

*The Initial Training of Educational Psychologists  
in England*

## **Practice Placement Partnership Framework**

**August 2019**

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## Glossary

<b>AEP</b>	Association of Educational Psychologists
<b>BPS</b>	British Psychological Society
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
<b>CBT</b>	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
<b>DBS</b>	Disclosure and Barring service
<b>DECP</b>	Division of Educational and Child Psychology
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>HCPC</b>	Health and Care Professions Council
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>NAPEP</b>	National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disability
<b>trainee</b>	Trainee Educational Psychologist

The current version of the Practice Placement Partnership Framework (PPPF) was updated by the Joint Professional Liaison Group members (JPLG) in consultation with NAPEP and Programme Directors who all commented on earlier drafts. A draft was also shared with the DECP trainee educational psychologist representative. The Association of Child Psychologists in Private Practice contributed to an earlier edition of this framework.

## Background

The Department for Education (DfE) recommended the development of this Practice Placement Partnership Framework (PPPF) to provide guidelines to support trainee educational psychologist' (trainee's) practice experiences during their training and to support the quality assurance of placement provision.

## Aim

The aim of the PPPF is to support the partnerships between universities and educational psychology placement providers in England and, recognizing the wide diversity in the structure, size and modus operandi of placement services, to safeguard broadly equitable placement provisions for all trainees and to promote best practice. The guidance also seeks to outline the reasonable demands that can be placed on trainees if they are to be equipped to manage post-training practice expectations successfully.

## Purpose

The purpose of the framework is to offer guidance and provide a checklist to ensure that all placements are able to support both the universal and specific training and development needs of trainees. It recognises that trainees are placed in services integral to, or commissioned by, local authorities as the majority providers of educational psychology services, and that the day-to-day work carried out by individual trainees during their placements will vary considerably. A key principle is the expectation for person-centred planning of the experiential diet of trainees, throughout their supervised practice placements, within which consideration is given to the particular skill profile, stage of training, and the learning and development needs of each trainee.

The framework is not designed to be harnessed to structure assessment of the performance and/or competence of trainees; these are comprehensively addressed by both the curriculum requirements of each university's doctoral training programme, and the core competencies required by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the British Psychology Society (BPS).

To support trainee placements effectively, the PPPF highlights the need for a close working partnership between the university training programme, the placement provider, and the trainee. In addition, the agreement complements a range of existing requirements/frameworks which address other aspects of the initial training of educational psychologists, such as university regulations, regulatory standards, local authority (LA) policies, processes and practices, and relevant legislation.

## Practice Placement Partnership Framework

This framework clarifies the expectations and responsibilities of the trainee educational psychologist (trainee), the placement provider and the university. The BPS stipulates that a minimum of 300 days of three-year doctoral programmes must be spent on supervised professional practice, with the majority of placement time spent in Years 2 and 3 of training. This framework relates to the substantive placements in Years 2 and 3.

### 1. Practice Placement Arrangements

- 1.1 At the end of Year 1, the university will ensure that the trainee is able to provide clear and accurate information to the placement provider about the competencies that they have demonstrated in Year 1 and any development needs which have been identified. Competencies should be defined in relation to the HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists and the BPS required learning outcomes for educational psychology.
- 1.2 Prior to the start of Year 2, the university will nominate a university tutor who is responsible for monitoring all aspects of the trainee's learning in relation to the HCPC Standards of Proficiency and BPS required learning outcomes for educational psychology.
- 1.3 Prior to the start of Year 2, the placement provider will nominate a placement supervisor who is:
  - registered with the HCPC as an educational psychologist;
  - eligible for Chartered Educational Psychologist status with the BPS; and
  - has at least two years' experience.

The placement supervisor is responsible for the co-ordination of all aspects of the trainee's practice in conjunction with the university tutor, to ensure that an appropriate range of learning opportunities is provided. Specific placement requirements are detailed in Appendix 1.

