

Educational Psychology Service

Schools Satisfaction Survey

Research study for

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1 Executive Summary

The educational psychology service survey was commissioned by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) for the purpose of finding out the current levels of user satisfaction with their services to schools.

An email was sent to all the schools on the Schools Portal (approximately 700 users) with a link to an online questionnaire. Two reminder emails were also sent to encourage responses. 79 questionnaires were completed giving an overall response rate of 11%.

Overall the majority of respondents are satisfied with the service (77%) and almost nine in ten respondents found the services useful (88%). Most thought that the service has stayed the same in the last 12 months (67%), although nearly twice as many people thought it had got better (19%) rather than got worse (10%).

The survey tested user satisfaction and importance on a number of key service attributes. The results show that:

- schools would like more EPS time to be allocated to their school (on average there was a 6.5 hour difference from the time they were allocated and the time they felt they should have received);
- one-third of schools have attended an EPS training course (the most popular is INSET) and the courses are highly regarded;
- a minority of respondents have used the telephone helpline or had support with a critical incident (14 and 5 schools respectively) but the majority are satisfied with the outcome;
- a significant minority of school staff found it difficult to contact their EP between school visits;
- there were more respondents who felt that school staff didn't have regular opportunities to meet and plan future work with their school EP; and
- the service aspect with the most disagreement to it was that 'the EPS provides sufficient time to discuss my views on the children'.

In order to improve overall satisfaction further and satisfy the increased demand for the service the following options should be considered:

- explore ways of helping schools to make more efficient use of the time allocated to them;
- look into the availability of schools purchasing additional hours since a number of respondents said that they were unable to buy extra hours;
- look at other ways of providing the service, one respondent suggested having a regular telephone clinic with their EP;
- investigate how turnaround of reports can be improved (eg more support for EPs, more EPs to reduce their individual workload); and

- find out from schools what would make it easy for them to contact their EP – respondents would like to have a direct contact number for their EP.

The response rate for this year's survey has fallen from that of 2006 (79 and 107 respectively). Response rates could be increased by:

- communicating in advance of the survey so people know to expect it;
- reviewing the methodology to decide if an online questionnaire is the easiest for respondents to complete; and
- taking actions based on the survey results and promoting them so people can see the importance of completing a questionnaire.

2 Introduction

The EPS undertake an annual research project to assess its current performance on delivering its services to schools, and to gain an understanding of any service improvements required. For the last two years the survey has been run independently of the EPS by the county council's Corporate Research and Intelligence Team.

3 Research Objectives

The research objectives were to find out:

- how satisfied schools are with the EPS and the services they offer to schools;
- how satisfied schools are with educational psychologists; and
- how the service provided to schools could be improved.

4 Methodology

All schools on the Schools Portal, approximately 700, were invited to take part in the survey. An e-mail was sent to a contact in each school with a link to the questionnaire. Two reminder emails were also sent to encourage responses. The questionnaire was hosted on the county council's website and used the Forms software. The questionnaire was available to complete from 4 June to 29 June 2007.

The 2007 questionnaire included many questions from the 2006 questionnaire. Where questions are the same accurate comparisons can be made between surveys.

No incentive for respondents to complete the questionnaire was given. 79 questionnaires were completed, giving an overall response rate of 11%.

All data are unweighted and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated.

5 Limitations

The questionnaire was sent to 700 primary and secondary schools in Lancashire. 79 schools responded, which equates to a response rate of 11%. Whilst in absolute terms the number of responses is low, it should be taken as statistically representative of the overall school population. However, because of the small number of responses it means that: any changes in perceptions between different years must be large in order to be significant (due to sampling tolerances); and it isn't possible to compare differences between different groups such as school sizes.

The table below shows the sample tolerances that apply to the results in this survey. Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample as well as the percentage results.

Number of Respondents	50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
79	11%	10%	7%
100	10%	9%	6%
200	7%	6%	4%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 500 respond with a particular answer, the chance are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 46% and 54% (ie +/- 4%), versus a complete coverage of the entire customer base using the same procedure.

The following table shows what the percentage differences between two samples on a given statistic must be greater than, to be statistically significant.

