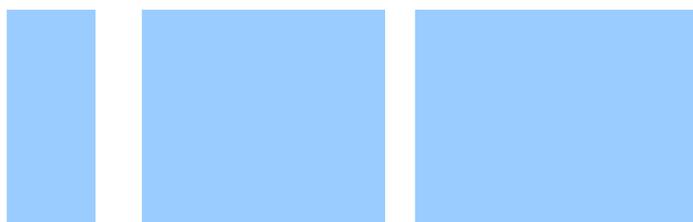
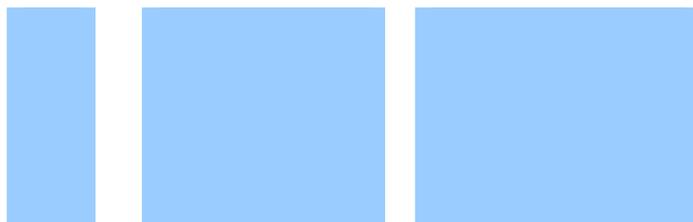


Educational psychology in Scotland: making a difference



An aspect report on the findings of inspections of local authority
educational psychology services 2006-10

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Foreword

While Scottish education serves many young people well, more needs to be done to ensure that all children and young people receive the support and guidance they need to maximise their achievements and be well prepared for life in the 21st century. Ensuring the provision of high quality local authority educational psychology services across the whole of Scotland ought to be one strand in our national strategy for addressing this challenging agenda.

This report provides, for the first time, an overview based on inspections of all 32 local authority educational psychology services. The picture it presents is broadly a very positive one although it also points to areas in which there is certainly scope for further improvement. The report shows that services are making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people in Scotland, particularly some of the most vulnerable. We have seen that effective educational psychology provision can make an important contribution to meeting the needs of all learners through supporting families, schools and education authorities in a wide variety of ways.

We have found many strengths in educational psychology services across Scotland. Almost all ensure, for example, that they meet the needs of parents and families effectively. Overall, the quality of their work with individual children and young people through programmes and therapeutic approaches is strong across Scotland, with almost all services being evaluated as good or better in that respect. In addition to their effective work with children and families, services have made important contributions to the implementation of key national priorities, including the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004*¹ and 2009 amendments² and the *Getting it right for every child*³ (GIRFEC) agenda. The breadth of this work gives educational psychology services a pivotal position in assisting education authorities in the development and implementation of policies and practice to raise educational standards for Scotland's children and young people.

Educational psychologists can and do contribute to the quality of education in schools and local authorities. Most services have become more involved in improving outcomes for all children and young people through developments relating to the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence⁴. This has been particularly evident in areas related to health and wellbeing and there is a need now to extend that work more strongly in other areas. Across Scotland, services have responded positively to the post-school psychological service initiative developed to increase achievement amongst young people and improve their transition into education, training and the world of work.

¹ *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004*, (The Scottish Government), <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/4/contents>.

² *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009*, (The Scottish Government), <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/7/contents>.

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec>.

⁴

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/understandingthecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp>.

We found that, across the country, the services were very varied in form and differed in the balance of their activities. Each has developed in response to local needs, with different priorities and structures. For example, a number of services have a strong role in research and professional development, building capacity across educational staff and partner agencies. Our findings suggest that there is no one formula for success. We have identified strong practice in services with a range of structures and staffing levels serving island, rural and urban settings across Scotland. In the most effective services, practice is well aligned with the vision, values and aims of the council and robust self-evaluation is used to identify and then implement the changes which are needed to improve outcomes. One consistent finding is that effective services have established very high quality partnerships and are using them to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

Other aspects of variability were less positive. Further work is required to improve self-evaluation in a number of services and increase the role of stakeholders in service review and development. Support and challenge, both by education authorities and by service managers, is not sufficiently robust in a few services. We found that a third of schools and centres do not feel that their service helped them achieve aspects of their strategic development plan or contributed to the continuing professional development of staff to improve their impact on children and young people.

There is now an exciting opportunity to strengthen the applied research function of educational psychology services to evaluate new initiatives and inform the local development and spread of effective practice. We have seen some strong examples of this happening, but it is an area in which there is scope for much more to be delivered, in a broader range of areas, so helping to support the increasing growth of education as a 'learning profession' which is continually reflecting upon, and improving, its own practice.

More requires to be done, therefore, to enable children and young people across Scotland to have access to the highest quality of educational psychology services, albeit adapted to local needs. In the current challenging financial context, services will certainly need to be efficient, responsive and flexible, so that their valuable resources are used to best effect. In the report, we have highlighted a wide range of good practice which can act as benchmarks for services as they strive to improve.

In conclusion, I hope this report, presenting as it does a comprehensive 'state of the nation' view of educational psychology in Scotland, will prove to be a catalyst for taking the development of services to a new, higher, level of performance. In particular, I hope the findings will be of value to all of those in education authorities and educational psychology services who are seeking to improve further the services they deliver, with a focus on maximising their impact in promoting better outcomes for all children and young people across Scotland.

Dr Bill Maxwell
HM Senior Chief Inspector

1. Introduction

Educational psychology services (EPS) work with children and young people from birth to 19 years of age, and increasingly up to the age of 24. They advise education authorities, school staff and, importantly, parents on the needs of children and young people with additional support needs and the educational provision made for them. They provide direct support to individual children and young people. They often work with and through others, which enables more children and young people to benefit from educational psychological skills and knowledge. They undertake research and contribute to the professional development of, for example, teachers. Their wide statutory role includes the study of children with additional support needs and provision of advice to the Children's Reporter on the needs of vulnerable children and young people, including those who commit offences or are in need of care and protection as outlined in the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004*.

The location, geography and socio-economic profile of each local authority have influenced the development of each service as it seeks to provide high quality educational psychology services to meet local needs. Services vary considerably in size, with staffing ranging from two educational psychologists to more than 50 in large urban services. Almost all EPS are led by a principal educational psychologist.

In 2001, the Scottish Executive commissioned a national review of EPS in Scotland. The subsequent report, *Review of provision of educational psychology services in Scotland (2002)*⁵ made a number of recommendations including:

'Educational psychology services should have a more formal framework of evaluation, which incorporates self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and, inspection by HM Inspectorate of Education and which, in particular, takes full account of the views of children, young people and parents.' (Recommendation 20)

In response to this recommendation, HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) developed a framework for self-evaluation and quality improvement, *Quality management in local authority educational psychology services (2007) (QMILAEPS)*,⁶ in partnership with educational psychologists and university staff.

In 2006, HMIE began a programme of inspection covering all of Scotland's 32 EPS using this quality improvement framework. We completed the programme in November 2010. This report analyses the evidence from these inspections.

More information about the inspection framework and how it was applied is included in Appendix 1. The inspections focused on the quality of services delivered by

⁵ *Review of provision of educational psychology services in Scotland (2002)*, The Scottish Executive, 2002,

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2002/02/10701/File-1>.

⁶ *Quality management in local authority educational psychology services*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007,

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/epsseqi.pdf>.

educational psychologists and, importantly, examined the impact and outcomes for children, young people and families. The inspections took account of the delivery of post-school psychological services, evaluating the impact of EPS in improving outcomes for young people moving from formal education into the world of work, training, further and higher education. Inspectors took full account of the particular context of the individual service when reaching evaluations about performance.

In each case, we gathered and analysed views on the quality of the service from children and young people, families, school and local education authority staff, partner agencies and EPS staff. An analysis of the views of these stakeholders (more than 5000 respondents in all) is provided in Appendix 2.

Inspectors made a number of evaluations in each inspection with reference to indicators of quality in the inspection framework. These judgements are summarised in Appendix 3. Overall, they show a very positive picture. For example, EPS have effectively embedded their professional legislative duties within service guidelines and practice frameworks. We judged that their work with individual children and young people, and their support for others, including schools and partner agencies was having a positive impact. In almost all services, we found that the needs of parents and families were being effectively met and almost all EPS were seen to be promoting inclusive practices in all aspects of their work.

The quality indicators where the findings were less positive related to some of the key processes, specifically research, management of the service and, in some cases, leadership and direction. Some features came through frequently as areas for improvement in inspection reports. These included a need to:

- improve outcomes for children and young people through evaluating more effectively the impact of the work of the service;
- involve stakeholders and in particular children and families in policy and service development;
- develop effective policies to ensure consistency of practice; and
- improve leadership and direction, and strengthen the culture of challenge.

Around one third of services had significant weaknesses in policy development, planning and the participation of stakeholders in the development and improvement of EPS.

We describe this evidence more fully and discuss its implications in the chapters which follow.

In evaluations carried out after inspections, EPS staff often commented that the inspection process acted as a catalyst for change. In most cases, it led to prompt and effective action to bring about improvement.

Where we found that substantial improvements were required in an individual service we undertook further follow-through inspection activity. The scope of each

follow-through inspection was developed in collaboration with the service and, in a number of cases, principal and depute principal educational psychologists jointly observed practice and participated in focus groups alongside inspectors to help build capacity within the service. In follow-through inspections we have been able to report that services had made satisfactory or better progress in almost all of the areas identified for improvement, and good or very good progress in a majority of areas.

Evidence from EPS inspections has contributed to evaluations of children's services through council, education authority and multi-agency inspections and reviews.

Future evaluative activity

Through this programme of inspections HMIE has established a national baseline of performance for educational psychology services across Scotland. As a result, the need for future scrutiny of EPS by HM Inspectors can now be determined through the *Shared Risk Assessment process*⁷ rather than a further cycle of inspection. This is in line with the Scottish Government's response to Professor Lorne Crerar's review of scrutiny bodies⁸, which has led to a number of significant changes in the coordination and frequency of strategic level scrutiny including a more streamlined process of assessing risk and planning appropriate scrutiny. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with EPS across Scotland and work with each education authority to help to support and challenge self-evaluation and ongoing improvement, with a strong emphasis on disseminating good practice.



⁷ <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/work/scrutiny/aip.php>.

⁸ *Report of the independent review of regulation, audit, inspection and complaints handling of public services in Scotland*, The Scottish Government, September 2007, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/25120506/19>.

2. What key outcomes have educational psychology services achieved?

The evaluation framework we used looks at outcomes from two different perspectives, and we consider both in this section.

Firstly it looks at the contribution of services to improving outcomes for the ultimate end-user of services - the learner - recognising that these contributions are often indirect because they involve educational psychologists in helping others to help the learner. These issues are explored under the quality indicator *improvements in performance*.

We also look at outcomes for EPS from another perspective, that is the extent to which they achieve success in fulfilling their statutory functions, meeting legislative requirements and following appropriate codes of practice. These key aspects of overall performance for educational psychology services relate to the quality indicator *fulfilment of statutory duties*.

For the first of these perspectives, we focus on the contributions of EPS to local and national priorities and, through these, to individuals. The priorities may be set out in locally-determined targets for social, education, wellbeing and care objectives in Children's Services and other plans. They can include, for example, improving achievements for children and young people with additional support needs and ensuring more effective transitions for children and young people entering school education or moving into the post-school stage. Evidence relating to targets of these kinds can provide indications of the improvements in performance made by EPS. It is important to acknowledge, however, that it is not always straightforward to obtain evidence of impact and improved outcomes for children and young people which can be related directly to the contribution of EPS. This report does include evidence of positive outcomes but one of its main findings is that there is a need to develop more comprehensive approaches for evaluating the impact and outcomes of the services' work.

We judged the majority of EPS to be good or better in relation to improvements in performance. We found many examples of services being effective in improving outcomes for individuals and for specific groups of children and young people, including those with autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, those who are looked after by the council and those who have social, emotional and behavioural needs. For example, children with autism spectrum disorders are receiving better targeted support through improved partnership working. In a majority of services, educational psychologists have helped to achieve a reduction in out-of-authority school placements as a result of well-targeted intervention for high risk children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs.

West Lothian EPS had worked successfully as part of a multi-agency team to meet the targets for looked after children (LAC) set out in the council's Single Outcome Agreement and the *We Can and Must Do Better* action plan. The service, working with others, supported young people in improving their school attendance and increasing their achievements. The positive impact of the work of the multi-agency approach had included raised awareness of the needs of LAC, up-skilling of foster carers and improved attainment year on year.