- 1.4 The placement supervisor will be a qualified and experienced HCPC-registered educational psychologist. In line with BPS Standard 2.4.8, placement providers need to ensure that "placement supervisors, ....based on their training, experience and CPD, have the appropriate competencies to be offering the particular services in which they are supervising the trainee, and are receiving their own supervision". The placement supervisor must attend University training/briefing meetings.
- 1.5 For each trainee, a personal professional development plan will be constructed by the university tutor in partnership with the trainee and placement supervisor, specifying the learning and development targets for the placement/each phase of the placement, and signaling the actions that will be taken by whom, to support achievement of these targets.
- 1.6 The university will provide placement guidelines for the information and advice of trainees and placement providers, based on HCPC Standards of Education (SETS), the BPS required learning outcomes, and university requirements and procedures, for example, relating to assessment of trainee progress.

- 1.7 To enable the trainee to make an effective contribution to the placement service, induction to the service is required. The placement provider will provide the trainee with information on requirements and expectations in relation to legislation, policies, procedures and practices with which they must comply in their work. Whilst on placement, the trainee will be required to follow the policy and practices of the host service. As a minimum, trainees should have been fully informed of:
- the child protection safeguarding policy;
  - health and safety policies relevant to the delivery of educational psychology services, e.g. lone working policy;
  - information sharing/confidentiality policy;
  - data protection policy; and
  - the processes in place to raise and escalate concerns about the safety and well-being of service users.
- 1.8 The placement provider will also ensure that trainees have the resources necessary for their work and development (e.g. office equipment, assessment and intervention materials, local induction, and facilities) and that these are effectively utilised where appropriate.
- 1.9 The trainee will provide the placement provider with information about the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks that have been completed by the university. In some instances, placement providers may require a repeat DBS.  
For further information please go to:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
- 1.10 The university will provide the trainee with initial child protection training.
- 1.11 The placement provider will provide the trainee with more advanced child protection training specific to the work context.
- 1.12 All supervisors are expected to have completed training in supervision as recognised by the BPS and/or provided by the education provider. The university will offer placement provider supervisor training (including refresher training) across Years 2 and 3. Certificates of attendance will be provided on request, as evidence in relation to meeting HCPC Standards. The university will ensure that placement supervisors have good notice of training dates, which will normally be communicated at least three months in advance..
- 1.13 Placement supervisors will attend all required supervisor training and contribute to the evaluation of these training events.

## 2. Supervision and Monitoring of Progress

- 2.1 The **placement provider** will ensure that supervision conforms to the BPS accreditation criteria which stipulate a minimum protected time allocation to 'formal' supervision of one half hour per day on placement, or the cumulative equivalent of this.

- 2.2 A supervision contract should be agreed at the start of the placement and revised by the trainee and supervisor at intervals, to maintain its relevance to changing demands and needs.
- 2.3 A joint record of supervision meetings should be kept. Both the placement supervisor and the trainee should also maintain their own records, where they judge this necessary or helpful.
- 2.4 A 'three-way' meeting between the university tutor, placement supervisor and trainee will take place at least once per term, in order to allow for review of the trainee's progress, the opportunities for learning and development afforded to the trainee. Three-way meetings also allow for periodic review of the volume, pace, variety and complexity of placement experience and demands, and for contingent adjustments to these, as necessary to accommodate the trainee's capabilities and competing programme requirements which need to be mediated. Written records of the three-way meetings should be made, which include distinct elements from the perspective of each party-
- 2.5 Prior to each three-way meeting, the placement supervisor should elicit feedback from service users to contribute to the evaluation of the trainee's progress and performance. Completion of the Trainee Educational Psychologist Practice Activity Checklist (**Appendix 2**), or an adapted version of this may be used to structure planning and to check and record the variety and balance of placement experiences.
- 2.6 The placement supervisor will observe the trainee working at least once a month, with observations focusing on a range of workplace activities, which might include carrying out a joint activity with the trainee. The Placement Supervisor will provide clear and specific feedback following the observation, as well as more general, on-going, formative feedback.

The placement supervisor will ensure that a range of experience is made available to the trainee which allow her/him to gather evidence that demonstrates the achievement of the relevant competencies. The range of placement experiences should be balanced with regard to:

- the overall volume or quantity of work allocated and its expected time costs for a trainee at the stage in training s/he has reached;
  - the complexity of task demands, (considering the level of experience of the trainee);
  - levels of responsibility and autonomy; and
  - breadth (variety of work).
- 2.7 If there is any area in which the placement provider is unable to offer appropriate experience, the placement supervisor will advise the university tutor, who will make arrangements for a short period of the placement to be spent elsewhere.