Size of Sample A	Size of Sample B	50/50	70/30	90/10
107	79	15%	13%	9%
100	100	14%	13%	8%
200	200	10%	9%	6%

(Confidence interval at 95% certainty for a comparison of two samples)

For example, for two samples of 400 responses in each at around 50% of responses in each category to be compared, the difference needs to be over 7% to be statistically significant. This is to say that the difference is not due to chance alone.

6 Main Research Findings

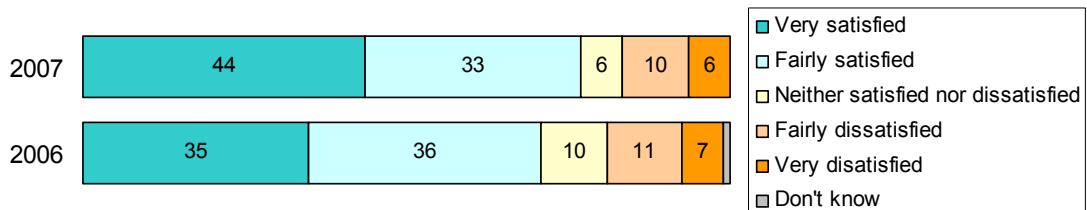
A marked up questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

6.1 Overall satisfaction with the Educational Psychology Service

Respondents were first asked overall how satisfied they were with the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). This gives a picture of general perceptions of user satisfaction with the service.

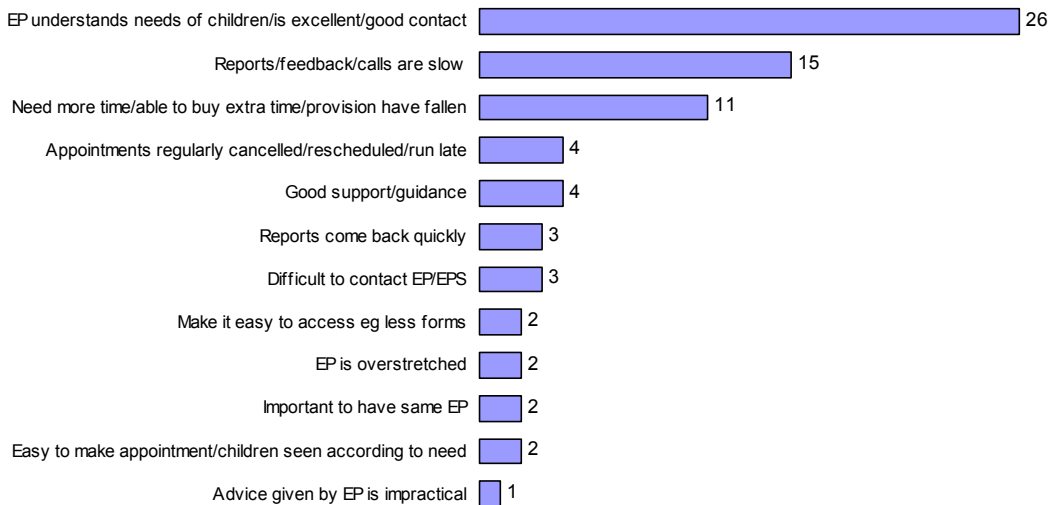
The majority of users are satisfied with the overall service offered by the EPS – 77% of parents are satisfied (very and fairly satisfied) with the service. There is still opportunity for improvement though because 33% were fairly satisfied and 17% were dissatisfied with the service. When asked why they rated the service in this way the most frequent comment by 26 respondents was because the educational psychologist (EP) is good (eg understands children’s needs, have good contact with them). The most mentioned negative reasons were that the service was slow to produce reports, give feedback and to return calls (15); and that the school doesn’t have enough time or should be able to buy more time (11).

Chart 1 - Overall satisfaction with the EPS



Base: all respondents – 2007 (78), 2006 (106)

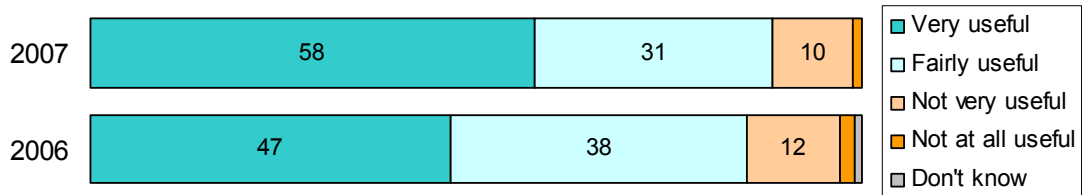
Chart 2 - Why do you say this?



