

Where does the time go?

We have had many conversations with head teachers, Sencos and other professionals wanting to discuss the best use of the specialist advice they commission. Two things have been particularly helpful. Some short vignettes such as those below help to illustrate some of the outcomes that can be achieved with different levels of EP involvement. We've also found it helpful to highlight some of the less obvious things we do, such as:

- When we have carried out some work for you we will remain available for follow up questions and clarifications about this work after it has been completed. There is no time limit on this availability and no charge for this.
- We keep records of the work we have done, stored securely for a period of years so that, if necessary, we can give an informed opinion after a long break in contact with the people involved. We operate a 'paperless office' system with all records and reports stored and backed up on encrypted drives.
- We will keep our skills and knowledge up to date by attending training courses, reading research papers and discussing our work in peer supervision sessions.
- We will maintain our own mandatory registration with the Health and Care Professions Council, and with the Information Commissioner's Office, as well as having the appropriate professional liability insurance. We subscribe to the DBS update service.
- We are able to offer a service during term time and during school and college holiday periods.

Vignette 1 The EP is asked to run a one hour twilight workshop for college learning support staff on working with students with social communication difficulties. This is a short session on a commonly-requested topic. Including preparation time we would expect this work to take two hours.

Vignette 2 A Senco arranges a morning of drop in meetings between individual members of school staff and the EP. Five meetings are booked, each lasting 30 minutes, in which staff can discuss pupils they are concerned about. Outcomes include useful changes to the plans for all the pupils discussed and a written summary from the EP of their advice in each case. This work would take about 4 hours.

Vignette 3 There is a request for an assessment of a young person's needs. The assessment must clarify skill levels in a number of different areas, identify barriers to progress and advise on more productive ways of helping that young person, including the use of appropriate facilities and resources. Work of this kind requires access to attainment records and should also include focused discussions with key staff and a meeting with parents or carers wherever this is possible. The EP will provide a written report that describes and explains the young person's views and needs and gives clear advice and strategies to staff

and to parents. We expect this to typically be a day's work, from the first discussions of the purpose of the assessment to the completion of the written report.

Vignette 4 A parent is very concerned that her son is not making progress and she believes that staff do not understand his needs. A meeting with the parent, key staff and the EP is arranged. The EP is able to establish to the parent's satisfaction that the young man's needs *are* well understood and that the support planned is appropriate. They offer advice about how to judge the need for future reviews if progress is not maintained. Work of this kind will take about 2 hours, including the EP's own brief record keeping and written advice.

Vignette 5 A school asks the EP to meet and carry out some assessment work with a pupil who is not making expected progress and does not engage well with support. By agreement the meeting is focused on specific questions about the pupil's motivation and possible reasons for lack of engagement. Work of this kind will typically take about half a day, including a feedback discussion with the EP and a brief written report.

Vignette 6 The EP is asked to lead a day's training for all school staff on behaviour management. The intended outcomes include reminders about legal, policy and best practice issues, and also skills development work in the areas of relationship building and the use of effective reactive strategies. At the school's request the training will run from 9.15 am to 3.30 pm. In total we would charge for 1 ½ days of EP time for this work, to include discussions about the content of the training, preparation of training materials, the costs of providing handouts and resources for participants, and the delivery of the training itself.

How long is a day?

With no precise and legally binding definition in the UK of "full time" employment, the question of whether someone has worked for a whole day or not becomes a matter for discussion and agreement rather than objective judgement.

We define a day as anywhere between 6 and 8 hours. If we have agreed with you that a piece of work will take a day then we will charge the day rate for it even if it takes up to 8 hours or, within reason, somewhat more than this. Similarly we will charge this rate for any piece of work that comes to a total of 6 hours. We have never found it helpful to either service users or service providers to define a day as precisely 7.4 hours, which is the position that local authorities are often obliged to take. This level of precision sets up service users to wonder if they have been "short changed" if they only receive 7 hours, and it encourages providers to believe they are working for free if a piece of work takes 7.75 hours.

We don't charge separately for travel time or miles unless the distance involved is much greater than our typical travel time – and then we would always clarify this before starting a piece of work. Please bear in mind, as the vignettes above show, that we do include an estimate of our preparation time, the cost of producing materials such as handouts for training courses, and follow-up admin time in the total number of hours we charge for.