**Equality Impact Assessment Report**

**Title:** Enhanced Psychological Practice (EPP) Programme

**NES directorate or department:** Psychology

**Date Report Completed:** 15/03/2024

# Introduction

Equality Impact Assessment is a process that helps us to consider how our work will meet the 3 parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is an important way to mainstream equality into our work at NES and to help us:

* Take effective action on equality
* Develop better policy, technology, education and learning and workforce planning solutions for health, social care and a wide range of our partners, stakeholders and employees
* Demonstrate how we have considered equality in making our decisions.

**A brief overview of the function:**

NES have developed an Enhanced Psychological Practice (EPP) training model. This is a post graduate certificate level training scheme designed to develop psychological staff capable of delivering high-quality, evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate psychological difficulties in a way that can be efficiently brought to scale. The approach aims to make effective use of the large cohorts of graduates in Psychology– as well as those with equivalent training and experience - to deliver and support, under supervision, brief, outcome-focused evidence-based interventions. Post qualification workers will provide a defined clinical service, working under supervision.

The EPP builds on existing NES training programmes and experience in Scotland of delivering Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) at the enhanced level of the NES Knowledge and Skills framework as well as learning from national and international psychological interventions training.

Within the Enhanced Psychological Practice Programme, there are two courses; one which focuses on learners working with Adults (EPP-A), and a course targeted at learners working with Children, Young People and their Families (EPP-CYP), with each course having modules related to their specific target population.

The increased demand for mental health services that pre-dates the pandemic has been recognised by the Scottish government with an acknowledgement that demand is outstripping supply (Mental Health- Scotland’s Transition and Recovery 2020 plan). The new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023) outlines a desire to have both a continued focus and stronger emphasis on early intervention and prevention for supporting the mental health of Scotland’s population. The EPP Programme, which was included as a case study in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Action Plan (2023-2025), is a development that offers a way to increase service capacity for evidence based early intervention and address the ambitions of the whole system approach to improving mental health and wellbeing, including primary and community care, proposed in the new Mental Health Strategy. Referrals for Psychological Therapies have increased with most Boards not meeting the access standard. This means that those with mild to moderate difficulties will continue to struggle to access appropriate help, the EPP provides a way to help address this.

**Relevance to NES Equality Outcomes:**

Outcome 1: Health inequalities are mitigated and where possible reduced or prevented through the provision of opportunities for healthcare staff to enhance relevant skills and knowledge.

**Potential for reducing inequalities or improving outcomes for any group:**

1. Paid learning opportunity - currently people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds can find it more difficult to obtain the required experience for masters or doctoral training because there are so few relevant paid posts. Voluntary work is therefore an attractive and valuable option for those who can afford to work without pay. Moreover, limited finances can mean that some people cannot afford to move or travel far from home to take up a post. The EPP training role is likely to increase opportunities for more people, by creating more posts, with travel costs to attend the face to face training days included.
2. Accreditation of prior learning routes for EPP into the doctoral and masters programmes are being explored, and it is expected that a proportion of those who successfully complete the EPP Programme will proceed with further training via one of these routes. Funded routes enable people to get more experience to enhance chances of further postgraduate training - EPP is likely to create more routes into applied psychology and psychological therapy training that are funded, and in turn enhance access to traditional training.
3. E-Learning is learner directed - the inbuilt expectation is that this will be carried out at a pace/level that is comfortable and suitable for the learner.
4. Entry criteria includes a 2:2 degree class – national job profiles are also being proposed to broaden the scope of degree required to undertake the learning programme.
5. There is opportunity for staff who are already employed in relevant NHS/CPP roles to undertake the programme, and for their post to be backfilled (fully funded) to enable them to be released to undertake this opportunity.

**An overview of the approach to the EQIA:**

The EPP pilot took place in November 2021, as a training programme for those in existing roles within NHS Scotland – 10 NHS Scotland Health Boards participated. Following the success of the EPP pilot, NES coordinated recruitment to Assistant Psychologist (or similar) posts in conjunction with NHS Scotland Health Board partners, to enable additional capacity within the workforce undertaking this training.

Alongside delivery of the education programme, NES have proposed establishing national job descriptions to underpin both the training and post qualification phases of the programme. NES are working in partnership with Scottish Government, staffside and employers to progress the development of national profiles.

National roles with protected ‘trainee’ status would protect against role drift, aid with clinical governance and ensure postholders were employed to be trained in a specific set of competences. This EQIA is in relation to the educational programme.

# Evidence

**Evidence used to inform the assessment:**

1. Feedback and evaluation of NES EPP Programme from those who have undergone training;
2. Academic publications;
3. Advice from expert colleagues within the field – e.g. UK wide education providers/ Universities;
4. Internal NES guidance;
5. Undergoing SQA accreditation; and continued review by external and NES internal SQA processes;
6. EPP Leads meetings and programme review sessions;
7. EPP Course team meetings and course review sessions.
8. Joint Advisory Group – feedback from key stakeholders, including learners, supervisors and employers.

