



**COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE
(EDUCATION)**

Psychology Service Handbook

September 2009

Blaenau Gwent Psychology Service Handbook

Mission Statement

Promoting Positive Change

The Psychology Service is guided by the belief that, given the right support, all individuals are capable of making positive changes in their lives. We are committed to the continuing improvement of the service offered to children, young people, their families, schools and other agencies.

CONTENTS

1	Mission Statement
2.	Introduction
3.	Seven Core Aims – Welsh Assembly Government
4.	Aims
5.	Objectives
6.	The Background and Training of Educational Psychologists
7.	Methods of Service Delivery
8.	How the Service is Delivered
9.	The Main Focus of Our Work
9 – 12.	What the Service Can Provide
13.	How We Work With Service Users
14.	Early Years Work
15 – 17.	The Structure of the Service
18.	Equal Opportunities
18.	Participation
18.	How We Monitor and Plan Our work
18.	Complaints Procedures
19.	Contacting the Service
Appendices	Training, Staff Development and Organisational Improvement School List

Introduction

This handbook is written for teachers and staff at school as well as other professionals who may have contact with the Psychology Service. It aims to describe who we are, what we can offer and how we work.

The Psychology Service is part of the Local Education Authority (LEA) and is responsible to the Chief Education Officer. The team provides a service throughout the year for children aged between 0 and 19, their families, staff at school and other professionals within the community who may be supporting children.

The Psychology Service is involved in establishing and supporting LEA policies, plans and initiatives. The Service is an active provider of INSET and details of available approaches can be found in the relevant appendix.

Seven Core Aims – Welsh Assembly Government

The Psychology Service supports the requirements set out in the seven core aims adopted by the Welsh Assembly, which seek to ensure that all children and young people:

1. have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development;
2. have access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including acquisition of essential personal and social skills;
3. enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
5. are listened to, treated with respect, and are able to have their race and cultural identity recognised;
6. have a safe home and a community that supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
7. are not disadvantaged by child poverty.

Blaenau Gwent Psychology Service comprises an experienced team who can offer a diverse and comprehensive service for children, young people and their families. We have always worked within and contributed to successful multi-agency and multi-professional teams. As such we have been able to rise to the challenges set out in:

- Children and Young People: Rights to Action the National Childcare Strategy;
- Safeguarding Children: Working together Under the Children Act 2004;
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 as amended by SENCA 2002;
- the SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2002,
- Cymorth's programmes;
- the national Parenting Plan; early years education; and
- the Foundation Phase.

These emphasise the importance of agencies coming together to provide and develop effective local services and early intervention for children, families and communities.

Aims

The Psychology Service aims to:

- utilise the broadest range of psychological applications for the benefit of children, young people and their families;
- promote best practice in order to meet client needs;
- support corporate aims and contribute to the effectiveness of the LEA;
- promote social inclusion and school improvement;
- work collaboratively, in multi-disciplinary contexts with other agencies; and
- continue to improve the service offered to children, young people, their families, schools and other agencies.

Objectives

- To apply up-to-date psychological theory and research.
- To promote the psychological well being, development and learning and the rights of all children and young people.
- To promote positive, inclusive attitudes.
- To respond to the needs of children and other Service users.
- To help build the confidence, knowledge and skills of children, parents and teachers.
- To work in partnership with other Service providers.
- To deliver friendly and professional advice and guidance.
- To undertake research and development within the LEA.

The Background and Training of Psychologists in Education

Educational Psychologists (EPs) in Blaenau Gwent are Psychology graduates with teaching qualifications and experience. We have all undertaken further training in applied psychology and are eligible for the status of Chartered Educational Psychologist. During training EPs study emotional, social and intellectual development as well as the psychology of teaching and learning. EPs study how people behave, communicate and maintain relationships. EPs also have skills in a broad range of assessment techniques, problem solving, training others, counselling, systems work, organisational change and research. EPs share a common knowledge and skills but may also develop particular areas of professional interest.

EPs have a distinctive role, which is different from psychiatrists. Psychiatrists are doctors who have a statutory role in mental health and are able to prescribe drugs. EPs work within an education environment and have specialist knowledge in the identification and assessment of learning difficulties, in analysing the behaviour of individuals, singly, in small groups and larger systems whilst taking account also of the influence of family and other circumstances.

Methods of Service Delivery

How we maintain appropriate professional standards

We aim to ensure the highest possible professional standards in the following ways.

