Annual Conference 2026 – Programme

Thursday 12 November	Session	Location
10:30 onwards	*Registration & refreshments*	Main Foyer
11:10- 11:40	**Welcome – Lisa O'Connor**, President & **Donna Wiggett**, General Secretary – *AEP*	Buckingham Suite
11:40- 12:20	**Keynote: Gawain Little,** General Secretary - *GFTU*	Buckingham Suite
12:20- 13:05	*Lunch Break*	Caprice Restaurant
13:05- 14:00	**Seminars 1–5**	*See programme*
14:05- 15:00	**Seminars 6–10**	*See Programme*
15:00- 15:20	*Refreshment Break & AGM Registration*	Academy breakout
15:20 *(until 18:30 at latest)*	**Annual General Meeting** *(AGM)*	Buckingham Suite
19:30 onwards	*Social networking & Dinner (served from 20:00)*	Lobby Bar & Buckingham Suite

Friday 13 November	Session	Room
07:00- 09:00	*Breakfast available from 7.00am*	Caprice Restaurant
09:15- 09:20	**Welcome – Day 2**	Buckingham Suite
09:20- 10:00	**Keynote: Joe Elliott,** Professor of Education & **Johny Daniel,** Associate Professor - *Durham University*	Buckingham Suite
10:00- 10:55	**Seminars 11–15**	*See programme*
11:00- 11:20	*Refreshment Break*	Academy breakout
11:20- 12:15	**Seminars 16–20**	*See programme*
12:15- 13:15	*Lunch Break*	Caprice Restaurant
13:15- 14:15	**Keynote: Andy Sawford**, Managing Partner - *Connect Group*	Buckingham Suite
14:15- 14:45	Closing Remarks **- Donna Wiggett**, General Secretary & **Lisa O'Connor**, President - AEP	Buckingham Suite

Seminar programme

Seminars 1–5 — Thursday 12 November, 13:05–14:00

1. **Location: Windsor Room**

Does a School-Based ELSA-Led Solution-Focused Intervention Improve Self-Determination in Adolescents with Externalised Social and Emotional Needs? An Exploratory Multiple Case Study and Process Evaluation

Presenter: Dr Verena West, *Educational Psychologist - Hertfordshire County Council*

Abstract:
Aim: To explore if a school-based solution-focused intervention, delivered by Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), improves outcomes for adolescents with externalised social and emotional needs, and if ELSA self-efficacy improves following intervention delivery. A process evaluation was conducted to identify facilitators and barriers to intervention implementation.

Methodology: This was an exploratory multiple case study research replication design. One ELSA and one pupil constituted one of seven cases.

Participants: All ELSAs (mean age=43.42 years, SD=9.41 years) and pupils (mean age=12 years and 11 months, SD=6.76 months) were of White British ethnicity. All ELSAs and two pupils were female and five pupils were male.

Measures and Data Analysis: Three pre-post intervention, standardised questionnaires, assessed the three domains of pupil self-determination: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. One standardised questionnaire assessed ELSA self-efficacy. Standardised questionnaires were analysed using the Reliable Change Index. Process and Intervention Fidelity semi-structured interviews were conducted mid-intervention, to inform a process evaluation. The interviews were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

Findings: Six pupils experienced significant changes in their autonomy. Three pupils significantly improved their competence, and their corresponding ELSAs significantly increased their self-efficacy. There were no significant changes in pupils' relatedness.

Conclusions: Case study propositions were mostly met in terms of ELSA self-efficacy, and improvements in pupil self-determination, specifically regarding pupil autonomy and competence. Facilitators and barriers to solution-focused intervention were also identified.

Future Research: The intervention could be replicated with intervention facilitators other than ELSAs, and explore how intervention benefits could be transferred to the wider school environment.

2. **Location: Eton Room**

Literacy beyond technocracy: addressing barriers to literacy for all

Presenter: Dr Joanna Stanbridge, *Principal Educational Psychologist - Cambridgeshire County Council*

Abstract: Current SEND reforms place increasing emphasis on early identification of barriers to education, inclusive practice, and building of system-wide capacity. A core remaining challenge is how to deliver effective, equitable and scalable literacy support. Despite sustained policy focus, literacy difficulties continue to shape participation, attainment, and life opportunities into adulthood, particularly for children and young people experiencing structural and/or socioeconomic disadvantage. This session declares literacy as a core concern of EP practice and aims to rally enthusiasm and conviction for literacy being central to educational equity.

