The Scottish Government

Evaluation of the Professional
Development Programme for
Educational Psychologists
in Scotland

Education and Training

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EVALUATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SCOTLAND

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This web only report is accompanied by the web only research findings 36/2008 "Evaluation of The Professional Development programme for Educational Psychologists in Scotland".

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

The Professional Development Programme (PDP) for Educational Psychologists (EPs) is supported by the Scottish Government Schools Directorate. The Support for Learning Division, part of the Schools Directorate, currently funds the PDP and commissioned this independent evaluation of the Programme. The main aim of the evaluation was to carry out an assessment of the effectiveness and value for money of the PDP and options for improvement within the current level of funding.

Specific objectives of the evaluation were to:
1.   Investigate and assess the value of the PDP taking into account both the quality of the CPD and research opportunities that it offers, including its fit with other CPD opportunities for educational psychologists.
2.   Assess the effectiveness of the management and organisation of the PDP including how PDP opportunities are currently publicised and the range of educational psychologists participating in the scheme.
3.   Assess how the output of the PDP is accessed and utilised by educational psychologists and local authorities and the perceived impact on the professional expertise and practice of educational psychologists.
4.   Assess how the output of the PDP is disseminated to other interested parties in the educational community and how it could be improved.

2. Methodology

One hundred and seventy EPs from at least 31 Local Authorities (LAs) responded to the online questionnaire in Phase I. In Phase II, further in-depth data was collected through interviews and focus groups from 19 EPs who had participated in Phase I, some of whom were members of the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP). In addition, other stakeholder views were gathered through interviews and focus group which included the existing PDP Steering Group members, Heads of Education Service (for the perspectives of both the Association of Directors of Education Scotland [ADES] and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities[COSLA]), representatives of Scottish Division of Educational Psychology (SDEP), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and Scottish Government including one representative from the Schools Directorate and two strategic officers from the Post School Psychological Services.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Sources of information about the PDP

Sources of information about the PDP varied with the questionnaire respondents being informed about the PDP mainly by their line managers (57%) and by others in the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) (58%). Other respondents had been informed by the ASPEP (20%), the PDP Steering Group (15%) and the University tutors (16%) on the professional training programmes.

3.2 Experience of the PDP

Eighty one (48%) questionnaire respondents had participated in the PDP over the years, with a representation of at least 28 LAs. Seventy four (91%) of the 81 PDP participants and all Steering Group members and co-ordinators reported that this experience had been useful to them as individuals as well as to their EPS. Forty one (24%) questionnaire respondents reported changes in their experience of the PDP process over time; however 97 (57%) felt that there had been no change. Changes were viewed both positively and negatively.

3.3 Decision making regarding the PDP themes

One hundred and two (60%) questionnaire respondents had been involved in selection of themes. All EP grades had been equally involved in the selection and the process was seen to be consultative. Other stakeholders from Phase II (namely, members of ADES, SDEP and Scottish Government) also felt that their views had been taken into consideration in the selection of themes. It was suggested that other wider stakeholder groups such as parents and other professionals should also be consulted.

3.4 Views about the PDP reports

One hundred and twenty (71%) questionnaire respondents had read the PDP reports at least once and up to 10 times, with most reading them as hard copies (n=104, 61%). A large number of questionnaire respondents (n=134, 79%) had found the PDP reports very easy or easy to access. However, some indicated that online access was not always easy. The PDP reports were shared with others mainly within the following contexts: in a discussion around a theme with other EPs, sharing with school and/or post-school staff and parents; for staff development within the Service, to inform practice at individual level, to inform policy/practice at authority level, to increase individual's knowledge base, to help develop further collaborative work and sharing thinking through national/international conferences and university modules. It was suggested that this sharing can be improved, especially with the parents and children.

3.5 Usefulness of the PDP to EPs and EPSs

The PDP was reported to be useful to EPs and EPSs. The top 5 aspects of the PDP that were found to be useful to EPs as professionals and EPS were, that it led to:
- the development of knowledge base
- collaboration with EPs in other services
- development of practice
- opportunities to do research
- better service delivery for children and young people

Thirty (18%) questionnaire respondents provided reasons for the PDP not being useful to EPs and EPS. In no particular order, the reasons can be summarized as follows:
- Insufficient time allocation
- Travel barrier

- Topic/research themes
- Quality of research and outputs
- Lack of focus on service delivery
- Variable quality of coordination and financial constraints

3.6 Overall suggestions for improvement of the PDP

- Improved and more transparent process for selection of topics/themes
- Improved research methodology and process
- Improved quality of coordination
- Increased funding/resources
- Better protected time allocation
- Better ways of dealing with travel barriers
- Broader dissemination and easier access
- More effective outcomes for children and family

3.7 Additional views from Phase II about the PDP

Interview and focus group participants also commented on other ways of improving the PDP, replacing it with something different and retaining certain aspects of the current PDP. They reported that the PDP was good value for money, given the level of funding provided.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The PDP was reported to be very useful for EPs and EPSs, and provided good value for money. The process and outputs were seen to impact positively on the professional expertise and practice of EPs, and on service provision for children and young people. Overall suggestions were made for the improvement of the PDP research process and output, which are reflected in the following recommendations:

1. Maintain the existing consultative process for initial generation of ideas and the subsequent decision making about the PDP themes.

2. More discussion needs to take place around the methods and a clear rationale should be presented for the use of certain methods.

3. There is a need for a streamlined product which is more cohesive. Editing of the output should be undertaken, perhaps as a required task for the PDP project team. However, further resource implications of this have to be considered.

4. Project management and leadership skills should be prerequisites to becoming a PDP co-ordinator. However, project management and leadership training could be offered to PDP coordinators, where required. The PDP Steering Group (including the Scottish Government) should ensure that appropriate levels of support and resources required to undertake the role effectively are provided.

5. Maintain the focus of the PDP on collaborative research across EPSs and LA boundaries. However, it is important to ensure improved communication and opportunities for participation of EPs from remote and/or small EPSs.

6. PDP material should continue to be made available in hard copy and wider dissemination should be ensured through online sources.

7. Wider dissemination of the PDP output should take place through the LAs and EPSs and by encouraging PDP participants to publish the research in peer reviewed national and international journals.

8. More CPD opportunities should be provided through the PDP, with more effective links with the EPS development plans, the CPD framework for EPs and the annual review process for EPs.

9. The EPSs and ASPEP should consider taking responsibility for discussion sessions at local level (within the EPS or LA) and national level (through ASPEP meetings or SDEP newsletter).

10. The PDP Steering Group should consider evaluating the effectiveness of the process for the PDP participants and the output for all EPs on an ongoing basis.

11. PDP Steering Group should liaise with other relevant parties to look for opportunities to access alternative sources of funding and resources. This would complement the current funding provided by the Scottish Government. On the basis of the available funding and resources, they should review the format of the PDP and should consider: a reduction of themes and/or expansion of the PDP cycle, the relevance and applicability of the research to practice when selecting themes, the possibility of carrying out longitudinal studies and ensuring there are tangible links between the themes from one cycle to the next.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1   The context of Educational Psychology in Scotland

Educational Psychologists (EPs) in Scotland work in partnership with children, parents, educational establishments and other agencies often within a multi-disciplinary context or framework, with regard to individual or systemic issues relating to children's learning, behaviour and development. EPs work at three levels which may overlap. These are the level of the child/family, school/establishment and local authority. Within these levels, they have five core functions: consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research (Scottish Executive, 2002). Each local educational psychology service (EPS) may vary in the emphasis placed on the different functions and the extent of the involvement at each level. EPs may also represent the profession on a range of working groups and other bodies at national level (Topping, Smith, Barrow, Hannah & Kerr, 2007).

The Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland (Currie Report) (Scottish Executive, 2002) identified research as one of the core functions of EPs working in Scotland. More recently, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) developed a self-evaluation framework for EPSs, which included research and strategic development as one of the Quality Indicators under Key Area 5: Delivery of key processes (HMIE, 2007).

1.2   Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

One theme of the first cycle of the PDP involved a review of CPD arrangements for EPs in Scotland in order to explore the role that the newly evolved PDP might play in this process (Liddle, 1996). Within his report Liddle considered the importance of CPD to the practice of educational psychologists and provided a wide-ranging definition, which included attendance at courses, work shadowing, collaborative working, independent study, project work and research.

Professional bodies and employers have also emphasised the importance of CPD for psychologists. CPD is construed as a career-long process that psychologists should undertake in order to keep up-to-date, to maintain and enhance their professional skills. (British Psychological Society (BPS), 2007); Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT), 2002). In addition, HMIE indicate that there is an entitlement for all staff to receive access to CPD, as stated in Key Area 7: Management and support of staff (HMIE, 2007). The individual psychologist is expected to take responsibility for the identification, planning, implementation and evaluation of their own development needs. It is important that there is a clear link between psychological theory, knowledge and practice. This should be reflected in their overall CPD plan.

The British Psychological Society has a mandatory requirement for chartered psychologists, who are practising, to undertake and maintain a record of their CPD.
A minimum of 40 hours of CPD per annum must be recorded. The Society expects the focus to be on learning outcomes rather than time spent on formal training courses. These outcomes are linked to the six National Occupational Standards for psychologists, one of which is research.

1.3   The Professional Development Programme

The Professional Development Programme is one way of encouraging EPs to engage in research. It arose from the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) which was established in 1985 and ran until 1995. The PDI was a Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) funded initiative, the aims of which were to:
- provide research opportunities for EPs
- encourage the embedding of research within professional practice to meet local needs
- encourage high quality reporting and dissemination of research findings
- encourage reflective practice
- facilitate continuing professional development
- raise the profile of the profession in Scotland

Brown's evaluation (1993) of the PDI was largely positive in terms of its value for money.   Other positive aspects were that it provided a focus for the CPD of educational psychologists and was useful as a model for professional development in other spheres of education However, an identified weakness of the PDI was the limited dissemination of the materials.

Liddle, Kerr & Walker (1996) reported that a number of influences had resulted in the need to rethink the previous model. The main influences for change included:
- restructuring of local Government in the intervening period
- the profession taking ownership of the co-ordination of the programme
- a need for a shorter timescale between the initiation of a theme and its dissemination
- more cross authority collaborative projects
- a need for different ways of dissemination of the PDP materials

Proposed methods of dissemination included incorporation in the annual conference and development of online resources (Brown, 1993; Liddle, Kerr & Walker, 1996). There was also a commitment to publish by late summer of the year in which the research took place.

The PDP is managed by the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP) through Co-ordinators, including a Senior Coordinator, and a Moderator. Coordinators are appointed through an open interview process whilst the Moderator is nominated by ASPEP.   A Steering Group oversees the PDP and comprises the Coordinators, the Moderator, a representative from each of ASPEP, Scottish Division of Educational Psychology (SDEP) and Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), as well as representatives from the Scottish Government.

The PDP involves three groups of educational psychologists from a range of Scottish local authorities working collaboratively each year on a topic chosen from one of three themes. Initial themes are generated through a collaborative process involving a range of stakeholders, including ASPEP, ADES, SDEP and EPSs. ASPEP and EPSs

contribute to the selection of themes by generating a list of 6 or so topics, with the Steering Group making the final selection.

EPs who are interested in participating are nominated by their EPSs. A start up conference is organised in May, which offers an opportunity for researchers in each theme to meet up for initial discussion facilitated by the coordinator for their group. The groups determine how to work on their themes, including the focus the research will take and how this will be taken forward. The main outcomes of the research are written up by March of the following year and disseminated in written and electronic formats in the summer, and form the basis of presentations and workshops at the national conference in September. Coordinators have an overview and support role throughout the process and edit the final report. Hard copies of the full reports and summaries go to local authorities, EPSs and EPs in Scotland and beyond; summaries are also sent to Universities, libraries and associated professional bodies. The electronic format is accessible on Learning and Teaching Scotland website (http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/pdp/) to all interested parties.

Since its inception in 1995, thirteen rounds of the PDP have been completed and published and the 14th round is currently underway.

1.4   The Evaluation

Funding for the PDP for Educational Psychologists began in 1995 and will continue under current arrangements, at the annual amount of £58,500, until March 2008. The PDP is supported by the Scottish Government Schools Directorate. The Support for Learning Division, part of the Schools Directorate, currently funds the PDP and commissioned this independent evaluation of the Programme.

The main aim of the evaluation was to:

Carry out an assessment of the effectiveness and value for money of the PDP and options for improvement within the current level of funding.

Specific objectives of the evaluation were to:
1.   Investigate and assess the value of the PDP taking into account both the quality of the CPD and research opportunities that it offers, including its fit with other CPD opportunities for educational psychologists.
2.   Assess the effectiveness of the management and organisation of the PDP including how PDP opportunities are currently publicised and the range of educational psychologists participating in the scheme.
3.   Assess how the output of the PDP is accessed and utilised by educational psychologists and local authorities and the perceived impact on the professional expertise and practice of educational psychologists.
4.   Assess how the output of the PDP is disseminated to other interested parties in the educational community and how it could be improved.

This report outlines the findings of the research project.

CHAPTER TWO METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

A mixed methods design was used, with collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The study was carried out in two phases.

2.1.1 Phase I

The first phase involved collection of data from EPs in Scotland through an online questionnaire.   An initial e-mail was sent out to the Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs) from all 32 local authorities through the ASPEP mailing list. This e-mail included a flyer and a participant information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, methods of data collection and ethical information. The PEPs were asked to forward the e-mail to all EPs and related personnel, including Research Assistants and Trainee Educational Psychologists. This was followed up two weeks later with an e-mail giving the URL for the on-line questionnaire and asking the PEPs to again circulate it to all relevant staff within the Educational Psychology Service.

The online questionnaire had 23 questions, with a mix of closed and open questions (see Appendix 1).   The questions focused on demographics, experience of PDP, perception of the effectiveness of PDP and suggestions for improvement.

One hundred and seventy EPs responded to the online questionnaire in Phase I, a response rate of over 30%, based, in the absence of accurate data, on an estimated staffing complement of 500 EPs across Scotland, including trainee EPs and research assistants. Given the short time scale, this was a very good response rate.
A breakdown of current grades held by the participants can be seen under the chapter 'Results and Discussion'. Participants were asked to indicate if they would be willing to participate in the second phase.