### **3. Changes to the Placement Supervisor and University Tutor**

- 3.1 Placement providers and the university will aim to give each other and the trainee at least four weeks' notice of any need to discuss or negotiate any changes in the

placement supervisor or university tutor, respectively.

During any periods of absence in excess of two weeks, another member of staff from the respective organisation should be appointed to fulfil these roles. Where there has been a change of placement supervisor it may be necessary to organise an additional three-way meeting to facilitate a smooth transition.

#### **4. Attendance and Accountability**

- 4.1 Attendance at the university is required on the days specified by the university. The university will advise the trainee and placement provider in advance of these dates, on which the trainee's time should be protected for attendance.
- 4.2 The BPS stipulates that 300 days of three-year doctoral programmes must be spent on placement, with the majority of placement time spent in Years 2 (130 days) and 3 (130 days). It is envisaged that a significant majority of these placement days will usually take place in school term-time.
- 4.3 The trainee should keep a record accounting for their use of time on placement. It is key that placement providers recognise the differential pace of work for trainees as learners at different stages of placement (i.e. as they progress from the start of Year 2 through to Year 3).
- 4.4 The trainee should notify both the university and placement provider of any absence due to illness or for any other reason. Permission relating to absence for any other reason, including a hospital appointment and funeral attendance, should be sought in advance from the trainee's university and the placement provider. The trainee must fulfil the required number of placement days.
- 4.5 The trainee will adhere to all university deadlines for the submission of assessed work.
- 4.6 Universities will do all they can to mark and moderate trainees' assessed work to ensure that trainees are in a position to apply to the HCPC for registration as close as possible to 1<sup>st</sup> September following their completion of their third year of training
- 4.7 The trainee should advise her/his placement supervisor and university tutor at the earliest opportunity of any health, personal or other circumstances that may affect their work. The university will be responsible for providing additional tutorial support as required to trainees experiencing difficulties, in parallel, where appropriate, to securing a reasonable adjustments plan, where this is necessary. As noted in para. 1.5, in all cases, a personal professional development plan will be constructed by the university tutor in agreement with the trainee and placement supervisor at the start of the Year2-3 placement: this plan will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, at each three-way meeting.
- 4.8 For a trainee experiencing difficulties which threaten to compromise participation and/or progress, a programme of support, led by the university tutor, will be agreed and review dates identified. All parties will be bound (as appropriate) by the HCPC



guidance on student conduct and ethics, the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (2016)<sup>1</sup>, the BPS Code of Ethics & Conduct (2018)<sup>2</sup> and the BPS Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) Professional Practice Guidelines (2002).

- 4.9 In line with the BPS Accreditation Standard 2.4.5, ultimate responsibility for the summative assessment of trainee educational psychologists' competence lies with the education provider.

## 5. Research requirements where the thesis is carried out on placement

- 5.1 Most trainees undertake research toward their doctoral research thesis during their placement. Where this is the case, the topic for the doctoral thesis should be agreed in discussion between the university, the placement provider and the trainee at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.2 The research should:
- have high relevance to educational psychology practice generally;
  - have a clear connection to psychological theory and research; and, as is required for a doctoral thesis,
  - be judged capable of offering an original contribution to knowledge.
- 5.3 Thesis supervision will be provided by university tutors. The trainee's research supervisor may be different from the university tutor responsible for maintaining placement liaison. In such cases, the latter university tutor would retain responsibility for liaison with the placement provider, including in relation to matters concerning the trainee's fieldwork within the placement context toward her/his thesis. (The identified research supervisor, where this role is undertaken by a second university tutor, is normally responsible for advising the trainee on methodological decisions and those relating to ethical approval of the planned research, data collection, data analysis, and the write-up of the thesis).
- 5.4 Where a trainee is carrying out research which is germane to a placement provider's priority areas for research and development and is, therefore, representing the placement provider and contribution toward service delivery and development, aspects of the research (e.g. data collection; negotiation, delivery and evaluation of an intervention), would legitimately be undertaken during the 130 days' placement time. However, data analysis and writing up of this work for the thesis should be carried out during the trainee's study time.
- 5.5 In other circumstances (i.e. where the research does not align with educational psychology service priorities), data collection and other 'fieldwork' components of the research would normally be carried out in study time, and not during the 130 days' practice placement time in Years 2 and 3.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct>

