



**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR**  
**Roinn an Fhoghlaim is Seirbheisean Chloinne**  
 Department of Education and Children's Services

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

**GUIDANCE NOTE: ACCESSING RESEARCH AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT**

Educational Psychologists in Scotland undertake five main roles outlined by the Scottish Executive in 2002. These roles are consultation, intervention, assessment, training and research. The purpose of this guidance note is to elaborate on the types of research activities we can provide and how these can be accessed.

**What Services do we Offer as part of our 'Research' Function?**

The research activities that Psychological Services engage in are probably broader than would be typically understood by this term. While we do engage in traditional research activities that include evaluating the impact of interventions, qualitative designs such as focus groups, as well as statistical analysis, our remit in this area extends to developing strategic approaches to organisational challenges, and development of policy and processes, as well as consultation on research design and methods. We also have a role in sharing research to improve evidence-based practice among our partners.

Our training and professional experience mean that, in our own practice, we would adopt a scientist-practitioner model of practice. This approach is characterised by a focus on clearly defining what a presenting issue might be, collecting baseline information on how it is manifested (i.e. frequency, duration, severity), generating, alongside others, hypotheses about how the problem may be overcome, and then measuring the impact of any interventions to guide future practice. As such, one of the most powerful services we offer in relation to research is a scientist-practitioner approach in individual casework.

We are also focused on building capacity within our partners to help our community thrive. Given this orientation, our support will often focus on helping you or your service to develop your own competencies in research and strategic development, rather than undertaking research on your behalf. The precise nature of the support we provide will be determined by the individual needs of the service or practitioner.

In summary you may want to consider contacting Psychological Services for support in the following scenarios:

- You or your service may be hoping to embed an intervention and would like to establish a way of identifying impact.
- You or your service are faced with a challenge and would like to do some exploratory research into the causes or maintaining factors that are associated with this difficulty before embarking on a remedial course of action.
- You or your service may want to develop processes that can be used to evaluate the policy or procedures you hope to implement.
- You or your service may have embarked on research already and want to explore ways of analysing the data.
- You or your service may want to embed a scientist-practitioner model of practice in your staff and would like support in achieving this.

In each of these cases we would be delighted to offer our support. There may also be other ways you feel we could support you through research or strategic development that aren't covered above. We are confident that the variety of skills we have mean that we could facilitate most requests and so we would still encourage you to get in touch.

### **Accessing Support from Psychological Services for Research and Strategic Development**

You would be able to explore options for support from Psychological Services in a variety of ways, including by telephone or email. Our contact details are given below:

- **Email**  
[Shannon.Finlayson@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:Shannon.Finlayson@cne-siar.gov.uk) / [s.kane@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:s.kane@cne-siar.gov.uk)
- **Telephone**  
01851 822736

Once you have made contact we will discuss your individual requirements and work with you to develop a written plan that formalises the collaborative approach we will take.

We are excited to hear from our partners in the private or voluntary sectors, colleagues within Education and Children's Services or from other Departments of the Comhairle and, in particular, the children and families in our community, about ideas they have for research or strategic development.