2.1.2 Phase II

The second phase involved collecting more in-depth data from a sample of EPs who had indicated an interest in participating further. Twenty seven people participated in Phase II of the evaluation: 19 EPs and 8 other stakeholders. On the basis of their availability and convenience, one focus group and 10 telephone interviews were undertaken.
- One focus group with 5 main grade EPs and Senior EPs (SEPs)
- Telephone interviews with 2 main grade EPs, 6 Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs), 1 Depute Principal Educational Psychologists (DPEP), and 1 Acting DPEP

This included PEPs and DPEPs who are members of ASPEP. The focus group and telephone interviews involved EPs from 11 Scottish local authorities. These Scottish local authorities represented a spread of urban and rural, central and remote, densely and less densely populated, and geographically large and small authorities.

The perspective of the existing PDP Steering Group members was collected through:
- One focus group with 3 members

- Telephone interviews with 2 members

The PDP Steering Group's focus group and interviews involved the perspective of the current PDP coordinators (EPs) and the Schools Directorate within the Scottish Government. Please note that the quotes in the results will only identify them as members of the Steering Group without differentiating between EPs and Schools Directorate to ensure anonymity of the individuals within this small group.

Other stakeholders' perceptions were collected through:
- Telephone interviews with 2 Heads of Education Service (the exact titles are not being used to ensure anonymity)
- Telephone interview with 1 SDEP member
- Telephone interview with 1 HMIE representative
- Interview with 1 Scottish Government Schools Directorate representative
- Interview with 2 Strategic Officers for the Post School Psychological Services (PSPS)

The Heads of Education Service involved the perspective of ADES and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). In addition the views of 2 other Heads of Service were fed in via emails from one of the Heads of Education Service mentioned above as s/he had invited Heads of Education Service to express their views by e-mails.

Please note that apart from the HMIE, all the perspectives are of individuals rather than the organisation or professional body they belong to. However, they were asked to comment within the context of their role/membership of that organisation or professional body.

The focus group and interview schedule contained seven questions (see Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5). The questions focused on the experience of the PDP; views about the process of PDP; views about the outputs of the PDP; views abut the current allocation of funding; views about the overall effectiveness of the PDP, including the outcomes for children and young people; views about how the PDP process and output could be improved within the existing levels of funding and resources; and there was the opportunity for participants to share any other thoughts or comments on any aspect of the PDP.

2.2 Ethical considerations

Researchers were bound by their respective professional codes of practice, i.e. the British Psychological Society, (http://www.bps.org.uk/the-society/ethics-rules-charter-code-of-conduct/code-of-conduct/code-of-conduct_home.cfm) as well as the University of Dundee code of practice for research on human participants (http://www.dundee.ac.uk/psychology/resource/ethics/Code%20of%20practice%20research%20dundee.doc).

Before data collection, the research proposal, data collection instruments and Participant Information Sheets were approved by the University Research Ethics Committee. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained. No raw data was presented to the three EP advisors/consultants (Barrow, Hannah and Kerr) or

Smith before it was rendered anonymous in order to preserve confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Consent forms for all stakeholders were prepared. At the beginning of each focus group, telephone interview, and interview the right of withdrawal was made clear to participants. Permission to audio record the focus groups and one of the face to face interviews was sought from participants prior to the interview. No other data was audio recorded.

Data was stored in a locked filing cabinet in a secure room at the University. Electronic data was securely stored and retrieved only through password protected computers. All raw data will be destroyed after one year of the publication of the Scottish Government report.

2.3 Research team and consultants

Triangulation across the members of the research team (Jindal-Snape and Smith with consultants Barrow, Hannah and Kerr) offered inbuilt quality assurance. The first author (Jindal-Snape) was the Principal Investigator and responsible for coordination and management of the project. The views of Educational Psychologist consultants were sought on pilot materials, throughout data collection and on the draft final report.

Two research assistants were involved in the data collection and analysis process. Zhou was responsible for data collection and analysis of the online questionnaires in Phase II. Baird was responsible for conducting and analyzing the data from the focus groups and telephone interviews in Phase II.

Consultation with the Scottish Government Research Advisory Group throughout the project ensured completion of the project according to the proposed vision.
The University of Dundee's standard ethical procedures applied to this project.

CHAPTER THREE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results from data collected in Phases I and II. The data has been merged under themes. Phase I data has been reported as data from questionnaire respondents. Phase II data has been indicated by stating that it is from interview and/or focus group participants.

3.1 Demographics

As mentioned in the previous chapter, 170 EPs responded to the online questionnaire in Phase I, a response rate of over 30%, based, in the absence of accurate data, on an estimated staffing complement of 500 EPs across Scotland, including trainee EPs and research assistants. They represented 31 Scottish local authorities (LA). Two respondents did not identify their LA and it is possible that they might be from the missing 32nd LA. The spread of respondents across the LA was varied, with a range of 1 to 15 respondents per LA. However, in some cases this reflected the size of the Educational Psychology Service in that Local Authority. Table 3.1a shows the breakdown of the Phase I participants according to their current grade. As can be seen, there was a good representation of different grades.

Table 3.1a: Current grade of respondents (EPs) in Phase I

Current Grade	Frequency	Percentage (N=170)
Principal Educational Psychologist	21	12
Depute Principal Educational Psychologist	14	8
Senior Educational Psychologist	27	16
Educational Psychologist	81	48
Assistant Educational Psychologist	1	1
Research Assistant	4	2
Trainee Educational Psychologist	16	9
Other grade	3	2
Grade unidentified	3	2
Total	170	100

(Other grade: 2 Area Depute Principal Psychologists; 1 Area Principal Psychologist)

Twenty seven people participated in Phase II of the evaluation, 19 EPs and 8 other stakeholders. The representation of the different grades of the EP participants involved in the focus groups and interviews is illustrated in Table 3.1b. Please note that the data in this table includes that for the EPs who were part of the PDP Steering Group but does not include for EPs who were interviewed as other stakeholders (e.g., Post School Psychological Services). See Table 3.1c for the other stakeholder profile. Five out of the 8 other stakeholders had been involved with the PDP for 10 to 14 years.

Table 3.1b: Current grade of participants (EPs) in Phase II

Current Grade	Frequency
Principal Educational Psychologist	7
Depute Principal Educational Psychologist	1
Senior Educational Psychologist	2
Educational Psychologist	7
Other grade	2
Total	19

(Other grade: 1 Acting Depute Principal Educational Psychologist; 1 Acting Principal Educational Psychologist.)

Table 3.1c: Number of years other stakeholders from Phase II have been involved with PDP

Years involvement with PDP	Frequency
1-4 years	0
5-9 years	1
10-14 years	5
Other	2
Total	8

(Other: 1 less than one year; 1 unknown)

Table 3.1d shows that amongst the questionnaire respondents in Phase I there was a range of experience in terms of years in practice as EPs.

Table 3.1d: Years of practising as an EP (Phase I)

Years of practising as an EP	Frequency	Percentage (*N*=170)
0 years (Trainee)	17	10
Probationer	9	5
1-4 years	40	24
5-9 years	20	12
10-14 years	16	9
15-19 years	13	8
20-24 years	15	9
25 years plus	31	18
Other	4	2
no response	5	3
Total	170	100

(Other: 2 were Research Assistants in post for 1 year, 2 were EPs with 1 – 2 years of practice spent in Scotland and much longer experience elsewhere.)

One hundred and thirty (77%) respondents were female, which is significantly more than the male (n=36, 21%) respondents. Four (2%) did not specify their gender. One hundred and thirty one (77%) were employed full time and 39 (23%) part time. Of the 39 part-time staff, 35 (90%) reported that their full time equivalent was in the range 0.4 to 0.8 FTE.

Table 3.1e shows that there was also a range of experience in terms of years in practice as EPs among focus group and interview participants.

Table 3.1e: Years of practising as an EP (Phase II)

Years of practising as an EP	Frequency
1-4 years	4
5-9 years	2
10-14 years	1
15-19 years	6
20-24 years	3
25 years plus	3
Total	19

One hundred and sixty eight (99%) respondents from Phase I reported that they were aware of the PDP. Of the 2 (1%) who did not respond, it was clear from their later responses that they had been aware. Similarly, all the participants in Phase II were also aware of the PDP.

3.2 Source of information about the PDP

The questionnaire respondents were asked to identify the sources from which they had heard about the PDP. A variety of sources were identified, with the top ones being others in the EPS and line managers (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Source of information about the PDP

Source	Frequency	Percentage (N=170)
Others in the Service	99	58
Line manager	96	56
ASPEP	34	20
On training course (e.g., MSc in Educational Psychology)	27	16
PDP steering group	25	15
Previously participated in PDP	8	5
PDP disseminated (e.g., publication, presentation, annual CPD conference)	7	4
Colleagues and team meetings	3	2
Always known of it (e.g., knew of it before entering the profession)	3	2
Don't remember	3	2

(Please note there is an overlap because questionnaire respondents could tick as many categories as applied to them.)

3.3 Experience of the PDP

Questionnaire respondents were asked about their experience of the PDP and in which capacity they had gained this experience. They were also asked to indicate the usefulness of that experience.

3.3.1 Role and trends

Table 3.3 highlights the roles that the questionnaire respondents had played in the PDP process, with PDP participant as the most common role. A total of 138 responses were received. However, respondents might have played more than one role over the years.

Table 3.3: Experience of PDP

	PDP participant	PDP project coordinator	PDP steering group member	Other
Frequency	81	6	6	46
Percentage (*N*=170)	48	4	4	27

Amongst the 'Other' category, the 46 (27%) respondents indicated that 17 had used PDP materials, 8 had attended PDP meetings, 7 had indirectly participated through conferences and helping colleagues, and 10 had no direct experience at all.

There has been a good spread of PDP participant roles across different EP grades (see Table 3.4). However, the project coordinator and steering group member roles seem to be linked with the senior grades.

Table 3.4: Experience of PDP in relation to the current grade of the EP

Current Grade	Participant in a PDP project	PDP project coordinator	PDP steering group member	Other experience
Principal Educational Psychologist	15	3	4	8
Depute Principal Educational Psychologist	11	0	1	3
Senior Educational Psychologist	18	1	1	5
Educational Psychologist	34	1	0	22
Assistant Educational Psychologist	0	0	0	0
Research Assistant	0	0	0	7
Trainee Educational Psychologist	1	0	0	1
Other grade	2	1	0	0
Total	81	6	6	46

Of the 81 questionnaire respondents who reported being a PDP participant, 44 (54%) had participated only once, 26 (32%) had participated twice and 11 (14%) reported participating more than twice (See Figure 3.1). The PDP participants represented 28 LAs. Across these 28 LAs there was a fairly even spread in terms of numbers of EPs involved in PDP; however, 7 LAs had between 5 and 8 participants compared to the other LAs who had 1 or 2 participants. It should be noted that this variation in numbers was also seen in the sample of questionnaire respondents from these LAs. It can be argued that this picture might not be representative of the all EPs in Scotland as people who have participated in PDP projects may be more likely to have responded to this questionnaire.
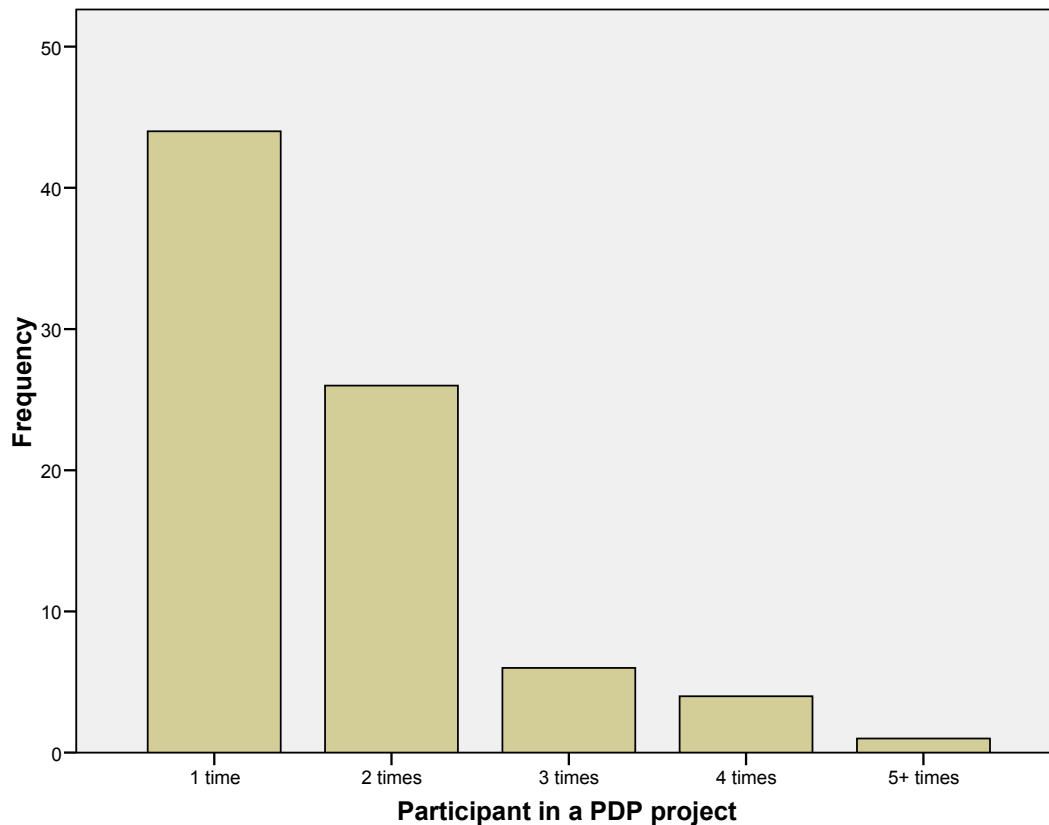
Figure 3.1: Frequency of participation in a PDP project

A couple of focus group participants said that there are certain EPs who are frequently involved in the PDP.