1. The services we provide are always guided by:
 - the Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines of The British Psychological Society; and
 - the Professional Practice Guidelines of The Division of Educational and Child Psychology.
2. We work in ways that promote equal opportunities and do not discriminate against people with regard to factors such as disability, race, religion, nationality, gender, age, social standing, sexual preference or political belief.
3. We enable all service users to give informed consent before they have contact with the Psychology Service. It is important that children, young people and their parents understand they have the right to choose whether to receive the support of psychological services or not.
4. We only provide verbal and written information that is professionally necessary, accessible and conducive to the well being of our service users.
5. We are committed to preserving confidentiality and do not divulge information to third parties without the consent of the 'information provider' unless failure to share information:
 - would put a child/children at risk; or
 - would contravene the law.

We establish appropriate ground rules as early as possible so that service users and other relevant people are aware of issues and constraints regarding confidentiality and access to information.

6. We only employ skills and techniques that meet appropriate professional standards and we inform service users when we are not competent to address the problem presented. In these circumstances, we also inform service users of other relevant services so that they may choose for themselves whether they want to access those services.

How the Service is Delivered

Time Allocation

Each psychologist is responsible for a geographical patch of schools as well as having other responsibilities. The Psychology Service places a high priority on work with schools but much of its school-related work takes place in other settings. Time is also allocated for the wide range of additional work that is necessary and for direct work with families and other agencies.

Service delivery is determined by pre-planned allocation of time to families, schools and other agencies.

The time allocated to individual schools depends upon the:

- a) total time available for school related work;
- b) number of schools that have to be covered;
- c) size of the school; and
- d) perceived needs of an individual school.

School related work can include time for home visits, report writing, record keeping, liaising with others as well as preparation work, e.g. for the delivery of in-service training etc.

Schools will be allocated a series of half-day sessions and notified of the dates in advance. Within existing staffing levels each primary school is allocated at least three sessions per term and each secondary school is allocated at least one session every two weeks. The sessions represent the minimum that can be expected. However, additional sessions may be arranged when circumstances dictate, such as:

- a) LEA demands;
- b) movement of children;
- c) urgent incidents e.g. critical incidents, child protection, self harm;
- d) counselling/supporting staff; and
- e) working with families.

From time to time either the school or the Service may need to cancel a session, in which case efforts will be made to arrange an alternative time.

In the event of urgent enquiries, children, young people, parents, teachers and other agencies can access the Service directly. Every effort will be made to put the caller in contact with a psychologist or other appropriate source of help.

The Main Focus of Our Work

1. We are applied psychologists working in the education community and we endeavour to use psychology in order to:
 - promote the psychological well being, the proper development and the rights of all children and young people, including those with special needs.
 - help and support parents, families, teachers and other people working in organisations that are responsible for the welfare of young people.
2. We focus on the unique needs of children and young people and their carers and avoid using stereotyped labels that tend to stigmatise people.
3. We maintain a psychological approach to 'problems in context' and avoid using a medical model that tends to 'pathologise' service users.
4. We use a systematic structured problem-solving approach to help people understand and manage their problems more effectively and to choose their preferred solutions or ways of managing those problems.

What the Service Can Provide

The Psychology Service offers support for all children and young people including those who do not present with special educational needs (SEN). The Psychology Service plays an important role both in helping to prevent difficulties arising and contributing to solutions when they do. This may involve the description of children's special educational needs.

Final decisions about funding, issuing statements and placement of children with special educational needs are the responsibility of other LEA officers.

The Psychology Service is an essential part of the LEA's resources. We aim to work with service users at three different levels. The type of work we undertake and the people we work with are different at each of those levels.

Level 1.

Organisational/systems work with schools, local authority services and voluntary organisations. Work at this level may include the following.

- Training parents, governors and staff at schools and other agencies/organisations (e.g. in positive behaviour management, child protection, circle time, social skills training, raising self-esteem, increasing motivation, promoting emotional literacy, developing effective teams/groups, dealing with bullying and meeting individual special educational needs).
- Contributions to Senior Management Team meetings, general staff meetings, governor meetings, meetings other staff from other agencies and organisations. These meetings may focus on the development of policies, procedures and strategies for dealing with a wide range of issues, including those listed above.

It is possible for level one work to be arranged in response to problems but the main focus of work at this level is proactive or preventative. It is designed to promote improvements by addressing organisational issues and systems. In this way it is very efficient and effective because it can have a beneficial impact on many children, young people and their carers. The benefits are also cumulative because people within the organisation may use the skills and strategies again without the need for repeated support with the same issues. In order to realise the benefits, however, it is important for psychologists and service users to invest sufficient time in this type of work. If it is successful, it should reduce the amount of work required at level three.

