not know enough about the service. Although the feedback received was positive, the overall lack of response from the Directorate suggests that the Service does not have a high profile – and that the relevance of our work to theirs is not apparent.

Suggestions for improving service:

- Raise profile of the service to ensure senior officers are aware of the role of the Psychology Service, the skills of its personnel, and how it could impact on the wider aims of the Department
- Regular attendance and input at meetings of senior officers and head teachers.

3.5 Staff from External Agencies

20 questionnaires were returned from staff including Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Social workers, Care workers from residential settings, Children’s Reporter, Health Visitors and School Nurses. The returns are summarised in Appendix 1 Table 4. A Focus Group was attended by a senior social work manager and a health service team manager/senior practitioner (see Appendix 2c).

Most feedback was positive, with the majority of responses indicating:

- Communication was good.
- Roles and remits understood.
- Advice and contributions of a high standard.
- Helpful contribution towards staff training.
- Effective joint work.

Criticisms:

A minority of responses criticised the communication structures and indicated that the role and remit was not clear to all health workers. Some health workers also felt they had to ask for information rather than receiving it automatically. A few health workers also criticised the working relationship, and their comments showed they did not feel that their own skills were known or valued. Some comments raised a fundamental difference in approach between psychologists and other workers (such as whether professionals should have met and agreed before meeting with parents, or whether access to services should be determined by a pupil’s relative ability level).

Comments made by staff from external agencies:

- More information/better publicity available on the service - meeting with EP to find out more about the work.
- EPs could visit and provide training. Training on clarification of roles
- Development of staff re interventions - Brief Solution Focus interventions. More practical advice and hands-on demonstrations of suggestions.
- Reply to phone messages please
- Some face to face contact rather than ad hoc
- More advanced notice of review meetings, etc

- More reports needed - also reports made available when EP unable to attend.
- Regular meetings to discuss cases and possible referrals
- More discussion re findings before meeting with parents.
- Language unit referral decision making needs clarification.
- It would be helpful to routinely have an overview of a child's level of functioning so we can make judgements about language levels in relation to other skills.

Suggestions for improving the Service:

- Set up immediate workshops for health workers to update them on the roles and remits of the Psychological Service (*two workshops were run in May, attended by a school nurse, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists.*)
- Set up regular meetings to discuss potential and joint casework (monthly with S & LTs, three monthly with social work staff).
- Set up joint training – starting with a workshop on play-based assessment for pre-school children.
- Consider ways of tracking that incoming phone calls are passed on and responded to within 3 days.
- Consider whether EPs should have a work mobile phone or electronic personal organiser with access to emails (as other education officers do).
- Consider a regular weekly 'in office time' for one or both EPs and publicise this to other practitioners.
- Ensure that a written response goes back to the agency originating a request for involvement; this should acknowledge the request and indicate when the case will be followed up.
- Ensure that written records of meetings/involvement with an individual is sent to all relevant agencies (files could be marked to show which agencies are involved).

Appendix 1

The following tables show collated figures for returns of questionnaires by each group.

Table 1
Questionnaire for Parents (7 returns)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. It was easy to make contact with the educational psychologist		5			2
2. The educational psychologist explained clearly to me his or her role in helping improve the situation for my child	1	5			1
3. There is written information about the educational psychology service, which is available to me		1			5
4. The educational psychologist tried to make me feel at ease when I attended the meeting with him or her	1	6			
5. The educational psychologist took time to ask me my views and listened carefully to what I wanted for my child	3	4			
6. I took an active part in making decisions about my child	3	4			
7. I was kept informed about actions taken on my child's behalf	1	5	1		
8. The educational psychologist did what they said they would do	1	6			
9. The educational psychologist's involvement was helpful to my child	1	6			
10. The educational psychologist involved other services when required, with my agreement	2	4			1 (N/A)
11. I was well prepared by the psychologist for any other additional meeting that I attended about my child		4	1		1 1 N/A
12. I was satisfied with the educational psychologist's contribution at the meeting(s) about my child	3	4			
13. Decisions made and actions taken at the meeting led to a clear plan for my child	2	4			1 "sometimes yes, sometimes no"
14. I would be happy to contact the educational psychologist again if needed	5	2			