There are PDP junkies, does this mean that PDP becomes institutionalized within the service?
            (Senior EP with 20-24 years EP practice)

However, the responses to the question regarding frequency of participation do not really support this perception.

As only 6 questionnaire respondents each said they had been Coordinator and Steering Group member, it is difficult to look for any definitive trends.

3.3.2 Usefulness of the role and experience

From the questionnaire data, of the 81 PDP project participants, 80 commented on the usefulness of their experience with 74 (93%) participants strongly agreeing or agreeing that this was a useful experience compared to 6 (7%) who thought it was not. All coordinators and steering group members, who responded to this question, strongly agreed or agreed that the PDP experience had been useful to them. Please note that one PDP project participant and two coordinators did not respond to the question regarding the usefulness of the role.

Data from the focus group and interviews with the Steering Group members further support the finding that the PDP role was useful. The Steering Group members reported that their participation led to added value and status for the EPS, networking for self and others in the EPS, and being part of a national network through Scottish Government. A similar view was expressed by an ADES member who was on the Steering Group.

The time commitment to the Steering Group is not a lot. The usefulness to ADES – the topics and direction of the research sit with local authorities educational priorities. The usefulness to our service – my own service has close links with the EP service and the PEP, so I get to know what topics and themes are of relevance to the local service.
(ADES perspective)

Further analysis of the questionnaire data was conducted for the PDP participants to establish whether perceptions of usefulness varied according to EP grade (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: 'Experience of being a participant in a PDP project is useful to me professionally' according to current grade

Current Grade	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Principal Educational Psychologist	14	2	0	0
Depute Principal Educational Psychologist	3	7	1	0
Senior Educational Psychologist	13	5	0	0
Educational Psychologist	16	12	3	1
Assistant Educational Psychologist	0	0	0	0
Research Assistant	0	0	0	0
Trainee Educational Psychologist	1	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0	1
Total	47	27	4	2

A Kruskal-Wallis test showed a significant difference among grade groups. There appears to be a difference between promoted grades (PEP, DPEP, SEP) and the main grade EPs. A Mann-Whitney test suggested that EPs in promoted grades were significantly more positive than main grade EPs about the usefulness of participation in a PDP project. However, even amongst the main grade EPs, 28 strongly agreed or agreed that this experience was useful as

compared to 4 who disagreed or strongly disagreed (for information about these tests, please refer to Appendix 6).

Further cross-tabulation was not conducted for coordinators or PDP Steering Group members as their numbers were small and all who had responded reported that the experience was useful.

3.3.3 Effectiveness of leadership and management of the PDP Coordination team

In the questionnaire, the PDP participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of leadership and management of the PDP project coordination team (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Perception of the PDP participants regarding the effectiveness of leadership and management of the PDP project coordination

Rating category	Frequency (n=82)	Percentage
Very effective	16	20
Effective	27	33
Partly effective	29	35
Not effective at all	10	12
Total	82	100

Although 81 questionnaire respondents reported that they had participated in a PDP project, there were in fact 82 responses to this question. Of these 82, 43 (53%) indicated that it was very effective or effective, and 39 (47%) that it was partly effective or not effective at all. This would suggest that there was a mixed view about the leadership and management of the PDP, and this may be an important area for consideration and development.

The data from participants in the focus groups and interviews seem to support this view.

> *The leadership was weak; there were a few dominant members. It would have been a better output if more time had been spent on the planning. Co-ordinators have a pivotal key role. They need good leadership skills. (Educational Psychologist with 1 – 4 years EP practice)*

However, this data should be looked at in light of the views of the questionnaire respondents who were PDP project coordinators (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Perception of PDP project coordinator/s regarding training, support and resource provided by the PDP steering group

	Category	Frequency
Training	Very effective	2
	Effective	1
	Partly effective	0
	Not effective at all	0
	None provided	2
Support	Very effective	3
	Effective	0
	Partly effective	1

	Not effective at all	0
	None provided	1
Resources	Very effective	2
	Effective	1
	Partly effective	1
	Not effective at all	0
	None provided	1

(Note: Five of the 6 PDP project coordinators responded to this question.)

Table 3.7 suggests that the experience of the coordinators was varied with regard to training, support and resources (as numbers are very small percentages have not been calculated).

Participants in the focus groups and interviews who have been coordinators reported that there is a transparent, robust recruitment process for the post. Some indicated that they did not need training as the skills were transferable from their job and they supported each other as coordinators. However, one Steering Group member highlighted that the support and resources for coordinators had been limited in recent years and said that it was detrimental to their work.

> *There was a change of decision which said that there won't be any technology given to coordinators. It used to be if you were a coordinator you got a laptop and soft ware. In our service we have some laptops but they are not exclusively for one person's use. And you are talking about putting confidential information and so on onto them. I think that for the work that the coordinators do (editing) there should be technology that supports them. (Steering Group member)*

3.3.4 Perceptions regarding change in experience

Questionnaire respondents were asked if their experience of PDP had changed over time. Of the 170 questionnaire respondents, 41 (24%) said it had, 97 (57%) said it had not changed and 32 (19%) did not respond. Further analysis was undertaken to determine whether this was related to their grade (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Change in the PDP experience according to current grade

Current Grade	Yes, changed	No, did not change
Principal Educational Psychologist	13	7
Depute Principal Educational Psychologist	4	8
Senior Educational Psychologist	8	16
Educational Psychologist	14	55
Assistant Educational Psychologist	0	0
Research Assistant	0	1
Trainee Educational Psychologist	1	8
Other	1	2
Total	41	97

A Chi-square test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the PEPs and the other three EP grades. This indicated that the experience of PEPs had changed significantly more than that of other EP grades. This might be due to a change in his/her grade over the years and the resultant change in the nature of his/her involvement with the PDP. A quote from a participant in an interview reinforced this interpretation.

> *My experience of PDP has changed because my job has changed. As a PEP I'm more involved in choosing projects and planning the conference. Before becoming a PEP I was more involved in helping staff to identify topics.*
> *(Steering Group member)*

It is also possible that the PEPs have had a longer history with the PDP.

Qualitative data from 40 questionnaire respondents highlighted how the experience had changed for them over the years. Changes included choice of topic, PDP structure, PDP dissemination strategy, funding/resources, overall quality, overall experience of participation, and some personal geographical and role changes. In general, there were very mixed views about these changes; positive views (n=20) were more frequent than negative views (n=13). There were also 9 instances of neutral views. Although the questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate how their experience of PDP had changed, some tended to compare PDP with its predecessor PDI.

3.3.4.1 Choice of topic

The change to 3 pre-determined themes (PDP) from a system which allowed researchers to choose their own topic (PDI) was reported negatively by 3 questionnaire respondents. For example, one respondent stated:

> *It seems to me that participants have less autonomy and less choice in terms of the subject matter of their study. There tends to be an overarching theme to which all projects in a given year must be tied. There may be interesting research taking place in Psychological Services across Scotland, but the results are not disseminated via PDP for the above reason.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 15 – 19 years EP practice)*

This view was supported by a PEP with 25+ years experience in the interview. Other interview and focus group participants raised concerns about the final choice of topic resting with ASPEP and the Scottish Government.

However, there were also positive views from some participants in the focus groups and interviews about the way in which topics are chosen. For example,

> *The PDP stands because it is modern and up to date because the topics are reviewed annually.*
> *(Head of Education Service/ADES/COSLA perspective)*

3.3.4.2 PDP structure

The current PDP structure focuses on cross-authority initiatives and collaborations at national level as opposed to its predecessor PDI which reflected collaboration at the local level. Views from both phases of research about this change seemed to be positive. They felt that PDP led to collaborative practice across Scotland which was especially important for smaller EPSs, networks which lasted beyond the PDP cycle, opportunities for new EPs to work with more experienced EPs, and insight into a range of practices.

> *A major strength is that you get to see a range of practices across local authorities. I don't know where else you get this opportunity to see the context within which colleagues are working and the varied practices of service delivery.*
> *(Post School Psychological Service)*
>
> *The process has been useful because our service is small. It provided opportunities for staff to work with EPs across Scotland.*
> *(Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years EP practice/ASPEP member)*

3.3.4.3 PDP dissemination strategy

Participants from both phases of research were positive about the current dissemination of the PDP through the national conference, CD ROMs, hard copies of reports to all EPSs and the hosting of the product on Learning and Teaching Scotland website.

3.3.4.4 Resources

Budget constraints were raised as an issue for the PDP in recent years by 5 questionnaire respondents. They reported that these had adverse implications for the quality of research projects and training opportunities, and led to the PDP becoming product-driven.
The following quote from a questionnaire respondent illustrates this position:

> *The very early PDPs were not very closely managed and provided participants with a high level of freedom and a significant budget to pursue the work. More recently I feel that the quality of the product had declined and it is no longer the excellent advertisement for Scottish Educational Psychology that it once was.*
> *(Principal Educational Psychologist with 25 years EP practice)*

Interview and focus group participants also commented on the detrimental impact of limited resources on the quality of the PDP, and decreased motivation to participate in PDP as part of the team or as a coordinator. It was indicated that this was due to the budget not changing since the inception of the PDP.

> *The formula of three projects and three coordinators has been faithfully managed over the years [since the inception of the PDP]. The total sum of money for it hasn't changed. Originally less than half the costs went on the coordinators, now nearly all of it does. There used to be £12,000, there is now £1,000 per project.*
> *(Steering Group member)*

The steering group has discussed whether the money for coordinators is a luxury. My view is that coordinators are key. It [PDP] may become ad hoc without the coordinators.
(Head of Education Service/ADES/COSLA perspective)

However, there was a view that additional resources for the PDP could come from sources other than the Scottish Government.

PDP needs backing from local authorities to enable people to travel to participate. PDP for everyone needs to be resourced.
(SDEP perspective)

3.3.4.5 PDP's overall quality and experience of participants

Most of the questionnaire respondents expressed positive views about the overall quality and experience of participation in PDP; although a few were of the opinion that the quality was declining. Generally, PDP participants reported feeling more involved, more experienced and more professional; felt that the current research had become more relevant to the profession; and that there was a high standard of action research.

3.3.4.6 Personal geographical and grade changes

Responses from the questionnaire suggested that there were other changes that were due to individuals' geographical movement from England to Scotland and change in their grade. Overall, the experience due to change in grade seems to have become richer and the EPs felt much more involved in the PDP process.

I have had experience of recipient of the PDP write-ups in my service. [due to change in grade I have now] more active participation as a member of a Network group. As a member of my service, [I am] involved in suggesting ideas for PDP projects and as a member of ASPEP, [I am] involved in the selection of PDP projects to go forward to the profession.
(Area Depute Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP practice)

3.4 Decision making regarding the PDP themes

3.4.1 Involvement in selection of themes

One hundred and two (60%) respondents reported that they were involved in decision making regarding the PDP themes at various times. However, 61 (36%) respondents said that they had not been involved in any decision making process and 7 (4%) did not respond.
This might go some way to explaining the view that respondents felt there was no autonomy in selection of themes. Of the 102 respondents who said they had been involved; 54 (53%) were involved 1-4 times, 26 (25%) were involved 5-9 times and 22 (22%) were 10 or more times (Figure 3.2).

Frequency

60 — 50 — 40 — 30 — 20 — 10 — 0

1-4 times | 5-9 times | 10+ times
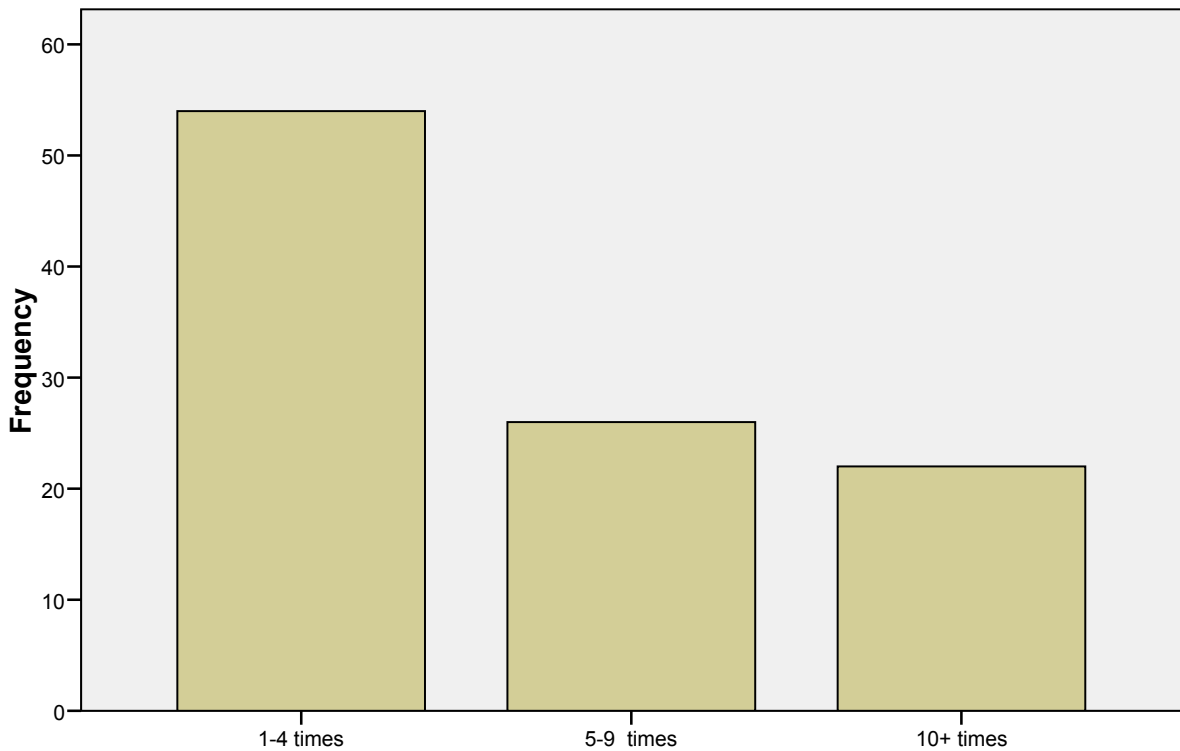
Figure 3.2: Number of times involved in decision making regarding the PDP themes

Further analysis was conducted to test whether differences were due to the grade of the EPs (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: Frequency of involvement in decision making regarding PDP themes according to the current grade

Current Grade	1-4	5-9	10 and over
Principal Educational Psychologist	4	7	9
Depute Principal Educational Psychologist	6	2	5
Senior Educational Psychologist	8	7	1
Educational Psychologist	31	6	7
Assistant Educational Psychologist	0	0	0
Research Assistant	1	0	0
Trainee Educational Psychologist	4	0	0
Other	0	3	0
Grade not known		1	
Total	54	26	22

22

Overall, it can be concluded that current grade does not have an impact on reported involvement in decision making. However, there may be differences between grades regarding frequency of involvement. A Kruskal-Wallis carried out to test the difference between grades showed a significant difference between the four grades of-PEP, DPEP, SEP and EP. The Jonckheere Trend test indicated that there was a trend from low to higher grades linked to increasing number of times involved in decision making (for information regarding the tests please refer to Appendix 6).

