



Renfrewshire
Council

VSE April 2016

Self-Evaluation of National Themes

**Renfrewshire
Educational
Psychology
Service**

Self-Evaluation of National Themes: Overview

What key outcomes has Renfrewshire Educational Psychology service achieved in relation to the national themes?

Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service (REPS) team has explored the nature of service delivery and key developments under the national themes:

1. **Learning and teaching**, exploring EPS contribution to learning and teaching with a focus on raising attainment and achievement for all and closing the poverty-related attainment gap, and
2. **Partnership working / Impact on the wider community**, to capture Health and Wellbeing, Getting it Right for Every Child and partnership working.

Over the last 5 years REPS has been involved in a wide range of activities, initiatives and interventions that fall within these broad themes. Figure 1 highlights key activities under each theme, including those which can be considered to fall into both themes. The impact of REPS involvement in these areas over the years is summarised in a number of Standards and Quality Reports (2011, 2012, 2015) (Ref 1).

REPS are centrally placed to support strategic initiatives across Renfrewshire. The range of strategic involvement under each VSE national theme is summarised in Figure 2. There is a very good partnership between EPs and Children's Services staff. The PEP has a close working relationship with the Education Manager (GIRFEC) and the ASN Manager. Beyond this the PEP is a member of the Children's Services Extended Leadership Team, and the Early Years Strategy Implementation Group.

This report provides a more detailed consideration of the key contributions that REPS has made under each theme area over the last 5 years. This includes a summary of the areas of strength identified, challenges arising and areas requiring further investigation and evaluation.

Finally, the report provides a summary (Appendix 4c) of the key service strengths and areas for development which emerged from the Validated Self-Evaluation which was carried out during April 2016 in partnership with a team from Education Scotland. Education Scotland positively validated REPS self-evaluation and a number of areas for further development were jointly agreed. The Education Scotland VSE report on the service is available at http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/RenfrewshireEPSVSE080716_tcm4-876343.pdf. The VSE report was very helpful in crystallizing EPSs thinking in term of future service development planning. A review of the service is now underway. The aim of this review is to recommend a revised model of REPS service delivery which can build on the strengths recognised by Education Scotland and consider the areas for development identified as a result of the VSE. An action plan is being developed which will be incorporated into the EPS improvement plan.

Figure 1. REPS service delivery across the national themes (2011-2016)

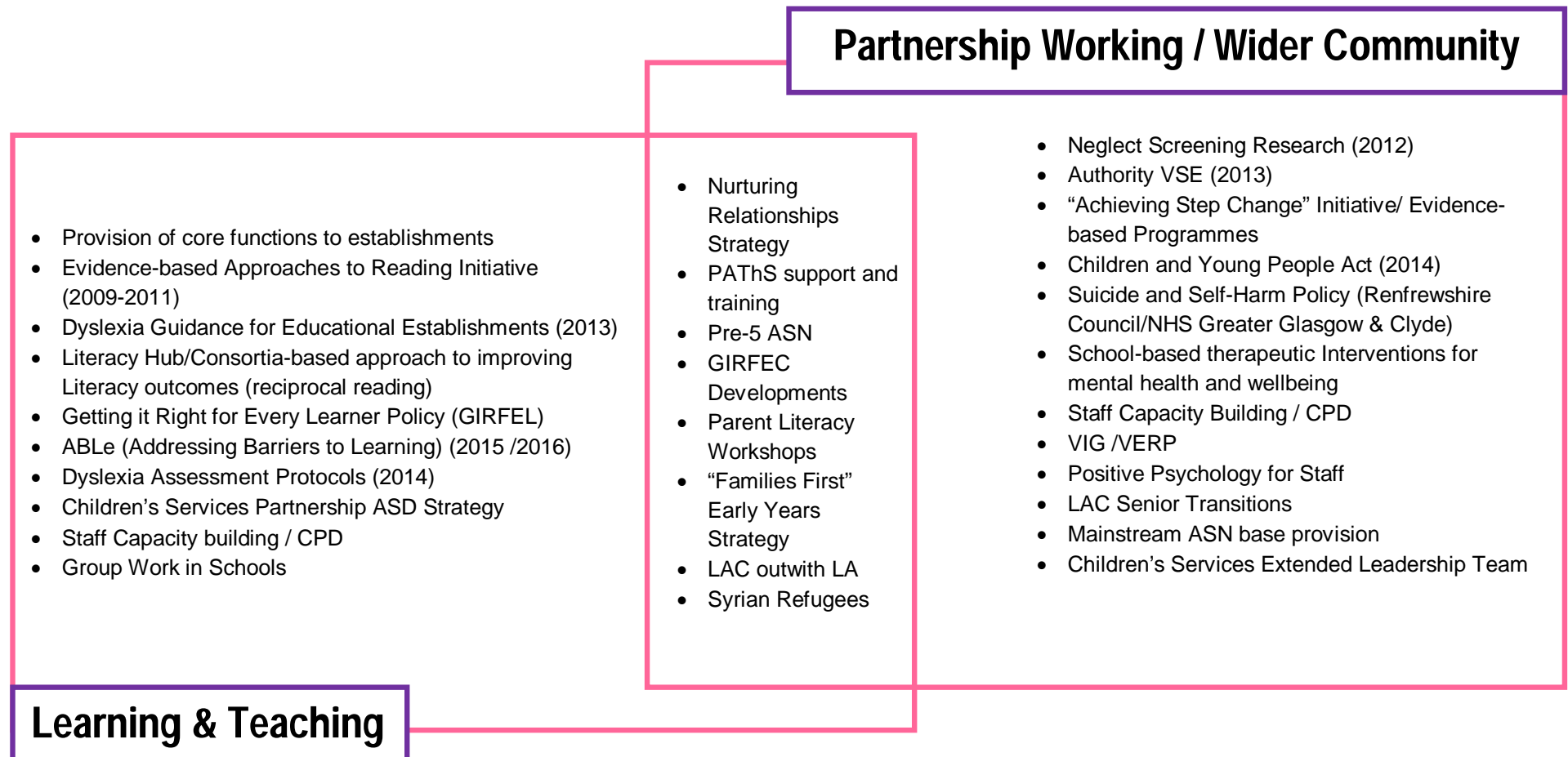
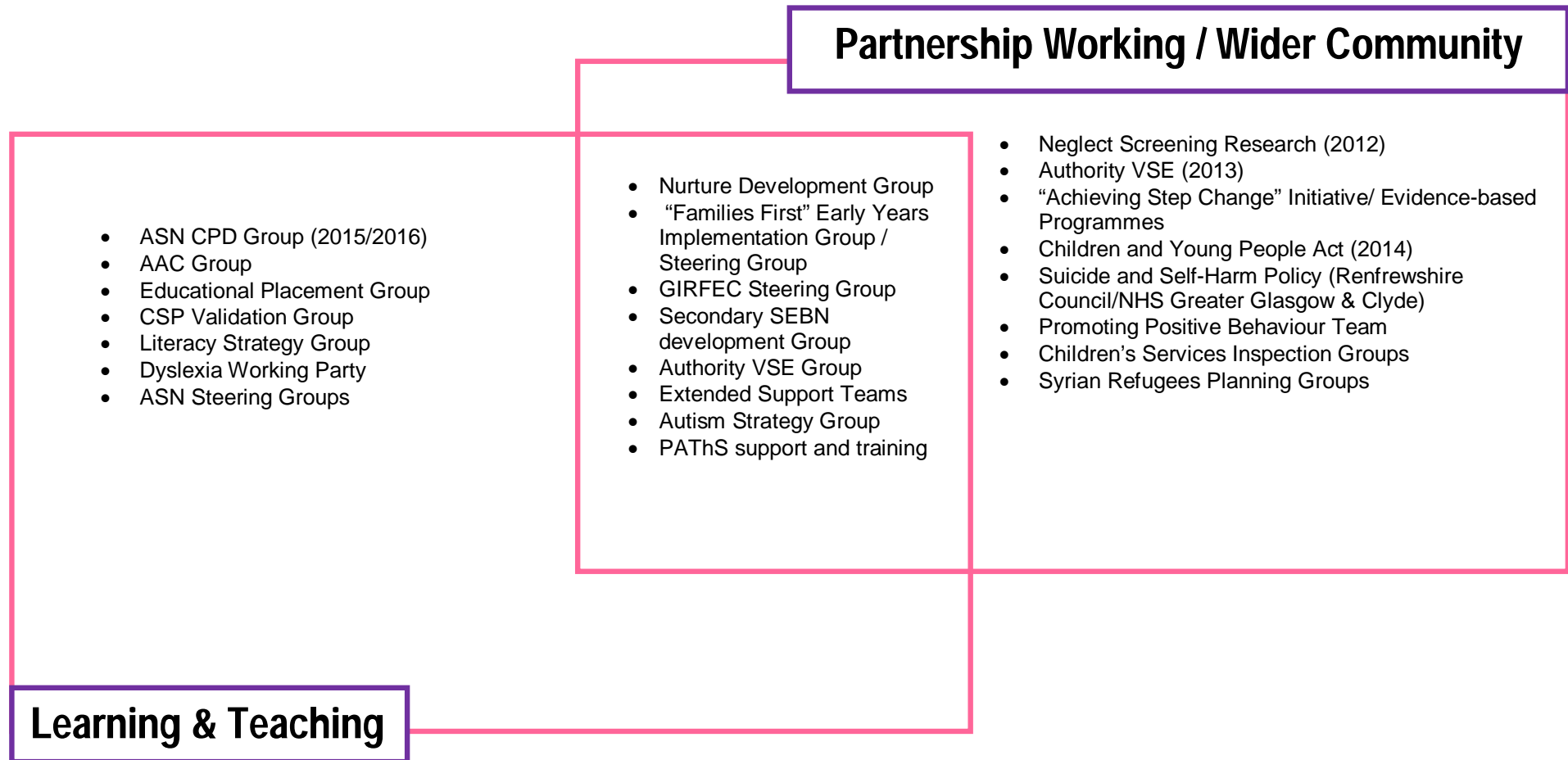


