



ISLINGTON

The role of the Educational Psychology Service in Preventing Exclusions and Supporting Pupils

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Educational Psychology Service

- Educational Psychology – application of psychological theories and approaches to support the learning and emotional development of children and young people (0-25 years)
- Islington EPS: 11.7 Full time equivalent (plus trainees)
- Different levels of intervention – ranging from individual child and family whole school (systemic work)
- Statutory requirement – for EPs to contribute psychological advice for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment
- Key role is to bring about **CHANGE** to improve **OUTCOMES**



EPS Delivery Model – brief overview

- **Core Funded Service:**
 - Statutory Work – Psychological advice, Tribunals, Annual reviews
 - Assessments of students at serious risk of exclusions
 - Assessments of children under 5 with complex needs
 - Assessment of Vulnerable young people (Looked After, YOS,
 - Critical incidents
- **Traded Services – purchased by schools**
 - Consultations and assessments for students with SEND at SEN Support (assess-plan-do-review)
 - INSET and workforce development –building capacity of staff, staff support
 - Supporting school policy development
 - Direct interventions for individuals and groups
- **Other Traded work**
 - Secondments to Virtual School, Youth Offending Service, Health, ITIPS and Universities

Exclusion Data and Information

- Social Emotional mental Health (SEMH) - highest category of need for EPS referrals (2017-2018)
 - SEMH (30% of total referrals)
 - Learning and cognition (25%)
 - Autistic Spectrum Condition (22%)
- 5 of the 32 permanent exclusions (2017-18) had received active EP involvement
 - 2 of the 5 (not recent involvement)
 - 2 of the 5 (involvement since the permanent exclusion)
 - 8 of the 32 had EP referrals but not had EP involvement (either because they were excluded before or they are due to receive EP support this term)
- Cases coming to Primary and Secondary Securing Education Board - very few have had EP involvement (now strongly encouraged)
 - Often are achieving below expectations
 - Have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences
 - Attendance issues
 - Likelihood of unidentified special educational needs or



Educational Psychology Service – supporting pupils at risk of exclusion

Early Intervention and Prevention

Termly planning meetings to identify and prioritise pupils at risk

- Exclusions data
 - Vulnerable groups (Looked after Children, Involved with YOS)
 - Review progress using tracking data
 - Transition planning
 - Consider more systemic factors –whole school, group, training needs etc
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- Prioritise work:
 - Individual
 - Whole School

Individual focused – assessments

- Consultation approach
- Individual observation and assessment:
 - analysis of interactions and triggers in classroom and wider school environment
 - Assessment of cognitive skills and executive functioning skills (memory, organisation)
 - Assessment of learning skills
 - Checklists and questionnaires to triangulate the pupil, parent and school perspective
 - Consider Protective and Risk factors to determine how resilient young person is
- ‘Voice’ of young person – aspirations, goals, what works
- Risk and protective factors (whole child)
- Psychological hypothesis and formulation to inform intervention



Informed intervention – how we can make a difference?

- Reading for meaning, writing, spelling, accessing curriculum (**raising attainments**)
- Problem solving, rational thinking, recall and memory, sustain attention (**cognitive and executive functioning skills**)
- Understand how thoughts and feelings affect their behaviour and responses (**cognitive behavioural approaches**)
- Forming friendships, resolve conflicts, seeing situations from different perspectives (**social interaction skills**)
- Stay calm and regulate emotions (**managing behaviour**)
- Build positive relations with key adults in school (**sense of belonging/secure attachments**)
- Build confidence and self-esteem (**emotional development**)



Support for staff

- Facilitate Pupil focused meetings (do they know the pupil's needs)
- Workforce Development:
 - The Adolescent brain
 - ADHD, ASC, SEN is 'everyone's business'
 - "Supporting Emotional Wellbeing in Schools" – course for Teaching assistants
 - Managing Change (motivational approaches)
 - Behaviour management skills (how to de-escalate, cope with persistent and disruptive, differentiate according to needs, use non-invasive approaches)
 - Communicating with young people (solution focused, using feedback and questioning, importance of building safe and positive relationships)
 - Restorative Practice
- Supervision for Staff (individual capacity to manage the stress)
 - Peer support (Designated Safeguarding Leads)



Other Systemic areas to Affect Change

- School Ethos and Culture
 - Values and beliefs of Headteacher and Senior leaders
 - Attitude towards inclusion and exclusions
 - Staffing structures (who holds key pastoral roles)
 - Behaviour management policies (cumulative, ‘zero tolerance’ or ‘respect repair and restore?’)
- Relationships with Parents (and siblings)
- Staff wellbeing – capacity of individual staff to manage challenge, stress, emotional impact, pressures in school
- Student wellbeing - Ensuring young person has a safe and positive relationship with at least one member of staff
- Transition planning

Preventing Further Exclusions

- School Readiness?
- Supporting **successful** re-integration or transition into new schools
- Positive relationships and positive regard
- Ensure all staff understand young person's needs (SEN), triggers, motivations, aspirations etc
- **Statutory Educational, health and Care Needs Assessment – (requires psychological advice)**
 - Is EHC Plan required
 - Is there a good understanding of needs
 - Provision required
 - Can need be met by resources in schools
 - Is specialist provision required.