3.4.2 Process of involvement in selection of themes

Questionnaire respondents were asked to expand on how they had been involved in the decision making process. Of the 102 (60%) questionnaire respondents who said they had been involved in selection of themes, 94 responded to this question. The data suggests that the extent of individual involvement in the decision making process regarding PDP themes, is related to grade. Five main channels of involvement were identified as:

- team meetings as a member of an EPS (n=72, 42%)
- discussion with the Principal Educational Psychologist (n=14, 8%)
- decision-making through ASPEP consultation (n=14, 8%)
- individual means of responding to selection of themes, mainly through questionnaires (n=4, 2%)
- steering group meetings (n=3, 2%) and through PDP coordination (n=2, 1%)

Please note that the percentage in brackets is out of a total of 170.

Good links were reported between the PDP Steering Group, coordinators, PEPs and EPs. ASPEP in particular was reported to have played an important role in facilitating the decision making process. However, 61 (36%) questionnaire respondents indicated that they had not been involved in the decision making process.

Participants in the two focus groups and the interviews were asked for their views about involvement in decision making regarding the PDP themes. They were positive about their involvement in this process both in terms of generating ideas for topics or their perspective to PDP Steering Group and ASPEP.

> *The Steering group works well. I feel able to offer suggestions and can bring the Scottish Government's priorities that are developing outside education and psychology, for example, how classroom staff feed into the leadership process. It's always been the case that if I am aware of a weakness in service I can feed that into the planning [for PDP].*
> *(Scottish Government perspective)*

> *The topics and direction of the research sit with local authorities educational priorities. My own service has close links with EPS and PEP, so I get to know what topics and themes are of relevance to the local service. COSLA have a wider take, they have political priorities and sometimes the PDP and these overlap.*
> *(Head of Education Service/ADES/ COSLA perspective)*

*The themes are in tune with national priorities. It's a nice collegiate exercise.
It relies on PEPs consulting with EPs and presenting suggestions to ASPEP.
(HMIE perspective)*

However, some focus group and interview participants reported concerns regarding the agenda reflected in the final PDP themes. It was suggested that it might reflect the Scottish Government's priorities rather than those of EPs. For example,

*The PDP reads as being reactive to national issues rather then taking the lead.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 15- 19 years EP practice/ASPEP member)*

However, another interview participant suggested that these concerns might be unfounded.

*ASPEP closely watched the PDP work on the ASL Act and the Code of Practice to be sure the government wasn't leading what the PDP was doing. As it turned out it wasn't. A balance is required between the needs of government and the needs of the profession. I wouldn't want to see services politicised.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years EP practice/ASPEP member)*

Despite positive views regarding involvement in the decision making process, there was reported uncertainty about what happens to the suggestions once they have reached ASPEP.

The process of reaching a decision on the themes and topics was received both positively and negatively by participants in both focus groups and interviewees who have been directly involved. An example is:

*Six topics, six votes. It is democracy in action, I can't see how else it can be done.
(Senior Educational Psychologist with 20 -24 years EP practice)*

However, the process was also criticised:

*At ASPEP there is no real discernment about the selection of topics, no real fit with strategic priorities, no rigorous discussion regarding the value of the topic.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years EP practice/ASPEP member)*

*I think that we need to consider the level of consultation on topics. I see myself as a screen for ADES and COSLA, but other bodies might want to comment, e.g. LTS; HMIE; SQA.
(Head of Education Service/ADES/ COSLA perspective)*

It was suggested that the rationale for the selection of themes should be transparent and consideration be given to the involvement of other professionals and professional bodies.

3.5 Views about the PDP reports

3.5.1 Frequency of reading the PDP reports

Figure 3.3 indicates that at least 8 (5%) questionnaire respondents have not accessed any PDP reports. It can also be inferred that 159 (94%) respondents, who responded to various categories have read PDP reports. The majority of questionnaire respondents (71%) reported reading PDP reports at least once and up to 10 times.
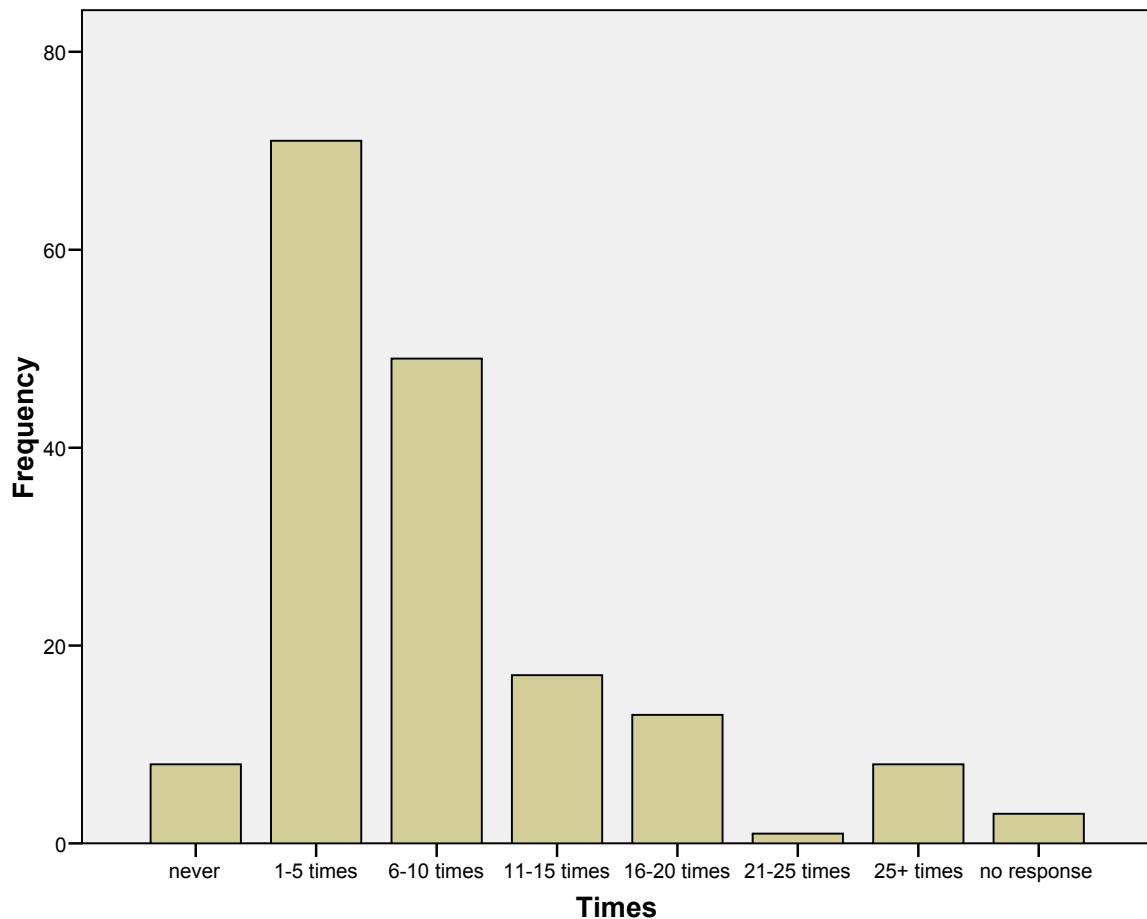
Figure 3.3: Number of times PDP reports were read

The 8 questionnaire respondents who had not read the reports were asked to give reasons for not having accessed the reports. Several reasons were given by each respondent:
- did not try to access (n=7)
- limited copies available (n=4)
- unable to access (n=2)
- limited time (n=2)
- difficulty accessing online version (n=2)
- know reports always available in the Service if needed (n=1)
- did not know about it (n=1)

These above responses were made by 2 PEPs, 1 SEP, 2 main grade EPs, 1 research assistant and 2 trainee educational psychologists.

3.5.1 Ways of accessing the PDP reports

Of the 159 (94%, N=170) questionnaire respondents who had read the reports, ways of accessing were reported to be:
- hard copies (n=104)
- online (n=43)
- disks in packs (n=6),
- conferences (n=3),
- discussion (n=1),
- summary (n=1)
- variety of forms from the Educational Psychology Service library (n=1)

The most frequently accessed medium of the PDP is hard copy.

3.5.2 Accessibility of the PDP reports

Questionnaire respondents were asked about their experience of accessibility of the reports. Of the 170 questionnaire participants, 134 (79%) found them very easy or easy to access, 16 (9%) found them difficult or very difficult to access, and 15 (9%) said that they did not know. Of those who said that they did not know, 4 were participants in a PDP project and would therefore have received a hard copy of the final report.

This data was interrogated further on the basis of the current grade of the questionnaire respondents. Only small differences in grade were identified.

There were numerous comments from the interview and focus group participants regarding difficulties with accessing PDP reports on line. The following quotes are used to illustrate this.

> *It would be useful if all the outputs were accessible on a website and downloadable as a Word Document and PDF file and available to the profession and wider people in education.*
> *(Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years experience of EP practice/ASPEP member)*
>
> *PDP is on the LTS website somewhere. It's hidden. Unless you know its there it is not easy to find.*
> *(Steering Group member)*

3.5.3 Sharing and using the PDP reports with other stakeholders

The questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate if they had used and shared the PDP reports with other stakeholders. Data suggests that EPs most often shared and used the reports with schools (49%), followed by other professionals (35%), and the Education Service (24%). Only 9% of EPs respondents reported sharing PDP reports with parents.
A few EPs indicated using reports with Senior Education Officers, other EPs, students at University, post-school providers and other psychologists internationally. There were no apparent trends regarding the grade of EPs and the use of reports.

In response to the question about how they had used and shared reports, 87 (51%) questionnaire respondents commented. Reports were used and shared for the following purposes:

- To inform own practice at individual level (n=32, 19%)
- Sharing with school/parents/post school sectors (n=29, 17%)
- Discussion around a theme with other EPs (n=22, 13%)
- To inform policy/practice at authority level (n=16, 9%)
- For staff development within the Service (n=10, 6%)
- To increase own knowledge base (n=8, 5%)
- To help develop further collaborative work (n=5, 3%)
- Multiple purposes

The following quotes illustrate the views of the questionnaire respondents:

> *Information, resources and handouts have been shared and disseminated to schools and parents - information has been considered helpful and positively received.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

> *I have used the PDP on several levels. I have used the training pack on ASD developed by the PDP on in-service training for schools. I have used the PDP reports as a reference for papers I have had to write. I have one of the PDP reports to input into the Code of Practice for the Additional Support for Learning Act. I have also used the PDP self-evaluation report to devise questionnaires for the inspection of psychological services.*
> *(Principal Educational Psychologist with 25+ years of EP practice)*

Focus group participants and interviewees were not directly asked about using and sharing PDP reports with stakeholders. However, they were asked about the overall effectiveness of PDP. One response illustrates how PDP was used to inform policy at the national level.

> *Take the ASL Act and the Code of Practice. Had it not been for the PDP and the psychologists involved in that PDP cycle, the Code of Practice would not have been the same animal. It [the PDP] empowered local authorities because EPs could inform them of the consequences of the Code of Practice.*
> *(Steering Group member)*

The data from the questionnaire respondents and interview/focus group participants suggested that the reports had been used in varied forms. However, the ways in which they were used seemed to be dependent on the EP rather than having a strategic and systematic LA or EPS approach to it.

3.6 Usefulness of the PDP to the EPS and the EP as a professional

The questionnaire participants were asked to indicate the ways in which they thought the PDP was useful or not useful to them and to the EPS. One hundred and forty eight (87%) respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the PDP was useful to the Educational Psychology Service, 9 (5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 9 (5%) said that they did not know. Overall, the PDP was perceived to be useful to Educational Psychology Services. This data was further anaylsed to investigate whether there was a difference in perception based on

grade. Generally responses were positive and differences between grades did not appear to be substantial.

Overall, EPs and other stakeholders reported that the PDP had a positive impact at the level of individual EPs and the EPS. A quote from an interview with a Head of Education Service illustrates this view.

