# Terms of Understanding – Cognus Educational Psychology Service

The purpose of this agreement is to outline working arrangements between the Cognus Educational Psychologist (EP) and the school SENCo with the aim of facilitating a way of working together that ensures best outcomes for children, young people and their families. This agreement can therefore be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that all parties are satisfied with the service arrangements. It is recommended that any discussion of these terms of understanding involves the school EP, SENCO and Headteacher/Inclusion lead.

**Expectations**

The expectations that the school can have of the Educational Psychologist are that:

* The EP will be reliable and punctual in attending appointments
* The EP will undertake agreed work
* The EP will communicate with pupils, parents and school staff in a professional manner at all times
* The EP will be available to contact by email (please note that staff do not have work phones)
* Emails will be responded to in a timely manner. As a general principle, emails will be responded to within 5 working days unless on annual leave or on sick leave
* Timescales for report completion will be agreed between the EP and the SENCO and adhered to once a piece of work has been finished (unless there are extenuating circumstances this will be no longer than 3 weeks)
* The EP will record the number of hours the school has used and communicate this regularly with the SENCO (at least termly)

The Educational Psychologist can expect:

* That requests are discussed with them prior to completion of ‘request for involvement’ form
* A completed ‘request for involvement’/referral form with parental signature. It is helpful if this is provided in advance of the planned school visit, so that the EP can plan the work effectively before arriving in school
* A quiet space in which to work effectively on arrival in school
* Access to classrooms for observations
* Planned access to key members of staff (for example, class teacher) for discussions, where agreed in advance
* If there is no EP meeting at the start of the work, the SENCo will keep parents informed of events and of EP visits
* Schools to implement recommendations following agreement during consultation meetings
* To be involved in review of work and action plans
* That should there be any concerns, these are first raised with them

**Working arrangements**

Arrangements that help to ensure the best use of the commissioned time include:

* Distributing hours in broadly equal termly amounts across the year - through prior negotiation with the school usually through an initial planning meeting at the start of the year (*the EPS will not be able to carry traded time over into the next academic year on a routine basis*). There will be exceptions to this, which can be discussed with your allocated EP and the Principal EP.
* Recognition that the time commissioned will involve time “off-site” for report writing, liaison with other agencies, administration (e.g., phone calls and emails).
* Dates of visits and the range of work to be undertaken are negotiated in advance and as much warning as possible given if a visit or any planned activities need to change (*if less than 3 working days is given for a cancelled the visit may be charged*).
* The availability of the SENCO at the start and end of a visit. To facilitate this, time in school can be arranged to fit with SENCO non-contact time as far as possible.
* The school makes relevant documents available for the EP, for example school records, reports from other agencies in advance of, or during a visit.
* There may be occasions when cancellations are unavoidable on the part of the EPS, due to illness/unforeseen circumstances.  It is the responsibility of the EP to notify the school/setting of any cancellation and the visit will be rescheduled.
* Schools can request a ‘pre-EHC’ report if the EP has had involvement over time and school would like to use this to support an EHCNA request. These can only be requested if an EP has had at least two involvements. The EP will charge report writing time (6 hours) and then assessment/prep time and if the EHCNA is agreed the school will be returned the 6 hours report writing time.

**Additional notes for guidance**

Work does not always proceed as planned and sometimes the nature of the work requires changes, for example a routine assessment turns into a need to request an EHCNA, or a case that appeared to require a rapid assessment in fact needs a longer-term piece of work. In such instances it is not always possible to be precise about how long a piece of work will take. Occasionally, EPs may need to re-prioritise work for one school in order to respond to a crisis situation in another school. The EP will always discuss priorities with the SENCO and negotiate any changes to a planned work programme in collaboration with the school SENCO.

If a school is unhappy with the service they have received it is requested that they firstly discuss the situation with their link EP. Problems sometimes arise through misunderstandings, and these can generally be resolved through an open conversation. If the situation is not resolved, or if concerns continue, please contact the Principal EP Nicholas English to discuss the matter.

We aim to develop long-term sustainable relationships with our schools. We welcome feedback from all partners as this helps us to review and modify service delivery to ensure best outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Date of agreement \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School Representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Educational Psychologist \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_