Base: all respondents 54

When rating how useful they found the services provided by the EPS almost nine in ten people thought they were useful (88%) – only 12% thought they weren't useful. This is again an opportunity for service improvement by looking in the reasons why people who found the services fairly useful and not very/at all useful and addressing these issues.

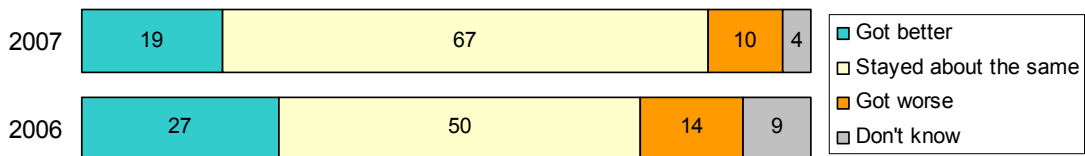
Chart 3 - *And overall how useful do you find the services provided by the EPS?*



Base: all respondents – 2007 (78), 2006 (107)

Respondents were asked if the service had changed over the last 12 months. The majority thought that the service has stayed the same in the last 12 months (67%), although nearly twice as many people thought it had got better (19%) rather than got worse (10%).

Chart 4 - *Over the past 12 months do you think the service provided by the EPS has got better, got worse or is it about the same?*



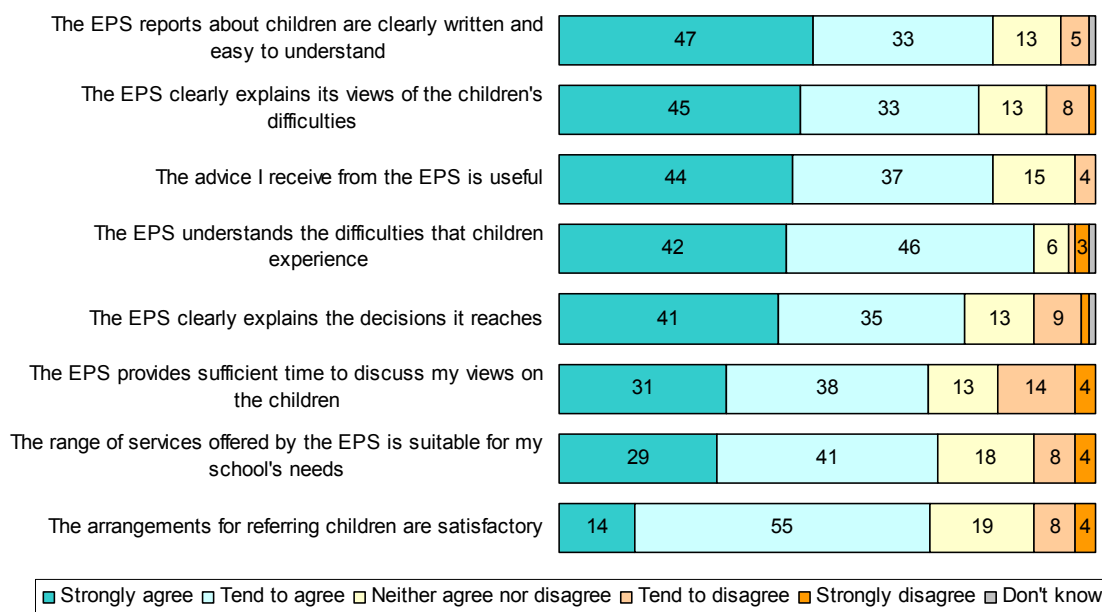
Base: all respondents – 2007 (78), 2006 (107)

6.2 Satisfaction levels with different service aspects

Service users were asked about a number of different service aspects ranging from the time allocated to schools to the different services offered by the EPS.

Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a number statement about the EPS. The following chart shows the results.

Chart 5 - How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the EPS...?