> *Firstly, we have seen an impact on the skill level of psychologists as a result of their participation in the PDP programme. This has fed into pieces of work undertaken in service delivery in the authority.*
> *(Head of Education Service/ADES/COSLA perspective)*

3.6.1 Reasons the PDP is useful

Aspects perceived to be most useful to EPSs were 'collaboration with EPs in other Services'; 'development of knowledge base'; 'opportunities to do research'; 'development of practice'; and 'better service delivery for children and young people within the local authority'.
Not surprisingly, individual services were seen to benefit from collaboration between EPs in different services. Opportunity to do research was regarded as slightly more important than development of practice. Better service delivery for children and young people locally was given equal weighting with delivering outcomes for children nationally (Figure 3.4).
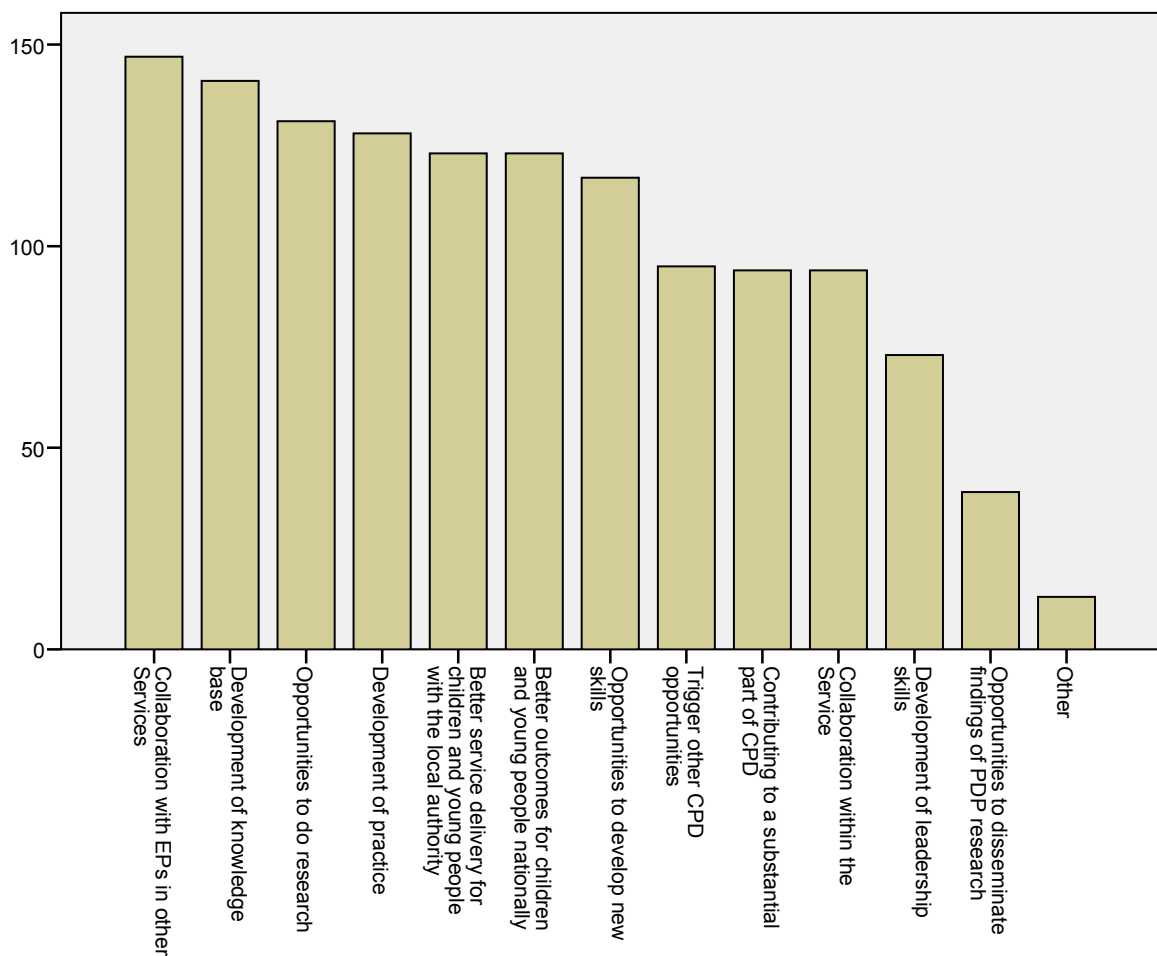
Figure 3.4: Usefulness of PDP to the Educational Psychology Service (in frequency, N=170)

The majority of EP respondents (89%) reported that PDP was useful to them because it led to the 'development of knowledge base'; 80% reported that it led to 'collaboration with EPs in other services'; 71% that it led to the 'development of practice'; 70% that it provided 'opportunities to do research': and 67% that it led to 'better service delivery for children and young people I work with'. While 89% said it led to the development of their knowledge base, only 71% thought that it led to development of practice, and 67% that it led to better services for children and young people. One interviewee's view was:

> *Transferring knowledge to practice will happen but all this is up to services to use the PDP outputs more effectively.*
> *(Principal Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years EP practice/ASPEP member)*

A similar number of questionnaire respondents reported that participation in the PDP led to opportunities to do research as to development of practice. Under half of the questionnaire respondents reported that involvement in PDP contributed substantially to their CPD with 36% reporting that it 'triggers other CPD opportunities' (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Usefulness of PDP for EPs (in frequency, N=170)

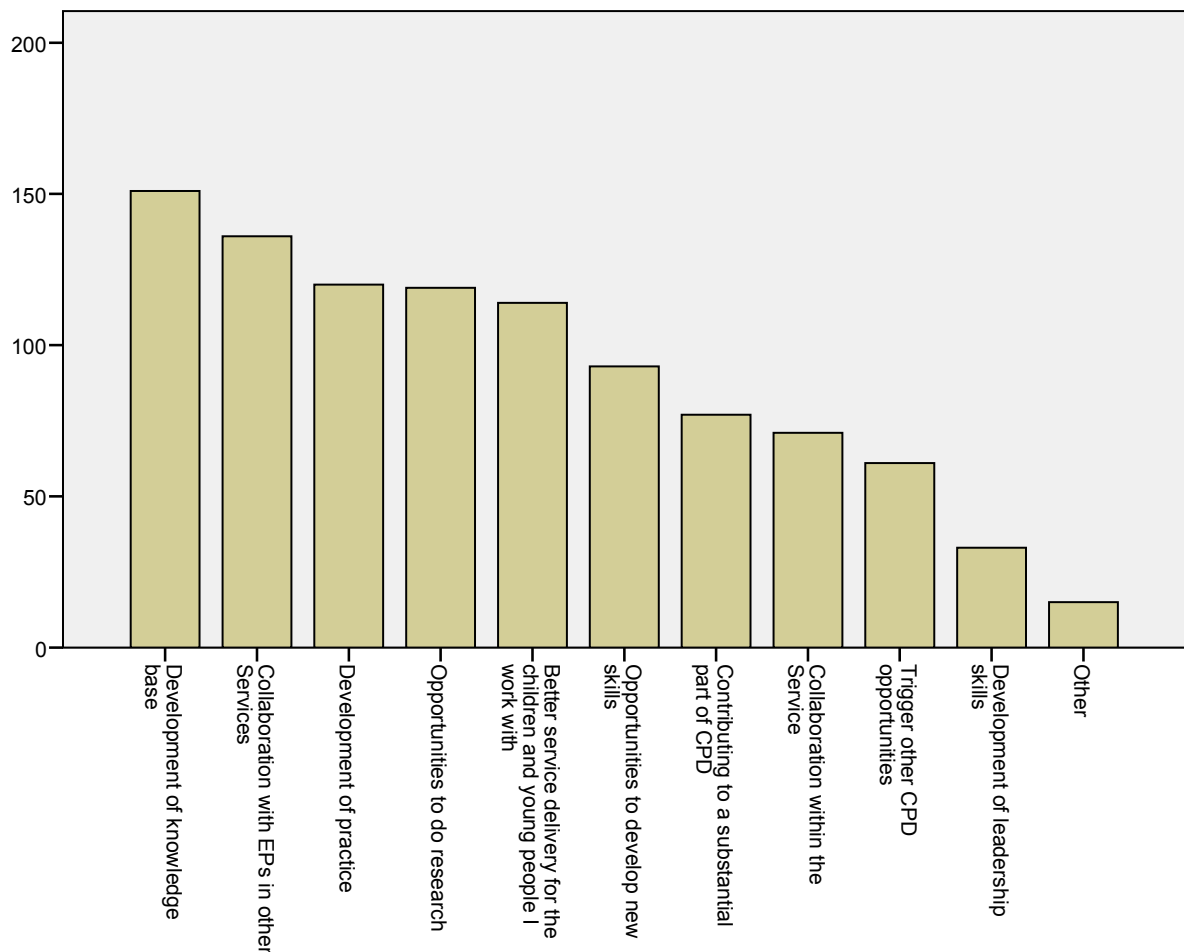Further analysis was undertaken to determine whether there were any differences in perceived usefulness according to grade. Questionnaire data suggested that for 'development of knowledge' and 'collaboration with EPs in other Services' there was little difference between the grades (PEPs, SEPs, main grade EPs and Trainee EPs.) s.

For 'development of Practice', there was some variation between the ranking by the DPEPs and other EPs; with DPEPs ranking it at number 6 compared to others who ranked it at number 2 or 3.

The views of focus group and interview participants concur with some of these findings, particularly around how PDP links with EPs' core function of research and other CPD opportunities. Some examples illustrate this.

> *It sits well there [with other CDP opportunities]. It's a protected opportunity*
> *to do research. And you can engage with people across the country.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years EP practice)*

> *The PDP has been instrumental in getting our service to the stage where*
> *research is main stream in our service.*
> *(Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years EP practice)*

Other stakeholders; including HMIE, Scottish Government, ADES and COSLA; provided positive comments on the quality of PDP research.

> *The quality of the output is exemplary. It is very well written, clever and*
> *articulate. The research is very good.*
> *(Head of Service/ADES/COSLA perspective)*

3.6.2 Reasons the PDP is not useful

Questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate why the PDP was not useful to the EPS. Of the 33 (19%) who commented on this aspect, 24 provided meaningful responses and the remaining 6 were not applicable (4 gave no related information and 2 answered a question about usefulness). Thirty (18%) questionnaire respondents gave reasons why they thought that the PDP was not useful to them professionally.

In no particular order, the main reasons that emerged for the perceived lack of usefulness to both EPSs and EPs were:

- *Insufficient time allocation*
- *Travel barrier*
- *Topic/research themes*
- *Quality of research and outputs*
- *Lack of focus on service delivery*
- *Variable quality of coordination and financial constraints*
- *Other reasons*

These are considered in the following sub-sections.

3.6.2.1 Insufficient time allocation

Seven questionnaire respondents, i.e., 23% of respondents who gave reasons for lack of usefulness, highlighted that insufficient time allocation for participation in the PDP projects and reading of the material resulted in the PDP not being useful to the EPS and EPs.

> *There is insufficient allocation of time to undertake quality research that can stand up to rigorous scrutiny.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years of EP practice)*

Insufficient time was also raised by participants in the focus groups and interviews. The following quotes illustrate additional aspects of the issue of insufficient time.

> *The methodology is restricted by time.*
> *(Steering Group member)*

> *I wouldn't have the time to give to the PDP to do a meaningful, robust piece of work.*
> *(Acting Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years EP practice)*

These views may indicate that lack of time might have had a detrimental effect on the quality of research including lack of rigour and restricted methodologies. In addition, it was reported that there were insufficient opportunities for learning from the process. This led to some EPs participating in local research rather than the PDP.

3.6.2.2 Travel barrier

Five respondents, i.e., 17% of respondents who gave reasons for lack of usefulness, reported that travelling to the Central Belt from remote services discouraged their participation.

> *Travel to events in the central belt is time consuming - often time that can be better spent. I feel that the PDP discourages participation from more remote services for this reason.*
> *(Principal Educational Psychologist with 25 years of EP practice)*

Some respondents commented that the involvement of EPs from small and remote EPSs, and part-time EPs was restricted due to time taken to travel to the PDP meetings.

3.6.2.3 Topic/research themes

Several questionnaire respondents referred to dissatisfaction with the nature of the themes. One thought that the themes were possibly too broad:

> *The themes chosen can be very broad and therefore it is difficult to know what you may be signing up for. I appreciate that this could also be an advantage of the process.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

One interviewee expressed a need for a more systemic approach to the selection of themes and topics which would help to increase the overall effectiveness of the PDP.

> *There may be a case for cross-profession research, for example, with the allied health professions, clinical psychologists, social work. May be we should be doing a needs assessment that includes the research needs [for educational psychology] of service managers; directorate; and the Scottish Government. We need that loop. HMIE are saying it's not what you need personally, it's what is needed across services.*
> *(Acting Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years EP practice)*

Another questionnaire respondent expressed the view that the research often seemed a compromise rather than *'cutting edge'* or project development oriented. The perception of compromise was echoed in another comment where a respondent referred to the *'compromise among a disparate group of people'*.

Some questionnaire respondents also indicated that the research topics did not match their own interests and that made the PDP less useful to them.

Although earlier data suggested that 60% of questionnaire respondents had been involved in selecting the themes, there was still dissatisfaction in terms of the chosen themes. This suggests that the selection of the theme and its usefulness to the EPs and EPS should be considered carefully and a clear rationale should be provided for the selection of the themes.

3.6.2.4 Quality of research and outputs

Approximately half (14) of the respondents who gave reasons for lack of usefulness, indicated how the low quality of research and outputs reduced the usefulness of the PDP for EPSs and EPs. These respondents reported that quality was compromised by restrictions of time and resources. There was a perception that tight timescales led to a focus on the product, and therefore learning from the process, reflection and evaluation was limited.
It was reported that research tended to be restricted to survey methodologies. It was also suggested that the product could be fragmented due to the number of EPs working on one PDP project. The following quotes highlight this.

> *The focus is entirely on product, leaving limited space for sharing good practice, reflection and thinking and learning together with others.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

> *In my experience, the group ended up being a series of mini projects that were only loosely connected to the overarching topic. Diversity of views is very positive, but this needs to be channeled into a product that is more than the sum of its parts - for me the PDP is many parts, that in its current form, do not make a coherent whole.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 10-14 years of EP practice)*

Comments on quality also included a reference to lack of evaluation:

> *Lack of focus, lack of follow up and evaluation of impact on practice.*

(Area Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP practice)

3.6.2.5 Lack of focus on service delivery

In the questionnaire data, there were several references to an insufficient focus on service delivery for children and young people.

> *Not enough opportunities to impact on service delivery for children and young people at the authority and national level.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

> *The pieces of work commissioned via the PDP are not always relevant to Service development plans, or significant/robust enough to contribute to improving the outcomes for children and young people.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

These comments appear to run contrary to the current emphasis on the impact and outcomes of service delivery to children and young people.

3.6.2.6 Variable quality of coordination and financial constraints

Questionnaire respondents mentioned that variable quality of coordination and insufficient funding had made the PDP less useful for them.

> *Good coordination of the group is also vital and the quality of coordinator role is variable.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 10-14 years of EP practice)*

However, it was recognised that the quality of coordination might have been affected by financial constraints.