At this level the psychologist does not have any direct contact with children and young people and, as individuals are not discussed, does not write individual file notes or reports. Therefore, children, young people and/or parents do not need to give informed consent.

Level 2

Consultative work with adults (e.g. parents and families, teachers and other support staff working in schools or colleagues in other agencies and organisations). Work at this level usually includes the following.

- Discussions with individuals who want to talk about any concerns they may have about children and young people in their care. This may be described as indirect work because, within this context, the psychologist does not have direct contact with the children or young people who are the focus of concern. The concerned adult decides what, if anything, to take from the consultation and retains full ownership of the problem and what to do about it.
- When it is professionally appropriate, a similar range of activities may be offered to small groups.
- Contributing to multi-agency work.

Work at level two may be preventative and proactive but may also be more reactive. It is usually arranged in response to problems or concerns and aims to empower and enable people to make positive changes in their lives in order to deal more effectively with their own problems and concerns. This type of work is also very efficient and effective because it enables the adults who participate to develop the confidence and skills required to manage similar problems more independently and successfully in future. In order to realise the benefits, however, psychologists and service users need to invest sufficient time in this type of work. For example, relevant adults would need to be available for sufficient periods of time to discuss their concerns in private with the psychologist. When these arrangements are successfully implemented, they also reduce the amount of work required at level three.

At this level the psychologist does not have any direct contact with children and young people and may not write individual file notes or reports. There is no need for informed consent as long as the concerned adults discuss 'hypothetical problems' without identifying individual young people by name. Informed consent is required if individual young people are identified by name.

Level 3

Direct work with children and young people and adults who are experiencing problems and who want help and support from the Psychology Service. Work at this level is usually a response to problems. It aims to provide direct help and support to individuals who are experiencing problems and who want/need direct contact with a psychologist. It may include the following.

- Individual assessment of learning difficulties and emotional/social/behavioural difficulties.
- Statutory assessments in order to prepare Psychological Advice (Appendix D Reports).
- Individual therapeutic sessions designed to help people implement and manage positive changes in their lives (e.g. counselling, solution focused therapy, structured problem solving, anger management and stress management). Some of these approaches may sometimes be offered to small groups.

It is important at this level that individual children, young people (and where necessary their parents) give informed consent to work with the Psychology Service.

How We Work With Service Users

We aim to form positive working relationships with relevant people in order to help them make positive changes in their lives. We use sound psychological principles to guide people through a structured, systematic process designed to help them do the following.

- Come to a clearer understanding of the nature of their concerns and other important factors associated with their concerns.
- Clarify what questions need to be addressed and what things need to change in order to work towards appropriate solutions.
- Consider some hunches about what things may be causing and maintaining their problems and concerns.
- Systematically check out some of their selected hunches.
- Decide how they themselves need to change in order to have a beneficial impact on their concerns and their solutions.
- Implement and maintain appropriate changes.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes.
- Review the process and make further changes if required.

We believe that better outcomes are achieved when people are empowered and enabled to manage their own problems and concerns effectively and independently. We are keen to ensure that any help and support we offer is carefully and sensitively provided in order to avoid over-reliance on others.

Our preference is to work in collaboration with parents and schools, however:

- parents can contact the service confidentially; and
- young people can contact the service in confidence without the knowledge of parents or schools in special circumstances.

Early Years Work

The Psychology Service is committed to working with young children and their families, with other professionals and in early years settings in order to promote positive progress through early identification and intervention.

The Psychology Service usually becomes involved in working with pre-school children and their families following identification by Health professionals. A Senior Psychologist is responsible for supporting all pre-school settings including LEA nurseries across the Borough.

The Psychology Service undertakes a number of tasks in relation to children in the Early Years including:

- contributing to multi-agency Child Development Team referral meetings;
- working together with a number of agencies in order to promote a co-ordinated approach to working with pre-school children and their families, e.g. Portage; Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP);
- providing advice to families including ways of supporting their child at home and possible arrangements for meeting their child's needs;
- consultation and liaison with pre-school and early years staff in School Nurseries, Family Centres, Day Nurseries, Pre-School Playgroups and Child Minders; and
- providing support and training for Early Years Providers in partnership with LEA Early Years Officers.