Base of all respondents: 77

The majority of respondents agreed with all of the statements about the EPS. The parts of the EPS service that were most highly regarded are that the reports about children are clearly written and easy to understand (47% strongly agree), the clear explanations about the views of children's difficulties (45% strongly agree) and the usefulness of the advice they receive (44% strongly agree). Respondents also felt that the EPS understands the difficulties children experience because it had the highest overall agreement (88% strongly and tend to agree).

The service aspects that have the most people disagreeing with them are the time given for discussing their views of children (18% disagree), the range of services being suitable for their school's needs (12% disagree), and the arrangements for referring children being satisfactory (12% disagree).

6.2.1 Satisfaction with the time allocated to schools

Respondents were asked how many hours their school was allocated by the EPS for this school year. The mean number of hours was just over 20 hours (ranging from 3 to 47 hours).

They were then asked how many hours they had used so far this year (at the time of fieldwork this was around a month before the end of the school year). The mean was just over 17 hours (ranging from 3 to 47 hours). When asked if they thought they would receive any outstanding hours before the end of the school year the majority thought that they wouldn't (45%), only one in three thinking that they would (29%).

On average respondents felt they should have received 26.5 hours (ranging from 4 to 100) – this is a difference of 6.5 hours between the hours schools were allocated and what they felt they needed. Although only six schools (8%) had bought in extra time from the EPS in this school year, it doesn't mean that don't want extra time because some respondents commented that extra time wasn't available.

Do you expect to receive any outstanding hours before the end of the current school year?	
Yes	29%
No	45%
Don't know	25%

Base of all respondents: 75

Have you bought in any extra time from the EPS this year?	
Yes	8%
No	86%
Don't know	6%

Base of all respondents: 77

6.2.2 Satisfaction with the training offered to schools

One in three respondents said that members of their staff had attended training provided by the EPS (35%). Of these 27 schools the most popular type of training was INSET (16 schools), followed by county courses (6 schools) or some other course (5 schools). The training was thought of highly because nearly all schools felt that it was useful, most finding it very useful (15 schools).

Chart 6 - Which of the following training courses have your staff attended?

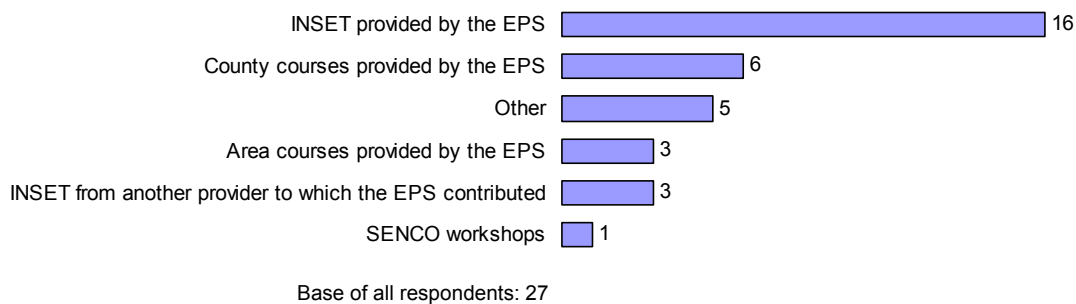
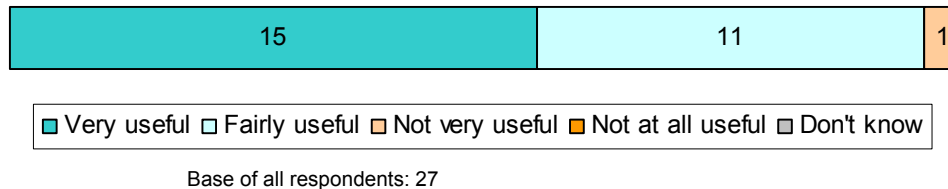


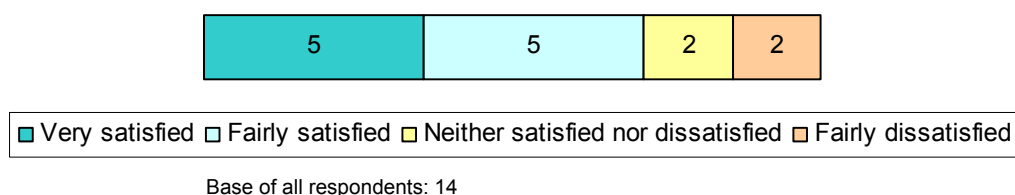
Chart 7 - And, how useful was this training?



