



## **SEEL RECOMMENDATION ON ALLOCATION OF WORKLOAD TO TRAINEES**

The aim of placements in Years 2 and 3 of doctoral training is for trainees to experience and contribute to a broad range of Educational Psychology activities with increasing independence. The number of cases that the trainee will be able to engage in will depend on the complexity of the work and the time available (see PPPF). How cases are allocated will depend on the local model of service delivery. As SEEL training providers, we recognise that there is variation in service organisation and therefore in placement experiences across the region, with about half of trainees working in fully traded services. Broadly speaking there are four models which our trainees encounter:

1. TEP working in their supervisor's schools, taking on a gradually increasing amount of casework in Year 2 and moving to a patch of schools in summer term of Year 2 or Year 3.
2. A traded service where the model is designed for TEPs and schools are offered TEP time in addition to what they already buy in – free or at a discounted rate.
3. TEPS are regarded as part of the workforce but have a reduced time (usually 0.4) allocation, from beginning of Year 2 and often increasing in Year 3
4. TEPS are regarded as part of the workforce and have a 0.6 allocation from the beginning of Year 2

In addition to the differences in models, and particularly pertinent for model 4, is that the allocation of deployable days for a full time EP can vary (in the London PEP group the average allocation is 180 days, but the range is from 146 days to 200 days). This will clearly impact any translation of allocation into actual days.

Despite these differences in models of service delivery, there is consistency in the positive messages we receive from Year 2 and 3 SEEL trainees, as shown in our annual 2020 Placement Quality Assurance Survey data:

- 75% find the workload manageable
- 92% find the range and complexity of work manageable
- 92% are happy with the levels of supervision
- 80% are happy with workload allocation.

However, each year there are as many as 25% of trainees who find the workload unmanageable. Whilst we acknowledge that there will always be a broad range of contributory factors (not least COVID-19 related difficulties and individual differences such as anxiety), one factor we have identified is that the model 4, and to a lesser extent model 3, put trainees in the position of having to deliver services at the same pace and rate as a fully qualified EP. For many, there is the additional difficulty of the Service offer to schools being already established for the academic year and having to assume a full workload early in their first term, sometimes after only a brief induction. Whilst supervisors work hard to support, often acting as an important buffer, and TEPs generally manage the work, there is a noticeable impact on the development of trainee confidence and the flexibility in their approach to work. For many of these trainees, there is a struggle to evidence the broad range of required BPS competencies whilst maintaining a healthy work/life balance. This can have a significant effect on wellbeing.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our current Year 1 and Year 2 TEPs have had a different placement experiences during the summer term 2020. Whilst we have been impressed by the range of remote work carried out and the quality of the reports based on this, we are also aware that, as a group, the current Year 1 feel considerably less well-prepared for their Year 2 placement and are more apprehensive than previous cohorts. We know you are aware of this but want to open a dialogue about the impact of some service delivery models on the trainee's experience on placement.

Based on feedback from PEP colleagues and strong endorsement that a clear and consistent approach to trainee work allocation and workload is welcome, we would like to make the following proposal:

*If trainees are to be considered part of the workforce (models 3 and 4) that the recommended allocation is reduced, to between 0.3 and 0.4 for a Y2 trainee and to between 0.4 and 0.5 for a Y3 trainee.*

Initial feedback from more than twenty PEP colleagues who saw the first draft supported this proposal, with no one in favour of an allocation outside this range. We believe that greater transparency in relation to the different models will address perceived injustices amongst trainees, which inevitably impact negatively on appraisals of placement quality.

We acknowledge that there will always be a tension between maximising service delivery and doing the best for trainees, and we realise that some local authorities may be concerned about the reduction in EP hours. However, we are confident that this will be compensated for by the development of confident, competent TEPs, who feel well-supported as they progress through their training and beyond into the profession.