There has been a gap identified in terms of service user engagement.

# Assessment

We have considered how this work will impact on the Public Sector Equality Duty. This includes how it might affect people differently, taking account of protected characteristics and how these intersect, including with poverty and low income. This is important as a national NHS Board in our work to address health inequalities.

We have also considered children’s rights where appropriate and our role as a corporate parent.

A Fairer Scotland Assessment requires public authorities to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

We have included our Fairer Scotland Assessment in this Equality Impact Assessment.

See guidance on the Fairer Scotland Duty on the Equality and Diversity Sharepoint Hub (coming in March 2023): [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/).

The bullet points below are the 3 parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty:

* How will it progress equality of opportunity for people who experience inequalities?
* How will it eliminate discrimination, victimisation or harassment or other unlawful conduct?
* How can it promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? For example, think about how we can tackle any prejudice or stigma.

**A summary of the assessment of impact, including on any protected characteristics/ the specific issues identified for particular groups (i.e. evidence of barriers, under-representation, particular needs):**

1. Scottish Government funding uncertainties mean extension to the training period can have significant impact into subsequent financial years. If the programme was defunded at any stage, learners would be unable to progress with the programme and would in some instances be out of employment. This could present barriers to accessing the programme for those with, for instance, caring responsibilities. Given the relative infancy of the programme, the infrastructure required to run the programme is also continuing to develop, and ties to the aforementioned funding uncertainties – robust and guaranteed programme resource would be required to develop flexible learning pathways, and as such flexible approaches are not yet possible for the EPP programme. Learners are required to attend workshops on the days that they are scheduled to take place.
2. There is the possibility that people living in particular Health Board areas may not be able to participate in the programme – Health Boards ‘opt in’ to hosting learners for the entirety of their training. If a Health Board is unable to engage with the EPP programme then a post to enable participation on the programme will not be available in that geographical region.

**Evidence of existing good practice:**

1. Learning needs questionnaire is to be completed by learners prior to joining the programme. This is subsequently assessed by the programme team – reasonable adjustments to the learning environment are made wherever possible.
2. Remote joining options to enable participation in teaching workshops are enabled where possible.
3. Paid learning opportunity, making it more accessible to a broader pool of people.
4. NES EPP programme team undertake mandatory equality and diversity training.

**Opportunities to promote equality or good relations****:**

1. The EPP Programme team encourages any questions or comments via the NES EPP mailbox – [nes.epp@nhs.scot](mailto:nes.epp@nhs.scot);
2. The EPP Programme team stays active and engaged with cohorts of learners and a network of supervisors by managing Microsoft Teams channels (including Microsoft Teams channels for each individual learner linked to their Course Assessor, and separate channels for each cohort of EPP learners and EPP supervisors)
3. An EPP Joint Advisory Group has been established to bring together a broad range of relevant stakeholders on an annual basis;
4. The EPP Programme team also engages via social media (X) through the NES Psychology Directorate account.

# Next Steps

The Equality Impact Assessment has informed the following actions:

1) the exploration of positive action at shortlisting and interview stages of selection, to mirror other NES funded programmes;

2) scoping unconscious bias training for prospective interview panels.

The impact assessment has identified the following actions to better advance equality, progress children’s rights and meet the Public Sector Equality Duty:

1. Exploration of applying positive action at shortlisting and interviewing stages of recruitment and selection, to align with other NES funded programmes;
2. Offering unconscious bias training for prospective interview panels (self directed learning via existing NES resources).