6.2.3 Satisfaction with the EPS telephone helpline

The majority of respondents had not used the telephone helpline in the last 12 months (64 schools), only 14 respondents having used it. Of these 14 schools most were satisfied with the outcome (10 respondents), only 2 people were dissatisfied.

Chart 8 - How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the outcome of using the EPS telephone helpline?



6.2.4 Satisfaction with the support relating to a critical incident

Only five schools had received support relating to a critical incident in this school year. All of these five schools were satisfied with the support they received (3 very satisfied, 2 fairly satisfied). It isn't known if this small number of critical incidents is indicative of the total number of critical incidents across all schools.

6.2.5 Usage of additional services offered by the EPS

Respondents were also asked if they had bought any additional services from the EPS. Only one respondent said that they had bought an additional individual assessment of a child. They were very dissatisfied with the service because they said the "15 hour request has not even been acknowledged".

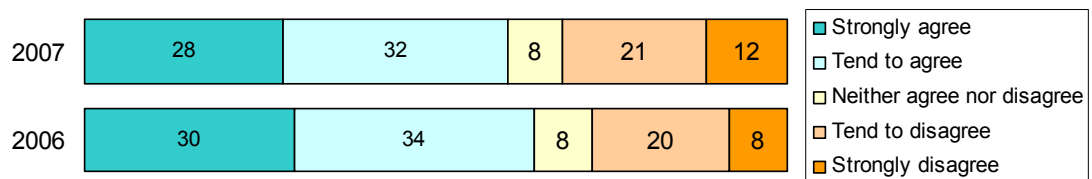
6.3 The service given by the Educational Psychologists (EPs)

Respondents were asked how easy it was to contact their EP between school visits and if school staff have opportunity to meet and plan future work with their EP.

The results show that 60% agree that it is easy for school staff to contact my EP between school visits. Importantly one in three respondents felt that it was difficult to contact their EP between visits.

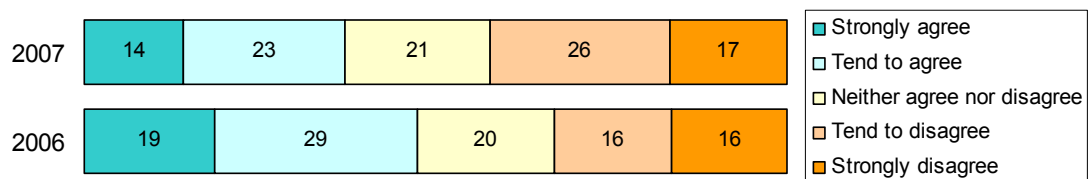
More respondents disagreed (42%) than agreed (37%) that school staff have regular opportunities to meet and plan future work with their school EP. This also suggests that schools would like more time to be available for their school with the EP.

Chart 9 - *It is easy for school staff to contact my EP between school visits*



Base: all respondents – 2007 (78), 2006 (97)

Chart 10 - *School staff have regular opportunities to meet and plan future work with my school EP*