Figure 2. REPS contribution to strategic groups across the national themes (2011-2016)



National Theme 1: Learning and Teaching

Where Are We Now?

REPS has maintained a “relationship-based approach” to service delivery to schools in order to effectively and equitably support learning and teaching in Renfrewshire educational establishments. Each establishment has a named EP who visits to all local authority pre-five centres and schools on a planned, regular basis. Time is allocated to each establishment on the basis of an analysis of school characteristics. This analysis reflects school size and deprivation factors. ASN schools and pre-five establishments supporting children with long term additional support needs also receive an allocation of EPs’ time. The provision of a named EP for each establishment allows the EP to take a whole-systems ecological approach to service delivery which encourages early intervention and promotes inclusion.

The overall nature of the service to be delivered to an establishment is confirmed in a service level agreement which is negotiated by the EP with key school personnel at the beginning of a session. The agreement is subject to annual review and includes arrangements for consultative casework, whole-school learning and teaching initiatives and capacity building initiatives and contributions to continuing professional development.

What difference does REPS make to Learning and Teaching in Educational Establishments?

The 2015 Standards and Quality Report (Ref 1) provides evidence of the impact of EPS service delivery in general. Heads have responded to questions about the impact of the EPs work on Heads and senior managers, children and young people, teaching staff and parents. The report also describes the impact of casework, consultation, CPD, and research/whole school development. From this information we can conclude that REPS has had a very strong impact on learning and teaching in schools in a number of ways.

Impact on Children and Young People

Almost all (93%) heads reported that the EPS made a positive difference to children and young people. EPs were reported to provide ‘support’, ‘guidance’, and ‘assessment’ to help children overcome their difficulties and ultimately lead to ‘better outcomes for learners’.

Other comments by Heads provided further evidence for the impact of the EPS on outcomes for children and young people; “ensuring the best outcomes for children”, “building esteem and reassurance” “reducing barriers to learning”, “improved support and engagement” and “help children overcome difficulties”.

Impact on Staff

Most Heads (84%) reported the EPS to make a positive difference to staff believing these positive differences included impacting ‘self confidence’, providing ‘support’, ‘information and advice’, ‘strategies and resources’ for staff to use and ‘reassurance’. In addition to the core service delivery function to schools outlined in this section, the service has engaged in a range of authority-wide initiatives under the learning and teaching theme. The key developments are summarised in the sections below.

Evidence-based Approaches to Reading Initiative (2009-2011)

The “Evidenced Based Approaches to Reading” collaborative research initiative was a two year project during which EPs distilled and utilised research information to support schools to design, implement and evaluate projects intended to improve reading attainment in their establishments. Teachers from 5 primary schools were first given training on evidenced-based approaches to literacy. This was followed up by guidance and support on research planning and evaluation methods. The result was five unique projects, each utilising an evidenced-based approach and each tailored to meet identified school and pupil needs. A dissemination event was held in March 2011 at which each school presented their project findings. A [summary report](#) is available on the service web page:

Literacy Hub/Consortia-based approach to improving Literacy outcomes (Reciprocal Reading)

The service was involved in the group developing the authority's literacy strategy. Within this context, recently the service has had involvement in a three-authority Literacy Hub/Consortia-based approach to improving literacy outcomes (West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Councils). The focus was on further development of the learning and teaching of higher order reading skills and the development of meta-cognitive skills using Reciprocal Reading. This was the core philosophy of the Reading Routes materials developed by West Dunbartonshire. REPS role was to provide consultation on evaluation methods used in the initiative which [reported in 2014](#).

Dyslexia Guidance and Assessment Protocols

A Senior EP has led the development of dyslexia guidance for schools. This guidance was approved by Board in March 2013 and subsequently circulated to schools. The dyslexia assessment protocol is now embedded in schools as an example of collaborative assessment in practice. This form of EPS consultation will be considered as part of Theme 1 of the current VSE.

ABLE (Addressing Barriers to Learning) (2015/2016)

Following a presentation in June 2015 by Polly Jones from Dundee EPS, the EPS has been developing an ABLe implementation plan for Renfrewshire. EPs were given time to familiarise themselves with ABLe and work in groups to develop practice skills. This was followed by EP input to education managers, early years, primary and secondary staff. Feedback from these inputs was very positive and expressions of interest to take part in a pilot phase from April to June 2016 have been received. The pilot phase will be evaluated by the service after June 2016 and full-implementation is planned from August 2016.