This session presents a shift away from individual diagnostic approaches, and towards a system-level response, operationalised through a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. RTI provides a flexible, tiered infrastructure enabling early identification, accessible classrooms, targeted support, and iterative problem-solving that can be adapted so that its implementation aligns with the context of any given school. This fits with current SEND priorities, supporting inclusive, needs-led provision while strengthening system capacity.

RTI and its implementation are underpinned by a philosophical stance grounded in pluralism, epistemic humility, and capabilities-based perspectives. In this context, the understanding of literacy is not limited to decoding and comprehension, but extends to participation, expression, and agency, reflecting a commitment to dignity, recognising the potential impact of stigma, shame, and repeated difficulty on identity and engagement.

Key features include development of school staff confidence, agency, and capacity to respond to barriers to literacy within everyday practice, reducing reliance on categorisation and introducing the construct of a compensation pivot to ensure robust decision-making about using assistive technology to ensure access and participation. A case study will be presented to demonstrate the implementation of RTI into a school's literacy pathway

The session presents a coherent, equitable, and scalable model, supporting EPs to facilitate meaningful, system-wide improvements to young people's literacy, equitably and with integrity.

3. **Location: Ascot Room**

Supporting Children who are Refugees or Seeking Asylum: Guidance for Educational Settings and EPS'

Presenters: Sarah Watson, *Trainee EP (Currently) - Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council* & Dr Rachael Lusby, *Educational Psychologist - City of York Council*

Abstract: Currently there is no reference to asylum-seeking or refugee children in the SEN Code of Practice or EP professional competencies despite evidence that their needs can be significant and complex.

Sarah Watson's (TEP – Sheffield/Bradford) doctoral research focused on promoting social justice for

asylum-seeking and refugee children through constructing guidance principles for EP assessment of asylum-seeking and refugee children.

The study developed themes understood to shape this area of practice: systemic concerns; professional competency and boundaries; values and beliefs; and taking time. The study has implications for how systems and processes might be improved through training and development, multidisciplinary working, anti-oppressive practices and assessment over time.

Dr Rachael Lusby (EP - York) responded to views from schools and experiences of completing assessments in York's contingency hotel by developing guidance for educational settings in York. A collaborative research approach sought views from: families, settings, charities, EP services, health, and council representatives. A guidance document was coproduced highlighting the importance of adopting an inclusive, compassionate, person-centred approach to supporting marginalised families in the city.
A concurrent training offer supports settings to develop their approaches, exploring the impact of intersectional trauma and approaches to assessment. Training is co-delivered by EPs and a mother with lived experience.

Finally, a One Page Profile has been developed to capture key information about the child/young person. The information is then held by the Children Missing Education team and shared with the new local authority, should the family be moved to a new area.

Our seminar would aim to combine these research outcomes to offer theoretical and practical insights on how EPs might better promote social justice for a group of children and young people who are frequently overlooked in professional discourse and wider policy.

4. Location: Henley Room

The use of GenerativeAI in the Educational Psychology workforce

Presenters: Paige Shuttleworth, Marielle Lord, Flo Radford & Aisha Zeina, Trainee Educational Psychologists - University of Southampton

Abstract: The use of Generative AI (GenAI) is increasing in the education workforce. Given the absence of agreed national guidance for Educational Psychologists, the present study aimed to explore how Educational Psychologists are currently using, or not using, GenAI in their professional practice. This included exploring the perceived challenges and opportunities, as well as views on the future role of GenAI within the profession. This study was approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Southampton. Four trainee Educational Psychologists from the University of Southampton, supervised by Cora Sargeant and Sarah Wright, piloted, and then conducted a survey exploring GenAI use in the Educational Psychology workforce. The survey contained a mixture of Likert-scaling and free-text responses and was completed by over 200 participants. Responses were received from across the professional workforce, ranging from Assistant and Trainee EPs to Senior and Principal EPs, with 42.5% responses coming from main grade EPs. There was representation from across the UK, and across years of professional experience. The results are due to be analysed in July 2026 and we would be keen to share these results with a wider audience through the conference. The theme of the conference appears in-line with our interests and this piece of research. We are all looking forward to this possibility and having data which will give an important snapshot into how EPs and EPSs are engaging, or not, with GenAI.