| Issue or risk identified | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Resources required | What is the expected outcome? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Possibility for people with accessibility difficulties to not be fully supported to engage | Ensure that responses to the pre-existing learning needs questions are reviewed and mitigations are put in place for any potential difficulties - each learner is assigned their own course assessor who meets with the learner during their induction on the programme to explore any learning/additional support needs  Each learner is assigned their own course assessor who meets with the learner during their induction on the programme to explore any learning/additional support needs  Checks made during training that learners are able to access/engage with training and resources (as not all learners disclose difficulties on the application form) as well as encouraging learners to seek help from facilitator if need support. | NES EPP Programme team  Any external facilitators of the workshops | Rolling action  Rolling action | Working time and capacity of EPP team.  Prompts in the facilitator notes to do this at the beginning of every workshop. | Appropriate steps can then be taken to support learners with potential accessibility difficulties and ensure equity of learning experience. |
| Possibility for people with attention and/or learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia) to not be fully supported to engage | Ensure that learning materials comply with NES standards and reduce and improve the amount and simplicity of content provided on workshop slides.  The learning is divided between e-learning content, clinical skills workshops and self-directed/directed study. The e-learning material is available to learners as soon as they start the course, and although there are deadlines to complete the e-learning, this is timetabled to allow learners to work at their own pace. All slides for workshops are made available to learners ahead of time. Self-directed and directed study is able to be managed at learners own pace/time.  We also respond to specific learning needs from pre-learning questionnaire. | NES EPP Programme team | Review every two years. | Working time and capacity of NES EPP Programme team | All resources are readable and understandable by potential learners |
| Possibility for people with hearing impairments to not be fully supported to engage | Option to send learners a PDF document and adapted facilitator notes before the session to use alongside their attendance.  Use of captions during online training  Ensure any newly created video file resources contain subtitles of speech; update existing video files to contain subtitles of speech as and when routine reviews take place. | NES EPP Programme team  Any external facilitators of the workshops | Rolling action (to be done on request by learner and with sufficient notice) | Working time and capacity of NES EPP Programme team  Facilitators access to version of teams where captions can be used. Knowledge on how to use captions | Users are able to engage as fully as possible with the learning programme  All resources are accessible in a suitable format for potential learners that maintains NES intellectual property |
| Possibility for people with sight impairments to not be fully supported to engage | Provide versions of resources that are compatible with screen readers | NES EPP Programme team | Rolling action (to be done on request by learner and with sufficient notice) | Working time and capacity of NES Design Team. | Users are able to engage fully in the workshop without restriction |
| Possibility for learners to perceive that the learning materials could be more representative of the diverse backgrounds of the Scottish population | Ensuring that any visuals in programme resources/e-learning are representative of people from different backgrounds and experiences within the Scottish population (e.g. gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability status). | NES EPP Programme team | Rolling action - updating existing resources when under review. New resources to be made accessible on release. | Working time and capacity of NES EPP Programme team and NES Design Team. | All learners feel included and represented in the learning materials. |
| Possibility for learners to perceive that examples given and roleplays could be more representative of their professional backgrounds and/or needs of those they work with. | Continue to enhance the selection of examples to encompass a wider range of behaviours that they may work with people on. | NES EPP Programme team | End of September 2024. Once completed to become rolling action. | Working time and capacity of NES EPP Programme team | All learners feel included and represented in the learning materials. |
| Accessibility of online delivery | Support the learner to access the resources through formats and software that is compatible with their devices (within what is practically possible for the NES EPP Programme Team). | NES EPP Programme team | Rolling action. | Working time and capacity of NES EPP Programme team | Potential attendees will not be prevented from attending due to access issues. |
| Accessibility of venues for face-to-face delivery | Continue to ensure any potential venues are accessible for learners with mobility issues; venues must be wheelchair or other mobility aid accessible; consult guidance available on NES intranet.  Continue to ensure that venues are accessible by public transport to allow anyone without a car to attend. | NES venue finding service | Rolling action. | Working time and capacity of NES teams. Information from potential venues. | Potential attendees will not be prevented from attending due to access issues. |
| Timing of training | Attempt to ensure that the training does not clash with any major religious or cultural festivals/events and that it does not start prohibitively early/end late making it difficult for those with young/school age children and for carers to attend | NES EPP Programme team | Rolling action. | Information from potential venues.  Information about school holidays. Information about religious or cultural festivals/events | Potential attendees will not be prevented from attending due to the timing of the training. |

**Monitoring, evaluation and review – what date will be collected:**

Data will be collected at the following stages to inform evaluation:

Application stage

Accessibility requirements/specific learning needs; information on protected characteristics will be collected used the NES standardised quality and diversity form.

During training

Course evaluation; programme outcomes for individual leaners (e.g. requirements for extensions; resists; pass/fail rate).

After training

Data on post qualification activity (i.e. tracking qualified learners within the NHS Scotland workforce) is collected by NES Digital colleagues.

**What analysis of the data will be undertaken:**

Data will be analysed with a view to achieving the aims of the Equality Duty (i.e. eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations). The data will help us to identify areas for improvement and measure impact.

**Are there specific targets or indicators to be monitored:**

No – the programme is in its infancy. Specific targets or indicators may emerge in time.

**How will results of monitoring be reported, when, and to whom:**

Results of monitoring will be reported within NES, within the Heads of Psychology (HoP) network, to the EPP Joint Advisory Group, and potentially other relevant stakeholders e.g. Scottish Government.

**When will the function be reviewed, taking into account any monitoring information:**

The function will be reviewed every 3 years to allow for completion of the 18 months training and post qualification consolidation phase, and a further 18 months whereby practitioners may move into a range of other roles and/or settings. The reviews will be led by Dr Marita Brack, Associate Director - Psychology, and Nicola Armstrong, Psychology Business Manager.

# **Sign-off**

**Director:** Professor Judy Thomson

**Date:** 15/03/2024