Capacity Building and Continuing Professional Development

Responding to Heads' survey findings, one of the major targets identified in the 2012 Standards and Quality report was to increase the amount of time spent by EPs on the delivery of CPD to education staff. Since this report, there has been a specific focus on this area of service delivery. The number of CPD seminars and training has increased steadily over the period from 2012. The majority of these have been delivered to individual establishments, but some have been whole authority seminars. Dyslexia, positive psychology and autism have been the most frequently delivered subject areas. Other topics covered include: dyslexia / positive psychology / solution oriented practice / attachment / PAThS / Bounce Back / behaviour management and additional support needs / restorative approaches in schools / adolescence / ADHD / numeracy and "dyscalculia" / emotional Intelligence / differentiation – learning motivation / GIRFEL / Child's Plan.

CPD has been delivered to parents, teachers, trainee teachers, classroom assistants, nursery-officers, additional support needs assistants, key workers in ASN bases.

With regard to the quality of capacity building and CPD provided by the EPS, the 2015 Standards and Quality Report indicates that 26% were very satisfied and 41% satisfied. This is an increase in satisfaction since the last survey in 2012 and is evidence of the impact the service has made to increase the amount of CPD delivered to educational establishments. Heads reported that psychologists provided 'very helpful development for staff' and 'superb' approaches to training which are 'excellent and well received' by staff. While a number of schools are still not requesting this type of service, surveys show a steady improving trend since 2011 which demonstrates that the service has achieved its improvement target of increased delivery of CPD and training.

Area of Work	How do we know? (Data / Evidence)
Evidence-based Approaches to Reading Initiative (2009-2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence-based Approaches to Reading Initiative Reports(2009-2011) Each school evaluated the outcome and impact of their project
Literacy Hub/Consortia-based approach to improving Literacy outcomes (Reciprocal Reading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minutes of meetings - Evaluation Report. -
Dyslexia Guidance and Assessment Protocols (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment Protocols now in use in all establishments - Guidance issued to establishments - Positive feedback from Dyslexia Scotland and parent representative
ABLE (Addressing Barriers to Learning) (2015 /2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from Awareness raising Seminars - Number of pilot establishment requests - ABLe implementation plan - Feedback from EP who is leading ABLe implementation - Feedback from stakeholders who attended EP's inputs - Emails from establishments who wish to be part of the ABLe pilot
Capacity Building and Continuing Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standards & Quality Report 2015 - Course Evaluations

What are our Strengths?

Over the past 5 years there is good evidence of REPS impact on learning and teaching at establishment and strategic levels. The service has been successful in fulfilling the brief given by the authority in 2011 to maintain an effective front line service to establishments and supporting the inclusion of children with additional support needs, while contributing to key strategic priorities such as the integration of ASL and GIRFEC policy and legislation, promoting early intervention, and capacity building of staff. It has also sought to introduce a strong evidence based approach to practice.

REPS spends the majority of its time working in educational establishments on learning and teaching issues relating to named individual children and young people. This work is predominantly consultative in nature and takes place within each establishment's "extended support framework" and at "extended support team meetings". Evidence for the impact of this work is described separately in Appendix 4(a) (*VSE National Theme 1: What is the impact of EPS consultative practice on learning and teaching?*) This is the subject of the first theme in the current VSE.

Where are our Challenges?

The primary challenge is to maintain a service delivery which integrates work at establishment level with support for key national and local authority priorities. Given the ongoing climate of financial restraint and limited resources, REPS needs to continually evaluate practice to ensure effective and efficient use of service resources, skills and knowledge.

What do we Need to Find out More About?

REPS have always been positively configured to support the most vulnerable children and their families. The service time allocation system (based on school size and SIMD weightings) ensures that increased service time is provided to establishments serving the poorest localities in Renfrewshire. However, the current national focus on "raising attainment and achievement for all" and addressing the attainment gap arising from poverty require more detailed scrutiny of the impact of the main REPS activity in establishments, namely, consultative practice. **Is EPS consultation working and what difference does it make to learning and teaching?** This focus is described in Appendix 4(a) which provides the background to the choice of the VSE Learning and Teaching Theme: *What is the impact of EPS consultative practice on learning and teaching?*

National Theme 2: Partnership Working / Impact on the Local Community

Where Are We Now?

REPS collaborative model of service delivery requires high quality partnership working across the full practice matrix. Self evaluation over many years provides very good evidence of strong practice in this area. Service delivery to establishments is negotiated in partnership with school staff. There is also very good evidence of ongoing partnership working with children's services colleagues (education and social work), partner agencies (health) and voluntary agencies (e.g. Barnardo's). The PEP is a member of the children's services extended leadership team, the planned admissions group, the GIRFEC Steering Group and the "Families First" early years implementation group. The extent of this partnership working is illustrated in figures 1 and 2. This section of the report outlines the most significant contributions REPS has made to partnership working in Renfrewshire. Partnership activities which are also relevant to learning and teaching are also considered in this section of the report (i.e. GIRFEC)

Nurturing Relationships Strategy

The Renfrewshire nurture strategy has been developing since 2014. The main focus for stage one was the development of a 3 level model of support for children with social, emotional and behavioural needs stemming from poor nurturing experiences and the provision of additional capacity for every pre-5 establishment, with a nurture "champions" established in every pre-5 establishment across Renfrewshire. In addition, around 500 nursery staff were trained by Kate Cairns Associates in the "Five to Thrive" approach, the implementation of which is supported by Barnardo's, including two "nurture facilitators". EPS contributed to strategic planning and training. In 2015, in recognition of the important role played by REPS in nurture, funding was provided to the EPS for an additional 1fte EP for 3 years in order to allow the service to lead stage two of the strategy which has the following aims:

- to promote an understanding of attachment theory and of the importance of nurturing relationships in helping all children and young people to learn and develop socially and emotionally
- to promote an understanding of the key principles of nurturing practice and support schools to embed these at a whole school level
- to support practices which will improve wellbeing and promote resilience for children and young people
- to introduce an approach to implementation which is evidence-based and therefore has the best chance of delivering a sustainable approach for establishments and children and young people.

To date, the EPS nurture team has established a nurture development group; carried out a national audit of approaches to nurture; participated in national training; developed an implementation plan based on "implementation science" (Meyers, Durlak & Wandersman, 2012)(Ref 2) and carried out an audit of needs in establishments across Renfrewshire.

The Nurturing Relationships Strategy will be the focus of the VSE partnership working / impact on the wider community theme and is considered in Appendix 4(b) on page 21, *VSE National Theme 2: Partnership Working / Impact on the Wider Community* "How well does the Nurturing Relationships Implementation Plan meet the

GIRFEC / Children and Young People Act (2014)

The Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) is a member of the multi-agency GIRFEC steering group and was lead officer in the development and preparation of the ["Getting it Right for Every Learner" policy \(2014\)](#). This is the authority policy which integrates the ASL legislation with GIRFEC and the requirements of the Children and Young People Act. The PEP continues to be centrally involved in this policy development as the Children and Young People Act legislation is implemented. In individual establishments, EPs have been working to support effective implementation of this new policy. The GIRFEC policy has introduced a revised staged intervention process for Renfrewshire educational establishments. Within this, a new process for identifying the needs and provisions required for children and young people has been developed. This has been led by the ASN Manager and the PEP with support from two Senior EPs and the authority Children's Services Support Officers. The new "Educational Placement Group Protocols" were introduced to establishments in October 2014. A review of these protocols is currently underway.