Shetland Islands EPS in collaboration with wider council services, had developed high quality provision for individual children and young people with complex needs. The flexible use of existing resources had enabled children and young people to be included in their own community, minimising the need for placement on the mainland. These approaches and programmes had increased the skills and confidence of teachers, support staff and partner agencies in meeting more effectively the needs of children and young people with complex needs.

Most services could show how they have made positive contributions to achieving local and national objectives. For example, services have played a significant role towards improving trends related to the GIRFEC agenda, inclusion and reducing exclusion. A growing number of services have contributed to their authority's implementation strategies for Curriculum for Excellence. EPS have provided significant support to schools and centres in addressing aspects of health and wellbeing to better support the needs of children and young people.

Clackmannanshire EPS was making a positive impact on the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence by supporting strategic developments across the education authority and carrying out high quality work with individual families. Examples included an emotional wellbeing event for all young people in S5 and S6 and promoting the emotional competence of young people across the primary, secondary and college sectors.

North Lanarkshire EPS had been successful in identifying Active Literacy as a strategy to improve the learning experiences and literacy attainment of primary school children across the authority. Longitudinal data had confirmed that the strategy was having a positive effect on reading attainment. Stakeholder feedback had indicated that the strategy was associated with improvements in the quality of learning and teaching and learner behaviour.

Overall across Scotland, our evidence shows that EPS could make a stronger contribution to improving outcomes for all children and young people. Opportunities for this would include contributing their knowledge of child development and learning

theory to support schools and centres to improve learning and teaching, and playing an active part in the development of approaches to assessment.

A majority of EPS have contributed to supporting schools', and partner agencies' capacity to improve outcomes for children and young people through innovative approaches to research including action enquiry.

Glasgow City EPS had developed a broad range of innovative practice to promote the achievements and emotional wellbeing of children and young people. These approaches included:

- the development of a self-evaluation tool, *How Nurturing Is Our School?* This encouraged schools to reflect on the extent to which they had put in place nurturing principles to improve the experiences and emotional wellbeing of children.
- *The Motivated School*⁹ which was helping young people to develop the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence by promoting wellbeing, personal development and empowerment in children and young people.

In a few services, educational psychologists are involved in improving school performance through their participation in education authority quality assurance processes. Several services have contributed strongly to improvement planning linked to the single outcome agreement.

A majority of services have successfully helped and advised other partners and agencies, leading to improvements in provision for children and young people. Examples include increasing the understanding of education authority staff in relation to loss, trauma, and attachment, and the development and evaluation of nurture. There are examples of programmes and therapeutic interventions which children and young people report have helped them to cope with feelings of anxiety and depression, by building their resilience and self esteem.

In many areas, the development of post-school work has resulted in improved transitions for young people, more effective joint working and the development of policy and practice in this area. In most services, post-school work is not yet sufficiently embedded into educational authority targets to allow EPS to show improvements over time in key indicators within the post-school sector. Only a few services have fully utilised the skills of all members of staff in the delivery of post-school psychological services. For the majority of services, post-school psychological services is delivered by a few nominated staff. It will be important to embed further the delivery of post-school interventions across a wider range of educational psychologists in order to ensure sustainability.

⁹ <http://www.themotivatedschool.com/aboutMotivatedSchool.html>.

Whilst most EPS have made a strong impact at strategic levels, only a few services have been explicitly planned into their councils' single outcome agreement targets. This has resulted in services being unable to make direct links between their involvement in education authority developments, such as *More Choices More Chances (MCMC)*¹⁰ strategies, and improved outcomes over time.

In a majority of education authorities, but not all, the EPS had had an important influence on the development of effective multi-agency and cross-sector working. In collaboration with partners and other education authority services, we have found that educational psychologists have made strong contributions to the implementation of *GIRFEC, Integrated Assessment Planning and Recording Frameworks (IAF)*¹¹, and *MCMC*. In a minority of EPS, targets for improvement were not sufficiently focused on the impact and outcomes for service users, particularly children and young people. Service targets were not well linked to education authority priorities.

Turning to the second main area of performance, all 32 education authorities were judged to be effectively meeting their statutory duties regarding the provision of educational psychology. Local authority educational psychologists across Scotland had good or better knowledge of their statutory duties. In almost all services, there is appropriate professional guidance in place and individual educational psychologists have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice through effective professional dialogue and continued professional development. EPS use their knowledge and understanding of the legislation well to develop systems and procedures to support and train colleagues and partners. They have increased the knowledge and understanding of school staff and partners of their legislative duties and helped to ensure that the additional support needs of children and young people are better planned for and met. Almost all EPS staff have been appropriately trained in safeguarding procedures although, in a few services, administrative staff have not been involved in appropriate training. Educational psychologists uphold practice requirements laid down by their professional associations.

A number of services had yet to put in place appropriate measures to ensure that all staff are fully aware of their statutory duties in relation to race, equality and diversity issues.

We also found that a few services needed to do further training to support staff in their wider statutory duties, to ensure that appropriate advice is provided to support the needs of vulnerable children and young people, including those who commit offences or are in need of care and protection. This work should be undertaken in collaboration with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration.

¹⁰ *More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland*, The Scottish Executive, 2006, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/13100205/16>.

¹¹ *Getting it right for every child: Proposals For Action: Section 3 Integrated Assessment, Planning and Recording Framework: Supporting Paper 2: Mapping template*, The Scottish Executive, 2005, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/07/25112359/24034>.

Summary of key findings

Strengths

- Success in helping to improve outcomes for individual children and specific groups of children, including the most vulnerable.
- Positive contributions to aspects of development within Curriculum for Excellence in the majority of cases.
- Work on the development of health and wellbeing across schools and communities, such as resilience and emotional competence, leading to a demonstrably positive impact on outcomes for children and young people.
- Positive impact on aspects of education authority improvement planning, policy and strategy development.
- Support for effective transitions into the world of work, training and further and higher education, contributing to increasing the number of vulnerable young people who move into sustained positive destinations.
- Professional fulfilment of statutory duties.
- Strong contribution to the implementation of the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and the 2009 amendments*, the GIRFEC agenda and 16+ Learning strategy.

Aspects for improvement

- Broadening the contribution of EPS to the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, being clear how the contributions are intended to lead to improved outcomes for all children and young people, particularly through improving learning, teaching and assessment.
- Developing improved arrangements to track children and young people's progress to monitor more effectively the impact of the range of EPS activities, including their work with individual children.
- Ensuring that improvement targets focus on impact and outcomes for service users and are closely linked to education authority priorities, and establishing more robust and systematic ways of collecting data to demonstrate progress and improvement.
- Embedding post-school psychological services' work more fully across EPS, with clearer strategic links to council planning and performance management.
- In partnership with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, review practice in a few EPS to better deliver their statutory duties in relation to giving advice to the Children's Reporter about vulnerable children and young people.

3. How well do educational psychology services meet the needs of their stakeholders?

This section focuses on the benefits which stakeholders have derived from local authority EPS. Stakeholders here include children and young people who receive educational psychology services and also those who support them (and so have a significant interest in the delivery of the services), for example, parents and families, schools, teachers and applied health professionals. We also include the staff within the EPS in this section. We evaluated how well educational psychologists meet the needs of stakeholders with reference to quality indicators including:

- *impact on children and young people;*
- *impact on parents, carers and families;*
- *impact on staff;*
- *impact on the local and wider community; and*
- *partnership working.*

Across Scotland, there is strong evidence of EPS working effectively with families, schools and partner agencies to meet the needs of children and young people. Most educational psychologists are generally highly skilled in working with others to address the wide range of needs that children and young people have at all stages, from the early years, through primary and secondary school and onto the world of work and post-school education. We judged the impact on children and young people to be good or better in most services. We found that educational psychologists have developed strong and productive working relationships with children and young people. Young people find it particularly helpful when educational psychologists support them to attend meetings which affect their lives and when they can be actively involved in making decisions. A number of services have developed innovative ‘person-centred’ planning approaches to help children and young people to engage more purposefully in meetings of this kind.

Orkney Islands EPS had been successful in ensuring that children and young people were meaningfully engaged in meetings and other processes to support them. Across schools, the format of these meetings had been changed to promote engagement. As a result, young people reported that they felt listened to and that their own ideas were being used to plan the most suitable intervention for them.

East Lothian EPS led on the development of highly effective transition passports to support vulnerable young people moving on to post-school provision. The passports focused on the rights of young people to be fully involved in their transition from school, and to decide what information should be passed on and how it should be presented. As a result, they promoted high quality planning to prepare young people for adulthood.

Most educational psychologists provide a broad portfolio of services that impact positively on vulnerable groups of children and young people, including a wide range of therapeutic approaches and interventions. Services also play a strong role in developing evidence-based strategies to promote resilience and wellbeing in partnership with the local authority and other stakeholders. These approaches include group work with children and young people, enhanced individual support, stakeholder training, the use of specific curricular resources and the development of helpful practice guidance.

A few services have begun to develop and pilot helpful approaches to evaluate the impact of the work of educational psychologists on individual children and young people through a detailed case review processes. These approaches directly involve children and young people, and their families in commenting on the impact of individual educational psychologists on their lives.

Falkirk EPS developed a case-work evaluation process to assess the impact of their work on individual children and families. The case-work evaluation approach was used by individual educational psychologists to evaluate the impact of their work on outcomes for children and young people, and reflect on the quality of their practice. The views of children, young people and their families were sought on the impact of the service on their lives. Peers and service managers were also involved in the evaluation process.

Almost all services focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people, in particular looked after children and young people and those at risk of offending. Most services also targeted wider groups, in line with education authority priorities. Examples include children and young people who had suffered loss, trauma or bereavement, those with attendance difficulties, and those with social, emotional and behavioural needs. Targeted work by EPS had most impact when it also led to wider strategic developments within their local authorities. This is achieved, for example, through related professional development activities with partners to extend their skills and knowledge so that they can meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs of young people more effectively.

We judged the impact on parents and carers to be good or better in almost all services. Parents and carers told us that they strongly value the commitment and professionalism of educational psychologists and the direct positive impact that they make on outcomes for their children. Most feel that educational psychologists provide helpful advice, and are very responsive to their needs. They particularly appreciate continuity of contact with individual educational psychologists. A number of services are exploring new ways of seeking parents' views and engaging them more effectively in order to improve the service.

East Renfrewshire EPS had successfully developed a very comprehensive support service for parents across the local authority. Over 2000 parents and carers had been involved in workshops which had helped to increase their skills making them feel more confident in bringing up their children.

Almost all EPS ensure that parents, carers and families are treated equally and fairly. Parents report that educational psychologists make them feel at ease during meetings; they seek out their views and listen carefully and respectfully to what they have to say. A few parents are concerned about the time taken to access EPS and some feel there is too much variability in practice within services. Clear and easily accessible information about the role of the educational psychologist would improve practice and help services and schools to better inform and manage the expectations of parents and carers.

The City of Edinburgh EPS ensured that parents and carers of pre-school children had access to up to date, accurate and relevant information to help them to meet the needs of their children. Supporting effective transitions was a central feature of this intervention. A set of helpful and accessible booklets had been produced for parents and staff.

Other stakeholders of EPS include members of the local educational community such as staff from schools and services who work directly with those children, young people and families the EPS supports. They also include the wider national and international community. For example, some EPS staff are actively involved in working groups, lead national initiatives and share innovative practice with others. Evidence of the EPS's impact beyond its immediate context comes from colleagues and peers, from published reports or from media sources.

In most services, the impact of the EPS on the local community was evaluated as good or better. Overall, staff in educational establishments agree that EPS are responsive to the needs of the local community and help them to improve their services for children, young people and their families. EPS work well with a range of support services including specialist teaching staff and local community groups, helping to facilitate their involvement with children, young people and their families.

Scottish Borders EPS had developed a range of projects to support teachers in the promotion of dialogic teaching approaches. The evaluation of the project showed that the approaches had been effective in supporting teachers to develop as skilled and effective practitioners in the area of classroom interaction.

South Lanarkshire EPS had used highly successful partnership working to develop a solution-focused programme to support children aged 10-14 who were coping with family break up and bereavement. The programme had been successful in building the capacity of adults working with bereaved young people. Adults involved in the programme reported that it had a positive impact on the lives of young people.