5. **Location: Sandhurst Room**

Workload Pressures on Educational Psychologists - A Case Study in Northern Ireland

Presenters: Darragh Mullen & Maria MacDonald, *Educational Psychologists – Education Authority NI*

Abstract: A workload impact survey has been designed in conjunction with the AEP and is due to be distributed to approximately 100 members in Northern Ireland in June 2026. We would like to present the data that arise from this survey, including any relevant trends that arise and its relevance for Local Authorities. We would also hope to be in a position to discuss how we presented this to Senior Management in EANI, potential responses, and actions that were taken at an organisational level as a result of the survey.

This survey gathered information on the following topics:

- Some personal information
- Contracted weekly hours
- The approximate number of additional hours worked beyond contracted hours
- The approximate number of hours spent in total on statutory work per week (including assessment, consultation, reading documents, writing reports, travel, admin, etc.)
- Whether members feel as though they have sufficient time per week to complete non-statutory professional activities (CPD, supervision, research, training, etc.)
- Whether current workload allows members to easily maintain HCPC standards of proficiency
- The impact of staff shortages on workload
- How members feel about the ability to meet 6-week statutory deadlines
- How current workload is impacting wellbeing
- How likely members may be to leave their current post in the next 12 months due to workload
- What measures could be taken to reduce workload pressures

Seminars 6–10 — Thursday 12 November, 14:05–15:00

6. **Location: Windsor Room**

"Adults make more bad decisions than kids!" Children's conceptualisations of capacity and participation

Presenter: Bernadette Cairns, *Principal Educational Psychologist - Highland Council*

Abstract: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) sets out a range of rights for children and young people, including the right to be consulted on matters that affect them, to give or withhold consent, and to lodge complaints about services. Article 12 states in particular that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously

. However, Children's experiences of participation and how far it influences decisions do not always reflect these ambitions, with many systemic barriers that contribute to this including the ways adults can preside over processes and maintain structures that exclude children. Adults are given more

powerful positions, for example in prioritising parental over child views in policy consultations, healthcare, or service evaluations. Childhood is also seen as a time when adults should have control so as to keep it carefree and so paradoxically, children's ability to exercise their rights – even where these are acknowledged – is determined by people who often seek to limit it.

This seminar will provide information on the way children's views and experiences in one Scottish Local Authority Psychological Service have shaped a process of creating a number of tools to help Article 12 be realised, starting with work exploring with them concepts around capacity and building this into reflective tools for EPs to use in their practice.

7. Location: Eton Room

Enhancing Self-Regulated Learning Skills: Research Insights and Key Implications for Educational Psychology Practice

Presenter: Dr Lucy Amaladoss, Educational Psychologist - London Borough of Hounslow

Abstract: Research has clearly demonstrated a strong positive link between self-regulation skills and effective learning and academic achievement, and the primary school age range has been highlighted as a particularly significant period of development. However, is this research and knowledge reaching schools and classrooms effectively and what is the role for Educational Psychologists in this area?

This seminar disseminates findings from a 2024 doctoral thesis, and subsequent 2025 academic publication, which evaluated the effectiveness and social validity of teacher-implemented Self-Regulated Strategy Development through a mixed methods study. This research explored the effectiveness of this intervention on writing and metacognitive outcomes as well as the impact on pupils from different socioeconomic backgrounds given the persistent and, in some cases, widening attainment gap associated with disadvantage.

The findings and implications of this study will be discussed in the context of Educational Psychology practice and with reference to guidance from the Education Endowment Foundation and the Department for Education. There will be a particular focus on practical implications and insights for Educational Psychologists to support the development of self-regulated learning skills, considering writing development and socioeconomic disadvantage. Implications will be considered at the individual and setting level and across key areas of Educational Psychology delivery including assessment, intervention, training and research. The session will be particularly relevant for Educational Psychologists and services interested in developing their knowledge and practice in this area.

8. Location: Ascot Room

Developing support for literacy in Gloucestershire EPS

Presenter: Kate Billington, *Specialist Senior EP - Gloucestershire Council*

Abstract: Gloucestershire EPS carried out research in 2024 considering EP confidence in different areas of working, including cases where literacy was an area of focus. This workshop aims to highlight

some of the findings from the research to provide a context to the development of strategic work in literacy and learning in Gloucestershire

The workshop will provide an overview of how the service is developing support for literacy and learning for settings and families in Gloucestershire as well as promoting confidence and a shared approach for EPs in the service, for example, considering service position on how difficulties are understood and approaches within assessment and training that promote literacy and independent learning skills.
The EPS are currently considering the evidence base for reading interventions used by UK secondary schools and the specific aspects of reading they aim to support. This workshop will highlight some of the findings from this project and where gaps may be in terms of the effectiveness and generalisability of these interventions.

