



**ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

## **Employment of Assistant Educational Psychologists (AsEPs)**

### **AEP Policy**

# Employment of AsEPs

## Background

Assistant Educational Psychologist (AsEP) is a post defined within the scope of the Soulbury Committee Report (2019) as a step towards training to become an Educational Psychologist.

The role of AsEPs is intended to complement the work of Educational Psychologists within Educational Psychology Services in delivering high quality services to children and young people.

As a group of professionals who are able to access membership, the AEP has a role in defining how and where they are employed, including appropriate job descriptions as well as pay and conditions.

## What is an AsEP?

An AsEP is a psychology graduate who is employed to assist the work of an Educational Psychologist/Educational Psychology Services and to gain relevant experience prior to applying for a place on a recognised Doctorate EP training course.

AsEP can be used in a variety of ways to complete a variety of duties, with appropriate supervision and support. The nature of those duties will depend upon the requirements of the service and the strengths and previous qualifications/experience of the AsEP.

Whilst an AsEP is a psychology graduate and is employed to apply psychology within a service the Soulbury Report 2019 [4.12] is clear that : “Assistant Educational Psychologists are not qualified to carry out the full range of duties and responsibilities of fully qualified officers on Scale A...”

AsEPs , nor other unqualified psychologists, should be employed to replace or cover for HCPC registered Educational Psychologists but to supplement or complement the work carried out by EPs. Assistant Educational Psychologist cannot fulfil the duties and responsibilities of a fully qualified EP and would be committing an offence if presented in such a way to the public.

The kinds of tasks that an AsEP could be involved in include:

- Support the delivery of defined projects
- Assist the work of an EP on individual pieces of casework (e.g. by gathering data through structured observation; completing structured assessments with individuals)
- Deliver training, mentoring, coaching

- Complete research tasks
- Support the delivery of specific interventions for which they have been trained

## AsEPs and training to be an EP

The Soulbury Report 2019 highlights that (section 4.13) ‘Those local authorities who employ Assistant Educational Psychologists should take positive action to ensure that these employees achieve qualified status as soon as possible. As a consequence it is the aim that no officer should remain on the Assistant Educational Psychologists’ scale for more than 4 years.

Employers should seek guidance from Human Resources specialist in writing contracts of employment. The temporary nature of any contract should be made clear to the employee. It is the decision of the employer should they choose to maintain the employee in their employ beyond the four years AsEPs period and their prerogative in determining the nature of the employee’s role. Individuals might continue to pursue a training contract to qualify as an Educational Psychologist by gaining further experience in a different role.

Please see examples of job descriptions for AsEPs in the appendix.

A Service choosing to adopt the use of AsEP’s should do so on the basis that the role supports;

- a training route potentially leading to post graduate professional training as an EP;
- development of a relationship with future potential applicants to qualified posts;
- supports effective delivery of service outcomes.

This would require employers to have a clear plan for the employment AsEPs that is consistent with the principles outlined in this paper.

The employment of AsEP’s does not prevent employers from creating alternative roles that support the delivery of a psychology service. In such circumstance fully qualified EP’s should be clear about their own responsibilities and duty to clients working alongside individuals in these support roles.

Educational Psychologist’s directing the work of other support staff should in all circumstances not validate the outcomes of their findings without careful consideration of their qualifications, experience and the level of supervision they receive.

‘Positive action’ that employers could take to support AsEPs gaining entry to the training course includes, but is not limited to:

- ✓ Ensuring that an AsEP is able to take part in a range of duties, in a range of contexts;
- ✓ Providing appropriate supervisory support for the AsEP (see below);
- ✓ Providing support for the AsEP to engage in a developmental needs assessment;
- ✓ Providing appropriate CPD opportunities;
- ✓ Providing opportunities for AsEPs to shadow EPs ;

The local University training provider would be a useful source of advice to support AsEP's progression onto an accredited training course. You may also wish to consult the BPS Guidance on Accreditation for the initial training of EPs which includes the expected competencies for a newly trained EP at Programme Standard 2

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Accreditation/Educational%20Accreditation%20Handbook%202019.pdf>

Helpful information is also provided within a range of publications from the HCPC e.g. <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-proficiency/practitioner-psychologists/>

We would encourage services to remain consistent with the Soulbury Report 2019 and use the term "Assistant Educational Psychologist"; and this title only be used when the terms and conditions are consistent with the above. In this way the structured professional development from Assistant to Trainee to qualified EP is maintained.

## Supervision and Support

AsEPs should be appropriately supervised and supported by an EP or EPs. The EP supervising the AsEP must be confident in the skills and abilities of the AsEP in carrying out their duties. The HCPC Standards of Performance, Conduct and Ethics states that *"4.1 You must only delegate work to someone who has the knowledge, skills and experience needed to carry it out safely and effectively."* and *"4.2 You must continue to provide appropriate supervision and support to those you delegate work to."*

It is recommended that AsEPs receive a level of supervision that is commensurate with that of Trainee EP (a minimum of 30 minutes per working day i.e. 2.5 hours per week for a full-time AsEP). Supervision can take many forms but where there is a 1:1 meeting between AsEP and the supervising EP there should be a written record of the meeting.

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

All records and reports produced by an AsEP should be countersigned by the supervising EP.

Supervising EPs should, as always, remain mindful of all the HCPC 'Standards of Performance, Conduct and Ethics' in endorsing the work of others.