Headteachers welcome service and practice level agreements which set out clearly what services individual educational psychologists will provide. School and authority staff value the contributions of educational psychologists to multidisciplinary meetings at school and learning community levels. Headteachers, quality improvement officers and specialist teaching staff are not generally being given opportunities to contribute directly to the development of EPS.

Almost all education authority staff report that the advice and information they receive from the EPS is of high quality. Just under a quarter of educational authority staff are not aware of the research function of the service, and a similar proportion did not know if principal educational psychologists are effective in setting an appropriate direction for services. If staff in education and partner agencies were more aware of the objectives of the EPS and the range of services it offered it would improve synergies between their respective contributions.

In most services, partnership working was evaluated as good or better. Most external partners such as social work and health professionals agree that educational psychologists work well with their services to support the needs of children, young people and their families.

North Ayrshire EPS had been central to the development and implementation of *GIRFEC* guidance across a range of partner agencies. This included the EPS generating a written description of integrated assessment for all relevant agencies to highlight the ongoing nature of assessment and its relationship to planning and intervention for individuals. The EPS had carried out an initial evaluation of the ways in which practitioners from a range of agencies were making use of the guidance. This information was used to refine the training materials and improve multiagency practice.

Stirling EPS developed very effective transition work targeted at vulnerable young people who were moving from secondary to post-school life. Partnership was strong. Very effective links had been made with further education colleges, training providers and the voluntary sector to create more opportunities for young people when they left school to find and sustain positive destinations.

There are a number of good examples of EPS collaborating effectively together to progress developments across a range of practice. Examples include effective consultation, emotional literacy, responding to critical incidents, therapeutic interventions, and nurture developments. A number of services have formed helpful professional networks to benchmark service performance and share practice with other EPS to support continuous improvement. Most services have representation on the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists, Scottish Division of Educational Psychologists and other relevant professional bodies. Almost all EPS effectively support the development of trainee educational psychologists, and a few services make strong contributions to the professional training courses at the Universities of Dundee and Strathclyde. A number of services regularly contribute to national and international peer-reviewed journals on topics such as *Friends for Life*¹² and *Thinking Through Philosophy*¹³. They frequently disseminate their practice through the national annual conference for educational psychology in Scotland, so extending professional learning. In most EPS, the impact on the wider community was evaluated as good or better.

Almost all services were effective in meeting the needs of their staff. Educational psychologists work effectively in teams within the service, and in education authority and council teams. EPS staff generally enjoy working in their particular service and feel that they have good opportunities to be involved in decision making and setting priorities. In most services, staff are encouraged to be creative and innovative in their work and feel well supported by their principal educational psychologist and senior colleagues. In the best examples, collaborative working is embedded across the service and the EPS seeks innovative ways of working together to benefit children and young people.

¹² <http://www.friendsinfo.net/uk.htm>.

¹³ <http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/learning/raisingachievement/>.

The Highland EPS used an emotionally literate approach to service delivery. This approach was used in informal support systems, at team meetings and to support policy development. It had also been used to support strategic planning in developing emotional literacy and promoting positive relationships more generally across children's services. This way of working had helped the service to deliver an effective psychological approach to the achievement of national and local outcomes such as improving post-school destinations by building resilience, improving attainment for Looked After and accommodated children and young people.

Where their roles and remits are clear, research assistants support the work of the service effectively and often make strong contributions to research at an education authority and council level. Administrative support staff comment positively about working relationships with educational psychologists and most report that they are appropriately involved in EPS review and development.



Summary of findings

Strengths

- The overall very positive response of children and young people to the services they receive from EPS.
- Effective working by almost all services with parents, carers and families to meet their needs, with most parents, carers and families reporting that the involvement of the EPS was helpful to their child.
- Strong partnership working in most services to support individual children and young people and their families, including their work through post-school psychological services.
- Strong contributions by educational psychologists across Scotland to national advisory groups and committees, and their influence on aspects of national policy and practice.
- The high motivation and very effective teamwork of almost all educational psychologists, research assistants and administrative staff.

Aspects for improvement

- Greater clarity about the contributions which EPS might make to achieving improvement priorities in schools and centres and to the continuing professional development of staff, to improve their overall impact on children and young people.
- Further development of partnerships with schools, agencies, the voluntary sector and education authority staff in some EPS, particularly in relation to EPS roles, remits and functions.
- Establishing clearer expectations in a few services about the professional services and standards stakeholders can expect, to reduce inconsistency and variability of practice.

4. How good is educational psychology services' delivery of key processes?

Inspections evaluated services on each of the five core educational psychology functions under the related quality indicators. The core functions are **consultation** and **advice**; **assessment**; **intervention**; **professional development** and **training**; and **research** and **strategic development**. They also evaluated performance in relation to inclusion, equality and fairness.

We found that the delivery of key processes is strong across Scotland, with almost all EPS delivering a broad range of services across the five core functions. In a number of EPS, performance is strong across all core functions. In these services, where the balance across the functions is well judged, the impact of educational psychology on the delivery of education authority priorities, and in achieving Best Value is greatest. In other services, there is too much variation in the quality of the service provided across the core functions.

In almost all services, **consultation** is seen as a key approach that enables parents, school staff and partners to raise concerns and explore next steps, as well as a means of negotiating and agreeing other services and activities. Effective consultation is valued highly by stakeholders and partners. A significant number of services have consulted with groups of stakeholders and partners about service delivery and as a result, developed service or practice level agreements to shape priorities and service focus. Partners see this as a very effective means of meeting the needs of target groups.

Aberdeenshire EPS developed a highly effective service wide consultation model. The model brought together a range of approaches including solution focused, person centred planning, appreciative enquiry and cognitive behavioural principles. While the approach was most often used to support learning and teaching, it was also used in other contexts such as strategic planning at a local authority level.

Most services have in place a range of appropriate **assessment** approaches and tools for working with individuals. Educational psychologists work effectively in partnership with others to provide integrated assessments which lead to clear plans to meet the needs of children and young people successfully, and also support their parents. The majority of services are influential within the education service and wider council in supporting the development of shared or integrated assessment frameworks. In a few services, the quality, range, and suitability of assessment methods is not consistently good.

Almost all services have developed a range of effective **interventions** which support well the needs of the most vulnerable young people. These include arrangements for early intervention and targeted additional support where required. Interventions take place at a range of levels, from the individual child and family, through the school to strategic levels across the education authority and council. For example, EPS offer therapeutic interventions to support individual children who have experienced trauma and loss, provide professional development to school staff to

ensure that they are aware of the impact of trauma and loss, and work in partnership with council colleagues to develop a strategic response to the management of critical incidents. Services work effectively with a wide range of specialist support staff and partners, including early years staff, social work staff and speech and language therapists to develop and deliver effective interventions.

Most services provide well-planned and appropriate **professional development and training**, often in cooperation with partners and stakeholders. Where targeted at suitable priorities, this can be an important means of sharing the specialist expertise, knowledge and skills of educational psychologists. Examples of these themes include behaviour management, self-regulation, restorative practices, dynamic assessment and child protection. A number of stakeholders across schools and authority services are not aware of the range of professional development and training which can be provided by EPS, but there are many examples of very effective training strategies which have been initiated, developed and delivered jointly with stakeholders and partners. Stakeholders, including teachers and parents, report that training programmes have contributed significantly to capacity building for schools and services and importantly to improved outcomes for children and young people. One example of this is training in solution-oriented approaches to improve staff skills in finding more positive strategies to address children's and young people's difficulties. There is scope for services across Scotland to extend this good practice to evaluate the impact of training and development work effectively and so inform future professional development activity.

Orkney Islands EPS carefully planned their work in partnership with other staff to build capacity amongst teachers to support young people and reduce the dependency on direct involvement by the educational psychologist. For example, jointly delivered group work in a secondary school had increased teachers understanding of the social emotional and behavioural needs of young people.

A majority of services have effective and well-planned programmes of **research and strategic development**. In these services, research and evaluation is appropriately linked to key council priorities, and research outcomes are used to inform and drive service and education authority strategy, policy and practice. In a few services, the research function was not well developed or connected to local priorities.

Renfrewshire EPS research was very well developed and effectively disseminated across schools and the education authority. Research support was provided to a wide range of education authority strategic initiatives including *MCMC 16+* Learning Choices, youth alcohol projects and pupil progress in relation to the four capacities as part of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. Research findings were widely disseminated both locally and nationally through conferences and publications.

EPS research assistants have provided very effective support through evaluating education authority and council initiatives, developing resources within EPS and supporting educational psychologists in the delivery of post-school activities. In a few services, educational psychologists and research assistants disseminate their research and development activities very effectively including through regular publication of research findings for schools and services and presentations at conferences. In the most effective services, the research, development and training aims are reviewed and planned with partners and stakeholders and directly support the priorities and targets of the education authority. Contributions include the coordination of information to improve support for young offenders, and the evaluation of approaches to improving literacy and numeracy across the primary and secondary sectors.

In **Fife EPS** research and strategic development was seen as a key activity by the service for all educational psychologists. The service supported educational psychologists' research skills in a number of ways, for example through policy guidance and quality assurance processes, and provided opportunities to develop expertise in methodology through continuing professional development. The research and strategic development topics addressed by the service were determined by the priorities of stakeholders and partners. Examples included a behaviour and discipline survey, an autism spectrum disorder survey and the evaluation of driving safety measures and restorative approaches. The outcomes of research and strategic development work shaped policy and practice across the council, improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

The majority of post-school psychological services have been involved in supporting post-school providers, mainly further education colleges, to build capacity through consultation, intervention, training and research and development. Individual assessment of young people has been offered in the post-school sector on a more limited scale. This reflects the emphasis placed by post-school psychological services on building capacity in others to improve outcomes for young people. Effective work in this area has included training in resilience and attachment in relation to looked after children and young people, training in the assessment of dyslexia, and enhancing health and wellbeing through programmes such as *Seasons for Growth*¹⁴.

¹⁴ <http://seasonsforgrowth.co.uk/>.

Summary of findings

Strengths

- The high quality of **consultation and intervention** which almost all EPS provide, in collaboration with school staff, education authority services and partner agencies.
- Well-planned and appropriate **professional development** and **training** for a range of service users and partners in most services.
- The strong ethos and practice of inclusion which almost all services have developed, supporting children, young people and families in their local community.

Aspects for improvement

- In a few services variability in the range and suitability of **assessment** methods needs to be reduced.
- Evaluating the medium and longer-term impact of EPS contributions to **professional development and training** so these can be consistently directed to improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Strengthening the **research** function in most EPS to enhance its contribution to practice and, for example, evaluate new initiatives and projects.



5. How good is the leadership and management of educational psychology services?

In the inspections we evaluated the leadership and management of all local authority educational psychology services. Two quality indicators were used in the inspection process:

- leadership and direction, and
- leadership of change and improvement.

We took account of the impact of leadership on the experiences of children, young people, their families and other stakeholders. We considered the extent to which leaders make a difference to the quality of outcomes achieved by the service and the education authority. There was a focus on the synergy between the EPS and the education authority, the strategic direction of the service and on the quality of support and challenge at all levels on the work of the EPS.

We evaluated service management across three quality indicators:

- policy development and review;
- participation of stakeholders; and
- operational planning.

This section discusses our findings in leadership and management and also considers some organisational features.

We evaluated the leadership of EPS, including vision, values and aims, and leadership and direction, as good or better in the majority of services, but as less than good in a significant number. Where leadership in services was evaluated as less than good, service managers and senior education officers did not have a consistently clear view of the strategic role for the service and as a result the work of the service was taken forward mainly at an operational level. Change was often unsustainable. The EPS often operated in isolation from the corporate team and insufficient account was taken of the need for effective strategic planning for improvement linked to local and national priorities.

In the most effective services, EPS managers provide strong direction, they communicate and demonstrate a clear view of what the service is trying to achieve. They develop effective strategic plans aimed at targeting resources at key objectives. Effective leaders take full account of the need for succession planning, making appropriate use of data to inform decisions and evaluate impact and outcomes. Strong services play an integral role in the education authority, influencing and planning policy and strategy.

The majority of services have appropriate means of addressing risk management but a few services need to better assess and manage risk. A number of services have yet to link their strategic plans effectively to those of the education authority and

national priorities. This has resulted in EPS skills and expertise not being fully utilised to support major developments across the education authority.