REPS involvement in GIRFEC developments is summarised in the REPS Improvement Plan (2015-2018) (Ref 3). Frontline service delivery in educational establishments within the EST framework is core to all EPs' practice and is central to the authorities staged intervention approach.

“Families First” Early Years Strategy

Renfrewshire's Early Years Strategy, known as [“Families First”](#) has been operating since 2013. It has three strands which offer a family-centred approach to improving outcomes for children and families. These were initially implemented over a two year period, running from August 2013 to March 2015. The PEP led the team involved in evaluating this strategy and is responsible for overseeing the evaluation of the two locality teams being conducted by the Robert Owen Centre at Glasgow University. The PEP works closely with the project manager and is supported in this by 2 research assistants. The impact of the strategy over the first 3 years has been extensively demonstrated (Ref 4). A decision has been taken to expand the strategy to 3 additional localities until 2017. The quality of the external and internal evaluation processes contributed to this funding decision.

Authority Quality Improvement and Self-Evaluation

- The authority was involved in validated self-evaluation between October 2012 and January 2013 [Renfrewshire VSE Report \(2015\)](#)
- The PEP and the two Senior EPs were involved in three groups convened to take this process forward in relation to the following themes; “Broad General Education”, “GIRFEC: Pupil Support and Planning”, and “Transitions”. This work involved the planning, implementation and analysis of a number of self-evaluation activities with the VSE context. Following this, the PEP was centrally involved in the inspection of Renfrewshire's Children's Services Partnership (2015). [Renfrewshire Children's Services Inspection Report \(2015\)](#)

Mental Health & Wellbeing

In 2014 the Educational Psychology Service was involved in multi-agency work with a number of agencies (Renfrewshire Council Children's Services – Social Work, Education Home Link Service, NHS – School Nurse Team, and the Choose Life Service Co-ordinator, Choose Life Young Person's Resource Worker) to produce a policy for Renfrewshire Council/NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde for all professionals working with children and families in relation to self-harm and suicide. The EPS provided a psychological perspective on the areas of self harm and suicide and used knowledge of local and national educational policies and legislation, and experience of the working in the Renfrewshire Children's Services context.

In an establishment context, individual EPs support children's mental health and wellbeing via casework consultation, whole-school training and direct work employing a range of approaches including: solution oriented work, cognitive behavioural approaches, video interactive guidance. Staff mental health and wellbeing has been enhanced by the development and provision of a positive psychology training workshop for staff in educational establishments. This has been delivered in a range of establishments across the authority.

Autism Strategy

The EPS has been involved in the authority's autism (ASD) forum which considers issues of common concerns across relevant ASD provision. A Senior EP has been involved in a sub-group looking at developing an ASD education strategy. In addition, the EPS was involved in the preparation of the Children's Services Partnership ASD Strategy which was launched in March 2016. A Senior EP delivers annual ASD awareness-raising to early years staff and, over the past session, has been part of the team developing and delivering the ASD Link training, which involves training a member of staff from each educational establishment in Renfrewshire to act as an ASD link person.

Area of Work	How do we know? (Data / Evidence)
Nurturing Relationships Strategy (2014 to current)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See Appendix 4(b)
GIRFEC / Children and Young People Act (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External Scrutiny by Education Scotland (2014) - Minutes of GIRFEC Steering Group - Involvement in LA VSE GIRFEC Theme - GIRFEL Implementation Training Evaluations - Notes from consultation meetings with stakeholders (EPs, HT, CSSOs, ASN Manager) - Renfrewshire Children's Services Inspection Report (2015)
"Families First" Early Years Strategy (2014 to current)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EY Implementation Plan updates - Impact Evaluation Reports - Glasgow University Evaluation Reports
Authority Quality Improvement and Self-Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renfrewshire VSE Report (2015). - Renfrewshire Children's Services Inspection Report (2015)
Mental Health & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RCSP Suicide and Self-harm policy (2015) - Collaborative casework information
Autism Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renfrewshire Autism Strategy (2016) - Minutes of Meetings - ASD Link Training evaluations

What are our Strengths?

Despite the challenging operating context arising from ongoing budgetary constraints, there is good evidence that REPS partnership working continues to have impact at the establishment level. The “relationships-based” approach to work in schools provides the best opportunity to promote inclusion and early intervention and build staff capacity. In addition, the service continues to contribute to wider strategic partnership initiatives. For example REPS was successful in securing additional staffing to lead the authority’s nurture strategy. This success builds on a very strong ability to lead and contribute toward core strategic priorities such as GIRFEC and the “Families First” early years strategy. REPS key strength is its ability to achieve an appropriate balance between effective front-line service delivery to schools and wider Children’s Services priorities. In this way REPS supports the Renfrewshire Children’s Services Partnership at a number of levels.

Where are our Challenges?

The challenge is to work to sustain the balance between work in establishments and the wider strategic focus. This in an increasingly accountable local authority landscape. Additionally, over the next year the GIRFEC legislation arising from the Children and Young People Act (2014) and the requirements of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, will require the service to continue to work closely with establishments and the authority to support new duties and requirements. It is anticipated that the VSE activities under the learning and teaching theme 1 (EPS consultation) will begin to streamline practice to ensure more efficient and effective support at an establishment level.

At an authority level, the challenge is to continue to deliver high quality, evidence-based initiatives which make a difference to stakeholders. The VSE activities around the Nurturing Relationships strategy will provide an opportunity to reflect whether the current approach to nurture is “fit-for-purpose”.

What do we Need to Find out More About?

As stated already, the Nurturing Relationships strategy will be the focus of the VSE partnership working / impact on the wider community theme and will be considered in the paper *Appendix 4(b) VSE National Theme 2: Partnership Working / Impact on the Wider Community “How well does the Nurturing Relationships Implementation Plan meet the needs of stakeholders?”* This strategy has been underway since 2014 and it is important to evaluate what impact the EPS has had to date in order to ensure effective future planning for the strategy. Specifically, there is a need to find out in more detail whether the proposed implementation plans for stage 2 of the strategy meet the needs of stakeholders. A number of questions arise in this consideration. These are outlined in Appendix 4(b)

Appendix 4(a) Self-Evaluation of VSE Theme 1: Learning and Teaching

What is the impact of EPS consultative practice on learning and teaching?

EPS Consultation: Where Are We Now?

One of the aims of REPS is “to work collaboratively with others in an educational context in order to support the learning and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, in particular, those who have additional support needs”. The service utilises a collaborative practice model in order to work towards this aim. This model is described in the REPS “Service Standards for Professional Practice” (Ref 5). Within this model EP consultation can take place in a number of different ways and is the first line of service delivery to educational establishments. Four main contexts for EP consultation have developed since 2006 in response to changing needs and demands.