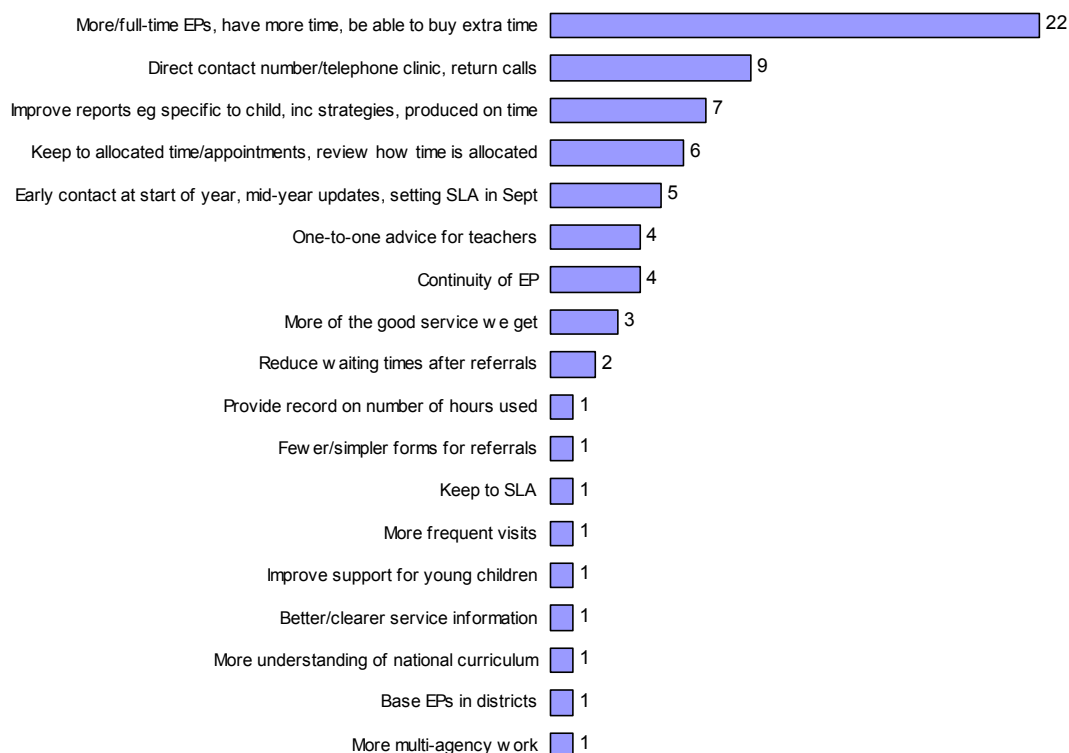


Base: all respondents – 2007 (78), 2006 (97)

6.4 Improvements service users suggested the EPS

Respondents were asked if they had any ideas about how the EPS could be improved. This provides a qualitative perspective of general perceptions about the EPS. The comments were categorised and the results are detailed in chart 10 below, showing the actual number of responses for each category.

Chart 11 - *How else can the EPS improve its service for your school?*



Base: all respondents making comment (50)

By far the most mentioned comment was to increase the amount of time EPs can work in schools either by have more EPs which will mean there will be more time available or allowing schools to buy extra time (22 respondents). The next most commonly mentioned things were to make it easier to contact the EP (eg direct contact number, telephone clinic) and for them to return calls, to improve the reports and make sure they are produced on-time, and to make sure appointments are kept and to review how time is allocated (eg by number of children rather than hours).

7 Appendix 1: Marked Up Questionnaire

All values are given in percentages unless otherwise stated

Base: all respondents (78)

Q1	Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the services provided by the EPS?	
	Very satisfied	44%
	Fairly satisfied	33%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6%
	Fairly dissatisfied	10%
	Very dissatisfied	6%
	Don't know	0%

Base: all respondents (54)

Q2	Why do you say this?	
		Count
	EP understands needs of children/is excellent/good contact	26
	Reports/feedback/calls are slow	15
	Need more time/able to buy extra time/provision have fallen	11
	Appointments regularly cancelled/rescheduled/run late	4
	Good support/guidance	4
	Reports come back quickly	3
	Difficult to contact EP/EPS	3
	Make it easy to access eg less forms	2
	EP is overstretched	2
	Important to have same EP	2
	Easy to make appointment/children seen according to need	2
	Advice given by EP is impractical	1

Base: all respondents (78)

Q3	And overall how useful do you find the services provided by the EPS?	
	Very useful	58%
	Fairly useful	31%
	Not very useful	10%
	Not at all useful	1%
	Don't know	0%

Base: all respondents (78)

Q4	Over the last 12 months do you think the service provided by the EPS has got better, got worse, or is it about the same?	
	Got better	19%
	Stayed the same	67%
	Got worse	10%
	Don't know	4%

Base: all respondents (77)

Q5	How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the EPS...?					
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The EPS reports about children are clearly written and easy to understand	47%	33%	13%	5%	0%	1%
The EPS clearly explains its views of the children's difficulties	45%	33%	13%	8%	1%	0%
The advice I receive from the EPS is useful	44%	37%	15%	4%	0%	0%
The EPS understands the difficulties that children experience	42%	46%	6%	1%	3%	1%
The EPS clearly explains the decisions it reaches	41%	35%	13%	9%	1%	1%
The EPS provides sufficient time to discuss my views on the children	31%	38%	13%	14%	4%	0%
The range of services offered by the EPS is suitable for my school's needs	29%	41%	18%	8%	4%	0%
The arrangements for referring children are satisfactory	14%	55%	19%	8%	4%	0%