The Structure of the Service

The Psychology Service currently consists of the following personnel:

Psychologists

Tom Dyson	(Principal Educational Psychologist)
John Gameson	(Senior Educational Psychologist, 0.1 fte.)
Mary Minto	(Senior Educational Psychologist)
Victoria Morris	(Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist)
Amanda Cotton	(Educational Psychologist, part time)
Clare Whittal-Williams	(Educational Psychologist, part time)
Vacant Post	(Educational Psychologist)

Administration

Dwynwen Jones	Secretary
Pamela Care	Administration Support

This adds up to 5.1 full-time equivalent psychology posts and 2 administrators.

In addition to work within the Service some staff have other responsibilities, which include the following.

Tom Dyson

- Contributes to the LEA's Departmental Management Team.
- Is the officer responsible for all child protection matters within the LEA.
- Represents the Local Education Authority at the following forums:
 - The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
 - The Domestic Abuse Forum.
 - The MAAPP Panel.
 - The Proteus Management Board.
 - Inclusion Services Monitoring Panel.

Mary Minto

- Deputises for Tom Dyson in his absence.
- Provides support across the Borough for Early Years settings including LEA nurseries, private and voluntary Playgroups and for childminders.
- Contributes to the multi-agency Child Development Team referral meetings.
- Contributes to the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP);
- Provides therapeutic support for the Parent's Into Education (PIE) project.
- Chairs the SEN sub-group of the EYDCP
- Provides support and training for Early Years Providers in partnership with colleges in the LEA.

Victoria Morris

- Is a member of the multi-agency Social Communication Team.
- Supports the families and children with Profound, Multiple, Severe Learning Difficulties and ASD who are placed within specialist provision.
- Offers support and guidance to other colleagues in relation to pupils with complex needs or Autistic Spectrum Disorder, who are placed within mainstream settings.
- Provides training to school staff and parents in relation to Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

- Is a member of the Blaenau Gwent's Children with Disabilities Group.

Amanda Cotton

- Chairs the Emotional Health and Well Being (EHWB) Group, including drawing up guidance for schools on EHWB.
- Delivers SEAL training to primary and secondary schools across the borough.
- Represents the Psychology Service on working groups regarding behaviour, including bidding for funding towards pilot projects.

Clare Whittal-Williams

- Contributes to the development of anti-bullying initiatives.

John Gameson

- Is seconded part-time as co-director (professional) to the post-graduate training course for educational psychologists at Cardiff University.
- Represents the profession at meetings of the Welsh Assembly Government Child Adolescent Mental Health implementation sub-group.
- Is the LA point of contact for WAG anti-bullying initiatives.

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to the principles of equal opportunities.

- We aim to value all individuals equally.
- We respect, value and welcome diversity and individual differences.
- We recognise that discrimination can occur in society in relation to race, social class, social and/or economic disadvantages, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion. We seek to challenge this in all aspects of our service delivery.

Through the development of our organisation and practice, the Psychology Service works towards ensuring that it delivers a service that is accessible and fair. It aims to be equally effective for all its service users, neither unfairly advantaging nor disadvantaging any individual or group in the community it serves.

Participation

The Psychology Service is committed to the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda, supporting the full participation of children and young people in making decisions, planning and reviewing actions that might affect them directly.

How We Monitor and Plan Our Work

The Psychology Service has developed a systematic approach to monitoring its work. A survey is conducted annually to seek the views of staff at schools, parents/carers and other professionals so that we can obtain evidence to help plan how we can use our available resources most effectively.

Work with schools is reviewed on an annual basis and the views of parents/carers and other professionals are included in this evaluation.

Complaints Procedure

If questions arise about any aspects of Service Delivery, in the first instance these should be discussed with the psychologist concerned. If the matter cannot be resolved in this way, contact should be made with the Principal Psychologist. We would much prefer to address and endeavour to resolve any problems or concerns that arise rather than allow frustration to build up.

Contacting the Service

- **School Contact** We visit schools regularly throughout the year.
- **Parental Requests** Parents have the right to contact us directly to ask for support. There is always the need to prioritise requests for our work and share our time out fairly.
- **Pre-school Children** Parents/carers may contact the Service about pre-school children. We may then arrange a mutually convenient meeting.
- **Other Agencies** Other agencies, with the permission of parents/carers, contact our Service in relation to individual children. We also contact and work closely with other agencies, usually with parental consent.

Our Service members are all currently based at:

Blaina Community Centre, High Street, Blaina NP13 3AN.

Telephone	01495 357890/1
Fax	01495 357899
e-mail	dwynwen.jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Should you require any further information or if you have any suggestions or comments about the range of services offered, please contact the Principal Educational Psychologist.