Table 2
Questionnaire for structured interviews with Children and Young People (10 returns)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1	I understood why an educational psychologist was involved.	4	4			2

2a	The educational psychologist explained clearly to me what she/he was going to do.	5	2	1		2
2b	In what ways could the educational psychologist have made clearer what was going to take place?					
3a	I felt comfortable meeting with the educational psychologist.	1	7			2
3b	How could you have been made to feel more comfortable?					
4	The educational psychologist listened to what I had to say and took me seriously.	6	3			1
5	I was able to trust the educational psychologist with personal information about me and my family.	3	4	1		2
6	The educational psychologist asked my permission to share information with other people who could help me.	3	2	1		4
7	The educational psychologist did what he or she said they would do.	5	1	2		2
8a	My contact with the educational psychologist made a difference.	2	4			4
8b	How could my contact with the educational psychologist have made a bigger difference to me?					
9a	I had a say in developing the plan to help me.	4	3	1		2
9b	In what ways would you have liked to be more involved in the plan?					
10	I would ask to see the educational psychologist again if I needed to.	2	6			1
11	I know how to contact the educational psychologist if I need to.		4	3		1

Table 3a**Questionnaire for people working in schools (summary) (47 responses)****(Some people gave more than one response to a question) Percentages shown in brackets**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1.	There is an effective procedure to link with the school educational psychologist.	12 (25)	26 (55)			9 (20)
2.	The Educational psychologist keeps the school informed about progress or outcomes of negotiated work.	9 (20)	21 (45)	4 (8)		14 (29)
3.	The educational psychologist respects the confidentiality of pupils, parents and staff.	25 (53)	16 (34)			6 (13)
4.	The educational psychologist deals sensitively and appropriately with pupils, parents and staff taking into account diversity and equality.	23 (50)	14 (29)	3 (6)		10 (21)
5.	The educational psychologist is committed to continually improving the service to pupils in our school.	12 (25)	21 (45)	1 (2)		13 (28)
6.	The educational psychologist provides an effective consultation service to parents in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.	6 (13)	17 (36)	1 (2)		22 (47)
7.	The educational psychologist provides an effective assessment service which delivers effective outcomes to children and young people.	3 (6)	26 (55)	4 (9)		14 (29)
8.	The educational psychologist contributes effectively to collaborative working practices in school to improve the outcomes for children and young people.	6 (13)	25 (53)	4 (9)		12 (25)
9.	The individual casework provided by the educational psychologist is valued by the staff in school as it leads to better outcomes for children and young people.	7 (15)	17 (36)	7 (15)		17 (36)
10.	The educational psychologist helps the school to achieve aspects of its strategic development plan.	2 (4)	13 (28)	5 (10)	1 (2)	26 (55)
11.	The educational psychologist's contribution to the continuing professional development of staff is valued and aids staff in improving the outcomes for children and young people.	1 (2)	22 (47)	9 (20)		14 (29)
12.	The educational psychologist's contribution to evaluation and research projects is valued and leads to better outcomes for children and young people.	2 (4)	11 (23)	7 (15)		26 (55)
<u>Your role in school</u>						
How could the psychology service be improved in relation to any of the aspects raised above?						