This workshop will introduce a Gloucestershire research project, which is currently being developed, which aims to consider the evidence base of two reading interventions and support a small number of secondary settings in Gloucestershire to set up, embed and evaluate the use of these for reading progress (vocabulary, comprehension, decoding, fluency, accuracy) as well for affective factors such as enjoyment and motivation.

9. Location: Henley Room

Youth Justice Workers' Experiences of Collaboratively Preventing and Responding to Sexually Harmful Behaviours Through Comprehensive Sex Education

Seminar Presenters: *Daisy Bloor, Educational & Child Psychologist, Wirral EPS*

Seminar Abstract:
Individuals with social communication differences (SCD), including autistic individuals, may be at increased risk of engaging in sexually harmful behaviour (SHB) under certain circumstances. This vulnerability has been attributed to factors such as literal thinking (Allely & Creaby-Attwood, 2016), limited social understanding (Maggio et al., 2022), difficulties interpreting social cues and consent, and the inaccessibility of mainstream Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE), which is often not aligned with their learning and communication needs (Petersson-Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022). There remains a significant lack of developmentally appropriate, accessible CSE resources tailored to populations with SCD, particularly those that support caregivers to deliver education at home (Panagiotakopoulou et al., 2024).

This qualitative participatory action research study was conducted within an English Youth Justice Service (YJS) and aimed to collaboratively develop a caregiver-focused CSE guidebook to support adolescents with SCD. Using the Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) framework, the study involved iterative development sessions with a specialist SHB sub-team, followed by a focus group exploring practitioners' reflections on the collaborative process and anticipated strengths and challenges of early implementation. Data were analysed using conventional content analysis.
Findings highlight practitioners' views that SHB among children with SCD is often associated with gaps in CSE knowledge, impulsivity, emotional regulation difficulties, and social misunderstanding rather than deliberate harmful intent. Participants emphasised the importance of explicit, scaffolded, and relational CSE, repetition, accessible language, indirect learning approaches, and caregiver empowerment. The study underscores the value of multi-disciplinary working and co-production in

developing practical, preventative resources. Implications for practice include the need for caregiver-supported, strengths-based CSE approaches that are embedded within Youth Justice, education, and family support systems.

10. Location: Sandhurst Room

Reclaiming Research: Strengthening the Educational Psychologist's Fifth Function
Presenters: Cathy Atkinson, Editor of *Educational Psychology in Practice* Journal,
Dr Will Shield & Dr Lata Ramoutar, Members of Editor of *Educational Psychology in Practice* Journal Editorial Board

The Currie Report (2002) identifies five core functions of the educational psychologist (EP): consultation, assessment, intervention, training, and research. Of these, research is often the least prioritised in practice, despite its significant potential to strengthen evidence-informed, systemic work within local authorities.

This workshop focuses on the research function as integral to EP practice rather than an additional activity. Research is conceptualised as practitioner-led, locally situated enquiry that is systematic, rigorous, ethically sound, and attentive to detail. Positioned in this way, research enables EPs not only to apply evidence-based approaches but also to generate practice-based evidence that can inform change across systems.

The session will explore what it means to adopt a research-minded approach within everyday practice, including how organising work with a research orientation can enhance outcomes for schools, children and families. Key elements of the research process will be introduced, including developing a clear rationale for a study, identifying focused research questions and intended outcomes, and considering the positioning of the practitioner-researcher.

Participants will also be supported to consider methodological decision-making, approaches to data collection and analysis, and principles of clear and ethical reporting. Further opportunities will be provided at our workshop ***EPs as Researchers: From Reflection to Research*** to generate and refine research ideas that can be taken forward into practice.

The workshop aims to support EPs in strengthening their research identity and confidence, offering a foundation for further development through structured planning, including progression to a research project planning workshop.

Seminars 11–15 — Friday 13 November, 10:00–10:55

11. **Location: Windsor Room**

If AI can do that, what do Educational Psychologists do? AI, ethics and professional identity.

Presenters: Dr Will Shield & Dr Lata Ramoutar, *Associate Professors of Child and Educational Psychology - University of Exeter*

Abstract: Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing how knowledge is accessed, generated and communicated. For educational psychologists (EPs), this raises important questions about

professional identity, expertise and the future direction of the profession. While much discussion has focused on the opportunities and risks associated with AI, less attention has been given to what these developments reveal about the nature and value of educational psychology itself.