## 6. Managing difficulties

- 6.1 The process for dealing with a trainee's concerns about the quality of the placement and/or placement supervision is detailed in **Appendix 3**. This process should be followed should concerns arise. Resolution should be sought through open discussion and active problem-solving with individuals directly involved<sup>3</sup>. All parties should ensure that they do not breach ethical principles set out in the HCPC's 'Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics', especially those relating to confidentiality and professional conduct.
- 6.2 The **university** has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that trainees are provided with good quality placement experiences (4). The university programme director holds overall responsibility for decision-making in relation to trainee progression within the academic, research and supervised professional practice components of the professional doctoral programme.
- 6.3 Partnership between university staff and placement providers is vital in decision-making about trainee progress on placement. The three-way meetings are essential to this process. Should significant concerns be raised by either the university tutor or placement supervisor about the trainee's progress, then targets and additional support will be identified with the trainee, in accordance with documented university procedures.
- 6.4 With regard to fitness to practise, ethical and other disciplinary concerns that may arise on placement and result in the trainee failing to complete it satisfactorily, their studies may be terminated by the university. The trainee then has the right to appeal through the university's procedures as set out in its regulations.

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<sup>3</sup> This could include the trainee bringing an advocate to any meetings.

<sup>4</sup> Health and Care Professions Council (2017) *Standards of education and training guidance*. Set 5. Practice-based learning: pages 38 and 40. <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/guidance/standards-of-education-and-training-guidance.pdf>

## Appendix 1: Practice placement requirements in Years 2 and 3

### The learning and community context

Trainees should have diversity and breadth of learning opportunities. It is also important that there is an even distribution and breadth of supervised practice experience. Surveys of Year 2 and 3 trainees in England have indicated that the majority are placed in Local Authority Educational Psychology Services that operate either traded or partially traded models of service delivery. The majority were allocated a patch of school and reported that they were very satisfied with the quality of supervision received on placement.

There was variation in the number of statutory assessments and summative reports (including reports which would contribute toward Education, Health and Care Plans) to which trainees contributed, with an average of 12. This suggests that contributing to an average of 12 Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) a year would be consistent with a realistic, balanced workload.

As indicated above, feedback indicates that a majority of trainees are undertaking supervised practice placements within EPSs which offer traded or partially-traded models of service delivery. The 2nd edition of the BPS Guidelines for Ethical Trading highlights several challenges for trainees working in this context:

- balancing the power of the commissioner and ensuring best practice;
- ensuring appropriate skill development;
- ensuring variety of experience; and
- preparation for ethical trading.

The Guidelines draw attention to the importance of the level of trainee skill.

“As TEPs progress through their doctoral training there is a continuous increase in skill acquisition and their related confidence. Schools and other commissioners may not be aware of the particular skills acquired at a certain point in time, and so may have unreasonable expectations and make inappropriate demands upon TEPs. This may include requiring TEPs to complete work too quickly or undertaking work that is too complex for their skill level at that time. In addition, TEPs may feel unable to challenge these demands and will need the support of their supervisor to come to a resolution” (p. 18)

### Placement based activities

The following list is illustrative of the placement-based training curriculum. It is not exhaustive and should be read alongside the universities’ placement documentation, and with consideration given to the skill profile, stage of training, and learning and development needs of each trainee.

## **Visits**

These should include visits to:

- facilities and special provision offered by the placement LA for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and social services
- Parent Partnership Services and Parent / Carer Forums; and
- work with children and young people missing from education, and with the services which have been established to support such young people.

## **Shadowing**

Observing and, as appropriate, working alongside a range of educational psychologists including, if requested, educational psychologists working in private practice.

## **Joint activity with other professionals in complex work**

Engaging in joint activity with a variety of professionals from different professions and disciplines: for example, opportunities for working with specialist teachers, educational psychologists in private practice and / or the voluntary sector, clinical and / or forensic psychologists, counsellors, speech and language therapists, social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and psychiatrists, paediatricians.