Table 3b

Questionnaire for people working in schools (Head teachers & deputies) (6 responses)
(Some people gave more than one response to a question)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1.	There is an effective procedure to link with the school educational psychologist.	5	1			
2.	The Educational psychologist keeps the school informed about progress or outcomes of negotiated work.	2	4			
3.	The educational psychologist respects the confidentiality of pupils, parents and staff.	5	1			
4.	The educational psychologist deals sensitively and appropriately with pupils, parents and staff taking into account diversity and equality.	5	1			
5.	The educational psychologist is committed to continually improving the service to pupils in our school.	3	3			
6.	The educational psychologist provides an effective consultation service to parents in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.	2	3			1
7.	The educational psychologist provides an effective assessment service which delivers effective outcomes to children and young people.		5	1		1
8.	The educational psychologist contributes effectively to collaborative working practices in school to improve the outcomes for children and young people.	2	4			
9.	The individual casework provided by the educational psychologist is valued by the staff in school as it leads to better outcomes for children and young people.	2	3	2		
10.	The educational psychologist helps the school to achieve aspects of its strategic development plan.	1	2	1		2
11.	The educational psychologist's contribution to the continuing professional development of staff is valued and aids staff in improving the outcomes for children and young people.		5			
12.	The educational psychologist's contribution to evaluation and research projects is valued and leads to better outcomes for children and young people.	1	1			4
<u>Your role in school</u>						
How could the psychology service be improved in relation to any of the aspects raised above?						

Table 3c
Questionnaire for people working in schools (guidance staff & SfLTs) (7 responses)

(Some people gave more than one response to a question)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1.	There is an effective procedure to link with the school educational psychologist.	3	4			
2.	The Educational psychologist keeps the school informed about progress or outcomes of negotiated work.	5	2			
3.	The educational psychologist respects the confidentiality of pupils, parents and staff.	6	1			
4.	The educational psychologist deals sensitively and appropriately with pupils, parents and staff taking into account diversity and equality.	6	2	2		
5.	The educational psychologist is committed to continually improving the service to pupils in our school.	5	1			1
6.	The educational psychologist provides an effective consultation service to parents in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.	3	4			
7.	The educational psychologist provides an effective assessment service which delivers effective outcomes to children and young people.	2	5			
8.	The educational psychologist contributes effectively to collaborative working practices in school to improve the outcomes for children and young people.	3	3	1		
9.	The individual casework provided by the educational psychologist is valued by the staff in school as it leads to better outcomes for children and young people.		6	1		
10.	The educational psychologist helps the school to achieve aspects of its strategic development plan.		2	2	1	4
11.	The educational psychologist's contribution to the continuing professional development of staff is valued and aids staff in improving the outcomes for children and young people.	1	5			
12.	The educational psychologist's contribution to evaluation and research projects is valued and leads to better outcomes for children and young people.		2		5	
<u>Your role in school</u>						
How could the psychology service be improved in relation to any of the aspects raised above?						

Table 3d
Questionnaire for people working in schools (SFLAs) (3 responses)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1.	There is an effective procedure to link with the school educational psychologist.	1	2			
2.	The Educational psychologist keeps the school informed about progress or outcomes of negotiated work.		3			
3.	The educational psychologist respects the confidentiality of pupils, parents and staff.	3				
4.	The educational psychologist deals sensitively and appropriately with pupils, parents and staff taking into account diversity and equality.	3				
5.	The educational psychologist is committed to continually improving the service to pupils in our school.		3			
6.	The educational psychologist provides an effective consultation service to parents in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.		3			
7.	The educational psychologist provides an effective assessment service which delivers effective outcomes to children and young people.		3			
8.	The educational psychologist contributes effectively to collaborative working practices in school to improve the outcomes for children and young people.		3			
9.	The individual casework provided by the educational psychologist is valued by the staff in school as it leads to better outcomes for children and young people.	2	1			
10.	The educational psychologist helps the school to achieve aspects of its strategic development plan.		3			
11.	The educational psychologist's contribution to the continuing professional development of staff is valued and aids staff in improving the outcomes for children and young people.		3			
12.	The educational psychologist's contribution to evaluation and research projects is valued and leads to better outcomes for children and young people.		3			

Your role in school

How could the psychology service be improved in relation to any of the aspects raised above?