Drawing on reflections from EP training, practice and supervision, this seminar explores how AI is prompting a reconsideration of what EPs do, how we do it and what remains valuable about our contribution. Experiences within university training programmes have highlighted how easily AI can now generate, summarise and communicate psychological knowledge. This has led to important questions about the distinction between declarative knowledge, what we know, and procedural knowledge, how we apply, adapt and use that knowledge within complex human systems.

The session will explore the implications of AI for consultation, assessment, formulation, report writing, supervision and professional decision-making. Particular attention will be given to the ethical and value-based dimensions of EP practice, including professional judgement, critical reflection and accountability. These aspects of practice remain difficult to automate and sit at the heart of educational psychology's contribution to children, families, schools and systems.

Rather than positioning AI as a threat to the profession, the seminar will consider how it creates an opportunity to revisit longstanding questions about expertise, knowledge and professional identity. Participants will be invited to reflect on how educational psychology can actively shape its next chapter, ensuring that technological developments enhance rather than dilute the values that underpin the profession. Through discussion and case examples, the session will offer practical provocations and questions that participants can take back to local services, training contexts and professional conversations about the role of AI in educational psychology.

12. Location: Oxford Room

The Science of Teaching Reading: What to Teaching, How to Teach and Why Pupils Fail to Learn

Presenter: Jonathan Solity, *Director - Optima Psychology*

Abstract: Psychologists have typically asked how children learnt and focused on within-child factors to explain academic success and failure. It was assumed that children's learning was determined, to a considerable extent, by their overall ability and capacity to learn and that measures of children's cognitive functioning and IQ would provide a reliable guide to their potential learning outcomes. A failure to learn led to assessments of their cognitive development and the differences that existed with their more successful peers. However, it is questionable whether such assessments translated into effective instructional programmes.

Less frequently asked questions focus on curriculum content and teaching methodology. They were derived from the assumption that there is no teaching without learning and that an analysis of the learning environment, rather than the child, provided the most valuable starting point for understanding what and how to teach. In recent years there have been significant advances in the Science of Teaching that have resulted in: (i) computational analyses of children's literature that have identified the most useful, generalisable skills to teach beginning readers and (ii) research into the structure of the learning environment that has focused on the core instructional principles that facilitate pupils' learning.

This seminar will describe the psychological theory and research underpinning the Science of Teaching. It will identify the outcomes of the analyses into what to teach, highlight the core instructional principles of learning that impact on how to teach and present them within an ipsative framework for assessing pupils progress. The seminar will also describe the instructional factors that cause pupils to experience difficulties in learning and end by highlighting the implications of the Science of Teaching for educational psychologists.

13. Location: Marlow Room

Words as Action: Neuro-Affirming Language, Anti-Ableism and Equity in EP Practice

Presenter: Dr Jane Park, *Co-Principal EP - Telford & Wrekin EPS*
Abstract: Language is never neutral. The words we choose and use as EPs carry power, shaping how neurodivergent children and young people are perceived, understood and supported across systems. Language influences identity, expectations, access to provision and the distribution of power. This workshop positions neuro-affirming language not as a stylistic preference, but as a core feature of equitable, ethical and anti-ableist EP practice.

Drawing on the Neuro-Affirming Language Guide, co-produced by Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Educational Psychology Services alongside multi-agency professionals and individuals with lived experience, the workshop situates language firmly within context, culture and systems. Participants will explore how historically medicalised and deficit-focused narratives have contributed to the exclusion and marginalisation of neurodivergent children and young people, often reinforcing notions of disorder, compliance and remediation.

Grounded in the neurodiversity paradigm, the workshop will examine identity-first language, presuming competence and strengths-led formulations as practical tools for equity and inclusion. Through examples from consultation and report writing, participants will explore how reframing language can shift responsibility away from the individual and towards systems, relationships and environments. Wherever colleagues find themselves on their path towards neuro-affirming practice, the session will support EPs to actively develop their language and terminology and translate this knowledge into practice. Colleagues will be invited to critically reflect on their own spoken and written language, and to consider how everyday practice can either maintain or actively disrupt ableist assumptions. With reference to Kerry Murphy's zones of neuro-affirming practice and reflection, the workshop will encourage Educational Psychologists to use language intentionally as action: to affirm identity, centre lived experience, redistribute power, and advance inclusive, anti-ableist and socially just practice across educational and multi-agency contexts.

14. Location: Sonning Room

How do Educational Psychologists Perceive the Quality of the Supervision They Receive, and What Factors may Influence This?