1. Extended Support Team (EST) Consultation

This type of consultation will take place within the context of an establishment’s extended support framework, and can take a number of different forms. In some establishments, particularly secondary schools, meetings take place on a weekly or fortnightly basis. The EP is a core member and is involved in discussions about a large number of pupils and issues. Other establishments review entire year groups at EST meetings and once again, the EP is present for consultation and advice. Parents are not present. This type of consultation involves working closely with professionals who raise issues of concern about a particular named child or young person. Staff involved could include senior management, teachers, specialist teachers, social workers, home link workers, doctors, school nurses and therapists. In other situations, most notably in Pre-5 centres, the EST is convened to discuss an individual child and both parents and professionals are present and centrally involved. These “Parental ESTs” can be a route to additional action and intervention by the EP in certain situations.

2. Collaborative Meetings

Where concerns about an individual child or young person require a more in-depth consultation with the EP, a collaborative meeting may be requested by the school. This meeting brings together parents, relevant school staff and the pupil (where appropriate) and is led by the EP. The role of the EP in the meeting is to help gather together existing information and to work with others to develop strategies to support the pupil and plan necessary future action. As part of an agreed action plan the EP may carry out some individual work directly with the young person if appropriate. The Collaborative Meeting is the primary access route to direct EP involvement with children.

3. Collaborative Dyslexia Assessment

The Authority approach to identification of dyslexia was revised in 2014 and subsequently rolled out to schools. The aims of the collaborative dyslexia assessment were:

- to streamline the process of identifying children with dyslexia where there are no other major compounding problems.
- to place the identification of dyslexia within a school context and within a staged intervention approach.
- to help school staff become more skilled in understanding the nature and implications of reading / spelling difficulties (across all stages) and to support them in developing strategies to meet the children's identified needs.

Feedback from EPs indicates that the approach works well in most primary schools although it works best where schools have some additional learning support and are gathering information about the child on an ongoing basis.

4. Early Screening Initiative (Primary 2/3 Screening)

The EP may be part of a school’s early screening team and can attend a number of meetings throughout the year. A whole year group (usually at the p2/3 stage) is discussed with the aim of enhancing learning for all children and identifying children who will need varying levels of additional support within the school. The role of the EP in the screening initiative has come more to the fore in recent years as many schools no longer involved the EP in the process. New EPs joining the team have highlighted this and thus now would be a good time to review our role in

A recent survey carried out with EPs reported on the early screening initiative in 31 schools. 45% (14 out of 31) of these schools were still using the early screening initiative. 5 out of 10 EPs were involved in screening as part of their service-level agreement. . Two schools only involved the EP in post screening discussions of children who appeared to have marked difficulties. Twelve out of the 14 schools who use early screening continue to involve the EP in the process in generally the way specified in guidance on the approach. In these 12 schools, the EP role included:

- advice and consultation regarding support strategies and guidance as to the role of EP
- initial consultation on “how” and “what” information to gather
- interpret/analyse of information
- development of learning and teaching interventions.

Heads of Establishment Views of Consultation

The most recent S&Q report published in April 2015 (Ref 1) indicated that Head’s overall satisfaction with EP “consultation and advice” was at 89% and satisfaction with ESTs (“multiagency working”) was at 79%. Consultations were described as ‘effective’ and advice as being ‘excellent’ and of ‘exceptionally high standard’. 8% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the quality of consultation and advice offered, perhaps reflective of the issue of time constraints with the EP. With regard to impact, in the 2015 report, Heads commented that advice and consultation to staff on general matters and approaches was “helpful”, “valued highly” and “very worthwhile”, leading to “more skilled and confident practitioners”. Some Heads thought that advice and consultation to staff was “limited” mostly due to time constraints and advice was “not always practical”. The trend in Heads’ satisfaction with the consultation and advice provided by the service over the past 8 years since 2007 revealed a year on year decline in satisfaction ratings from 2010. This coincided with the reduction in EP numbers which suggests that it is related to Heads’ concerns that more EP input is required in this area. Despite this, most comments provided were positive:

- *“We have effective consultation and receive appropriate, knowledgeable advice”.*
- *“Valuable source of information and advice, provides information on recent research etc. Contributes to future planning and systems development”.*
- *“Our EP is excellent, however the amount of time is not sufficient”.*

With regard to multiagency working, of which EST is a major component, 79% of Heads were very satisfied or satisfied with the arrangements in place for multi-agency working with the EPS. Some stated the “EPS provides an excellent service for multi-agency working” and the “EP contributes effectively to the school EST”. 8% of Heads selected the neither/nor option and the remaining 13% were dissatisfied with the multi-agency working arrangements. Heads reported the difficulties of working around the timetable of EPs and explained, “it is extremely difficult to arrange multi-agency meetings as everyone is so stretched”. Some Heads also commented that the limited time EPs have with schools means the “time allocation no longer allows attendance at monthly EST meetings”. The satisfaction rating of 79% was lower than the rating obtained in the 2012 survey (92%) and may be due to the factors described above rather than a reduction in the quality of multi-agency working by EPs.

Parent Views of Consultation

In the 2012 S&Q Report, most parents (96%) reported that they found the collaborative meeting helpful, were clear about the outcome of the meeting (92%) and were happy with the actions taken by the meeting (90%). Parents were able to report on and describe the positive impact which the EP had in terms of:

- positive change (both in their children, in themselves as parents);
- the provision of information and advice;
- help and support; and
- reassurance.

While many parents surveyed were highly satisfied with the service provided by EPs, areas for improvement were identified including communication, earlier involvement and increased resourcing of the service.

Area of Work	How do we know? (Evidence)
EST Consultations	Scrutiny of Stakeholder Surveys Standards and Quality Reports School/Service Agreements Minutes of Meetings Heads Survey findings Parent Survey findings PEP observations of EP practice
Collaborative Meetings	Scrutiny of Stakeholder Surveys S&Q Reports School/Service Agreements Heads Survey findings Parent Survey findings PEP observations of EP practice
Collaborative Dyslexia Assessment	Feedback from EPs Feedback from Schools Dyslexia Consultation Summary Reports
Early Screening Initiative (Primary 2/3 Screening)	Survey of current EP and school Involvement

Consultation: What are our Strengths?

Current approaches to consultation have been developing since 2006. They are now effectively integrated into Renfrewshire's staged model of planning and intervention for children and young people. There is good evidence of impact of this way of working for over 7 years. There is evidence that this way of working promotes early intervention and inclusion of children and young people with a wide range of additional support needs and wellbeing concerns.

Collaborative Meetings provide a context for the EP to apply collaborative assessment and intervention at an establishment level. They allow a consistent collaborative approach to casework and are popular with parents and staff alike and offer ways to consult effectively with children and young people. In many establishments they facilitate a strengths-based and solution oriented approach to assessment and intervention by the EP.

The **Extended Support Framework and EST meetings** have been a core aspect of Renfrewshire staged planning and intervention model for almost two decades. They are a core structure in the authority GIRFEC and GIRFEL ("Getting it Right for Every Learner") policies. They have been reviewed very positively by Education Scotland and the Care Commission ([Renfrewshire Children's Services Inspection Report \(2015\)](#)).