Table 3e

Questionnaire for people working in schools (teacher, class teacher, PT) (22 responses)
(Some people gave more than one response to a question)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1.	There is an effective procedure to link with the school educational psychologist.	3	11			8
2.	The Educational psychologist keeps the school informed about progress or outcomes of negotiated work.	2	6	4		11
3.	The educational psychologist respects the confidentiality of pupils, parents and staff.	9	8			5
4.	The educational psychologist deals sensitively and appropriately with pupils, parents and staff taking into account diversity and equality.	6	6	1		9
5.	The educational psychologist is committed to continually improving the service to pupils in our school.	4	7	1		10
6.	The educational psychologist provides an effective consultation service to parents in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.	1	6			14
7.	The educational psychologist provides an effective assessment service which delivers effective outcomes to children and young people.	1	8	2		10
8.	The educational psychologist contributes effectively to collaborative working practices in school to improve the outcomes for children and young people.	1	10	2		9
9.	The individual casework provided by the educational psychologist is valued by the staff in school as it leads to better outcomes for children and young people.	3	5	2		12
10.	The educational psychologist helps the school to achieve aspects of its strategic development plan.	1	4	1		15
11.	The educational psychologist's contribution to the continuing professional development of staff is valued and aids staff in improving the outcomes for children and young people.		7	4		11
12.	The educational psychologist's contribution to evaluation and research projects is valued and leads to better outcomes for children and young people.	1	3	3		14
<u>Your role in school</u>						
How could the psychology service be improved in relation to any of the aspects raised above?						

Table 3f

Questionnaire for people working in schools (8 role not stated, 1 EY worker) (9 responses)
(Some people gave more than one response to a question)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1.	There is an effective procedure to link with the school educational psychologist.		8			1
2.	The Educational psychologist keeps the school informed about progress or outcomes of negotiated work.		6			3
3.	The educational psychologist respects the confidentiality of pupils, parents and staff.	2	6			1
4.	The educational psychologist deals sensitively and appropriately with pupils, parents and staff taking into account diversity and equality.	3	5			1
5.	The educational psychologist is committed to continually improving the service to pupils in our school.		7			2
6.	The educational psychologist provides an effective consultation service to parents in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.		1	1		7
7.	The educational psychologist provides an effective assessment service which delivers effective outcomes to children and young people.		5	1		3
8.	The educational psychologist contributes effectively to collaborative working practices in school to improve the outcomes for children and young people.		5	1		3
9.	The individual casework provided by the educational psychologist is valued by the staff in school as it leads to better outcomes for children and young people.		2	2		5
10.	The educational psychologist helps the school to achieve aspects of its strategic development plan.		2	1		6
11.	The educational psychologist's contribution to the continuing professional development of staff is valued and aids staff in improving the outcomes for children and young people.		2	5		2
12.	The educational psychologist's contribution to evaluation and research projects is valued and leads to better outcomes for children and young people.		2	4		3
<u>Your role in school</u>						
How could the psychology service be improved in relation to any of the aspects raised above?						

Table 4 Questionnaire for staff from external agencies (20 responses)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1a	There are structures and processes leading to effective communication between your service and the educational psychology service.	2	10	5		3
1b	In what ways could communication between the educational psychology service and yourselves be improved?					
2a	Educational psychologist's roles and remits are clearly defined and support the work of the service.	2	8	5		5
2b	What further clarification of roles or remits would be helpful?					
3	Appropriate information and advice are received timely when requested.	2	11	4		3
4a	The advice and information received from the educational psychology service is of a high quality.	3	12	1		4
4b	How could the value of the information or advice received be increased?					
5	Educational Psychology makes effective contributions to working groups and standing committees.	2	13			5
6a	The educational psychology service offers support to the service in relation to research and development.	1	4			14
6b	In what ways could the educational psychology service offer further assistance in relation to research and development?					
7a	There is a broad range of skills available which can be used to support my service.	2	11			7
7b	What other skills, if any, would you like the educational psychology service to offer to your service?					
8a	Educational psychologists make a helpful contribution to training for the service.	2	11	1		5
8b	Are there other contributions you would like the educational psychology service to make to training for your service?					
9a	Educational psychologists work effectively with the staff in the service.	3	13	2	1	1
9b	How could educational psychologists work effectively with the staff in your service?					
10a	Educational psychologists work effectively in partnership with your service to support educational establishments.	2	12	2	1	5
10b	How could partnership working be enhanced to provide best support to educational establishments?					