We evaluated leadership of change and improvement as good or better in most services. Where leadership in services was evaluated as less than good, performance management was not sufficiently strong, and the service needed to place a greater emphasis on ensuring impact and improved outcomes for service users. Greater synergy with other services in the educational authority was often required, to meet more effectively the needs of local children, young people and families.

Where services are successfully led:

- the principal educational psychologist has integrated the priorities of the service effectively with his or her authority and has provided valuable support and contributions at strategic levels;
- the principal educational psychologist and the EPS management team set realistic but challenging targets which help to drive improvement; and
- staff have a sense of ownership about targets and feel that they have been fully involved and consulted in the development of service planning.

In the most successful services, robust self-evaluation is used to identify any changes needed to service delivery to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Educational psychologists have lead roles in developing policy and practice within the education authority including in relation to achieving, nurtured, included and safe. They have established very high quality partnerships and are using these to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people, for example, by leading on aspects of the integrated assessment ensuring that the quality and consistency of the approach across the authority is in line with the principles of *GIRFEC*.

Principal educational psychologists in most services show strong commitment to service development and delivery, with appropriate support and challenge provided for staff. Depute principal educational psychologists provide valuable support to staff and principal educational psychologists. In most services, there is effective team working and the service culture has enabled a professionally supportive and challenging ethos to develop. In the most effective services, leadership roles explicitly extend to all staff and are an integral aspect of service culture and expectations. In these services, delegation of task management is a key feature, and this supports and encourages effective succession planning. However, in a few services, there is a need for a more rigorous approach to challenge to drive service performance and improvement. The role of senior educational psychologist, in a few services, requires to be reviewed to ensure it best meets the strategic requirements of the service and the education authority.

Fife EPS developed distributive leadership skills across the service effectively providing challenge for staff. Senior service managers set demanding performance targets for all, closely linked to council priorities. Feedback and self-evaluation was embedded in the work of the EPS. The service built capacity through the development of the talents and skills of all staff. It provided excellent opportunities for shared and distributed leadership and nurtured expertise in its staff. Staff demonstrated a belief in their ability to make a difference.

Most principal educational psychologists and senior education officers responsible for EPS recognise the need for a systematic approach to self-evaluation that leads to improved outcomes for children, young people and families. Almost all EPS have undertaken service audits and self-evaluation exercises and made a number of effective improvements. Almost all EPS staff welcome opportunities to engage in professional dialogue about their work and recognise the need for self-evaluation leading to improvement. Most EPS are now actively involved in self-evaluation and service improvement planning. Although there is generally a high level of commitment to self-evaluation, it is not yet embedded within all services and in a few EPS self-evaluation is not yet coordinated sufficiently enough to ensure that improvements are consistently achieved and sustained.

In a few EPS, senior service and educational authority managers are not aware of the overall effectiveness of their services and are not able to assure themselves fully that the needs of children, young people and families are being met appropriately.

Self-evaluation does not always sufficiently focus on outcomes for children and young people and does not always lead to improvements in practice. EPS generally recognise that there is a need to include stakeholders, including children and young people, more routinely in joint self-evaluation.

In a growing number of EPS, however, effective and rigorous self-evaluation involving staff at all levels has resulted in very clear action plans with identified timescales and resources. This has allowed progress to be measured and reported on effectively.

South Lanarkshire EPS had in place robust self-evaluation, which was used to identify any changes needed to service delivery to improve outcomes. The principal educational psychologist had put in place very effective structures to involve staff fully in service improvement planning and help secure continuous improvement in the standards of educational psychology provided. Professional creativity was encouraged, success celebrated, and staff were well supported to develop innovative approaches to service delivery. Progress against demanding targets set for service development groups was carefully monitored. The authority provided strong support and challenge to the service to help it ensure that developments were targeted on improving outcomes.

The quality of management varies significantly both within and between services. Around one third of services had important weaknesses in at least one aspect of EPS management. The majority of services have effective policies and procedures in place aligned with those of the council. The majority of services link their policies well with national initiatives. Web-based access to policies is being developed by a few services to improve accessibility for stakeholders. The majority of services do not yet involve stakeholders directly in the development and evaluation of their policies. A few services require to implement and monitor their policies more effectively to achieve greater consistency of practice in, for example, assessment across their local authority area.

A significant number of services require to strengthen mechanisms to link service management decisions better to the needs of the local community, through for example, service development and improvement activities. It is important that service documentation is readily accessible to stakeholders and services should also give consideration to ways of involving stakeholders more effectively in relevant aspects of policy development and planning.

Perth and Kinross EPS had deployed a variety of effective methods and approaches to engage stakeholders in considering the aims and priorities for the service. The service had a well-planned and systematic programme in place to seek the views of stakeholders on their experience of the service they received. Actions identified from surveys and evaluations were incorporated into the service's quality improvement planning process. The service had developed a practice guideline on the participation of stakeholders with the aim of designing a service more closely matched to the needs of stakeholders and improving engagement across agencies.

We found that the quality of EPS improvement planning and reporting is too variable, with only a majority of services being evaluated as good or better. Links between EPS plans and relevant authority strategic plans are often not well established. In these services, self-evaluation and planning for improvement is not strongly linked to wider authority planning and review cycles. A significant proportion of services have not yet embedded their operational planning within their council's planning

framework. As a result there is no coherent policy framework to guide service direction, monitor implementation of policies and promote consistency of practice.

Effective collation and analyses of data can give EPS managers, staff and stakeholders a more informed view of current practice across the service. Only a few services have, however, developed effective management information systems which support them in delivering their core functions and achieving their improvement objectives.



North Ayrshire EPS had a very comprehensive planning process which was fully integrated into the education authority and council planning cycle. This allowed the service to ensure that service targets were in line with, and add value to, national and local priorities. Targets were benchmarked against previous performance and evaluated in relation to expected outcomes. A wide range of effective evaluation strategies ensured that the service had a rich source of high quality data to track performance and ensure continuous improvement. As a result of the high quality operational planning the service was able to demonstrate sustained improvement year on year to service outcomes and evidence the value added by the EPS to the education authority and council objectives.

Educational psychology services have evolved and developed in response to the national priorities and developments, the needs of the local community and the Best Value requirements of the council. Service staffing levels and management structures are therefore, and appropriately different across Scotland. We have identified strong practice in services with a range of structures and staffing levels and which serve island, rural and urban settings across Scotland.

We have found a number of examples of innovative steps which are being taken to ensure that the EPS structure and the focus of its activities meet the needs of the local community as well as possible and makes best use of resources. In a few education authorities educational psychologists operate as members of multi-agency locality teams, in response to the *GIRFEC* agenda, and developments related to the *Integrated Assessment Framework*. The services involved have carefully considered how their core functions can be delivered within these structures to best meet the needs of stakeholders. From inspection evidence, this approach has engendered effective team working and good communication between partners and agencies. Other services have given high priority to building the capacity of teachers and support staff to ensure that the benefit of educational psychology expertise and knowledge, including from research, reaches more children and young people. This includes work on early intervention, literacy and attachment.



Summary of findings

Strengths

- Effective support from principal educational psychologists, deputies, and others with leadership roles for the delivery of high quality educational psychology making a difference to children and young people
- Opportunities for shared and distributive leadership created by service leaders to build capacity through developing the talents and skills of staff to more effectively meet local and national priorities.
- Effective strategic links with the education authority, partners and agencies are leading to improved outcomes for children and young people.

Aspects for improvement

- Support and challenge, both by education authorities and by service managers, is not sufficiently robust in a number of services.
- A few services need to put in place improved arrangements to better assess and manage risk.
- A few EPS, in partnership with their education authorities, need to improve arrangements for service improvement and align these more effectively with the education authority and council planning frameworks.
- The quality of EPS improvement planning, monitoring and reporting is too variable and not sufficiently linked to wider education authority planning and review cycles.
- The majority of services need to improve the quality of management information systems to support quality improvement and ensure better targeting of resources.
- The majority of services have not yet involved stakeholders sufficiently in policy and service development.

6. Conclusions

This review of all 32 local authority EPS has identified that Scotland has high quality provision. Its strengths include the expert and valued support which educational psychologists provide for highly vulnerable children and young people and their families, their contributions to building the capacity of other educational professionals, their role as key players with agencies and partners who support children and young people, and their contributions to shaping and evaluating policy and practice. These areas of strength need to be sustained. It is likely that the calls on EPS will increase while resources may become more scarce. This makes it even more important that decisions about how to achieve the greatest benefit from the valuable contributions of educational psychologists are closely linked to the needs of individual councils as well as Scotland as a whole. Maintaining the steady state is not an option.

The report has identified real opportunities for educational psychology services to make an even stronger contribution across education as a whole. We have identified many examples of effective and innovative practice across the country which we hope will contribute to achieving this important priority. Our findings point to a number of key aspects where changes would, we believe, have the greatest impact – direct or indirect – on children and young people.

- While educational psychologists routinely contribute to supporting schools to take forward health and wellbeing as part of Curriculum for Excellence, there is the potential for them to make wider contributions to the curriculum, working with colleagues in education services to identify areas where their expertise might have the greatest impact. This might include improving learning, teaching and supporting transitions as part of the successful implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.
- The research function of educational psychology services could contribute more to improving outcomes for children and young people. This applies in particular to the priorities selected for research and the use that is made of the results of research to inform policy and practice.
- It is important to develop and apply innovative approaches to evaluate and review all aspects of educational psychology practice in relation to their impact on children and young people and on the adults who support them. Where possible, this should include longitudinal verification of impact. Comprehensive evidence of impact can inform decisions about the focus and balance of EPS contributions across the wide range of possible activities and functions.
- Self-evaluation is not yet consistently strong and robust across all services, meaning that improvement processes are not as effective as they should be across the country. As EPS strengthen their service improvement processes, ways should be found to ensure that children, young people, their families and other key stakeholders can contribute to the development and review of the service.

- The structure and focus of each service has to be directed to addressing national and particular local needs and achieving Best Value. As part of this, service planning needs to be aligned with that of the council and other services. Educational psychologists represent a valuable resource, and it is particularly important that their expertise, and their time, is applied in ways which will add the greatest value.

Educational authorities, in partnership with principal educational psychologists, will have a key role in addressing the challenges outlined in this report. There are reflective questions set out in Appendix 4 to support education authorities and educational psychology services as they seek to improve. Their leadership should focus on building capacity in the service, putting in place appropriate support and challenge mechanisms which ensure the highest quality services at the level of the individual, the school and community and the council.

Scottish education requires the highest possible quality of educational psychology services, founded on evidence-based practice, working both to support individuals and to address national priorities. This requires services to operate in synergy and partnership with others to address local needs as well as Scotland's priorities, and to be agile and efficient. In this way, Scottish educational psychology services can play a full part in meeting the demands of education in the 21st century.

Appendix 1

Background to the inspection process

The quality improvement framework

The national self-evaluation and quality improvement framework for EPS (QMILAEPS) is based on *A Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations (2006)*¹⁵. The framework is designed to apply a set of six key high-level questions to the work of educational psychology services.

What key outcomes have we achieved?

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

How good is our delivery of key processes?

How good is our management?