The EP is a core member of the extended support framework and there is evidence that the EPs regularly take a leadership role at EST meetings (PEPs Observation of Practice). The 2015 S&Q report provides evidence that 79% of Heads were very satisfied or satisfied with the arrangements in place for multi-agency working with the EPS. Some stated the "EPS provides an excellent service for multi-agency working" and the "EP contributes effectively to the school EST".

The **Dyslexia Assessment / Consultation** protocol has been effectively introduced to all establishments and many schools report positive developments. A recent survey of EPs indicated that the strengths of this approach relate to the nature of assessment which is collaborative, contextual, least intrusive and conducted over time. It creates a context which enables the EP to work directly with class teachers, building capacity and empowering staff.

The **Early Screening Initiative** has been a core aspect of many schools support for learning policy for many years and the EP's contribution in many schools is critical to its success. It promotes evidence-based decision making and facilitates focused and structured consultation directly with class teachers in a full year group. A recent survey of EPs involved in the process indicated that the initiative has a range of strengths, including:

- system issue identification
- early intervention for those children experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy.
- staff empowerment and capacity building
- identification of possible themes of difficulties in classes.

Consultation: What are our Challenges?

Collaborative Meetings vs Extended Support Teams

Over the years EP individual practice has developed differently across sectors and between EPs. Some EST meetings discuss a number of different children without parents being present. Others focus on an individual child with full parental involvement. Moreover, as new EPs have joined the REPS team, questions have been raised regarding the most effective way to delivery consultative practice. This is an ideal time to reflect on this ongoing self-evaluation. While S&Q Reports over the years provide good information about overall service delivery satisfaction and impact, survey findings do not allow the impact of the EPs involvement in ESTs and CMs to be considered separately and comparatively. Moreover, recent discussions about the nature and impact of ESTs and CMs within Renfrewshire Children's Services and at REPS team meetings have led to the need for evaluation in order to streamline processes, improve outcomes and impact for teacher, parent, children and young people. Specifically, developments within the CH & YP Act and GIRFEC require REPS consultation to operate within a new operating context. Might a review of EP involvement in CMs and EST lead to better use of EP time in establishments?

Collaborative Dyslexia Assessment

Feedback from EPs indicates that there appears to be some variability in how/when schools use/initiate the dyslexia assessment process. Teachers of children at upper primary stages may not be able to comment about child's phonic knowledge and these are issues around the provision of time for discussion between EP, support coordinator and class teacher. The process seems to be less effective or straightforward at secondary stage. This is an areas which EPs have identified as variable and requiring a closer look within a future evaluation.

Early Screening Initiative

Only half of Renfrewshire EPs are currently involved in this type of consultation activity. There are issues around this no longer being a priority use of limited EP time. Schools also find it hard to release and provide cover for staff to fully engage in this activity. Some EP reported that present school time allocations only allow discussion of more serious concerns. There were additional issues reported relating to consistency of implementation, the need for the protocol to be reviewed and developed to reflect CFE and GIRFEC. Despite this, EPs who engage in the process believe that it is an invaluable way to build staff capacity and promote early intervention and learning.

Consultation: What do we Need to Find out More About?

The current national focus on “raising attainment and achievement for all” and addressing the attainment gap arising from poverty require more detailed scrutiny of the impact of the main REPS activity in establishments, namely, consultative practice. Is EPS consultation working and what difference does it make to outcomes for learning and teaching?

Collaborative Meetings vs Extended Support Team Meetings

There is a need to compare and contrast the impact of the EP at collaborative meetings (CMs) and at extended support teams (ESTs). Initial explorative questions might include: what is the nature of the impact of the EP at EST and CMs? What added-value does the EP bring? In what way does the EPs contribution at CMs and ESTs lead to positive outcomes for children and young people / for learning and teaching? Is there un-necessary duplication of practice? Do CMs lead to EP instigated change? Do they promote inclusion? Do they build staff capacity? What aspects work better than others? Is there a difference in impact between ESTs and CMs?

Collaborative Dyslexia Assessment

The intention is to carry out a formal review of the collaborative assessment process in October 2016. A review of the strengths and challenges outlined about confirms that this would be helpful in order to determine what is required to improve implementation for all schools. The activities agreed for the VSE week will begin this process.

Early Screening Initiative

A number of issues for further investigation emerged from the recent survey of EPs. These centred on several themes relating to:

- consistency of the process
- role / impact of the EP in this context
- need to update and incorporate GIRFEC and CFE developments
- how might it be adapted to include wellbeing measures and pupil voice
- need for a more formal evaluation of the impact of the process for learning and teaching.

Theme 1: Learning & Teaching

What Impact does EPS Consultative Practice have on Learning and Teaching?

VSE Activities Programme

Activity One: Analysis of consultative practice data from different sources (parental interviews, PEP observations)

Lead EP: Mary Shields / Gai McKelvie **Partner:** Susan Bell / Val McKay

Learning Outcome: To examine existing evaluative data about the Service for information on the EP's role within our consultative practice model. The overall aim is to compare the relative impact of the EPs role in EST and CMs in order to identify how we can ensure effective, efficient and consistent service delivery to educational establishments. What are the differences which make a difference?

Activity Two: Focus Group of EPs

Lead EP: Vivien Yih **Partner:** Karen McPherson (SEP, Inverclyde) / Joyce Young (CSSO)

Learning Outcome: At team meetings EPs have often raised questions about variations in practice within the existing established service delivery framework. This has particularly come to light as new EPs have joined the team. There is also an issue for the authority regarding the way establishments use ESTs and CMs in a range of ways. There is a feeling within the team that this needs to be explored in more detail. The aim of this activity is to gather information on the individual practice of EPs and their views on areas of strength and weakness, with particular emphasis on the context of learning and teaching. We want to identify how we can make best use of EPs' skills and time in order to provide a service that meets the changing needs of stakeholders and has maximum impact on learning and teaching:

- In what ways do EPs contribute to the established consultation practices, i.e. ESTs, collaborative meetings, dyslexia assessment, early screening initiative?
- What are EPs views on the impact that their contributions make to outcomes for the establishment, for children and young people and for families? What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of these practices?
- On the basis of this discussion, what are EP views on whether/how our established consultation practices could be revised in order to improve outcomes for the establishment, for children and young people and for families?
- What more do we need to find out in order to revise practice?

Activity Three: Three Focus Groups with representatives from the following sectors: Early Years, Primary, Secondary

Lead EPs: Mary Shields / Amy Nolan / Vivien Yih **Partners:** Gillian Kinnear / Grace Hannigan / Jane Scott

Learning Outcome: To identify how the consultative practice operates in these sectors, to obtain information about the impact of these activities, and to explore the ways in which it could be developed to maximise our impact on learning and teaching.

- How does service delivery differ between the sectors?
- How consistent is our service delivery within the different sectors?
- What do our stakeholders in the different sectors find helpful?
- What makes a difference to outcomes for children and young people?
- What aspects of EP practice have the biggest impact?
- What could be improved?
- What can we learn from the different way service delivery operates across the sectors?
- What more do we need to find out?

