**Increased capacity in the Educational Psychology Service**

There is a national shortage of Educational Psychologists. Whilst there has been a slight increase in the number of funded places to the national Doctorate training courses more EPs are retiring than entering the profession and demand for EP services has gone up in recent years.

Locally we have been subject to the same pressures. In the past year we have actively planned to retain and build our capacity. We have done this by:

* Appointing three EPs and advertising for another. Jo Egan, Gael Hawley and Liz Williams have all joined us this year. Interviews for the other post will take place in July 2016.
* We have created 2 Assistant Educational Psychology (AEP) posts. These are one year fixed term contracts for people intending to apply to the doctorate training courses. These post holders will provide practical support to school under the direction and supervision of our EPs. We have just appointed to these post and the new AEPs will be in post for September 2016.
* We have made two appointments offering contracts to doctorate students in advance of completing their course. Both these EPs will join us in September 2016.
* Introducing 2 bursary posts for EPs in training. We have had two colleagues who are in the second year of their doctorate course within the team this year. They will remain with us next year as well. The intention here is that they add to our workforce and hopefully will think off working for us once they complete their doctorates. We have just arranged to employ another year two bursary student from September 2016.
* In addition we have had three EPs working with us on a temporary basis this year. These colleagues have largely helped to meet demands for statutory assessments but have also provided some service to schools.

These appointments mean that we will be able to identify teams of three or four EPs for each locality. We have created two senior EP posts to lead locality working and to contribute to the new ways of working and two senior practitioners who will lead practice in the areas of Autism and Social Emotional and Mental Health.

Stuart Williams