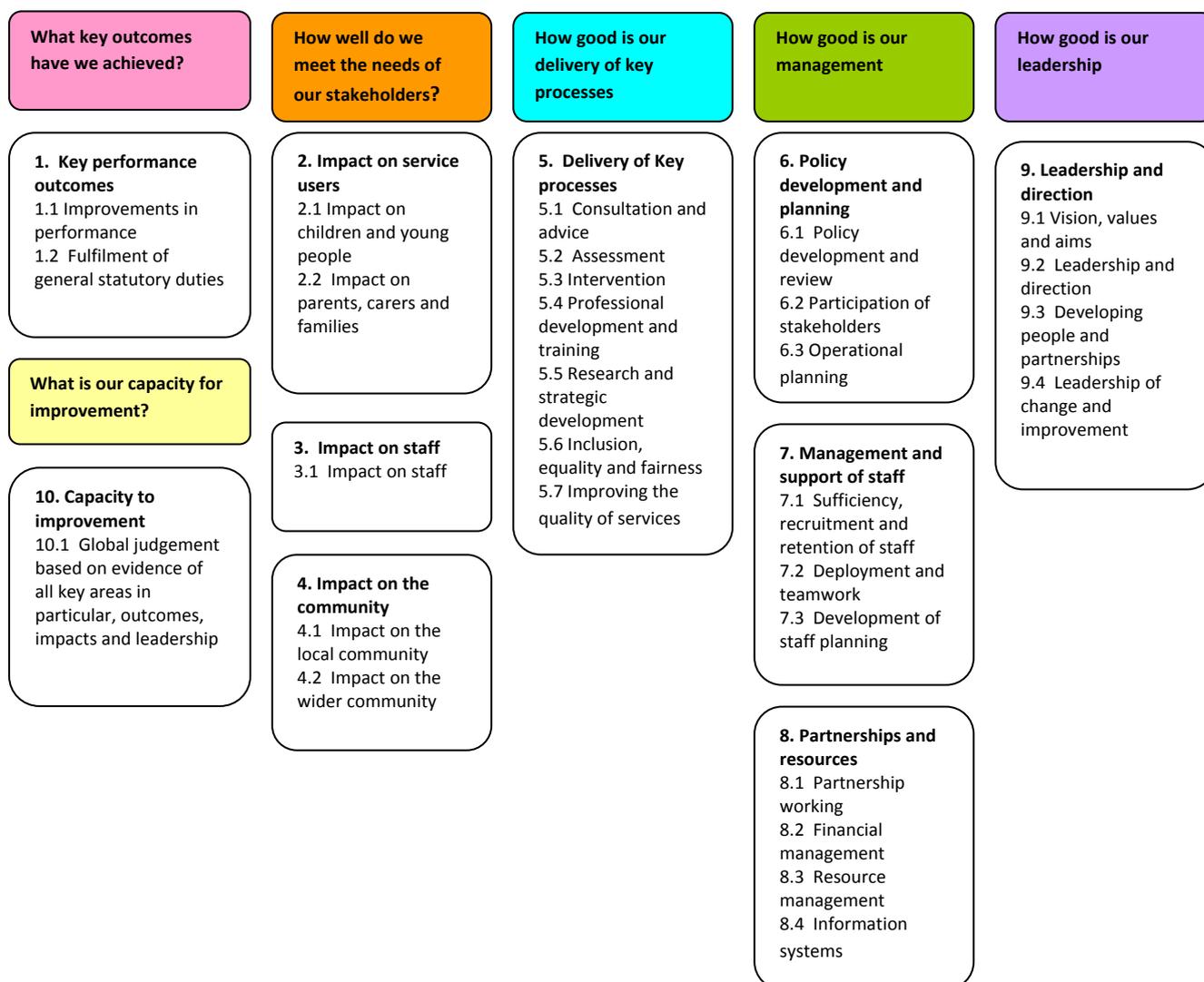
How good is our leadership?,

What is our capacity for improvement?

Each of these high-level questions can be answered through evaluating the relevant performance and quality indicators, which are grouped within the over-arching framework under ten key areas. The framework, shown in Figure 1, consists of 28 performance and quality indicators in all, with 19 evaluated in most inspections.

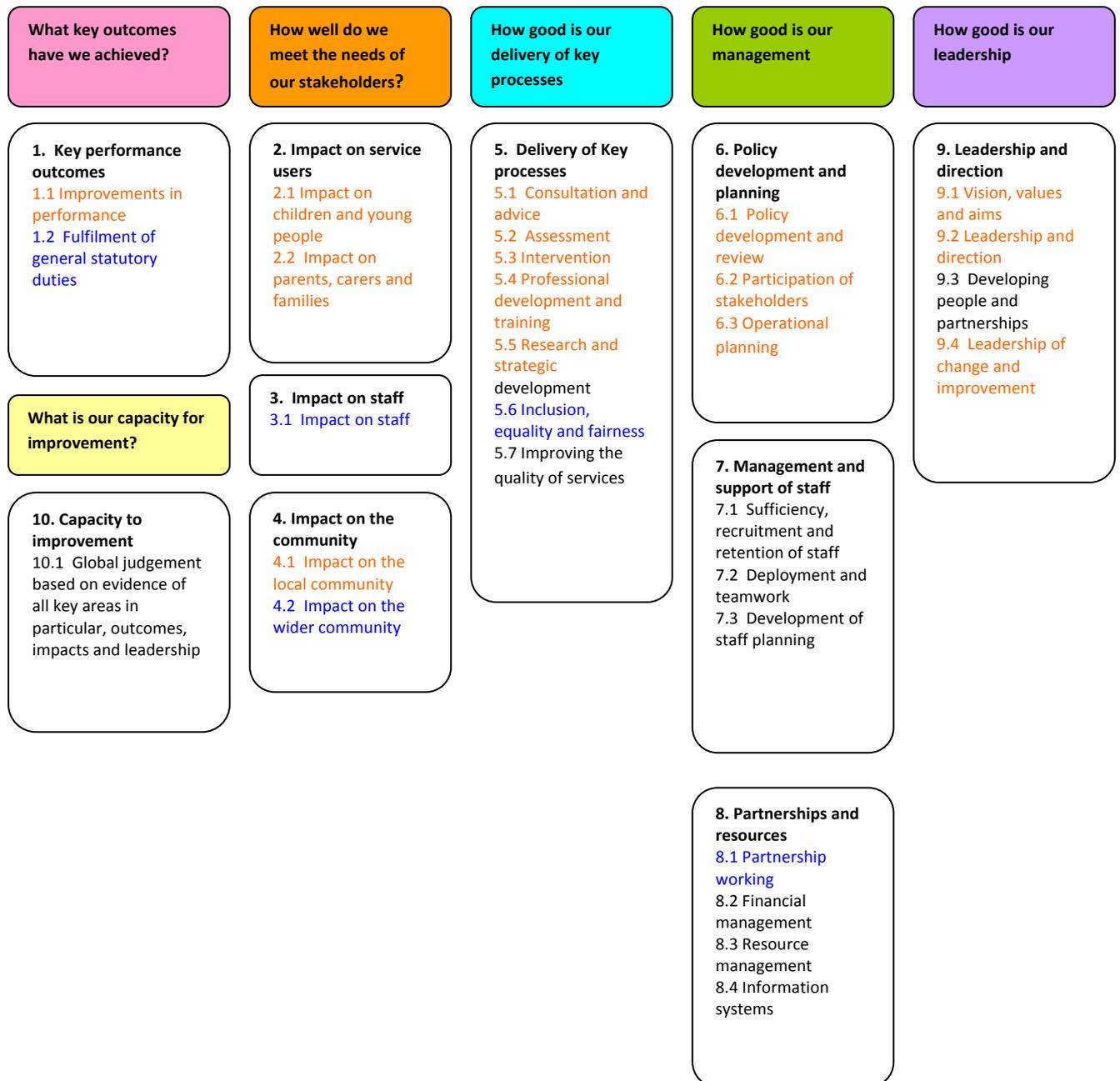
¹⁵ *A Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2006, <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/Framework%20for%20evaluating%20quality.pdf>.

Figure 1: Over-arching framework



From June 2010, as part of HMIE’s contribution to ensuring that inspection is proportionate, in line with the Scottish Government’s response to Professor Lorne Crerar’s review of scrutiny bodies, the volume of inspection activity was reduced and evaluations made against 14, rather than 19, indicators. In Figure 2, the 19 core performance and quality indicators have been highlighted in red and blue. The five indicators, which were removed from the inspection process, are shown in blue.

Figure 2: Over-arching framework



The inspection process

The first pilot inspections by HMIE of local authority EPS using the *QMILAEPS* framework began in May 2006. The pilot inspections were well received by the two services involved and as a result of their feedback changes were made to the model before the national cycle of evaluation was undertaken. Inspections covering the remaining 30 local authority EPS were completed in November 2010. A national reference group, including representatives from the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists, the Scottish Division of Educational Psychologists and the training courses at the Universities of Strathclyde and Dundee, was in place throughout the development of the self-evaluation framework and inspection cycle.

The scope of each inspection was broad, covering four levels of service delivery and influence: the level of the individual child and family, the school or learning community, the strategic level of the education authority and council, and the national level. Improving outcomes for children, young people and families was at the heart of the inspection process.

During inspections, HM Inspectors read a range of case records, interviewed children and families and met with school staff and partners who received services. They also observed practice undertaken by educational psychologists across the core functions of consultation and advice, assessment, intervention, training and professional development, and research and strategic development.

Identifying and disseminating good practice was a key aim of every inspection. Experienced practitioners, working as depute or principal educational psychologists joined HMIE inspection teams as associate assessors as a further contribution to capacity building for self-evaluation and the sharing of best practice.

Ten inspections resulted in further follow-through inspection activity to support EPS improvement against the agreed main points for action and report on progress with improvement. A further five services have received ongoing support for service development and improvement through HMIE District Inspector links with local authorities.

QMILAEPS complemented the *Quality Management in Education*¹⁶ framework and supported the inspection of EPS alongside the scrutiny of the education functions of local authorities. Over a one third of EPS inspections were undertaken within the context of the inspection of the education functions of local authorities. In 2009, the strategic inspection at authority level was reviewed and as a consequence, EPS inspection activity was modified to ensure that the interactions and connections with the local authority continued to be captured through interviews with senior managers and scrutiny of authority level planning and reporting.

¹⁶ *Quality management in education*, HM Inspectorate of Education, June 2006, <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/qmie.pdf>.

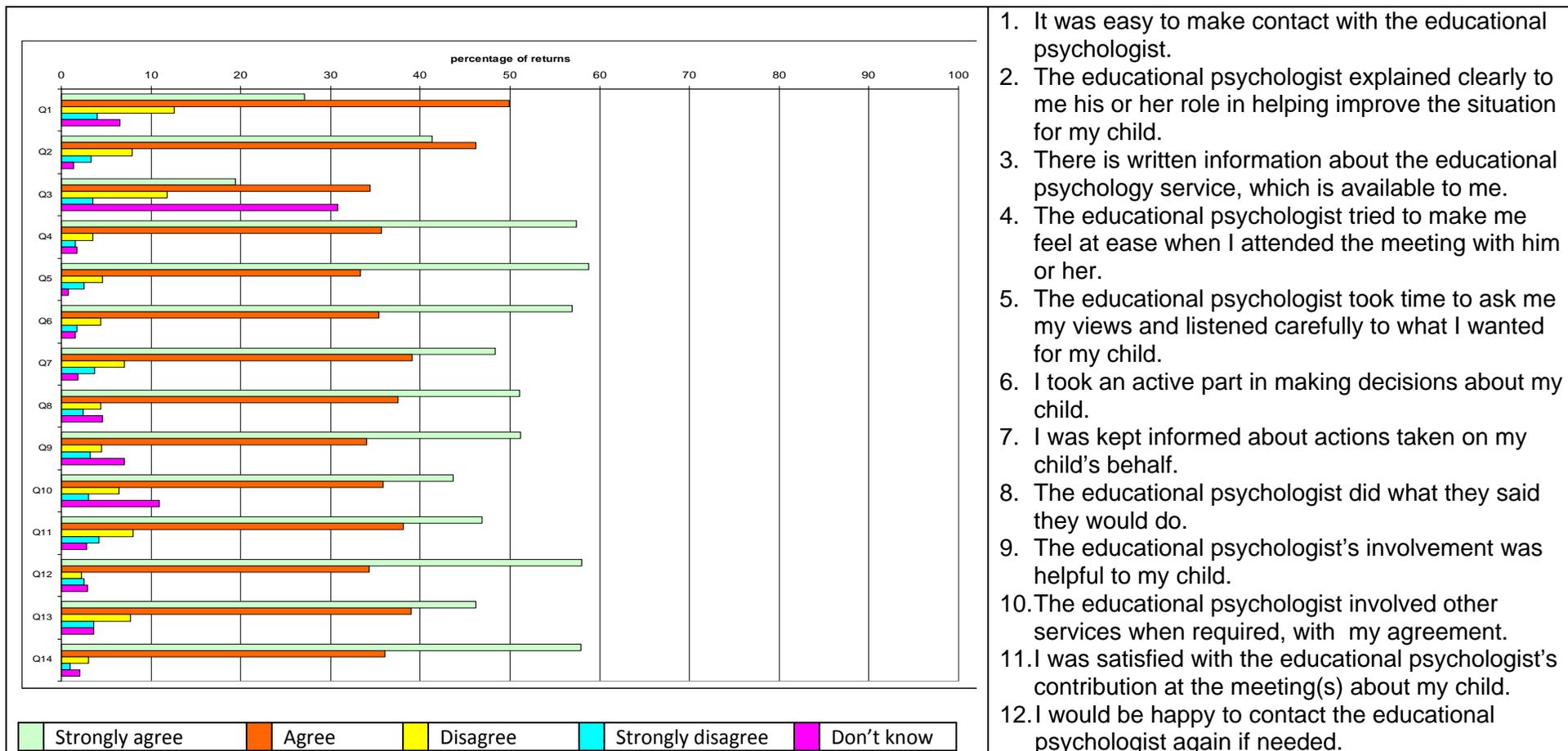
The Beattie Report (1999)¹⁷ challenged educational psychologists in Scotland to support participation and improved attainment in young people involved in post-school education to help improve young people's employability. It recommended the development of post-school educational psychology services for 16 to 24 year-olds. The roll out of post-school psychological services included 20 local authorities, beginning with 12 pathfinders from 2004 to 2006. Following approval from the then Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, the initiative was extended to the remaining 12 education authorities in April 2008. This announcement was made part way through the EPS inspection programme in 2008 and a number of services had not had a post-school element to their inspection. HMIE therefore carried out focused evaluative visits to these services to gather information on post-school developments. The outcomes of these visits have been included in the evidence base for this report. From April 2008, all EPS inspections evaluated post-school working.