Table 5 Questionnaire for Authority Staff

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. There are structures and processes leading to effective communication between your service and the educational psychology service	3	1			
2. Educational psychologist's roles and remits are clearly defined and support the work of the department	2	1			1
3. Appropriate information and advice are received timeously when requested	2	1			1
4. The advice and information received from the educational psychology service is of a high quality	2	2			
5. Educational psychologists make effective contributions to working groups and standing committees	2	2			
6. The educational psychology service offers good support to the department in relation to research and development	1	3			
7. There is a broad range of skills available which can be used to support my service	2	2			
8. Educational psychologists make a helpful contribution to training for the service	2	2			
9. Educational psychologists work effectively with the staff in the service	2	2			
10. Educational psychologists deliver effective support to educational establishments in partnership with this service	2	2			
11. Parents express positive views of their experience with the educational psychology service	1	2			1
12. The principal education psychologist is effective in leading and in setting an appropriate direction for psychological service	1	1			2

Appendix 2

Focus Group responses

2a Focus Group questions – schools

1. What works well regarding links with the school's psychologist?

- Planned visits – allows reviews, consultations etc to be planned ahead.
- The system allows for more informal contact so that we can ask 'should we be worried?'
- Email contact – quick response, always answered.
- Written record/reports.
- Direct work with pupils.
- EP's knowledge base and awareness of pupils.
- Training events around ASL legislation & SOS have worked well.

What needs to be improved?

- Use of EP time in school – balance between being available to staff and need to attend reviews. Where EP has had limited recent involvement contribution is marginal, and some comments/suggestions could be made by others present. Also, at secondary level the number of people present at reviews can be overwhelming for parents and we should therefore seek to avoid 'supernumerary' professionals.
- *Possible solution: schools and EP prioritise use of EP time; offer protected 'drop-in' time for EP with staff; schools could timetable reviews to free up some of EP's sessions.*

Written records/reports can be delayed if these are caught up on during holidays. Some schools tend to keep their own records of meetings knowing this is the case.

There needs to be more EPs so schools have even more input.

2. What do you think of the way the psychologist deals with staff, parents, pupils?

- Always positive when you contact her.
- Tries to address needs.
- Ensures parents understand – sensitive and tactful/upfront and straight-forward with parents in situations that could be tricky.
- Pupils respond well to her. Pupils are comfortable seeing the EP. The EP is skilled in seeing past the pupils' presentation on the 1:1 to gauging how the pupil must present when part of a large class.
- Reassuring for staff to have feedback on their practice – staff find the EP approachable (this is helped by her regularity). They feel they can pick up points from reviews with her.
- Verbal feedback to staff is prompt, easy to access, and can cover several children at once.
- Critical incident support to teachers has been offered and is highly valued.

3. How effective is the assessment service provided by the psychologist?

- Additional information provided by the psychologist is helpful.
- Pre-referral meetings are useful to clarify issues and to decide way forward.
- Informal/initial consultation meetings provide opportunity to discuss informally and flag up potential problems.
- The EP provides a good assessment service, often observing the pupil in the classroom as well as undertaking formal assessment.

What would improve it?

- The whole process from pre-referral meetings with parents to implementation of a plan can take too long.
- More observations (ideally 2 or 3) – EP might not see a 'typical' day.
- Having to pass on verbal feedback to other staff is hard, so prefer it written down, however succinctly.
- It would be useful to let teachers and staff know how EPs can support assessment for ADHD.