> *A colleague who is a coordinator is unable to provide training for the group because there is no money.*
> *(Senior Educational Psychologist with 20 -24 years EP practice)*

3.6.2.7 Other reasons

Questionnaire respondents mentioned other reasons for the PDP not being useful to them. Some of these were not related to the PDP; rather they indicated that other research and CPD opportunities were available to them. As mentioned earlier, BPS requirements are that the EPs must engage in at least 40 hours of CPD per annum. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Services are proactively providing them with other CPD and research opportunities.

We are now engaging in a number of research projects per year within our service and thus skills which were previously developed by PDP opportunities are available on home ground.
(Educational Psychologist with 10-14 years of EP practice)

Another questionnaire respondent referred to being unable to participate as a research assistant:

At present I cannot participate as a Research Assistant I can only support the EPs that participate in this service.
(Research Assistant)

This may be a useful resource for future PDP projects to utilize.

Overall, questionnaire respondents reported a variety of reasons for lack of usefulness of the PDP, either to them or their EPS. Some respondents expressed concern that the quality of the PDP product was declining. In addition, several respondents felt that the input in terms of time and effort was not reflected in the quality of the output. It should be noted that these are the views of 30 out of a total of 170 questionnaire respondents as well as some focus group and interview participants. There was an overlap between some questionnaire and focus group/interview participants. A few EPs from physically remote EPSs had difficulties in participating in the PDP process due to distances and related time and financial costs.

3.6.3 Ways in which the PDP can be improved for EPs and EPS

A total of 77 (45%) questionnaire respondents suggested ways in which the PDP could be made more useful to them professionally and a total of 66 questionnaire respondents suggested ways in which it could be made useful for the EPS. The improvements were similar and in no particular order, the main areas were as follows:

- Improvements in general plan, structure and model
- Training opportunities
- Research process
- Dissemination
- Choice of topic
- Time allocation
- Travel barrier
- Resources
- Children and young people
- Co-ordination

These are considered in the sub-sections that follow.

3.6.3.1 *Improvements in general plan, structure and model*

Questionnaire respondents identified a need for better planning and annual evaluation.

> *Different models of delivering PDP, e.g. use of new technology/communities of practice.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

> *In addition to the current approach, introducing the opportunity to engage in more process focussed activities... This would involve not necessarily requiring a finished product and there would be greater flexibility around how any finished product would look. Opportunities to share good practice and to think and learn together without always feeling that a measurable*

outcome must be reached would be invaluable in terms of individual professional development, not least in encouraging a dialogic and reflective approach that can impact on the way individual EPs have dialogue within their EPS and also more widely.
(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)

... follow up and implementation of PDP outcomes, with evaluation, so that the work put into these projects does not drift away at the end of the year.
(Area Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP practice)

In addition several questionnaire respondents pointed out that more quality assurance procedures should be in place. In the context of the EPS, the following suggestions were made:

Requiring or encouraging a pre negotiated agreement of how topic fits with service plan; how time allocation to PDP can be incorporated within service delivery/allocation; a service-wide agreement of how participant(s) will be supported within service; how collaboration to happen; how outcomes and experiences to be implemented within service and wider authority.
(Senior Educational Psychologist with 20-24 years of EP practice)

Not sure if it should be every year - but perhaps Year 1 could be the research and year 2 could be taking some of the suggestion forward/measuring impact of the work. see Q 14 above [question related to how PDP can be made more useful to them as a professional] (2 or more services making bids for smaller scale action research projects - the results of which could be disseminated nationally).
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 10-14 years of EP practice)

There was a suggestion that the PDP should not be a stand alone activity but be integrated into the EPS development plan, taking account of the value of participation in the PDP, PDP reports and impact on service delivery. It was suggested that this could be made possible by increasing the length of the PDP cycle.

3.6.3.2 Training opportunities

A few questionnaire respondents talked about improving training opportunities.

Initiating innovative and groundbreaking projects and training opportunities. Let me illustrate the point with one example. It is not generally appreciated that it was the PDP that introduced most psychological services to email. This was achieved by providing hardware and training to the PDP participants as a key tool.
(Senior Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years of EP practice)

3.6.3.3 Research process

Some questionnaire respondents suggested ways of improving the research process, such as using more effective research methodologies.

More effective methodology - methodologically too much of it reflects poorly on the profession.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP practice)

Having research assistants to support the projects through statistical analysis, field work, survey methods etc. Often EPs have to do much of the 'legwork' involved in research themselves - not a good use of their skills.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 25+ years of EP practice)

As mentioned earlier, Research Assistants are not actively involved in the PDP process. Some EPS have Research Assistants who could bring research expertise to the PDP projects.

3.6.3.4 Dissemination

Twenty questionnaire respondents suggested that PDP dissemination methods could be improved. Ways of making the reports more attractive and accessible, and ways of widening dissemination were discussed.

A glossy summary magazine style abstract that I could make sure I was more aware of all and then I could focus in more detail as I saw fit. Such a magazine might be more attractive to other non psychologist readers.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 25+ years of EP practice)

It was suggested that accessibility could be improved through an online output which could be shared with other professionals. However, one questionnaire respondent indicated that the current online material was not easy to access due to its length.

Uploading online copies of PDP as soon as hard copy is available. Continuing to have training materials where appropriate included within PDP report.
(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)

Similarly some felt that it should be disseminated more widely and made suggestions as to how that could be done.

Planning discussion sessions within the Service would ensure everyone read the material and would also result in more follow-up.
(Educational Psychologist with 20-24 years of EP practice)

Having more opportunities to share and disseminate findings to my work settings as a service response (schools; other agencies; children and their families).
(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)

Some suggested developments related more to EPSs than to the PDP. These included the possibility of increased use of technology and wider dissemination of the product.

3.6.3.5 Choice of topic

The questionnaire data shows that 27 responses were made in relation to improvements in the choice of topic and themes from an EP and EPS perspective. There was a view that themes should be generated in a more planned and systematic manner. It was suggested that the themes should link over the years or the possibility of conducting longitudinal studies should be considered. It was felt that this would lead to an improvement in the quality of the research process, output and, implementation of research to the EPs' and EPS' practice and service delivery. Some questionnaire respondents felt that it was important that themes were relevant to the EPs, however others wanted to see links with the LAs and nationally.

> *Being more longitudinal, allowing more substantial and meaningful pieces of work to be completed. By having a continuous and ongoing plan which links previous and future PDPs rather than isolated topics each year, therefore allowing substantial investigation into relevant subject areas. Topics should be closely related to national initiatives.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

> *Linking more closely with national initiatives, perhaps by having a single focus each year, rather than three unrelated topics Perhaps by having a team working over more than a period of one year to allow a more in-depth piece of research which would contribute to more meaningful and robust outcomes.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

These comments are interesting and should be read along with the results regarding involvement in the selection of themes within the section '**Decision making regarding the PDP themes'.**

3.6.3.6 Time allocation

Eleven questionnaire respondents reported the importance of having protected time for participation and allowing a longer time scale in order to produce written outcomes of good quality. Respondents made reference to how lack of protected time had resulted in their non-participation in the PDP due to work commitments, part time nature of their employment, working in a small and remote EPS, and/or family commitments.

> *Considering extending the length of a PDP area for research. In reality it can take several months to get to a focus and that leaves little time for data gathering and the write up*
> *(Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP practice)*

> *Being more easily accessible for those who wish to take part who are in remote areas. Time being allocated for those who take part.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP practice)*

> *Essential for staff to have a way to be released from some of own ongoing remit, in order to do work on PDP. I have never been in a position to commit myself to extra work, given how hard I work all the time anyway - lots of time over and above contracted hours, and because of caring commitments at*

home, either with child, with disabled spouse, and recently with elderly parents. Unreasonable that it cannot be done within working hours.
(Educational Psychologist with 25+ years of EP practice)

There was a view that PDP is very important for the EPs and EPSs but that its status was not recognised by giving protected time for participation.

3.6.3.7 Travel barrier

Earlier results suggested that travelling to the central belt discouraged active participation from remote services. Seven questionnaire respondents suggested possible ways to overcome this difficulty, including the idea of undertaking more regionally based projects.

Possibly supporting more locally based research that would also have implications for other areas of Scotland…
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years of EP practice)

Consideration of alternative communication means to reduce travel barriers.
(Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP practice)

It was suggested that travel barriers could be reduced by changing the format of PDP to move to a more regional collaboration between neighbouring LAs and/or by using advanced technology for virtual communication.

3.6.3.8 Resources

Three questionnaire respondents reported on the importance of having sufficient funding for the success of projects.

… The grant for the PDP has remained static since its inception but the staff costs have increased. This has meant that psychologists who have been on PDP have not benefited from the training and research opportunities that were available in the past.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 25+ years of EP practice)

In the interviews and focus groups, participants stated that although salaries had increased over the years, there had been no related increase in PDP funding. It was suggested that this could have had a negative impact on the quality of the process and product. However, one interviewee from the Scottish Government felt that the resources were adequate for the PDP. If more funding was required this could be accessed by ASPEP through COSLA, ADES or LAs.

3.6.3.9 Children and young people

Three questionnaire respondents suggested ways in which the PDP could be improved to provide better service to children and young people. This included having more opportunities to share and disseminate findings to schools and families.

Encouraging more of a focus on effective outcomes of the work for children and young people. It also needs to be less "stand alone" and exist alongside or embedded within other initiatives.

(Educational Psychologist with 10-14 years of EP practice)

A stronger link between the PDP reports and their impact on practice needs to be made, better service delivery for children will only occur if the wisdom of the PDP research is translated into practice.
(Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP practice)

It was suggested that sharing with and disseminating the research to parents, children, schools and other professionals should be done through the EPS in a systematic fashion. As previously indicated, there was a perceived lack of transfer from research to practice for some EPs. Therefore, it becomes even more important that it is not left to individual EPs to share resources with children and families. There is also a need to evaluate the impact of the PDP on the service delivery for children and young people.

3.6.3.10 Coordination

Two questionnaire respondents suggested ways to improve certain aspects of coordination. It was reported that the large groups of EPs participating in each project might lead to delays in aspects of the research process, which can then reflect negatively on the coordination of the project.

Finding better ways to facilitate the collaborative aspects of the process. Inevitably with a large group of individuals from different localities, experiences and expectations etc., it can take time for the group to agree on the specific focus of the project and tasks. This can lead to considerable delays in the research process and impact on the quality of the product which can be achieved within the timescale.
(Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with 20-24 years of EP practice)

Notification several months in advance of dates you have to be available for the launch. This has stopped me on around two occasions and at least twice I wasn't chosen after applying to go on the PDP.
(Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years of EP practice)

Overall, some positive suggestions were made for making the PDP more useful to the EPs and EPS.

3.7 Overall Suggestions for the Improvement of the PDP Process and Outcomes

The questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate how they thought the PDP process and output could be improved. From the 170 questionnaire respondents, 64 provided suggestions. The main areas for improvement were in line with those offered on how the PDP could be made more useful to EPs as professionals and to EPSs.

3.7.1 Improved programme as a whole

Out of 64 respondents who made suggestions, 22 (34%) made comments regarding improving the PDP programme in general. These suggestions included improved structure, firmer leadership, sharper focus, a process-focused programme, smaller project groups, on-going evaluation and a focus on process rather than being product-driven.

Improved structure, better leadership, longitudinal program which would allow for more training input and better planning, application of a wider range/more appropriate methodologies etc, closer links with national priorities and Service initiatives, etc.
(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP experience)

More focus on the process outcomes for working within a PDP group rather than purely product focus. More longer-term evaluation for PDP outcomes. Avoid large groups where group dynamics can be a barrier. Careful consideration of how the information is presented at the annual conference (more creativity and not necessarily an information-giving presentation).
(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP experience)

Some of the suggestions included radically reducing the number of participants in each project but that consideration might be given to increasing the number of projects so that more EPs could participate. Others emphasised that the PDP cycle should be increased to improve the quality of the research process and output.

3.7.2 Improved process in choosing topics/themes

Out of 64 respondents who made suggestions, 9 (14%) suggested ways of improving the process of choosing themes. This included keeping continuity of themes over time, and themes being guided by local context as well as national initiatives.

Make it more specific to individual Services or confederation of local services researching a common area thereby being guided by context as well as themes of national significance.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 25+ years of EP experience)

Focus group and interview participants also had views about how the process for choosing PDP topics could be improved so that topics fitted better with strategic needs.

Maybe a national legislative framework could be linked to the PDP. Maybe the government would be better to do this so that we get the 'roadmap' joined up approach.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years EP practice/ASPEP member)

The views of the two Heads of Education Service (fed in via ADES) concur with this.

Increasingly we are linking our research activity to the improvement/quality agenda so that more practice, not just in the Psychological Service but also across schools and our Inclusion Services, is improved through evidence-based activity. I would think that the Schools Directorate would be more open to persuasion if the PDP is linked explicitly with Improving Scottish Education etc.
(Head of Education Service/ADES/COSLA perspective)

There was an increased emphasis on careful planning and selection of themes to strategically link to the local and national agendas.

3.7.3 Improved research process

Out of 64 respondents who made suggestions, 6 (9%) suggested ways in which the research process could be improved, for example, using more appropriate methodologies and cutting edge techniques as well as accessing research expertise.

> *...It could be more challenging, both technically and in the content... Statistics don't get more sophisticated than a chi square or a t-test and no really interesting qualitative work using cutting edge techniques. Overall I just feel it reflects poorly on the profession.*
> *(Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP experience)*
>
> *...The project groups would perhaps benefit from having access to a research assistant(s).*
> *(Senior Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP experience)*
>
> *...Manage projects without a paid co-coordinator. Look for commissions from elsewhere in the education system.*
> *(Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP experience)*

It was highlighted that resources from elsewhere in the LAs could help improve the research process by being able to bring in more research expertise and project management.

3.7.4 Improved quality of coordination

Five (8%) out of 64 questionnaire respondents suggested ways in which the quality of coordination could be improved, including having more structured support.

> *The coordination of the projects could be a little more hands on with more support given in terms of pulling it together.*
> *(Senior Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years of EP experience)*

It was suggested that more support should be provided to the coordinators to ensure ongoing progress with the research and effective management of time scales. This ties in well with previous data that suggested that support and resources for coordinators were limited.