¹⁷ *The Beattie report, Implementing inclusiveness realising potential*, The Scottish Government, 1999., <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Life-Long-Learning/16581/6658>.

Appendix 2

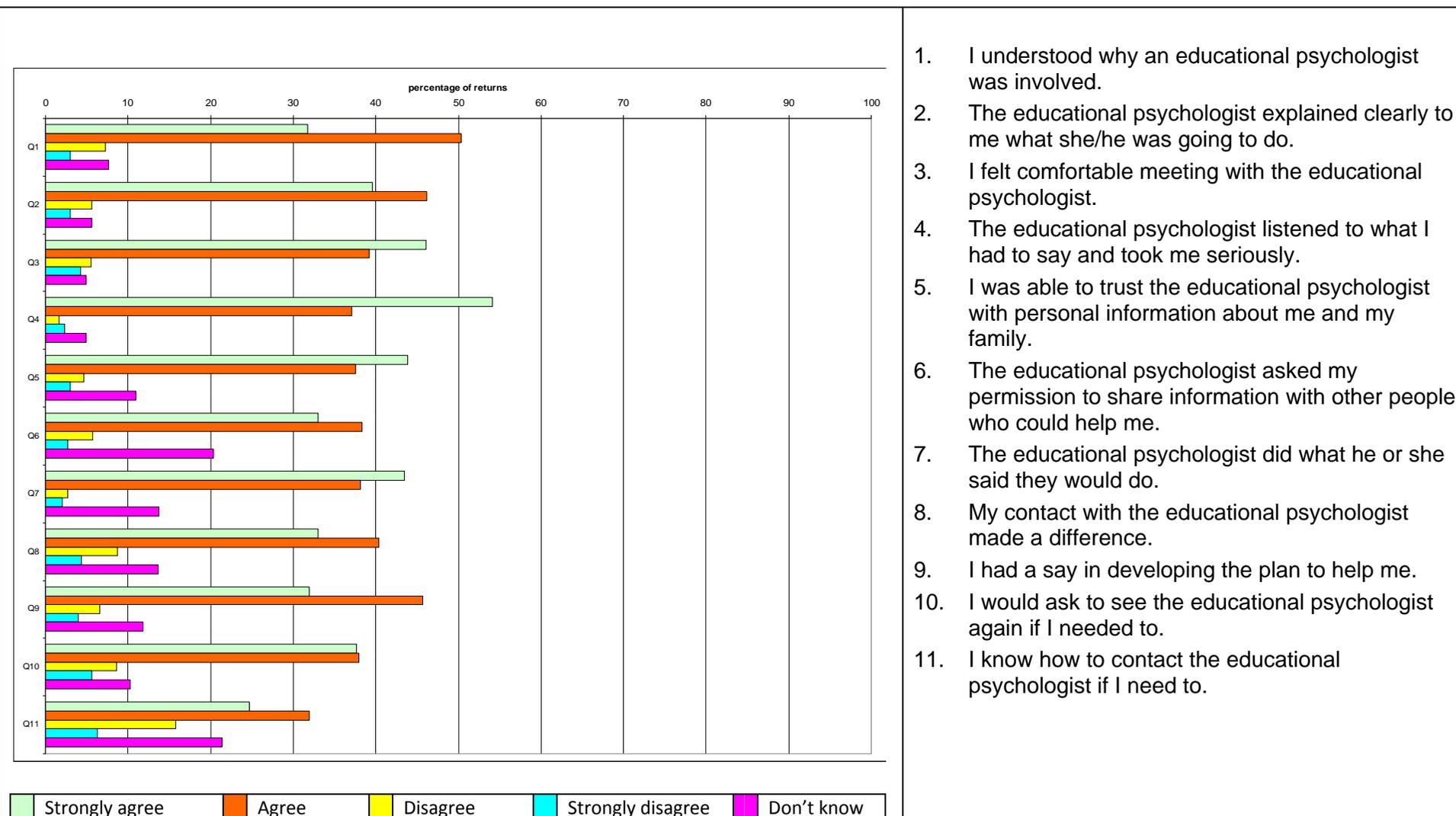
Tables of stakeholders' views

Summary of the views of parents and carers



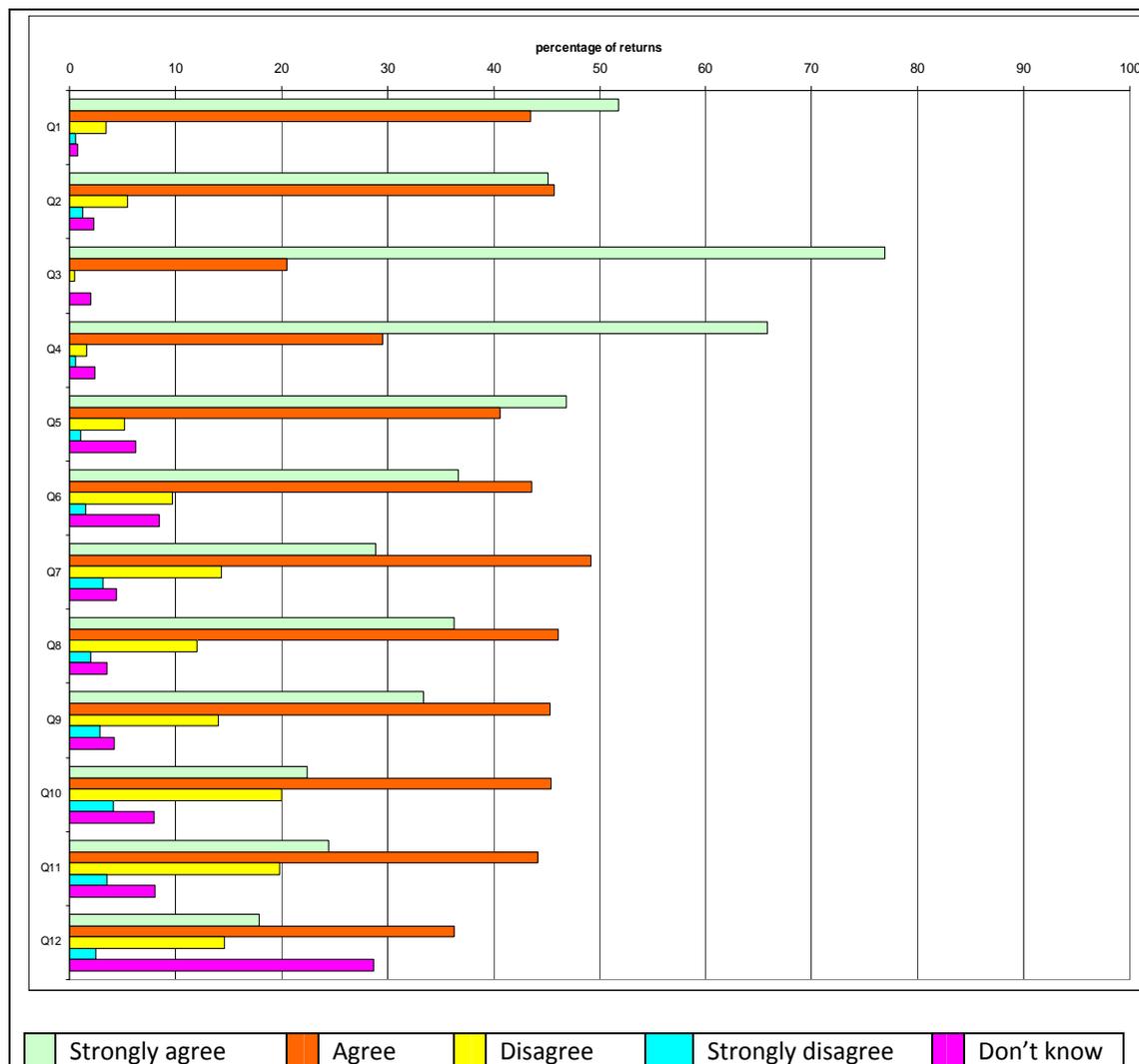
1. It was easy to make contact with the educational psychologist.
2. The educational psychologist explained clearly to me his or her role in helping improve the situation for my child.
3. There is written information about the educational psychology service, which is available to me.
4. The educational psychologist tried to make me feel at ease when I attended the meeting with him or her.
5. The educational psychologist took time to ask me my views and listened carefully to what I wanted for my child.
6. I took an active part in making decisions about my child.
7. I was kept informed about actions taken on my child's behalf.
8. The educational psychologist did what they said they would do.
9. The educational psychologist's involvement was helpful to my child.
10. The educational psychologist involved other services when required, with my agreement.
11. I was satisfied with the educational psychologist's contribution at the meeting(s) about my child.
12. I would be happy to contact the educational psychologist again if needed.

Summary of the views of children and young people



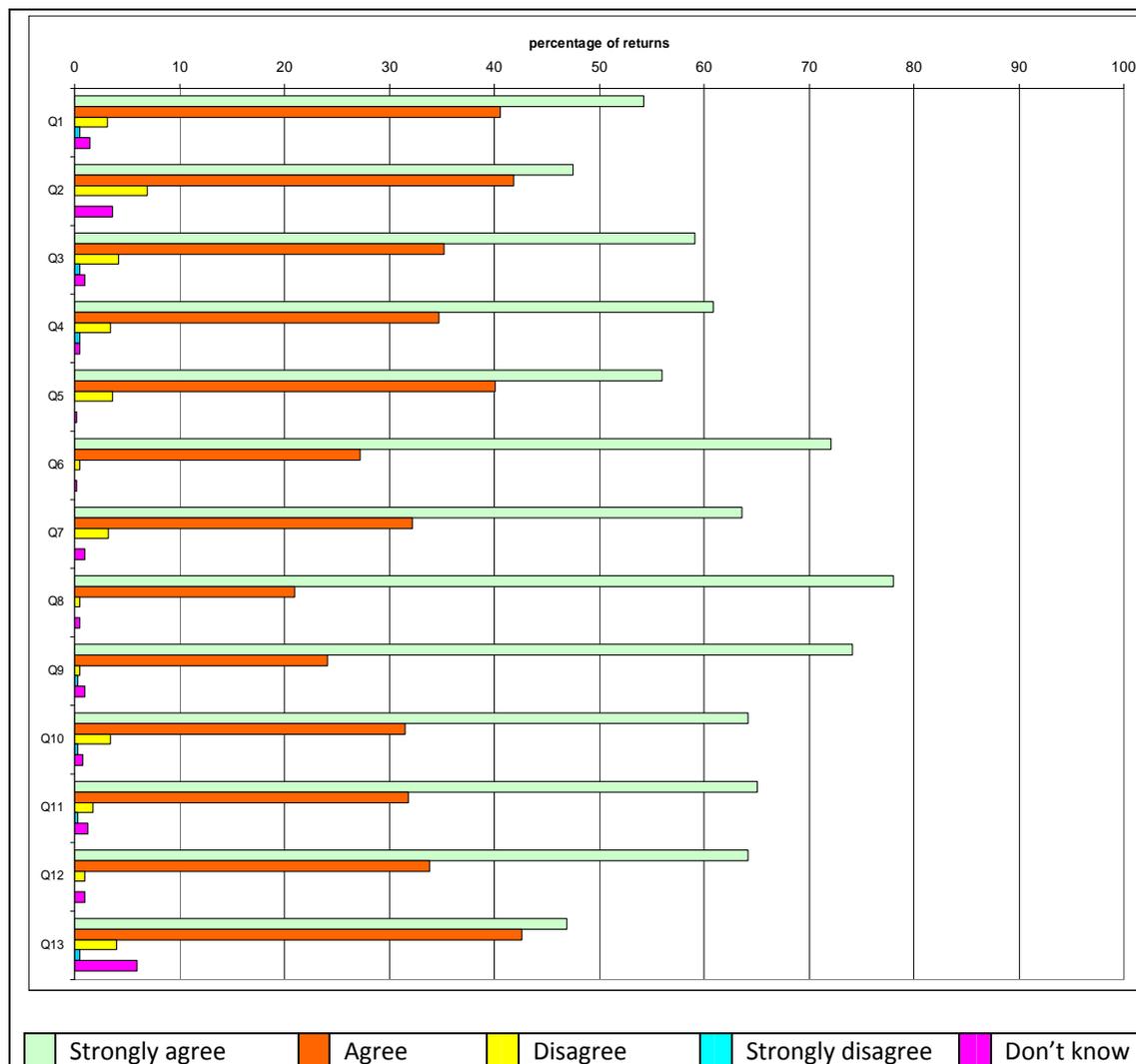
1. I understood why an educational psychologist was involved.
2. The educational psychologist explained clearly to me what she/he was going to do.
3. I felt comfortable meeting with the educational psychologist.
4. The educational psychologist listened to what I had to say and took me seriously.
5. I was able to trust the educational psychologist with personal information about me and my family.
6. The educational psychologist asked my permission to share information with other people who could help me.
7. The educational psychologist did what he or she said they would do.
8. My contact with the educational psychologist made a difference.
9. I had a say in developing the plan to help me.
10. I would ask to see the educational psychologist again if I needed to.
11. I know how to contact the educational psychologist if I need to.