- It would be useful to set up sessions with staff on what assessment materials are available for school staff to use and advise on the development of a lending library of assessment tools.

4 How effective is the consultation service provided to parents by the psychologist?

- Prefer the documents used now to traditional 'psychological reports'. Parents want to know the implications of an assessment, not all the details (such as scores). The consultation action records ensure that everybody including parents get the same information.
- The pre-referral (pre-request for involvement meetings) are useful in helping parents feel part of decisions and in helping to clarify what role the psychologist is going to play.
- Often parents have similar problems to the pupils and need things explained clearly. The parents' agenda can be different from that of the education professionals. EP good at being sensitive and communicating clearly.
- When parents have gone direct to the EP, the EP has been good at keeping the school 'in the loop.'
- Good continuity of relationships between the EP and parents over the years.
- The EP is adaptable/ flexible and will visit parents at home or meet at times/places to suit.

What would improve it?

- Clarity of role of EP – some parents think EP is there for counselling or psychotherapy.
- More home visiting would be useful in order to gain an insight into the child' life at home and give parents more advice on issues pertaining to home – tip sheets for parents on how to manage behaviour would be useful.
- Ensuring that action plan is summarised at the end of the meeting – everyone needs to be clear who is doing what. EP should signal what needs doing, but not give impression that she has time to do it if she cannot. Problem of cancelling/postponing input (e.g., when called away to urgent meetings) – would be better to have arranged for someone else to do it.

5 What does the psychologist do to contribute to school development?

- Solution Oriented Schools, introductions and training.
- ASL Act training.
- CP input and training.
- EP has good contacts and knows who would be good speakers for the authority training days.
- Contributions valued on personal development e.g. emotional resilience.

How could this be widened/ improved?

- Inviting EP in to take part in revising school policies, e.g. SFL.
- EPs should be pushing the directorate/planners for INSET for appropriate groups – ensuring that those who most need it access what is relevant for their practice.
- A published menu of skills/training areas.
- Involving EP in whole school development days.
- At conferences people don't choose to come to EP presentations because they want to hear visitors – they can hear us anytime!
- Staff development on the role of the EP would be useful to help people understand that we have skills to offer to training projects, school initiatives etc which can help the school develop its capacity to meet a full range of needs.

6 How does the psychologist contribute to better outcomes for pupils?

- By giving strategies and feeding back on good practice.

- Ideas are realistic, manageable, and practicable.
- EP provides a new look at things which can refresh and reassure staff and pupils.
- Pupils with ASD and some emotional difficulties may speak more readily to EP - & this can be shared with staff in productive ways.
- EPs' links with medical professionals can be channel for useful information – helpful in formulating action.
- It is helpful for pupils to have someone to talk through issues with them who is not directly involved in 'the problem'.
- Formal assessments can sometimes help a pupil become aware of their strengths.
- Follow up visits are useful in tracking pupil progress.

7 What could psychologist contribute through evaluation and research projects?

- Could be at authority level as well as school.
- Longitudinal case study – looking at impact of strategies over time.
- In schools EP could work alongside teachers who are encouraged to take on action research – help schools evaluate initiatives.
- Creating a forum for the sharing of good practice would be a useful role.

2b Focus group questions – Authority Staff

1. What advice/information or input would you expect to get from the psychological service?

- There is a little bit of a blur between the EP service and Pupil Support and this needs to be clarified for people
- Education Department staff hear about our involvement with schools when they visit their link schools and early years establishments
- Community Education contact with us is through Youth Services

2. How would you contact us?

- Directly, usually through the Principal Psychologist at EMT meetings, or by phone or e-mail
- Community Education would see schools as their first point of contact about children. They would expect the schools to let them know if we are involved in any children on issues relevant to themselves. They would then phone Papdale House.
- Being in a separate building presents a barrier to regular face to face contact and keeping the EP profile high.
- There is conflict for the Principal who is also a practitioner in keeping the EP profile high in the department by attending strategic meetings and at the same time keeping abreast of high level work.