Research Project by Derbyshire

‘Why are some school’s more successful than others in meeting the needs of students at risk of exclusion’

Interviews and questionnaires for students and adults to analyse differences between high and low excluders

- *Flexible, graduated approach (34 low excluders vs 15 high excluders)*
- *Positive emphasis/expectations (19 low vs 5 high)*
- *Communication and respect (18 low vs 5 high)*
- *Whole school vision/commitment (15 low vs 4 high)*
- *Staff skills/development (12 low vs 2 high)*
- *Staff well-being supported (10 low vs 4 high)*
- *Nurture emphasis (12 low vs 6 high)*

- *Derbyshire Educational Psychology Service (2014)*



Major themes from Derbyshire research

Low Excluders

- School partnerships/managed moves
- Behaviour expectations couched positively – 'respect' 'repair' 'moving on'
- Consistent approach
- Talking with adults 'feeling listened to'
- 'Feeling valued'
- Involvement of parents

High excluders

- Perceived agency/LA shortfalls
- Behaviour policy and procedures
- Problem discourse: removal of student
- 'Rules,
- Time out



Quote from low excluding school

- *We have a strong focus on staff well-being and teamwork. In this school there is a real positive attitude about staff supporting each other, recognising strengths, a no blame culture if someone is struggling with a student with challenging behaviour, problem sharing, recognising the baggage that some students carry with them and that staff should not take behaviour challenges personally. (Primary, staff interview).*
- Derbyshire Educational Psychology Service (2014)



Trainee EP: Doctoral Research

‘Exploring perceptions of enablers and barriers to positive outcomes in a primary Pupil Referral Unit. The perspectives of pupils, primary caregivers and staff’.

- Parents report that children are enjoying school for the first time.
- Enabled by the positive relationships they (parents) have with staff who understand them.
- Pupils talk about increased sense of belonging at PRU
- Pupils talk about having positive relationships with peers who are ‘more like them’ and with staff (many, for the first time).
- Staff talk about pupils making progress in learning when social and emotional needs are met – boosting self-confidence and self esteem



Questions for further exploration?

Why Islington are bucking the trend (low SEND pupils being excluded, but high exclusions in other groups?)

Further exploration into the differences between high excluding and low excluding schools

What is the impact of EP Model of service delivery – is there a need to give schools more EP time for early intervention and prevention?

Do schools have capacity to implement the advice being given by support services and agencies?

Skilled key workers, Nurture interventions, repair and restore approaches, staff training and support

Are there creative alternatives to exclusions?

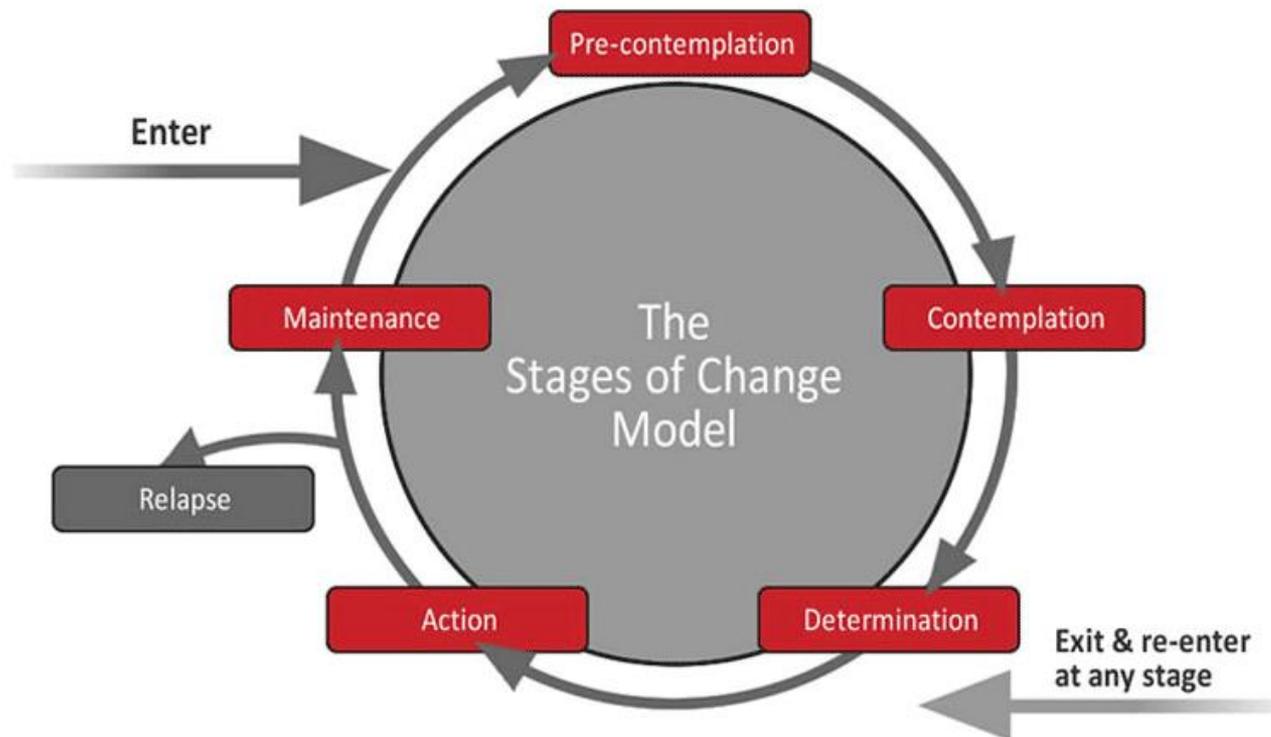


What more can we be doing?

- Action Research opportunity to analyse differences – (similar to Derbyshire – using self evaluation tools, questionnaires etc.) Gather perspectives of students and staff
- Improved joined up working with school improvement and other support services
- Tracking outcomes – building evidence of impact of fixed term and permanent exclusions on learning, social and employment
- Trialling interventions – nurture provision, youth workers in schools, peer mentors, parent projects
- Building capacity of staff to manage challenging behaviour and affect change – motivational interviewing approaches to change (similar to social work model),

Change is not easy!

The Cycle or Stages of Change: Prochaska and Diclemente (1983)





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Thank you for listening

Any Questions?

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