



A day in the life of a trainee EP- Hertfordshire style

by 08-11 trainee Louise Field

(pictured here taking a break from it all to be bridesmaid at her best friend's wedding)

A day in the life of a TEP in Hertfordshire (Herts) consists of waking up bright and early in suburbia being surrounded by large green open spaces, pretty countryside and the occasional fox. As the weather sets in it's the usual morning workout of defrosting the car so that you can actually see where you're going when driving down the road!



Herts Educational Psychology Service (EPS) serves over 281 schools within a mainly affluent middle class county which is generally governed by the Conservative Party. There are pockets of deprivation which includes my patch of 7 schools in Borehamwood located on the border of the London Borough of Barnet and is 13 miles from central London.

Journeys to my schools consist of the familiarity of junctions 18-23 on the dreaded M25 motorway and rural countryside and tractors when travelling

between the four Hertfordshire EPS team bases.

The majority of my work consists on individual casework which includes a broad range of referrals working within a time allocation model. It has come to my attention that individual assessments are mainly what the schools request, with little understanding of the wider aspects of the job. One of my priorities has been to change this by offering school systems work, INSET training and behaviour management support for key staff.

The EPS consists of the Educational Psychology Service and the Behaviour Support Team (BST). This helps to provide a number of opportunities for joint working which include joint assessment and consultation and opportunities to advise the BST on longer term individualised work for pupils, for example Anger Management programmes.



Due to the fact that Herts is such a large county the working from home policy has become popular amongst EPs who often have to travel many miles between various schools and their office base. This has led me to the conclusion that by driving a Mini Cooper I am in need of a bigger boot as my car has become my office!

In terms of Statutory Assessment the Local Authority particularly favours numbers. This generally equates to the use of standardised tests. This appears to be a trend across schools; however my patch appears to be amenable to other forms of assessment, including functional assessment (comprising dynamic and curriculum based approaches).

Within the EPS there are opportunities for community based working including drop in sessions for parents worried about their child's progress. From September 2010 EPs will also be attached to Children's Centres with an aim to work more preventatively within the community.

Finally the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has been welcomed in Herts with many training opportunities to help support Government recommendations in light of the Every Child Matters Agenda. This includes meetings led by a lead professional, and team around the child and child in need meetings. It is hoped that these practices will help to support more systemic working allowing stakeholders' greater access to professionals.