Presenters: Suzanna Bird, *Educational Psychologist - Barking and Dagenham EPS* & Simon Ungar, *Educational Psychologist – UCL*

Abstract: Supervision is increasingly recognised as an essential component of good practice in psychological professions. This doctoral thesis study aimed to assess the quality of supervision that qualified educational psychologists (EPs) are receiving in the UK, using an online mixed-methods questionnaire. Of the 220 EPs who participated in the study, 85.3% identified as currently receiving adequate supervision, 28% identified as currently receiving exceptional supervision, 18.3% identified as currently receiving inadequate supervision and 3.7% identified as currently receiving harmful supervision, with these categories being non-mutually exclusive such that a participant may self-report experiencing multiple types of supervision with the same supervisor. Receiving adequate supervision was positively associated with having supervision monthly or more frequently, keeping a supervision record and use of a supervision policy. Use of a supervision model was positively associated with exceptional supervision. Supervisors being trained in supervision was positively associated with adequate and exceptional supervision, and negatively associated with inadequate supervision. The use of a supervision contract was not significantly associated with any supervision category. Supervisor actions and inactions described by participants as impacting their supervision experiences across quality categories related to supervision processes, qualities of the supervisory relationship, supervisor skills and supporting supervisee professional development. Implications for the supervision practice of EPs and further research areas are discussed.

15. **Location: Sandhurst Room**

Hearing the Silence: Understanding Collective Belonging for Deaf Students through a Critical-Constructivist Lens

Presenter: Sarah Grimble, Trainee Educational Psychologist - City of Doncaster Council

Abstract: Belonging is a multi-faceted phenomenon with implications across personal, social and academic areas. Existing research conducted predominantly outside the UK provides insight into identity construction, social inclusion and academic progress for Deaf children and young people. Yet, offers limited insight into how Deaf children and young people understand, negotiate and embody a sense of belonging at school. For Deaf young people, belonging is particularly vital because their access to communication, social interaction and identity-affirming environments is often shaped by systems that were not designed with them in mind.

This seminar will present my doctoral research, drawing on Social Constructionism and Deaf Critical Theory, alongside a cultural-linguistic model of Deafness, which considering Deafness to be a cultural identity rather than an audiological deficit. These lenses consider the role of power, privilege and language in constructing meaning of Deaf young people's experiences of belonging at school. Using Critical-Constructivist Grounded Theory as a means of exploratory study, nine Deaf co-researchers shared their experiences of belonging through in-person interviews, conducted alongside a British Sign Language interpreter. The resulting Grounded Theory documents a journey of how Deaf young people embody collective belonging in the face of oppression. The individual components of this journey, accessible language, identity development, shared experiences and Deaf pride, lead to Deaf Consciousness, in which solidarity with other Deaf peers strengthens and empowers individuals to advocate and challenge acts of oppression in a hearing-dominant society

The theoretical model alongside nine tenets of Deaf Consciousness will be presented, designed to guide hearing professionals towards meaningful allyship with Deaf communities, promoting inclusion, diversity and equality for Deaf young people in EP practice and highlight implications for wider educational policy and practice.

Seminars 16–20 — Friday 13 November, 11:20–12:15

16. **Location: Sandhurst Room**

COMPASS: a framework for navigating the challenges of an increasingly polarised world

Seminar Presenters: James Wood, Wiltshire Council & Joanna Stanbridge, Cambridgeshire Council

Abstract: As the SEND Reforms land and we all begin to navigate the first days of the new landscape, we will be faced with a wide spectrum of emotional, ethical and practical reactions from families, schools, LA colleagues, as well as from one another as EPs. We can predict noise, strong views, uncertainty, and a very human pull towards polarisation.

In preparation for this, we have developed a theory-based framework for EPs to use which can provide a shared anchor and help us to resist being drawn into black and white thinking and polarised arguments – COMPASS.

The COMPASS framework is not a tool to tell people what to think, or to persuade them to agree. It is a tool to support how we think, especially when a natural human response under threat is to seek certainty. We often look for palatable explanations which are oversimplified, and we end up nailing colours to a mast to show allegiance. The COMPASS framework helps to provide psychological space for reflective thought, relational safety, and grounded forward motion, and guards against the paralysis and intransigence that can arise from polarisation: - we want to acknowledge and hold differences of opinion whilst finding agreed ways forward.

As EPs, we are often the ones who can bring the oxygen back into the room, not by taking sides, but by offering frameworks that encourage reflection, reduce heat, and create the conditions for thoughtful action.