Appendices

Training, Staff Development and Organisational Improvement

Blaenau Gwent Psychology Service works with schools and other organisations to promote staff development, change and improvement. The team as a whole can offer a wide range of training and may work individually, in pairs/groups or as a whole team. It is important that this work is seen as an integral part of the organisations' development plan. The table below gives **some selected examples** of the issues, themes and topics that are well established in this area of service delivery.

Issue, Themes and Topics	Some Examples
Child protection issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training and development work with school staff and other professionals. ▪ Advice on individual concerns regarding child protection.
Understanding and managing social, emotional and behavioural development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation, training and support to schools about the process of behaviour management. ▪ Motivation. ▪ Emotional intelligence. ▪ Personal development. ▪ Circle Time. ▪ Social Skills. ▪ Parent training. ▪ Stress management for staff and pupils. ▪ Anger management. ▪ Bullying.
Managing special educational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Autistic Spectrum Disorders. ▪ ADHD. ▪ Dyslexia. ▪ Dyscalculia. ▪ Dyspraxia. ▪ Profound, multiple and complex difficulties.
Understanding and managing organisations, systems groups including school improvement and promoting inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching reading, and spelling. ▪ Helping to provide training, support and guidance to a cluster of schools to challenge disaffection. ▪ Supporting schools in challenging circumstances. ▪ Exploring and improving pupils' and parents' engagement in education.
Managing Critical Incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responding to traumatic incidents including sudden death, bereavement, serious injury, violence or trauma.

Supporting the LEA in the development of joint agency work with health and social services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CAMHS. ▪ CDT. ▪ Children’s Entitlement Partnership - EYDC, Early Years. ▪ LSCB . ▪ Social Communication Clinic. ▪ ADH Clinic. ▪ Family Support Panel ▪ Adoption and Fostering Panel ▪ Pre-accommodation Panel
---	---

Additional issues, themes and topics may be negotiated with service users according to changing needs.

This aspect of service delivery is available to:

- cluster groups and schools;
- other services and departments within the Community Services Directorate;
- other agencies (including voluntary agencies); and
- parent groups.

We believe that the valuable time invested in staff development should result in positive change for individuals, groups and organisations. It is important that the changes are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

This work is most effective when the content of, and approach to, development activities are negotiated, planned and implemented in ways that are designed to meet the unique, changing needs of individuals, groups and organisations. All relevant people need to be committed to the process of change and development.

BLAENAU GWENT PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

Blaina Community Centre High Street Blaina NP13 3A Fax: 357899 Tel: 357890/1

Sept 2009

NAME	TITLE and Extra Responsibilities	SCHOOL
<u>TOM DYSON</u> (Full time)	Principal Educational Psychologist ----- Child Protection for LEA LSCB Service Manager DMT	Tredegar Comprehensive Deighton Primary Georgetown Primary St Joseph's RC Primary
<u>MARY MINTO</u> (Full time)	Senior Educational Psychologist ----- Deputising for PEP Early Years Work CDT Supervision EPiTs Covers V.I. and H.I. Units	Glyncoed Comprehensive Abertillery Primary Queen St Primary Briery Hill Primary All pre-school settings including LEA nurseries
<u>JOHN GAMESON</u> (0.1)	Senior Educational Psychologist ----- Cardiff University	
VICTORIA MORRIS (Full time)	Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist ----- Severe Learning Difficulties Autistic Spectrum Disorders Adoption panel	Abertillery Comprehensive Bryngwyn Primary Sofrydd Primary St Illtyd's Primary Ystruth Primary Ystruth Annex (Comm .Clinic) Pen-y-Cwm Special School
AMANDA COTTON (0.5)	Educational Psychologist ----- Behaviour Management Emotional Health & Well Being	Ebbw Vale Comprehensive Glyncoed Primary
CLARE WHITTAL-WILLIAMS (0.5)	Educational Psychologist -----	Nantyglo Comprehensive Blaen-y-Cwm Primary Coed y Garn Primary St Mary's Church in Wales Pr St Mary's RC
TERRI STALLARD (Locum)	Educational Psychologist -----	Brynmawr Foundation All Saints RC Primary Cwm Primary Glanhowy Primary Pontygof Primary Rhos y Fedwen Primary Waunlwyd Primary Willowtown Primary Ysgol Gymraeg Brynmawr
EMILY JACKSON (Trainee)	Educational Psychologist -----	Beaufort Hill Primary Blaentillery Primary Brynbach Primary Garnlydan Primary Roseheyworth Millennium
DWYNWEN JONES	Secretary	PAMELA CARE Clerk/Typist