Base: all respondents (44)

Q6	How many hours was your school allocated by the EPS during this school year?	Mean 20.16
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Base: all respondents (40)

Q7	How many hours have you received from the EPS during this school year to date?	Mean 17.09
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Base: all respondents (75)

Q8	Do you expect to receive any outstanding hours before the end of the current school year?	
	Yes	29%
	No	45%
	Don't know	25%

Base: all respondents (77)

Q9	Have you bought in any extra time from the EPS this year?	
	Yes	8%
	No	86%
	Don't know	6%

Base: all respondents (40)

Q10	And how many hours do you feel your school should have received during this school year?	26.56
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Base: all respondents (78)

Q11	Have any of your staff attended any training provided by the EPS?	
	Yes	35%
	No	65%

Base: all those attending an EPS training course (27)

Q12	Which of the following training courses have your staff attended?	Count
	INSET provided by the EPS	16
	County courses provided by the EPS	6
	Other	5
	Area courses provided by the EPS	3
	INSET from another provider to which the EPS contributed	3

Base: all those attending an EPS training course (27)

Q13	And, how useful was this training?	
	Very useful	56%
	Fairly useful	41%
	Not very useful	4%
	Not at all useful	0%
	Don't know	0%

Base: all respondents (78)

Q14	Has your school used the EPS telephone helpline within the last 12 months?	
	Yes	18%
	No	82%

Base: all those using the EPS telephone helpline (14)

Q15	How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the outcome of using the EPS telephone helpline?	
	Very satisfied	36%
	Fairly satisfied	36%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14%
	Fairly dissatisfied	14%
	Very dissatisfied	0%
	Don't know	0%

Base: all respondents (78)

Q16	Has your school received any support from the EPS in relation to a critical incident in this school year?	
	Yes	6%
	No	94%

Base: all those receiving support for a critical incident (5)

Q17	How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the support from the EPS in relation to the critical incident?	Count
	Very satisfied	3
	Fairly satisfied	2
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0
	Fairly dissatisfied	0
	Very dissatisfied	0
	Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (77)

Q18	Has your school bought any additional services from the EPS?	
		Count
	Yes	1
	No	76

Base: all those buying additional services from the EPS (1)

Q19	Which of the following additional services have your school bought from the EPS?	
		Count
	Additional individual assessment of children	1
	Training for staff	0
	Intervention with a child	0
	Intervention with a group/class of children	0
	Project/research work	0

Base: all those buying additional services from the EPS (1)

Q20	And, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service/s?	
	Very satisfied	0
	Fairly satisfied	0
	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	0
	Fairly dissatisfied	0
	Very dissatisfied	1

Base: all respondents ()

Q21	Now thinking about your educational psychologist (EP), how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your EP...?						
		Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	It is easy for school staff to contact my EP between school visits	28%	32%	8%	21%	12%	0%
	School staff have regular opportunities to meet and plan future work with my school EP	14%	23%	21%	26%	17%	0%

Base: all respondents making a comment (50)

Q22	How else can the EPS improve its service for your school?	Count
	More/full-time EPs, have more time, be able to buy extra time	22
	Direct contact number/telephone clinic, easier to contact EP, return calls	9
	Improve reports eg specific to child, inc strategies, produced on time	7
	Keep to allocated time/appointments, review how time is allocated eg by child not hours	6
	Help us make plans by having early contact at start of year, mid-year updates, setting SLA in Sept	5
	One-to-one advice for teachers	4
	Continuity of EP	4
	More of the good service we get	3
	Reduce waiting times after referrals	2
	Provide record on number of hours used	1
	Fewer/simpler forms for referrals	1
	Keep to SLA	1
	More frequent visits	1
	Improve support for young children	1
	Better/clearer service information	1
	More understanding of national curriculum	1
	Base EPs in districts	1
	More multi-agency work	1

Base: all respondents (73)

Q24	And how many children are currently on roll at your school?	Mean
		182