During this session we will introduce COMPASS and use the example of the dyslexia debate to demonstrate COMPASS in action.

17. **Location: Oxford Room**

On Positive inclusive transition (On Point) and the role of the Educational Psychologist in the primary to secondary transition of disadvantaged children

Presenter: Dr Louise Bason, *Specialist Educational Psychologist - Warrington EPS*

Abstract: The move from primary to secondary school is a major developmental milestone and it has drawn extensive research (e.g. Jindal-Snape et al.,2020, 2023) with challenges identified for those pupils that are disadvantaged. Furthermore, although transition planning and preparation by schools is established as important, the processes involved can vary and impact is not always effective. This means that establishing activities that make an enhanced transition and which support positive outcomes for pupils, is important.

This seminar will focus on what is meant by an enhanced transition by sharing the way in which the On-point pilot project employed a person-centred methodology to support the transition of 4 pupils who were at SEND support in their respective primary schools. The project was carried out between

February 2025 and February 2026, spanning from the spring term of Year 6 to the spring term of Year 7. During the seminar I will share the features of the project and what was identified as having most impact in the evaluation process in terms of enabling positive outcomes for the pupils involved. I will also talk about the way in which this project is leading to further work. This seminar intends to discuss the way in which the role and skills of the EP can be instrumental at various operational levels, particularly the systemic.

18. Location: Marlow Room

Executive Functioning as a framework for embedding inclusive school practice

Seminar Presenter: Gemma Handelsman, *Educational Psychologist - Handelsman Psychology*

Abstract: Executive Functioning (EF) underpins inclusive classroom practice, enabling pupils to manage attention, regulate behaviour, follow instructions and sustain goal-directed learning (Dawson & Guare, 2018). Research highlights strong links between EF and both academic and social-emotional outcomes, with evidence that these skills can be developed and supported through embedded classroom approaches. The Education Endowment Foundation similarly identifies metacognition and self-regulated learning as high-impact strategies.
This workshop explores how an EF framework can support Educational Psychologists (EPs) to develop more inclusive and responsive approaches to learning and behaviour. It considers how reframing aspects of behaviour as skills to be developed can shift how need is understood in schools.

It draws on three years of iterative, action research-informed practice facilitating EF projects across diverse settings. These projects emphasise the EP's role across child, group/classroom and organisational/whole-school levels, as reflected in the Currie Matrix (NAPEP, 2025). They also draw on Chidley and Stringer's (2020) Implementation Framework, which highlights the "transfer problem", where training alone rarely leads to sustained change. The projects position EPs as key agents in supporting implementation through consultation, training and ongoing, iterative cycles of data-informed reviews.

Participants will explore key principles, illustrative examples and implementation considerations for using an EF framework to support inclusive classroom and whole-school practice.

At a time when EPs are reflecting on their role within 'Every child achieving and thriving' (DfE, 2026), the workshop offers an evidence-informed, practice-based perspective on how EPs can help embed inclusive, sustainable approaches across children, classrooms and whole-school systems.

19. Location: Sonning Room

Promoting Inclusion of EYs Children through Co-regulation with Key Adults

Presenters: Rona Taylor, *Senior Educational Psychologist*, Natasha Goodhall, *Specialist Educational Psychologist* & Amy Sutton, *Trainee Educational Psychologist - Salford City Council*

Abstract: Working collaboratively like this has also strengthened links between school and home, as a

mutual trust and respect was developed." Quote from participating SENDCo
In September 2025, Salford EPS began a 2 year Early Years Co-regulation Project involving 15 diverse schools with the aims of:

- Improving the wellbeing of children and their carers
- Increasing staff knowledge and skills
- Supporting connections between staff, children and families
- Avoiding exclusions of Early Years children
- Generalising skills across setting and enhancing whole school practice

The project drew on relational approaches, including use of the PACE model, attachment theory, intensive interaction and emotion coaching to support the enhancement of the knowledge and skills base of the staff we worked with.

Natasha, Amy and Rona will explain the genesis of the project, the constituent parts, including whole school training, mini-CPD sessions, solution circles, a piece of casework involving 6 sessions of therapeutic work and EP/TEP/Assistant EP group supervision. We will share the joys and the challenges of this work as well as learning from the evaluation we have been able to do so far, including feedback from participants.

Time will be given in the workshop for participants to ask questions and consider ways that aspects of the Co-regulation Project could be implemented in their local context.