Summary of the views of schools and centres



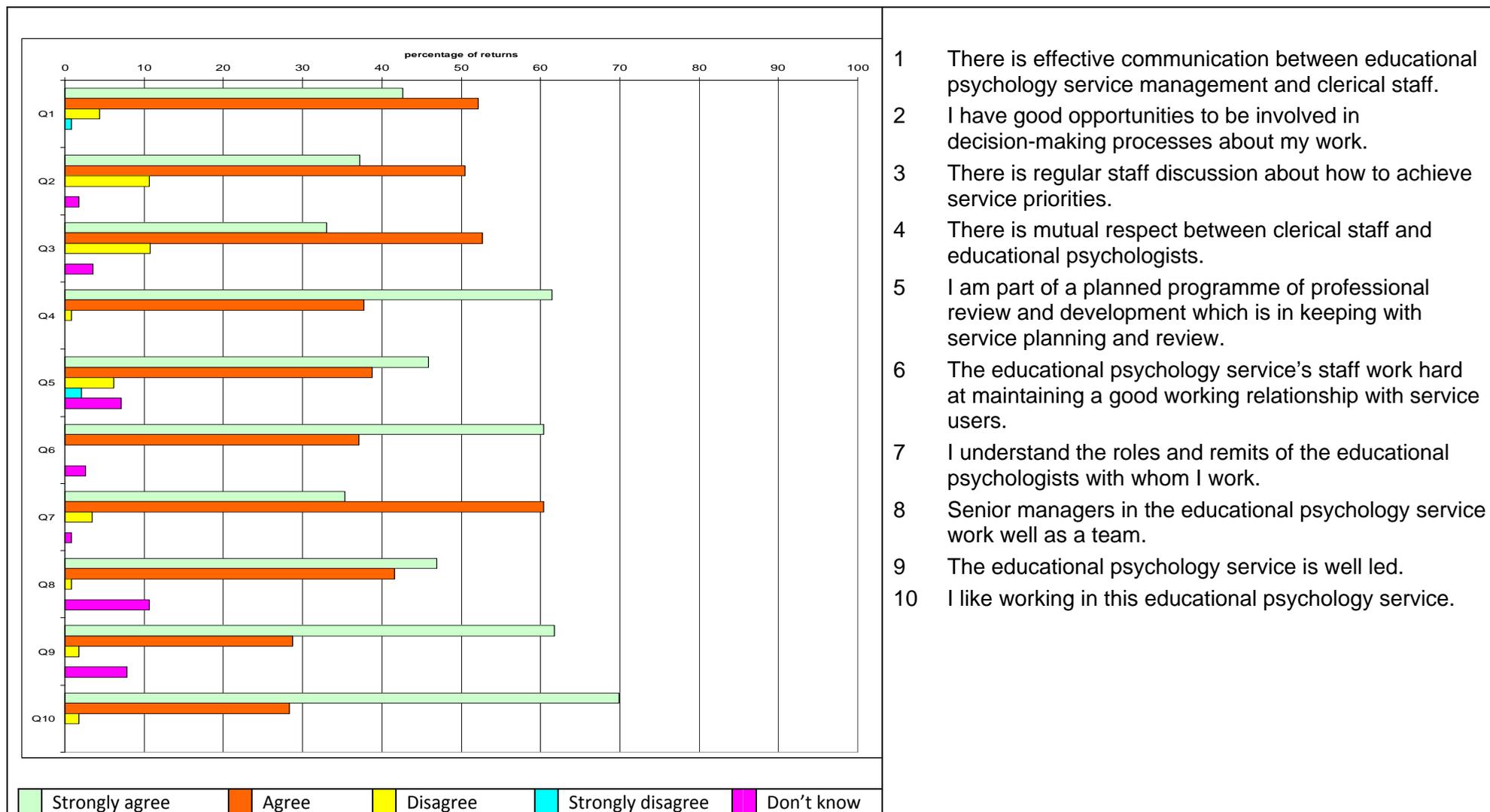
1. There is an effective procedure to link with the school educational psychologist.
2. The educational psychologist keeps the school informed about progress or outcomes of negotiated work.
3. The educational psychologist respects the confidentiality of pupils, parents and staff.
4. The educational psychologist deals sensitively and appropriately with pupils, parents and staff taking into account diversity and equality.
5. The educational psychologist is committed to continually improving the service to pupils in our school.
6. The educational psychologist provides an effective consultation service to parents in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.
7. The educational psychologist provides an effective assessment service which delivers effective outcomes to children and young people.
8. The educational psychologist contributes effectively to collaborative working practices in school to improve the outcomes for children and young people.
9. The individual casework provided by the educational psychologist is valued by the staff in school as it leads to better outcomes for children and young people.
10. The educational psychologist helps the school to achieve aspects of its strategic development plan.
11. The educational psychologist's contribution to the continuing professional development of staff is valued and aids staff in improving the outcomes for children and young people.
12. The educational psychologist's contribution to evaluation and research projects is valued and leads to better outcomes for children and young people.

Summary of educational psychologists' views

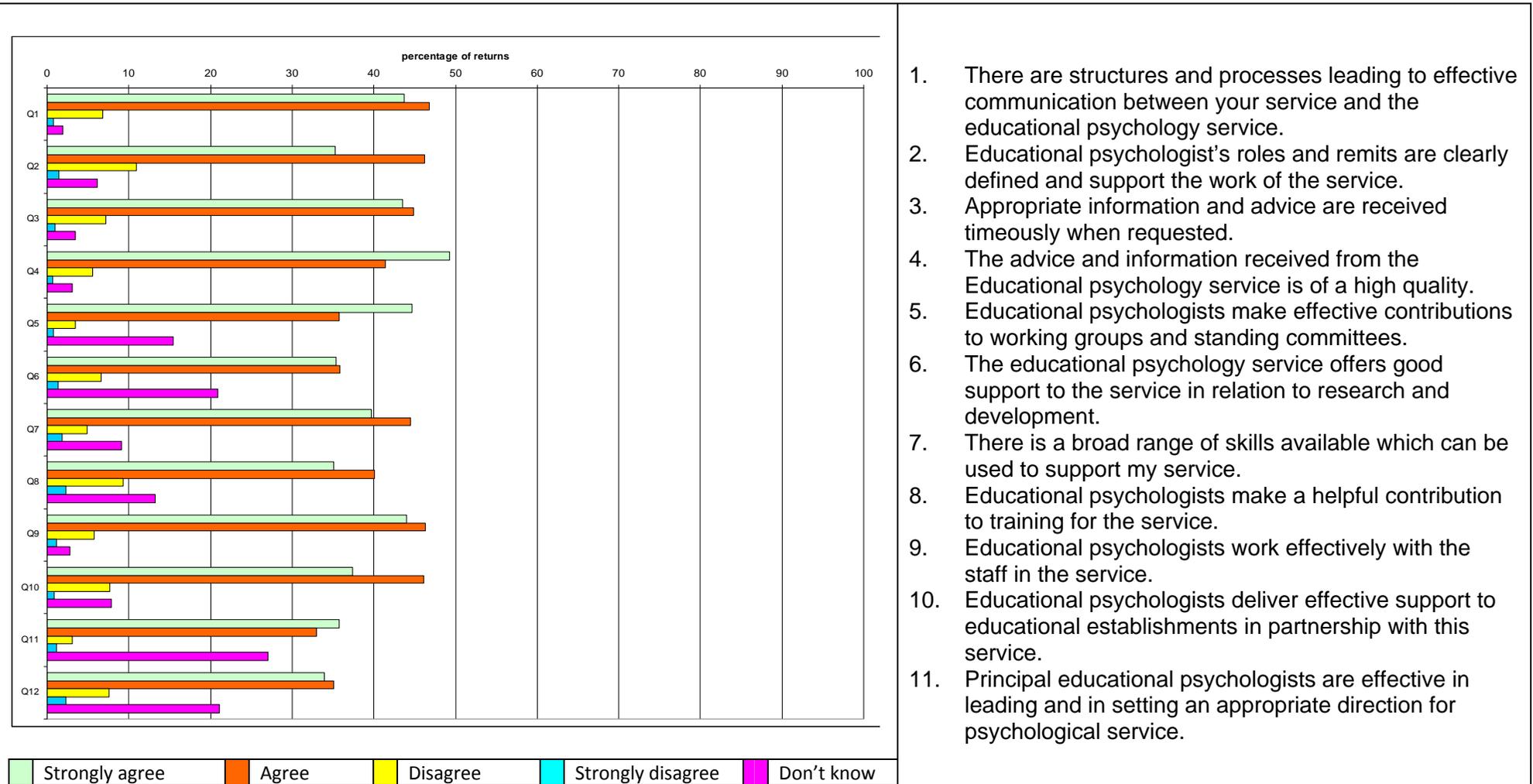


1. Communication is effective between educational psychology service's managers and staff.
2. Educational psychology managers operate effectively as a team.
3. The educational psychology service is well led.
4. I have good opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes in relation to the service.
5. Information on procedures and policies within the service is high quality and readily available to me.
6. I have opportunities for consultation and joint working with colleagues to improve our impact on children and young people.
7. I am part of a planned programme of professional review and development which is in keeping with service planning and local authority priorities.
8. Staff work hard to promote and maintain good relationships within the wider community.
9. I like working in this educational psychology service.
10. There is regular staff discussion about how to achieve service priorities.
11. I have opportunities to engage in the broad range of roles described in the Currie Review of educational psychology.
12. The educational psychology service takes account of the national context in planning and delivering service.
13. Educational psychologists are represented in national initiatives e.g. Better Behaviour Better Learning.