3.7.5 Increased funding/resources

Out of 64 respondents who made suggestions, 7 (11%) suggested ways in which funding might be increased and the importance of having secure funding/resources for projects.

> *Increase the budget: 1) to provide a decent lunch and encourage social interaction in a relaxed setting and 2) to avoid the rather mean-spirited approach to the purchase of books and/or attendance at conferences.*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 25+ years of EP experience)*

Fund the PDP on a par with the level when it was first set up around the mid 90s. Compared with my first experience of the PDP, restrictions mean it is no longer possible for projects to have the same high scale impact on services, schools and LEA.
(Senior Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years of EP experience)

There was a view that funding that was set at the inception of PDP could not realistically meet the costs more than a decade later. One questionnaire respondent clearly voiced his/her concern regarding resources and pointed out that either the funding should be increased or the current format needed revision.

... The biggest comment I would wish to make is that a PDP coordinator used to be provided with a laptop for the editing task. This is no longer sanctioned within the budget (because the budget is now very tight) but several coordinators do not have sole use of a laptop through work. It has been reported to me that the experience of editing (which, inevitably eats into coordinators' private time) is now much harder and more complicated than it used to be when there was technological assistance provided… Either the grant will need an increase to reflect these rising costs, or the structure of 3 projects and 3 co-coordinators will have to give.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 20-24 years of EP experience)

3.7.6 Better protected time allocation

Sixteen questionnaire respondents commented on how to deal with insufficient time allocation. Some provided reasons why having protected time allocation was difficult; some talked about the importance of having such time; and some suggested ways of dealing with it.

Reports are very large - probably too much reading for the psychologists who are only generally interested in the topic…The time which should be ring fenced 12 days - is more than the total psychologists' CPD allowance. This is a large chunk of time which some services may feel would be better used to support other 'locally linked' research projects. The downside of this would be local projects would not enable psychologists to gain the benefits of joint work with psychologists from other authorities.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 10-14 years of EP experience)

Assuming that an increase in time allocation to PDP projects is unlikely then maybe the length of each cycle should be increased. Many good research projects have a pilot phase before the main study, but the yearly cycle hardly allows for this, indeed, it is sometimes the pilot study that is being reported.
(Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years of EP experience)

Although questionnaire respondents were supportive of the PDP, there was a view that time needs to be allocated to ensure that all EPs can make use of the PDP process and output.
It was suggested that the reports could be made shorter; length of PDP cycle could be increased; and more systematic allocation of time to EPs could be considered. However, it was also mentioned that the required time for participation sometimes exceeded the EPs' allocation of CPD time.

3.7.7 Better ways for dealing with travel barriers

Four (6%) out of 64 questionnaire respondents, suggested ways of dealing with travel barriers. In addition to suggestions noted earlier in this report, one respondent suggested a range of alternatives.

> *My local authority is an isolated place. Paired research with another local authority might be good.*
> *(Principal EP with 20-24 years EP practice)*

3.7.8 Broader dissemination and easier access

Seven (11%) of the 64 questionnaire respondents, suggested ways in which a PDP report could be disseminated more widely and in a more accessible form.

> *I think the historical submission of a written doc for the yellow folder has a constraining effect on the quality of some PDPs. It is often the process of the PDP experience that is most useful and this can be difficult to express in written form. I think shorter written documentation should be presented e.g. an executive summary (max one A4 page) for each PDP to each service so folk can see the implications for action. I think the CD Roms are useful…*
> *(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years of EP experience)*

> *I have had experience of reports not being available online for such a huge time lag that I have given up searching eventually and just moved on! …Also, needs to be some encouragement for authority managers to become more engaged in having higher awareness of contents (particularly own authority's!). Maybe disseminate at wider venue than just annual psych conference? Something through COSLA? This year I was asked to present PDP outcomes at LTS Festival of Learning. That was a very good suggestion - presentation very well received with huge interest from across Scotland. Maybe other or all topics could be 'flag-shipped' that way?*
> *(Senior Educational Psychologist with 20-24 years of EP experience)*

Focus group and interview participants also had views on how the dissemination of the PDP output could be improved. They emphasised the need to make the PDP material available on websites such as that of the SDEP; more easily accessible on the LTS website; as well as consideration given to developing an ASPEP website; and/or having a specific website for the PDP. They suggested that other professionals should be able to access these online reports.

> *I want classroom teachers to remember to use it.*
> *(Scottish Government perspective)*

> *We have to have a dynamic website, PDP's website*
> *(Senior Educational Psychologist with 20 -24 years EP practice)*

ASPEP have talked of developing a national website. SDEP have done this but it's not flourishing. ASPEP could look at this again. The website could be linked to LTS's to cover CPD and PDP.
(Principal EP with 5-9 years EP practice/ASPEP member)

However, there was a note of caution regarding widening dissemination too far. It was felt that the other professionals should be able to access these reports when required rather than disseminating to everyone irrespective of their need or interest.

We are looking for intelligence, not universal allocation [of PDP reports].
(ADES perspective)

3.7.9 More effective outcomes for children and young people

Two (3%) out of 64 questionnaire respondents reported the need to have more focus on effective outcomes for children and young people.

EPs are applied psychologists and the PDP has always been about practical adaptation and application of what existing research has shown to be effective. This means it leads directly to effective positive outcomes for children and families as well as being a vital and dynamic element in the career-long CPD of EPs
(Steering Group member and coordinator – EP grade not specified)

Focus group and interview participants had mixed views about the effectiveness of the PDP on outcomes for children and young people. Participants gave examples of PDPs which have been successfully used to inform and develop individual practice and service delivery. Examples frequently cited by participants included: Curriculum for Excellence; ASL Act and Code of Practice; ASD; Gathering the Views of Children; Solution Focused Approaches; Resilience Factors; and Critical Incident.

For example, the training that has come from the PDPs on Critical Events, EMDR and therapeutic approach have helped to stop long term effects. A whole infrastructure was set up at an independent therapeutic centre and the impact has been directly on young people.
(Steering Group member)

However, there was a view amongst interview and focus group participants that effectiveness depends on the theme of the PDP. It was suggested that more applied research has tangible impact whereas theoretical research has more indirect impact.

Outcomes and impact depend on the theme. The PDP on Autism had great impact. There were hand-outs to schools and it informed professional practice. The more theoretical ones have an indirect impact.
(SDEP perspective)

A view from an interviewee is that the PDP reports do not always lend themselves to be fed into practice.

HMIE is very interested in the impact of PDP. Often documents didn't have impact. They reached EP Services but not other professions. That depended on the influence of EPs at area level. PDP reports are often not written in a way that shows how they feed into practice.
(HMIE perspective)

There were views from some focus group and interview participants that the effectiveness of PDP for outcomes for children and young people is an aspect that has not been explored in any great detail.

A lot of stuff from PDP is now main stream. It is critical that we begin to demonstrate this impact. It is demonstrable in certain case, e.g. Curriculum for Excellence and ASL Act. The PDP is a good vehicle to address these. But where the direct link to the impact on the service user or stakeholder is more difficult to do. It should be possible to track back to get impact. It would be a good exercise to commission someone to do the research to follow the threads back to see what's been mainstreamed.
(Senior Educational Psychologist with 20-24 years EP practice)

I don't know if it does have a big impact on children and young people, but through people's individual practice it probably does. The domino effect should not be underestimated, but it's not often evident.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 25+years EP practice/ASPEP member)

Although views about the usefulness of PDP for outcomes for children and young people were mixed, it was clear that the participants felt that these links should be made explicit when choosing PDP themes. It was suggested that an evaluation of this impact should be carried out.

3.7.10 Other improvements

Four (6%) questionnaire respondents reported other ways of improving the PDP by linking trainee EPs and newly qualified EPs.

EPiTs [Educational Psychologist in Training, i.e., trainee educational psychologist] could become part of the process - mutual support to EPs for research, EPiTs for research and knowledge building opportunities - means EPiTs are not doing pieces of work for university that are not 'useful' to the service sometimes.
(Trainee Educational Psychologist)

There was a view that the trainee EPs and newly qualified EPs would be able to bring a fresh perspective, innovative ideas and research expertise to the PDP.

3.7.11 Happy with current arrangement

Finally, three (5%) questionnaire respondents said that they were happy with the current arrangement. One respondent, who has been/is a coordinator and a member of the steering group, supported the current PDP structure.

The PDP process is basically sound… The main issue is that the structure and management by coordinators ensures that there is delivery on the various topics. The reports are not perfect pieces of academic research and it has never been intended that they be so … EPs are applied psychologists and the PDP has always been about practical adaptation and application of what existing research has shown to be effective. This means it leads directly to effective positive outcomes for children and families as well as being a vital and dynamic element in the career-long CPD of EPs.
(Steering Group member and coordinator – EP grade not specified)

3.8 Additional views from Phase II about the PDP

3.8.1 Ways of improving the PDP within the existing levels of funding

The participants in the focus groups and the interviews were asked how they thought the PDP process and output could be improved within the existing levels of funding and resources. Their views ranged from keeping the status quo to the need for a radical overhaul of the PDP.

As might be expected those participants closest to the operation of the PDP were more aware of the current financial situation and the constraints being experienced by the Steering Group and the individual projects.

PDP participants are aware that things are much tighter.
(Steering Group member)

The other stakeholders were less aware of the current level of funding and resources or felt that it was not appropriate for them to comment. Several other interview and focus group participants suggested that it was not possible to carry on with the existing format in the current budget. Some participants suggested changes that could be made to the PDP within the current budget.

Fewer coordinators and fewer projects might mean we can do more with the budget. Could reduce the number of hard copies and rely more on web-based dissemination. This may reduce costs. Could cut down on the number of themes and/or limit the number of psychologists involved.
(Head of Education Service/ADES/COSLA perspective)

If that's the sum then something has to give. Maybe we could have two coordinators and two projects.
(Steering Group member)

You can only cut the number of coordinators, topics, or cut the number of people involved if you want a quality product.
(Steering Group member)

However, there were notes of caution regarding radical changes to the PDP.

I'm happy with it (the process). There will never be an ideal process but we need one that works. I'm not predisposed to see radical change. I'm open to it being adapted.
(PSPS perspective)

It would be negative for EPs and Scotland if the PDP went or was watered down or changed so much that it delivered nothing.
(Head of Education Service/ADES/COSLA perspective)

The Scottish Government perspective was that the government was not in a position to increase the funding. It was suggested that EPs should approach other bodies for funding over and above the current budget allocation. This is reinforced by the following quote.

Developments arising from the use of BLBB funding across Scotland, now represented by the work of the Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Team, are a very good example of how funding can support educational psychologists, working with other education personnel, to develop innovative approaches that have the potential to impact on a very broad basis. A model for the PDP that had a central theme with significant funding could perhaps be shaped to deliver outputs of similar value.
(Head of Education Service view fed in via ADES)

Some interview and focus group participants said that although some changes were inevitable, there are parts of the current PDP model that are valued and should be retained.

Rethink the model, but ensure that the really important bits are retained: collaboration; opportunity to develop training materials; professional development; opportunity to do research.
(Educational Psychologist with 1-4 years EP practice)

It's important to maintain the benefits we've got. Don't loose the cross service benefit. It shouldn't be compressed in time.
(PSPS perspective)

The importance of maintaining the collaborative nature of the PDP, cross-EPS work, opportunities to do research, training opportunities emerging from the PDP and CPD was highlighted. Care should be taken not to *'throw the baby out with the bath water'*.

3.8.2 Replace PDP with something different

The views of those interviewees who favour replacing the PDP are illustrated by the following quotes. It should be noted that these participants' views are in the minority.

Wipe the slate clean and think again. What do we need as a framework for CPD? The profession does need the support of the Scottish Government but there needs to be a review of how the money is used to support all EPs in Scotland.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years EP practice/ASPEP member)

I'd like to see the £58,000 increased and used for the doctorate programme which local authorities currently pay towards. And a national CPD framework and national coordinator to organize the website and conferences, and linked to the courses at Strathclyde and Dundee Universities. The national coordinator would have a wider remit than the current PDP co-coordinator.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 5-9 years EP practice/ASPEP member)

It was suggested that the current allocation of funds to the PDP could be used to support CPD activities and Doctorates. However, it should be noted that these comments were made within the context of lack of adequate funding and resources, and participants were focusing on those activities which might be sustained and supported by LAs.

3.8.3 Value for money

Some of the interviewees raised the topic of value for money of the PDP. All participants, apart from one, regarded it as being good value for money.

The profession is doing the Scottish Government a big favour, but it is getting to the stage where it is potentially not worth the bother because of what's on the table.
(Principal Educational Psychologist with 15-19 years EP practice/ASPEP member)

It's good value for money and should have more money. It's not very expensive for what you get from it, that is, the benefits to the individual, services and the profession.
(PSPS perspective)

It's good value for money. At local authority we often commission research the quality of which varies. What we get from PDP is good action research by skilled practitioners who directly work with children and young people.
(Head of Education Service/ADES/COSLA perspective)

They [the Scottish Government] get a good quality product at a ridiculously cheap price.
(Steering Group member)

There was a view that Scottish Government were getting very good value for money. At times it was seen to be at the expense of the EPs' personal time and the EPS.

Overall, the view from the interview and focus group participants was that either funding had to be increased or that the current model needed rethinking.

CHAPTER FOUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will focus on the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the findings of this evaluation. As mentioned earlier, the main aim of the evaluation was to carry out an assessment of the effectiveness and value for money of the PDP, and options for improvement within the current level of funding.

4.1 Selection of themes

Nearly two-thirds of questionnaire respondents as well as the interview/focus group participants reported that there was an effective process for involving EPs in the generation of ideas and selection of the final themes, with the views of the Steering Group, Scottish Government and ADES also taken into consideration. However, a third of questionnaire respondents reported that they had not been involved in this process. There was a view that other stakeholders (namely schools, parents and children) should be involved in the decision making process. Further, there was a need for more transparency regarding how and why the themes were finally chosen. Currently, there was no evidence of clear planning to target better outcomes for children and young people through PDP.