Activity Four: Focus group of Theme Group members analysing the information from the VSE process

Lead EPs: Mary Shields / Amy Nolan

Partners: Tony McEwan, Valerie McKay, Lynne Ferguson, Michelle Welsh, Grace Hannigan, Margaret McShane/Morag McGuire

EPs: Vivien Yih / Gai McKelvie

Learning Outcome: In this activity we hope to bring together the information from our focus groups and existing evaluative information and reflect on how this information could impact on the delivery of our service and on our capacity for improvement.

Concluding questions:

What impact does EPS consultative practice have on learning and teaching within educational establishments?

What is the unique contribution of the EP in these contexts?

What aspect of practice has the most impact?

Reflective Dialogue

At the end of both activity days the following questions should be considered, to allow further activity / questions to be planned:

- Has the activity been successful in meeting its aims?
- Where the questions helpful?
- Did we meet the right people?
- What do we still need to find out?
- Can we confidently assess our capacity for improvement?

Appendix 4(b) Self-Evaluation of VSE Theme 2: Partnership Working / Impact on the Wider Community

How well does the “Nurturing Relationships” implementation plan meet the needs of stakeholders?

Nurturing Relationships Strategy: Where Are We Now?

Stage 1 of the Renfrewshire nurture strategy came to a close in June 2015. This was successful in training nurture champions in pre-5 establishments and nursery classes, in the creation of a nurture nursery class and outreach workers to sustain children with severe attachment disorder in mainstream education. In addition, in partnership with Barnardo’s, the “5 to Thrive” approach was rolled out and around 500 additional nursery staff were training and supported by two “nurture facilitators”. The impact of this work was noted in the [RCSP Inspection Report \(page 18\)](#)

REPS involvement in stage one had comprised membership of the steering group, and involvement in the training of the early years “Nurture Champions”. REPS made a strong contribution to stage 1. Prior to this REPS had an equally strong track record of delivery of bespoke training on attachment and approaches which improve wellbeing and promote resilience

REPS took over responsibility for leading Renfrewshire’s nurture strategy in August 2016 with the appointment of an additional 1fte EP to the service. This enabled 3 EPs to develop stage 2 of the strategy. The aims of stage 2 of the strategies are:

- To promote an understanding of attachment theory and of the importance of nurturing relationships in helping all children and young people to learn and develop socially and emotionally
- To promote an understanding of the key principles of nurturing practice and support schools to embed these at a whole school level
- To support practices which will improve wellbeing and promote resilience for children and young people
- To introduce an approach to implementation which is evidence-based and therefore has the best chance of delivering a sustainable approach for establishments and children and young people.

To date, stage 2 has comprised the following activities:

- Establishment of a multi-agency Nurture Development Group to coordinate the implementation
- Survey of national and other local authority approaches to “whole-authority” nurture
- Development of an evidenced-based approach to implementation based on the model proposed by Meyers, Durlak & Wandersman (2012)
- Nurture EP capacity building via attendance at 4 day national nurture training delivered by Education Scotland’s RSW team
- Development of “Nurturing Relationships” development strategy (Ref 6)
- Educational establishment survey to identify good practice and future support and training needs.

Stage 2 was being implemented as part of the Early Years Implementation Strategy. At the time of notification that VSE would be taking place, REPS nurture EPs were in the process of finalising the survey of establishments. This would provide the team with the needs analysis required to develop the next stage of implementation. The decision was taken to use the VSE fieldwork week to “take-stock”, evaluate and review the impact of REPS involvement in the strategy to date. Information from this review, together with the data from the establishment survey would ensure that the nurture implementation plan would be “fit-for-purpose” and able to meet the needs of stakeholders. A formal launch of the strategy is planned for May/June 2016.

Area of Work	How do we know? (Evidence)
Stage One Nurture Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REPS membership of Nurture Strategy Group • Nurture Strategy Group minutes • EP design, delivery and evaluation of training in attachment • Evaluation of individual REPS training on approaches to wellbeing and resilience (positive psychology, attachment theory and nurture) • Data on outcomes and impact of “Nurture Champions” approach • Data on outcomes and impact of Barnardo’s implementation of “5 to Thrive” approach • “Families First” early years implementation plan update data • Renfrewshire Children’s Service Partnership Inspection Report (Care Inspectorate) (Page 18)
Stage Two Nurture Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EY Implementation Plan updates • Minutes of Nurture Development Group meetings • “Nurturing Relationships” Implementation Plan • Educational Establishments Survey Data • Summary of paper by Meyers, Durlak & Wandersman (2012) • Summary of survey of Local Authority approaches to Nurture • Minutes of Secondary SEBN Review Group meetings

Nurturing Relationships Strategy: What are our Strengths?

REPS has made a strong and systematic start to its leadership of the Nurture Strategy. It has adopted a project management approach which has been integral to Renfrewshire’s early years strategy. It has also established a strong and supportive multi-agency partnership approach to strategy management. These developments build on a very good nurture and attachment knowledge base within the service and very good training evaluations. Finally, there is an enthusiasm within the REPS nurture team to adopt a rigorous “implementation science” framework as a model for the strategy. The success of the approach to implementation to date is evidenced by the number of establishments who have indicated that they would like to be considered as “pathfinder” establishments for the next stage of implementation.

Nurturing Relationships Strategy: What are our Challenges?

The challenge is to ensure that REPS plans for implementation match the needs of the range of stakeholders involved. The strategy has a set of aims and a very structured implementation plan. The challenge is to ensure that this is fit for purpose. REPS need to evaluate the impact of past and present REPS involvement in nurture initiatives in order to inform future effective EP contributions to the strategy. Initial indications are that a large number of establishments want to be involved in the initiative. There will need to be careful discussion about the best way to meet the demand from establishments to be involved in the initiative.

Nurturing Relationships Strategy: What do we Need to Find out More About?

A consideration of past, present and proposed EP involvement in Nurture initiatives reveals the following questions which may be helpful when considering future strategy direction:

- What impact has REPS involvement in the Nurture Strategy had to date?
- How well have EPs been leading and facilitating the Nurture Development Group?
- What was the impact of the REPS involvement in Stage One Nurture training
- What has been the impact of EP training in wider approaches and interventions to wellbeing and resilience?
- What is the utility of the approach to “implementation science” adopted by REPS?
- What does the data from the establishment survey say about future strategy directions?
- What additional information needs to be obtained in order to more effectively plan Stage 3 of the strategy?

Theme 2: Partnership Working / Wider Community

How well does the “Nurturing Relationships” implementation plan meet the needs of stakeholders?

VSE Week Activities

Activity One: Focus Group of staff who have taken part in EPS wellbeing training/interventions

Lead EPs: Sandra Menary / Ellen Ferguson **Partners:** Lynne O’Brien or Samantha King

Stakeholders: Lynne Gilchrist, Emma Mayers, Ceiridh McAtasney, Sandra Cashmore, Kirsti Margery, Val Smith, Cara Wadsworth, Thomas McCormick, Alison Lauder, Louise Mayer, Lynne Ferguson, Liz Harris, Marie Renton

Learning Outcome: To provide information which can inform the development of the training being developed for the Nurture Strategy. This will complement the data obtained from the Establishment Survey.

Questions:

- Do you think the training was beneficial?
- Has it changed your practice? If so in what ways? If not, what could we do to improve training/interventions?
- What impact have you noticed? If so on who? How do you know?
- What else could we do differently to impact positively on children and young people?
- Do you think it made a difference having an EP leading the training training/intervention?