3. What would improve it?

- The EP could inform link officers of training being offered to their particular schools and request Head Teachers to extend an invitation.
- The EPs could offer training slots around current topics at EMT meetings or ESM meetings. Topics of interest are SOS, Integrated Assessment Framework, etc.

4. How would you and your colleagues describe their working relationship with the psychologist?

Schools:

- Information is easily accessible on which school is allocated to which EP, but providing this information for the newsletter may increase awareness
- Link Officers hear favourable reports about initiatives we have been involved with in schools, eg, SOS

Parents:

- Parents can still feel it is a stigma to see and EP. They are more at ease with Home Link involvement

5. How could working relationships be enhanced?

- Community education is to be part of a more integrated structure. Integrated working is something EP could help them develop further
- Increasing awareness of the roles of the EP particularly its consultative model of service delivery would be helpful
- Scripts could be shared with Education staff which give ways of selling the involvement of an EP as a way of supporting the existing team.

6. How do you feel the Psychological Service aims support the Department's overall plan?

- Leadership, attainment and self-evaluation are the key components of the Department's newest overall plan. It is felt that we do have skills and knowledge which support these areas. In particular we are key people to support wellbeing in pupils and staff.
- Family learning is a subheading of the overall plan. It is felt that we could have a lot to offer to this aspect.
- It was felt that our own plan should have broad aims which target the wide experience of children and families within and out with school.

2c Focus group questions – staff from external agencies**1. What works well re links/communication with the Psychological Service?**

- EPs are accessible – can always make contact within a day or two
- Links through schools and social workers are good
- Referral routes/requests for involvement are clear
- The EP is seen as part of the extended team whose input is imperative (for Aurrída) – less so for Camoran.
- Links are positive from 3 service views.

2. What needs to be improved?

- Some people in health are unclear when to expect reports
- Some people in health find it hard to contact us

3. Do staff in your service understand the roles and remits of the psychologists? How could this be clarified?

- Camoran staff would welcome leaflets about EPs or face to face information sharing
- People need training on the roles and remits to clarify what to expect and how we work
- Giving the young person a note of the meeting is good practice.
- An indication of when a child might be seen would be helpful – this could be part of the acknowledgement of a request for involvement (within 7 days?)

4. Do the range of skills and services offered by the Service support your work?

- Unsure what else could be offered.
- Staff are aware of a lot of skills and consultation process used.
- It would be ideal to have more therapeutic 1:1 and preventative work for young people who need a bit of support
- More EP time/personnel
- More EP training on counselling and skills to social work staff (Camoran)
- Written feedback when a child has been seen who was referred by S<

5. Are there further contributions to strategic work that the Educational Psychology Service should be involved in with your service?

- Ongoing work already includes EP – training on CP, Integrated Plans, CPC work, GIRFEC, MCMC

6. How could the effectiveness of partnership work between your service and the Educational Psychology Service be enhanced?

- We all work well together
- Outcomes are good. Managers know what the remit is and like the way we work.
- Managers and practitioners like planned visits happening on the same day (EPs and S & LTs) – could also be scheduled visits/meetings with social workers in school.

2d Focus group questions – parents

1. What works well?

- The psychologist is easy to contact. She responds very quickly to requests for advice. The advice given has helped me to get X back to school when she runs away. It actually worked.
- The psychologist explained what she was going to do and what the next steps would be. I contributed my ideas to the plan to help my child.
- I feel the psychologist does not make judgements about me in the ways school staff sometimes do. She puts my story over to school in a way that is objective and helps the school understand my feelings.

2. What needs to be improved?

- If I had not known already about the Service through other contacts I have I would not have known how to get in touch with them. Perhaps leaflets in public places like the library would be helpful for parents.