

Action Card

Card number	005
Project	EHCP Processes – Educational Psychologists (EP) shortage
As a	Group of families who have applied for an EHC Needs assessment and subsequently it is agreed that an EHC needs assessment will be carried out to determine whether to issue an EHCP or not
We want	<p>1) To have a clear understanding of the steps the LA is taking to deal with the current shortage of Educational Psychologists (EP's), including whether they are commissioning (by the LA funding their fee and/or reimbursing families who use a private EP in the absence of available LA EP) private EP'S to deal with the shortage. Paragraph 9.49 Code of Practice <i>“Psychological advice and information from an educational psychologist who should normally be employed or commissioned by the local authority.”</i></p> <p>Actions taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed recruitment strategy • Temporary policy for considering private advice adopted for the summer term Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments: Parent Carers update Surrey Local Offer • Recruitment to assistant EP posts • Implementation of outsourcing contracts, 973 additional advice over financial year. <p>2) To have assurance that can be shared with parent carers of the actions that are being taken to ensure the EHC needs assessment is not held up by the shortage of EP's. Particularly as a shortage of EP's is not listed as a reason for an exemption to the timescales. Paragraph 9.52 Code of Practice <i>“Advice and information requested by the local authority must be provided within six weeks of the request, and should be provided more quickly wherever possible, to enable a timely process.”</i></p> <p>Actions taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coproduced briefing note for parents and settings re delays to go out for all newly agreed assessments. • Update to parent carer section of Local Offer, May 2023 • Focus group established including FVS representative to shape strategy to maximise LA ability to meet statutory duties. <p>3) To be provided with the resolutions that are being considered other than those listed above such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessing remotely where appropriate to allow for EP's to complete more assessments by cutting the travel time.

- EP's having an admin assistant to write the reports which could be dictated to save the time writing the reports and allow more time for assessments.
- Allowing trainee EP's where appropriate to take on some of the assessment (with indirect supervision).

Action taken

- Virtual assessments are part of the current offer, however this approach is not appropriate for all CYP
- Virtual co-production meetings are being introduced as part of the revised approach
- Administrative support has been secured and we are looking to recruit to a second post with interviews in June 2023
- Trainee EPs undertake a number of statutory assessments, with direct supervision, as part of their training. There is a cap on the amount expected to allow for development of the full range of skills and knowledge that we expect from an EP
- We offered posts to 16 assistant psychologists who will, as part of the role, support the statutory assessment process. 4 of those appointed have secured places on the doctoral training course for September 2023.

4) Assurance that private EP reports will be accepted as part of the EHC Needs assessment (as long as they are current and completed following the necessary guidelines) Paragraph 9.47 Code of Practice *"The local authority must not seek further advice if such advice has already been provided (for any purpose) and the person providing the advice, the local authority and the child's parent or the young person are all satisfied that it is sufficient for the assessment process. In making this decision, the local authority and the person providing the advice should ensure the advice remains current."*

Action taken

- See point 1 above.

5) To have clear and transparent information on the situation and the steps that are being taken communicated to all families at the very start of the EHC Needs assessment – this is extremely important to manage expectations and to try and prevent the frustration and anxiety families are currently experiencing because they have not been communicated with effectively. Paragraph 9.42 Code of Practice *"Throughout the statutory process for EHC needs assessment and EHC plan development, local authorities must work in partnership with the child and his or her parent or the young person."*

Actions taken:

Dates of updates	Please provide an initial response by the 6 th January 2023 and then quarterly updates. 1 st Response – 16/2/23 Discussed at Action Card meeting in March and May 2023 2 nd Response – 15/6/23
Date Closed	
Publishable response	13/07/23