Summary of the views of EPS administrative staff

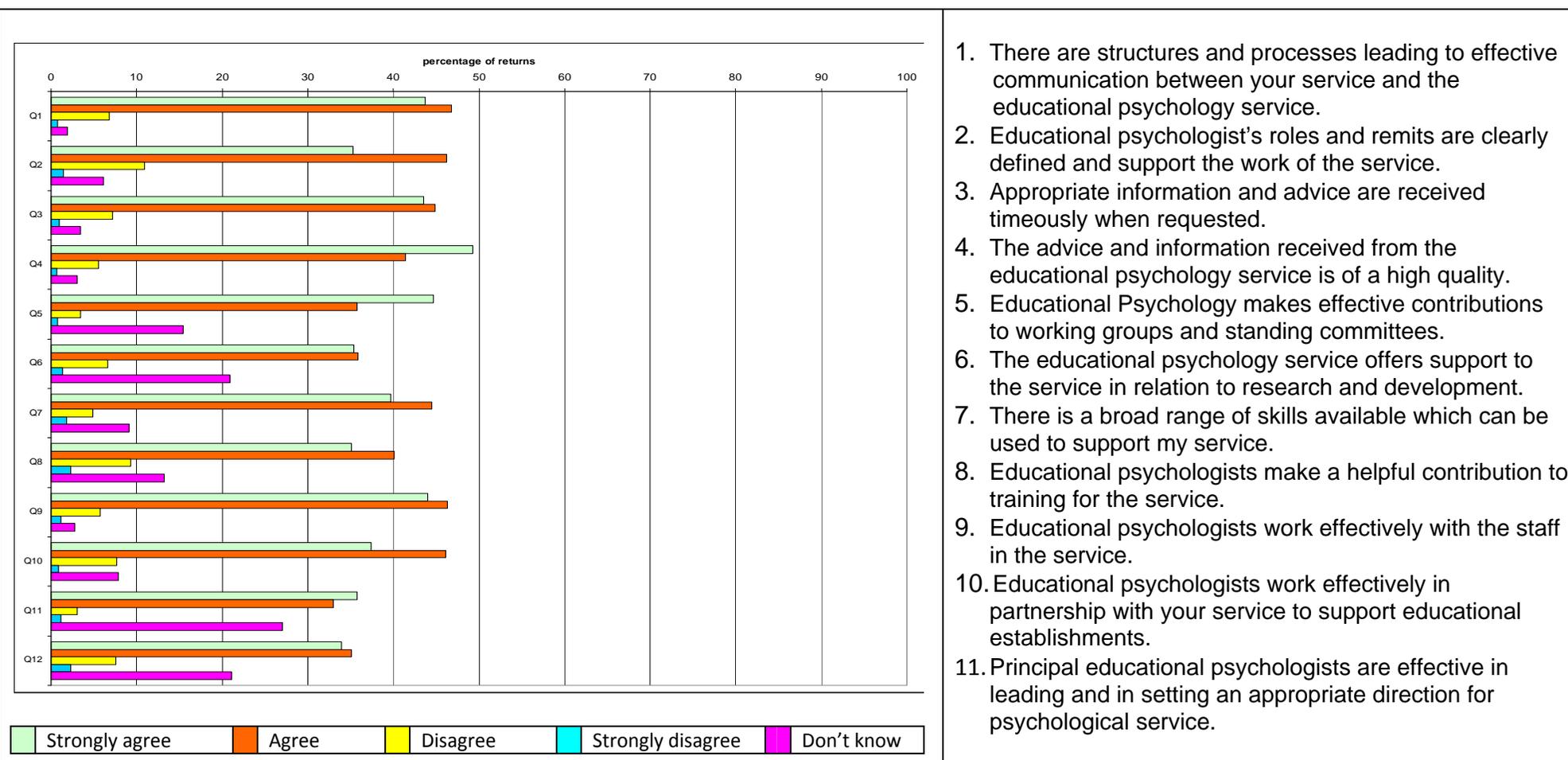


Summary of the views of education authority staff



1. There are structures and processes leading to effective communication between your service and the educational psychology service.
2. Educational psychologist's roles and remits are clearly defined and support the work of the service.
3. Appropriate information and advice are received timeously when requested.
4. The advice and information received from the Educational psychology service is of a high quality.
5. Educational psychologists make effective contributions to working groups and standing committees.
6. The educational psychology service offers good support to the service in relation to research and development.
7. There is a broad range of skills available which can be used to support my service.
8. Educational psychologists make a helpful contribution to training for the service.
9. Educational psychologists work effectively with the staff in the service.
10. Educational psychologists deliver effective support to educational establishments in partnership with this service.
11. Principal educational psychologists are effective in leading and in setting an appropriate direction for psychological service.

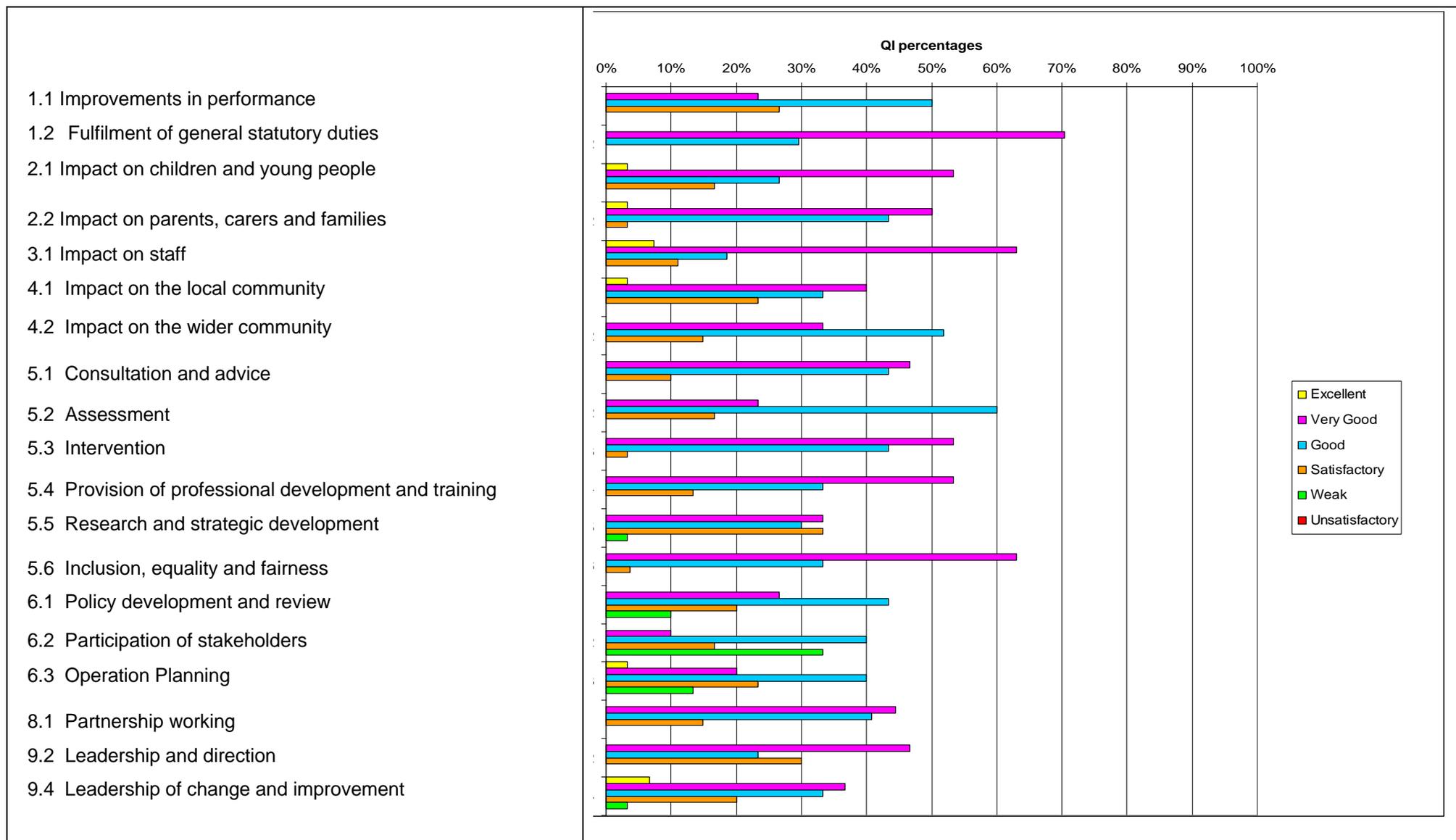
Summary of the views of external agencies and partners



1. There are structures and processes leading to effective communication between your service and the educational psychology service.
2. Educational psychologist's roles and remits are clearly defined and support the work of the service.
3. Appropriate information and advice are received timeously when requested.
4. The advice and information received from the educational psychology service is of a high quality.
5. Educational Psychology makes effective contributions to working groups and standing committees.
6. The educational psychology service offers support to the service in relation to research and development.
7. There is a broad range of skills available which can be used to support my service.
8. Educational psychologists make a helpful contribution to training for the service.
9. Educational psychologists work effectively with the staff in the service.
10. Educational psychologists work effectively in partnership with your service to support educational establishments.
11. Principal educational psychologists are effective in leading and in setting an appropriate direction for psychological service.

Appendix 3

National performance and quality indicator evaluations graph



Appendix 4

Reflective questions to support self-evaluation and improvement

The report has identified a range of important aspects of practice and policy which are not yet consistently being achieved to a high standard across services in Scotland. The reflective questions below address these challenges. They are intended to support staff in education authorities and EPS as they seek to improve the practice, impact and outcomes of EPS across Scotland

Improving outcomes for children and young people

- How well do targets for improvement highlight impact and outcomes for service users, particularly children and young people, and link to education authority priorities?
- What needs to be put in place to ensure that EPS develop consistently robust and systematic ways of collecting data so that the impact of services can be measured over time?
- In what ways can EPS become more formally involved in improving outcomes for all children and young people through developments relating to the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, particularly those linked to learning and teaching?
- How can educational psychologists' record keeping and monitoring capture more effectively the impact of their work on improving outcomes for children and young people?

Meeting their statutory duties

- What procedures need to be put in place to ensure that appropriate training and practice guidance is provided for all EPS staff in relation to race, equality and diversity?

Meeting the needs of children and young people

- How can educational psychologists ensure that there is clear and accessible information about services for children and young people, and all service users?

Supporting parents, carers and families

- What steps do services need to take to establish clearly what parents, carers and families can expect of the service to reduce inconsistency and variability of practice experienced by stakeholders?

Impact on schools, authority services and the local community

- How can EPS best work with schools and centres to help them achieve relevant aspects of their strategic development plan and contribute to the continuing professional development of staff?
- How can EPS communicate their role, remit and function most effectively to staff in schools and across the education authority to best meet the needs of the children and young people?

Impact on EPS Staff

- How can EPS best support the professional development and review needs of all educational psychologists, research assistants and administrative staff?

How good is the delivery of key processes?

- What do EPS need to put in place to ensure consistently high quality of assessment across services which is relevant and meaningful?
- How can EPS best evaluate the medium and long-term impact of their training and professional development work with other professionals?
- In what ways can services learn from best practice in order to strengthen the research function of educational psychology across Scotland and that research supports improvements for children and young people?

How good is the leadership and management of educational psychology services?

- How can EPS improve the quality and robustness of support and challenge arrangements, both by education authorities and service managers?
- What benchmarking approaches can be used to enable senior service and education managers to have greater confidence in overall effectiveness of the EPS and that the needs of children, young people and families are being met appropriately?
- What steps can senior service and education managers take to ensure that rigorous self-evaluation is embedded in practice across EPS and is clearly focused on outcomes for children and young people?
- In what ways can stakeholders, including children and young people, be more fully involved in the evaluation of the EPS?
- What can services do to better assess and manage risk, so that they can respond quickly and flexibly to the changing educational and financial context?
- In what ways can EPS strengthen their leadership across the service to increase their contribution to supporting education authority priorities?

- How can post-school psychological services become more embedded in EPS practice and have clearer strategic links to council planning and performance management?
- How can services involve stakeholders effectively in policy and service development?
- How can EPS improve planning and reporting and establish better links to wider education authority planning and review cycles?
- What steps need to be taken to improve the quality of EPS management information systems to ensure that resources are targeted in ways that will achieve the greatest benefit for children and young people?

Appendix 5

Glossary

Definition of terms used in this report.

HM Inspectors use published criteria when making evaluations. They are published as quality indicators which relate evaluations to six levels. The table below describes the levels used in the six-point scale.

Levels	Description
Excellent	Outstanding, sector leading
Very good	Major strengths
Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak	Important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

This report also uses the following words to describe numbers and proportions:

almost all	over 90%
most	75-90%
majority	50-74%
less than half	15-49%
few	up to 15%

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