## **Organisational Development**

- Contributing to research and development in organisations
- Formative and summative evaluation of fidelity of implementation and impact of a change project within an organisation
- Support for evidence-validated development of a protocol or policy
- Support for school effectiveness through processes of needs analysis, development of training and follow-up to support fidelity of implementation and necessary adaptations to ensure ecological validity, harnessing principles of intervention science

## **Casework**

Here, to ensure breadth of experience, supervised practice activities to support a trainee's learning and development may need to be additional to, rather than integral to the commissioned work undertaken within the placement service.

Trainees should have experience of casework with a range of children, young people and young adults, which:

- addresses the 0 - 25 year age continuum;
- provides opportunities to engage with service users from the highly heterogeneous diverse ethnic, faith, cultural, socio-economic backgrounds which characterise contemporary British society, including those with English as an additional language;
- affords opportunities to address a diverse range of needs, including those associated with difficulties with communication, interaction, thinking or learning, physical or sensory

impairment, poor mental health and/or emotional and/or behavioural self-regulation and/or social interaction;

- prioritises vulnerable groups, including children in care, care leavers, and young people and young adults within the youth justice system.

Casework needs to be undertaken at three different levels:

#### **i. Consultation, Assessment and Formulation**

This should include consulting with teachers, parents and others to elicit relevant background knowledge and help establish priorities; multi-method assessment, including observation, normative and/or curriculum-based measures, as appropriate, and synthesis of findings to inform a problem formulation and the contingent development of evidence-validated intervention plan and evaluation of its implementation and impact.

Casework of this sort should be carried out in a range of settings including:

- the child or young person's home;
- nurseries and other early years provisions;
- a small number of differing primary schools;
- a number of secondary schools;
- tertiary provision e.g. further education, 6th form colleges and/or universities, or other contexts accommodating children and young people of post-statutory school age; and
- special / additionally-resourced provision or schools

#### **ii. Direct Work**

Direct intervention with individual children, young people and young adults, using appropriate evidenced-informed therapeutic methods for which trainees have undertaken relevant prior study/training and for which they are in receipt of supervision from an appropriately trained and experienced practitioner. Such work needs to be carried out in a range of settings.

Direct group intervention with children, young people and other service users, including:

- group work with groups or classes of students in pre-school, primary, secondary or post-16 schools or other education settings;
- group work with adults, including parents / carers, teachers or teaching assistants; and/or
- provision of support and advice to individual parents, carers and/or professional colleagues.

#### **iii. Statutory work**

Clearly, this constitutes a particular form and function of consultation, assessment and formulation, with a higher premium placed on the quality and instrumental value of the summative assessment report to a range of stakeholders, including:

- the focus young person
- her/his parents and carers;