20. Location: Windsor Room

EPs as Researchers: From Reflection to Publication

Presenters: Cathy Atkinson, Editor of *Educational Psychology in Practice Journal*
Katherine Callicott, Ida Conboy & Frank Pearson – *Members of Educational Psychology in Practice Journal Editorial Board*

Educational Psychology Services are operating within a rapidly changing landscape shaped by SEND reform, increasing demand, workforce pressures, and evolving models of delivery. These shifts raise important questions about how services are organised, how impact is demonstrated, and how educational psychologists (EPs) can best meet the needs of children, young people, families, and schools.

In this context, practitioner research and evaluation are critical. If EPs are to influence practice, shape service development, and contribute to national conversations, we need robust evidence grounded in our everyday work. However, valuable ideas are often left unexplored or important doctoral research unpublished due to competing demands on time and capacity.

This interactive workshop, facilitated by members of the *Educational Psychology in Practice* (EPIP) Editorial Board, provides space to pause, reflect, and develop research-informed practice. Participants are invited to bring a practice question, service development, evaluation, or thesis research they are seeking to write up for publication.

Through collaborative discussion and problem-solving, the session will support participants to refine practice questions into researchable projects, design feasible evaluations, and strengthen

methodological rigour. A key focus will be on writing for publication, including how to translate service-based work or doctoral research into a journal article suitable for *Educational Psychology in Practice*.

The workshop will also offer practical guidance on structuring papers, navigating the publication process, and identifying clear next steps. It will be particularly relevant for those wishing to disseminate their work and strengthen the evidence base for educational psychology.

Keynote Speakers (Buckingham Suite)

Gawain Little

Gawain Little is the current General Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU). He is the co-author of Lessons in Organising What Trade Unionists Can Learn from The War on Teachers (Pluto, 2023). Prior to the GFTU, he was a teacher for over 20 years and activist. This included being a workplace rep, local branch officer and National Executive member of the National Education Union (NEU). Gawain chaired the International Solidarity Committee of the NEU and edited the journal *Education for Tomorrow*.

Gawain is a longstanding trade union activist and a long-standing education campaigner. Through his work in education and the trade union movement, he champions equitable, inclusive education for all.

Joe Elliott and Johny Daniel

Joe (Julian) Elliott is a Professor of Educational Psychology at Durham University. After graduating from Durham in 1977 he practised as a teacher of children with special educational needs and subsequently worked as an educational psychologist in North East England. As an AEP member at that time, he was responsible for organising North-East branch annual study days. Joe changed track to become a university lecturer in 1990 but continued to occasionally act as an EP at a local school for the next three decades. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, former President of the International Association for Cognitive Education and Psychology, an appointed Education Panel member of the UK Research Excellence Framework for its three most recent exercises (2014, 2021 and 2029) and, somewhat surprisingly, is a member of the US-based International Dyslexia Association's Scientific Advisory Board. Joe received the DECP 2020 Award for Outstanding Contribution to Educational Psychology and, almost as happily, was once the subject of a question on pub quiz machines.

Dr Johny Daniel is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Durham University. His research addresses fundamental questions about how we identify children with specific learning difficulties, why some children are more likely to be identified than others, and what constitutes effective educational support. Combining large-scale national datasets with school-based intervention research, his work challenges assumptions about SEND identification and examines the relationships between SEND, educational attainment, mental health, and inequality. He currently leads research funded by the Nuffield Foundation and ADR UK.

Andy Sawford

Andy Sawford is the managing Partner at Connect. The Connect Group is a strategic communications consultancy, supporting organisations, including the AEP to navigate politics, policy making and the media. He is a former British politician who served as Member of Parliament for Corby from 2012 to 2015. A member of the Labour and Co-operative parties, he was Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government from 2013

to 2015. From 2008 to 2012 he was the Chief Executive of the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU), a London-based thinktank and registered charity.

A safe and inclusive conference

The AEP is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for everyone attending our conferences and events.

Our safeguarding policies have been recently reviewed and updated to reflect this commitment, and we ask all delegates to familiarise themselves with and adhere to our **Code of Conduct** throughout the event. **Designated safeguarding contacts** will be available throughout the conference to receive reports or complaints, offer support, record incidents, escalate serious concerns and liaise with venue management where necessary. You can find a photographs and contact details below, so you know who to approach should you have a concern, need support, or wish to report an incident.

We encourage delegates who experience or witness behaviour that causes concern to speak to a designated contact. Every concern will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.

Designated Safeguarding Contacts Information:



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