Activity Two: An exploration of ways to evaluate children and young people’s wellbeing interventions

Lead EP: Garry McDonald / Ciara Briggs **Partner:** Jean Brierly **Stakeholder:** Amy Nolan (EP) / Linda Bell (HL)

Learning Outcome: Existing evaluation information will be used as a basis for an exploration of different ways to measure the impact of wellbeing interventions with children and young people.

Activity Three: Interview with Primary DHT regarding the EP role in coach/consult framework for the introduction of a Nurture approach in a primary school.

Lead EP: Garry McDonald **Partner:** Laura McAllister **Stakeholder:** Anne Louise Nicolson (DHT, St Paul’s PS)

Learning Outcome: To explore one schools perception of the impact of an “implementation science” approach to nurture group development. The activity will involve an interview with a DHT who has experience of an EP using this approach. What is the value of this approach and what impact did it have on the school in moving nurture forward?

Questions:

- What is the value of using the Implementation Science approach? (Reflecting on the role of the EP and all four phases of the implementation science model used in the strategy)
- Do you think the approach has impacted on teaching practice? If so in what ways?

- What do you think was the impact of this approach on all members of the school community? i.e. Parents, Children and Young People. How do you know?
- What was the added value of the EP in offering the coach/consult model? (This question may already be answered in previous questions).
- What is it about the implementation science approach and the role of the EP that is effective with regarding to changing practice? (Both positive and negative experiences)

Activity Four: Focus Group of Nurture Strategy Members and Nurture Development Group Members

Lead EP: Ellen Ferguson **Partner:** Angela Glassford

Learning Outcome: To explore the impact of the lead role of REPS in the nurture strategy.

Stakeholders: Susan Bell / Gerard McAuley / Marie-Claire Temple / Liz Harris / Julie Munro / Lynda Mutter / Julie Colquhoun / Alison Robertson / Michael Dyer / Louise McCrory

Questions:

- Does it make a difference? If so, what difference does it make having an EP lead/be involved in the strategy?
- What was the added value of the EP?
- Was it useful having an EP onboard to develop the initial strategy?
- If it was useful in what ways? If not what would have been more useful?

Activity Five: Focus Group of Theme Group members analysing the information obtained from the VSE process and from the overview of the establishment survey data.

Lead EPs: Ciara Briggs / Sandra Menary **Partners:** All
EP: Garry McDonald, Ellen Ferguson

Learning Outcome: This activity will bring together all the data collected through the VSE process and the survey monkey report and reflect on this information and the implementation plan developed by the Nurture Strategy Group. This will facilitate a consideration of the overarching question:

How well does the Nurturing Relationships Implementation Plan meet the needs of stakeholders?

Concluding questions:

- Where are we now?
- Areas for improvement?
- EP Capacity?
- What else do we need to find out?

Reflective Dialogue

At the end of both activity days the following questions should be considered, to allow further activity / questions to be planned:

- Has the activity been successful in meeting its aims?
- Where the questions helpful?
- Did we meet the right people?
- What do we still need to find out?
- Can we confidently assess our capacity for improvement?

Appendix 4(c) Validated Self-Evaluation

Summary of Outcomes

REPS validated self-evaluation took place during the week of 25th April 2016. The Education Scotland Report on this week of self-evaluation activity can be found on their website http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/RenfrewshireEPSVSE080716_tcm4-876343.pdf. The service identified a number of key strengths and areas for further development under each theme considered during the week.

Learning and Teaching: What is the impact of EPS consultative practice on learning and teaching?

Key strengths:

- Consultative practice is valued by the Local Authority and stakeholders
- Good relationships with stakeholders and partners underpin consultative practice
- There is a consistent quality service being delivered across establishments
- EPs knowledge, skills and objectivity provide challenge and support for schools and support inclusion
- EPs consultative practice supports establishments to build capacity
- EPs consultative practice is solution oriented with an emphasis on strengths and actions.

Areas for further development:

- Review the whole service delivery model rather than the consultative process in isolation. Are different service models for different sectors required?
- Addressing the balance between targeted EP involvement at a child and family level and supporting wider strategic initiatives at both establishment and LA levels
- More involvement with establishment improvement plans to support local authority and national initiatives
- Streamlining service delivery, e.g., cluster work, CPD catalogue
- Explore ways which the LA can address barriers to EPS impact on learning and teaching (in schools) and wider service delivery (beyond school level)
- Make more use of data that is readily available at REPS, establishment and LA level to plan and evaluate service delivery
- Outcome focused evaluation.

Partnership Working / Wider Community: How well does the nurturing relationships implementation plan meet the needs of stakeholders?

Key strengths:

- Strong partnership working with education partners including senior managers, health & third sector
- Rigour of approach to ensure evidence based practice
- Strategic, systemic & outcome focused support in the development & implementation of the Nurture Strategy
- Stakeholders value the work the EPs do to support mental health and wellbeing
- High quality training delivered :
 - *Evidence of changes to practice resulting in positive impact e.g. reduced detentions & exclusions*
 - *Increased teacher understanding & confidence leading to better inclusion & less individual referrals to EPS*
- Depth of knowledge of theory, research and evaluation methodology to support implementation
- Consultation, coaching & support leading to increased capacity and independence in school

Areas for further development:

REPS capacity

- *Continued consideration about the criteria for selecting pathfinder schools*
- *Balance between individual & strategic/systemic work*
- *Clear & focused plan for REPS systemic work*

Sustainability

- *Linking school improvement plans with Service Level Agreement & EPS systemic work*
- *Extending links with other partners who can support implementation*
- *Extending coach/consult model across schools*

Measuring Impact

- *Identify evaluative measures to be used including considering existing data in schools*

Implications for General Service Development

A number of more general considerations arose during the VSE week, which can be summarised with the following questions:

- What sort of EPS does Renfrewshire Children's Service want?
- How best do we deliver educational psychology in Renfrewshire for the benefit of children and young people? (a range of ways to do this, what is the most effective way? What are the things we do which make the most difference? How do we evaluate the potential impact of things we don't yet do?)
- What configuration of REPS will best support LA & National priorities?
- How will we determine and evaluate this?

The Service agreed that the best way forward was to continue the self-evaluation process and develop it into a fuller review of EPS service delivery. The specific parameters of this review would be developed in due course. However, immediate issues for consideration were identified as follows:

- A wide range of possibilities have emerged over the week
- Resist the temptation to jump immediately to new models
- Need to continue the self-evaluation process and inquiry stimulated by the VSE
- Change needs to be outcome focused, driven by self-evaluation and data
- Further exploration is required to determine the way forward
- Need a method of doing this which is inclusive and strengths based, taking the service and stakeholders with us.

The review would also ensure that the areas for development agreed with Education Scotland would be addressed:

- Ensure sustainable and transformational change
- Continue to review service delivery in the context of Children's Services and to impact more on building capacity to achieve systemic change, whilst retaining the best of practice in relation to vulnerable children and young people
- Evidence better the services' impact and contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people
- Use self evaluation to better measure effectiveness across all Currie functions and levels, broader range of stakeholders
- Build on contribution the PEP makes to authority strategy through further development of distributive leadership within EPS team

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