

Request for Psychological Consultation and Assessment and/or Therapeutic Intervention

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Referral to an EP: what to expect

What is an EP/Educational Psychologist?

All EPs have postgraduate qualification and relevant experience in applying psychology to improve educational and psychological outcomes for children and young people.

We work with individual children to:

- ❖ help clarify problems and find ways of addressing them
- ❖ carry out specialised assessments of learning, attitudes, motivation and behaviour
- ❖ investigate ways of improving emotional wellbeing and behaviour

We also work with groups of pupils, teachers and teaching assistants to help with things like:

- ❖ raising achievement and promoting inclusion
- ❖ increasing knowledge and skills of staff
- ❖ developing Special Educational Needs policies and behaviour policies

My training route and experience:

I am a qualified teacher, with teaching experience. I have a post-graduate qualification (MSc), which is my professional training as an EP. I am registered as a Practitioner Psychologist with the Health Care Professions Council, which is a requirement for all practicing psychologists. I have been working as an EP since qualifying in 1992. I am also a qualified Human Givens Psychotherapist and can offer individual or group therapy in some situations.

Why should an EP be involved?

You and/or your child's teacher(s) may have noticed that your child is having some difficulties in school, and spoken together about them, tried some new strategies and approaches and monitored how well they have worked. You may have had a few meetings together to talk about next steps. It is possible that the hoped-for progress has not yet happened, so it might now be timely to ask for advice and support from a professional from outside school to look into the situation for your child and offer ideas about what to do next. This can only happen with your permission.

What will happen?

The EP will need to gather information about your child (using the completed referral form as a starting point), looking at the areas they have difficulty in, as well as their strengths and the situations where things are going well, to build a picture of the barriers to their progress and how best to overcome them. The way the information is gathered is likely to include:

- ❖ meeting(s) with key adults in school who know your child, and with yourself/selves (joint meetings are often most useful, but separate meetings may be offered)
- ❖ review of written records about your child, (such as attainments, school reports, records of progress over time, including those by other professionals)
- ❖ observation of your child in and around school (depending on the situation, it might be best if the child is only told that there is a visitor coming to look at the whole class or group)
- ❖ individual work with your child at school and/or at home (the nature of this will vary depending on the age of the child and the type of concerns being explored, but will always aim to put the child at ease, and gives them an opportunity to share their experiences and views of the situation)
- ❖ provision of a written report (see 'What happens next?')

If you are seeking a therapeutic intervention for your child, it is likely that the following will be appropriate:

- ❖ assessment of suitable therapeutic approach via consultation meetings with parents and key staff (and/or young person, depending on their age)
- ❖ a number of individual therapy sessions of up to an hour each (depending on age of child) – usually averaging 4-6 sessions
- ❖ a final consultation review meeting with parents and key staff (and/or young person, depending on their age)
- ❖ provision of a brief written summary of the work undertaken (can be in the form of a letter to the young person, depending on their age and preferences)

How will I be involved?

The referral form gives you an opportunity to provide your views as a starting point, and you can add further information if you feel it will be helpful. Some parents find it helpful to write a short 'life story' about their child to add to the referral. You can also ask your child to provide their views as well, either on the form, or separately, depending on their age. Your views and knowledge of your child are important in helping the EP understand your child's difficulties. You are best placed to say what your child is like at home and out of school. This may be different from school.

Should I be there when the EP sees my child?

Parents have a right to be present when an EP sees their child. For very young or anxious children, this can be reassuring. However a parent's presence can also be an unhelpful distraction for the child, and most parents chose not to be present and decide to meet the EP at a different time.

What happens next?

At the end of the assessment cycle (which may require more than one appointment), the EP will provide a written report, summarising the information gathered, the EP's findings/conclusions and suggestions for next steps to support your child. Ideally, the draft report will be discussed in a meeting with you and key staff from your child's school, before it is finalised. In some situations this discussion can take place by phone or in your home. Normally two copies of the report will be available, one for yourselves and for the school.

Data Protection Act

The information held by the EP will be on a computer and on a paper file. It will be treated as confidential and stored securely. In most circumstances, this information will only be shared with another professional, service or person with your consent (in writing). You can withhold or withdraw consent at any time. Where there are concerns about the safety of a child/young person, the law allows information to be shared without consent.

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