

By email



Association of Educational Psychologists

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To: PEPs in England

CC: Programme Directors for the initial training of EPs within England

Re: The Employment of Trainee Educational Psychologists in Years 2 and 3 of their training

Dear Colleague

The Employment of Trainee Educational Psychologists in Years 2 and 3 of their training

I am writing on behalf of the AEP's National Executive Committee to ask for your help because of growing concerns regarding the wellbeing of many current Trainee EPs. The concern about their wellbeing centres on the difficult financial situations being faced by those Trainee EPs who are trying to manage on bursary payments throughout the 3 years of their training, especially those who also have caring responsibilities. We have been horrified to learn that some Trainee EPs who are parents and have no source of income other than the bursary have had to have recourse to using food banks in order to feed themselves and their children. Whilst they were acutely aware of the difficult financial situations they would face during training the reality has proved to be very much worse than they had anticipated, and is now being made even worse by rising inflation and significantly escalating fuel costs.

When the initial training of EPs moved to 3 years there was an agreement within the Soulbury Committee that Trainee EPs would be paid a bursary during their first year but that they would be employed in line with the Soulbury Agreement in Years 2 and 3 – I have attached copies of the Joint Education Services Circulars 173 and 186 which were issued in 2010 and 2013 respectively to remind Local Authorities of the rights of Trainee EPs and the responsibilities of those Local Authorities which are covered by the Soulbury Agreement.

I have also attached a copy of the most recent Soulbury Report issued to all LAs in 2019 – again, paragraphs 4.11 and 4.14-4.18 outline the agreement which should be followed for the employment of Trainee EPs during years 2 and 3 of their training.

The current financial difficulties being faced by Trainee EPs would be largely alleviated if they were employed in Years 2 and 3 in line with original agreement made when initial training moved from one to three years. Not only would employment in line with the Soulbury Agreement provide the Trainee EPs with a reasonable salary in Years 2 and 3 (please also see attached a copy of the Joint Education Services Circular 222 which was

issued earlier this year and provides the current Soulbury salary scale for Trainee EPs (£24,970 - £34,107) but it would also enable them to be able to be paid travel expenses whilst working within EP services and to be entitled to a range of legislative benefits which include statutory maternity benefits, access to childcare provisions and pension contributions. Those Trainee EPs who have young children are particularly affected badly by not having access to free childcare which would be available to them if they were employed.

In this letter I have no intention of revisiting the reasons why many PEPs decided to pay bursaries rather than salaries during the period from 2010 when all EP services were adversely affected by austerity measures. However, I am pleased to note that a number of LA EP services are now employing Trainee EPs in line with the Soulbury Agreement. I would urge those of you who are not currently employing Trainee EPs to do whatever you can now to remind your Senior Managers and HR teams of the content of the Soulbury Report and various Joint Education Services Circulars in relation to Trainee EPs and take steps to comply with them and ensure that Trainee EPs are treated appropriately as soon as possible so that we do not hear any more reports of them having to use food banks to feed their children.

Please do contact me if you wish to clarify/discuss any of these issues further – I trust that you will all do what you can to support the incoming generation of EPs.

Yours sincerely



Kate Fallon

General Secretary – Association of Educational Psychologists