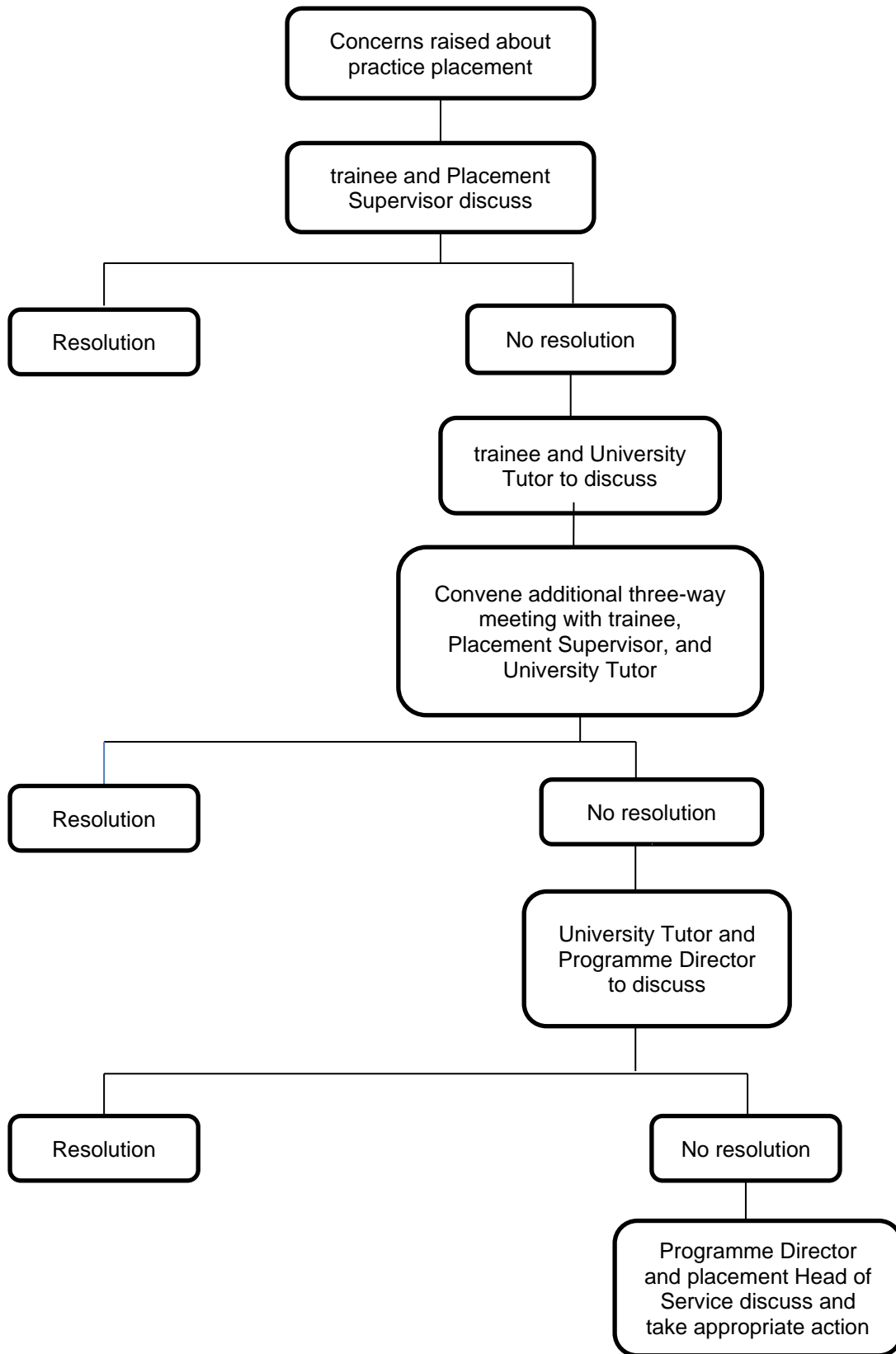
- staff who currently work with the young person;
- local authority special needs officers; and, in some cases,
- staff from other agencies;
- and/or those working in special educational settings to which the young person may transfer.

In addition to completing psychological advice as part of a statutory assessment of SEND, including the child's and parental / carer perspectives, trainees should have opportunities to contribute to annual review meetings and to attend (a) SEND panel meeting(s).

## Appendix 2: Trainee Educational Psychologist Practice Activity Checklist

Activity	Achieved	Comments
<b>Consultation, Assessment and Formulation</b>		
Early years		
A range of primary schools		
A secondary school		
Tertiary provision e.g. FE/6 <sup>th</sup> Form college		
Special resourced provision		
Other settings		
<b>Joint activity with other professionals, parents / carers in complex casework</b>		
Familiarity with range of sessions through shadowing/visits		
Contributing through joint work with EP		
Joint activity with other professionals and parents/ carers in complex cases		
<b>Direct Individual Intervention with young people</b>		
e.g. CBT or another evidenced based intervention		
<b>Direct work / group work with young people and other service users</b>		
Primary/secondary		
With adults, including parents/group session and individual advice		
<b>Statutory work</b>		
Completing psychological advice as part of statutory assessment of SEND, including parents / carers' perspectives		
Contribute to an Annual Review meeting		
Attend a SEND panel		
<b>Organisational change projects and research</b>		
Evaluation or change project within an organisation.		
Protocol or policy development		
Practice development through training		

**Appendix 3: Process for dealing with Trainee Educational Psychologists' concerns regarding their practice placement.**





## Appendix 4: Roles and Responsibilities

### **Placement Provider Responsibilities**

Professional liability, legal and case responsibility lies with the placement provider for the activities undertaken by the trainee whilst on placement. Decisions about appropriate practice must remain with work setting supervisory structures.

### **Trainee Responsibilities**

A trainee on placement is bound by the policy and practice of the host placement provider whilst carrying out duties in line with any agreement made with the supervisor. As part of this, trainees need to ensure that they are conversant with the placement provider's policies on lone working, health and safety (see above).