Recommendation 1: *Maintain the existing consultative process for initial generation of ideas and the subsequent decision making about the PDP themes.*

- *Consideration should be given to the involvement of other relevant stakeholders in the process.*
- *The themes should meet, as far as possible, local as well as national priorities. They should also respond to HMIE reports.*
- *Feedback should be provided to the EPs and stakeholders on criteria for the final selection of the themes. This might be possible through making the minutes of the meeting where this decision is taken available through the SDEP web site or the ASPEP mailing list, which can then be disseminated by PEPs to all EPs.*
- *The PDP themes should be explicitly linked with outcomes for children and young people.*

4.2 Quality of the PDP research and output

Some questionnaire respondents and interview/focus group participants reported that the quality of some research was 'cutting-edge'. Others felt that there was a need to improve the quality of research. They reported that, probably due to constraints of time and budget, most PDP research used traditional methods, such as surveys. They suggested that consideration should be given to new and innovative methods. This is quite important as research is one of the core areas of an EP's work.

Recommendation 2: *More discussion needs to take place around the methods and a clear rationale should be presented for the use of certain methods.*

- *The PDP participants should be provided with opportunities for training in research methods.*
- *Involvement of trainee educational psychologists might help in knowledge transfer from the Universities to the EPSs.*
- *Involvement of existing research assistants in EPSs should be considered.*

There was a view that the quality of the output might be improved by aiming for the standard required by peer-reviewed publications. Questionnaire respondents commented that some

outputs were fragmented due to the large number of authors. It was also suggested that the quality did not reflect well on the profession.

Recommendation 3: There is a need for a streamlined product which is more cohesive.

- *Editing of the output should be undertaken, perhaps as a required task for the PDP project team although further resource implications of this have to be considered.*
- *Authors could be encouraged to publish their findings in peer-reviewed journals.*
- *The Educational Psychology in Scotland (SDEP) newsletter could be developed into a peer reviewed journal to accommodate dissemination of PDP.*

Skilled PDP coordinators were considered to be vital to the quality of the PDP. There were mixed views amongst PDP participants regarding the leadership and management skills of the PDP coordinators, with around half of them reporting it to be very effective or effective and the other half reporting that it was partly effective or not effective. The experience of the coordinators with regards to training, support and resources offered to them was also varied. Participants in the focus groups and interviews who had been coordinators reported that there was a transparent, robust recruitment process for the post. However, they felt that opportunities for training, support and resources for coordinators were less well structured.

Recommendation 4: Project management and leadership skills should be prerequisites to becoming a PDP co-ordinator. However, project management and leadership training could be offered to PDP coordinators, where required. The PDP Steering Group (including the Scottish Government) should ensure that appropriate levels of support and resources required to undertake the role effectively are provided.

4.3 Communication

All questionnaire respondents and interview/focus group participants were positive about current opportunities for involvement in research across EPSs and LA boundaries. In line with Brown (1993) and Liddle, Kerr and Walker (1996), this was highlighted as being important to collaborative practice for EPs from different LAs. There was evidence of all EPs having the opportunity to participate in the PDP irrespective of their grade although senior EPs had participated in PDP more than the main grade EPs. There was a fair geographical spread across LAs, although there was also some evidence that the opportunities for EPs from small or remote EPSs might be restricted due to the difficulties in releasing EPs for a substantial period of time and the travel time required to attend meetings. Some EPs from remote areas and small EPSs raised their concerns about limited opportunities for involvement.

Recommendation 5: Maintain the focus of the PDP on collaborative research across EPSs and LA boundaries. In order to increase the opportunities for participation of EPs from remote and/or small EPSs, improved communication could be achieved through consideration of:

- *the use of information technology to enhance 'virtual' communication, for example through e-pop, GLOW, video conferencing, telephone conferencing and setting up of virtual communities of practice.*
- *regional distribution of themes, which might also ensure relevance of a particular theme to atypical EPSs. However, this should not distract from the relevance of PDP at a national level.*

4.4 Dissemination of the PDP

Participants had mixed views about the current system of dissemination. Most of the EPs reported that the output of the PDP was easily accessible. They accessed reports mainly as hard copies, CD ROMs and online. There seemed to be an increasing demand for online material; however the current online material was seen to be difficult to access.

Recommendation 6: *PDP material should continue to be made available in hard copy and wider dissemination should be ensured through online sources.*

- *There should be clearer signposting of where the online resources can be accessed.*
- *Consideration should be given to making online material (at least summaries) available through other websites such as those of ASPEP, SDEP and ADES, or a website specifically for the PDP.*

The PDP output is currently disseminated to other stakeholders (such as schools, Education services, parents and children) mainly by individual EPs in their day to day practice but also through national conferences, including the annual CPD conference and LTS. The PDP output is placed on LTS website.

Recommendation 7: *Wider dissemination of the PDP output should take place through:*

- *The inclusion of the dissemination to other stakeholders in the local authority service plan (by the LAs and EPSs).*
- *Encouraging PDP participants to publish the research in peer reviewed national and international journals.*
- *Monitoring of the dissemination practice as part of an ongoing evaluation.*

4.5 Usefulness of the PDP

The PDP process was seen to be beneficial and questionnaire respondents and interview/focus group participants reported that it offered good opportunities to undertake research for the EPs and the EPS. In terms of the CPD opportunities, there were mixed views, with less than half the respondents reporting that it was useful for that purpose. However, some of the participants, especially the ones undertaking roles such as PDP co-ordination, saw it as a valuable CPD opportunity for themselves and their EPS.

Recommendation 8: *Provide more CPD opportunities through the PDP. Ensure that it links with the EPS development plans, the CPD framework for EPs and the annual review process for EPs.*

The data suggested that the PDP research findings did not always transfer to the EPs' practice. This is disappointing as this was one of the aims of the PDI over a decade ago (Brown, 1993). There was a view that there was a need to have more opportunities to engage in discussion on the PDP material to encourage transfer of research to practice and that EPS should take responsibility for this.

Recommendation 9: *The EPSs and ASPEP should consider taking responsibility for discussion sessions at local level (within the EPS or LA) and national level (through ASPEP meetings or the SDEP newsletter).*

4.6 Evaluation of the PDP

Several questionnaire respondents and interview/focus group participants raised concerns that the PDP was not subject to quality assurance processes, and reported a need for on-going evaluation of the PDP.

Recommendation 10: *The PDP Steering Group should consider evaluating the effectiveness of the process for the PDP participants and the output for all EPs on an ongoing basis.*

- *EPs could conduct self-evaluation of the effectiveness of their participation in a PDP project.*
- *A simple questionnaire could be distributed at the PDP project meetings for participants and with the PDP materials for all other EPs.*
- *Where possible, consideration should also be given to seeking feedback from other stakeholders, including children, young people and their carers.*

4.7 Revision of the current format of the PDP

The interview/focus group participants reported that the PDP was good value for money, given the level of funding. However, concerns were raised whether this was at the expense of the EPs and EPSs. Some questionnaire respondents and most interview/focus group participants have indicated that the current budget cannot adequately maintain the quality of the PDP within the current format of three themes. Some questionnaire respondents and interview/focus group participants felt that although the PDP had worked well, it was time to review the format anyway. Suggestions included increasing the PDP cycle from 1 to 2 years; shifting the focus from outcomes only to include process and implementation; placing more emphasis on action research that can be directly applied to the EP practice; and finally a reduction in number of themes (especially if the budget and time scale can not be increased).

Recommendation 11: *PDP Steering Group should liaise with other relevant parties to look for opportunities to access alternative sources of funding and resources. On the basis of the available funding and resources, they should review the format of the PDP. They should consider:*

- *opportunities to access alternative sources of funding and resources, such as making applications to funding bodies, SDEP and LAs. This will complement the current funding provided by the Scottish Government.*
- *a reduction of themes and/or the expansion of the PDP cycle.*
- *the relevance and applicability of the research to practice when selecting themes.*
- *the possibility of carrying out longitudinal studies or ensuring there are tangible links between the themes from one cycle to the next.*
- *linking PDP to research that is already being undertaken in services as part of the 5 EP core functions.*

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Online Questionnaire

Evaluation of the Professional Development Programme (PDP) for Educational Psychologists in Scotland

Note: when answering text questions, please *do not press enter* after you finish typing as this will submit your responses prematurely.

1. Local Authority (select an answer from <u>one</u> of the options below)

(A-D) [please select ▼]

(E-I) [please select ▼]

(M-R) [please select ▼]

(S-W) [please select ▼]

2. Current position in the Service

[please select ▼] **(select one answer)**

If other, please identify: [   ]

3. Years practising as an EP [please select ▼] **(select one answer)**

If other, please identify: [   ]

4. Gender [please select ▼] **(select one answer)**

5. Currently full time or part time? [Full time ▼] **(select one answer)**

If part time, what is your full time equivalent?
[please select ▼] **(select one answer)**

6. Are you aware of PDP? [please select ▼] **(select one answer)**

If Yes, please complete the rest of the questionnaire. If No, please submit the questionnaire now.

7. How did you hear about the PDP? (tick all that apply)

Line Manager	☐
PDP Steering Group	☐
ASPEP	☐
Others in the Service	☐
Other	☐

If other, please identify: [   ]

8. What is your experience of the PDP? (tick all that apply)

		Number of times in role	PDP was useful to me professionally in this role
Participant in a PDP project	☐	please select ▼	please select ▼
PDP project co-ordinator	☐	please select ▼	please select ▼
PDP steering group member	☐	please select ▼	please select ▼
Other	☐	please select ▼	please select ▼

If other, please identify: [   ]

9. Has your experience of the PDP changed over the years?

please select ▼

If Yes, explain how/why:

[   ]

10. How many PDP reports have you read?

please select ▼ **(select one answer)**

If you have read any PDP reports, in what form have you accessed them? (tick all that apply)

Hard copy	☐
Online	☐
Other	☐

If other, please identify: [   ]

If you have not, is this because:

You did not try to access it	☐
You were not able to access it	☐
Limited copies available in the Service	☐
Other	☐

If other, please identify: [   ]

11. How easy is it to access the PDP reports?

[please select ▼] **(select one answer)**

12. I believe the PDP is useful to <u>me as a professional</u> because it leads to: (tick all that apply)

Opportunities to do research	☐
Collaboration within the Service	☐
Collaboration with EPs in other Services	☐
Opportunities to develop new skills (e.g. literature search. research methods, writing research reports)	☐
Development of my knowledge base	☐
Development of my practice	☐
Development of leadership skills	☐
Contributing to a substantial part of my CPD	☐
Triggering other CPD opportunities	☐
Better service delivery for the children and young people I work with	☐
Other	☐

If other, please identify: [   ]

13.   I believe the PDP is not useful to <u>me as a professional</u> because:

[   ]

14. I believe the PDP can be made more useful to <u>me as a professional</u> by:

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│                                          ├─┤
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│◄ │                                    │► │
└──┴────────────────────────────────────┴──┘
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15. I believe the PDP is useful to the <u>Educational Psychology</u> <u>Service</u> [please select ▼]**(select one answer)**

16. I believe the PDP is useful to the <u>Educational Psychology</u> <u>Service</u> because it leads to: (tick all that apply)

Opportunities to do research	☐
Collaboration within the Service	☐
Collaboration with EPs in other Services	☐
Opportunities to develop new skills (e.g. literature search, research methods, writing research reports)	☐
Development of knowledge base	☐
Development of practice	☐
Development of leadership skills	☐
Contributing to a substantial part of CPD	☐
Triggering other CPD opportunities	☐
Opportunities to disseminate findings of PDP research	☐
Better service delivery for children and young people within the Local Authority	☐
Better outcomes for children and young people nationally	☐

If other, please identify: [   ]

17. I believe the PDP is not useful to the <u>Educational Psychology</u> <u>Service</u> because:

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│                                        ├─┤
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│◄ │                                  │► │
└──┴──────────────────────────────────┴──┘
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18. I believe the PDP can be made more useful to the <u>Educational Psychology Service</u> by:

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┌────────────────────────────────────────┬──┐
│                                        │▲│
│                                        ├─┤
│                                        │▼│
├──┬──────────────────────────────────┬──┼──┘
│◄ │                                  │► │
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19. How many times have you been involved in decision making regarding the PDP themes? [please select ▼] **(select one answer)**

If you have been involved, describe how you have been involved?

[text box]

20. Have you shared and used the PDP reports with (tick all that apply)

Schools ☐

Department of Education in the Service ☐

Parents ☐

Other Professionals ☐

Other ☐

If other, please identify: [_____]

Briefly describe how you have used PDP reports with others and any outcomes observed:

[text box]

21. If you have been <u>a participant in the PDP project/s</u>, how would you rate the effectiveness of leadership and management by the PDP project co-ordinator/s? [please select ▼] **(select one answer)**

22. If you have been <u>a PDP project co-ordinator</u>, how would you rate the training, support and resources provided to you?

	Very effective	Effective	Partly effective	Not effective at all	None provided
Training	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Support	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Resources	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

23. In your opinion, how can the PDP process and outcomes be improved?

Thank you for your time. We would like to invite some Educational Psychologists to participate in one of three focus groups to be held in central locations in Scotland. It is anticipated that each follow-up focus group will take no more than 60 minutes and will be organised according to your convenience in January 2008. We will send you further information about the focus group if you are interested in participating. If you have to travel to participate in the focus group, we will reimburse all reasonable travel expenses.

If you would be interested in participating in a follow-up focus group, please leave your contact details below. However, if you don't want to leave your contact details here, please contact Divya Jindal-Snape (d.jindalsnape@dundee.ac.uk; 01382 381472) directly to let her know of your willingness to participate in a focus group. Your personal details will not be shared with anyone apart from Divya Jindal-Snape (Project Leader) and the Research Assistants, Laura Baird and Yuefang Zhou.

Name

E-mail Address

Telephone Number

Please indicate your availability for the following dates: (tick all that apply)

Week beginning 14th January 2008

	am	pm
Monday 14/01/08	☐	☐
Tuesday 15/01/08	☐	☐
Wednesday 16/01/08	☐	☐
Thursday 17/01/08	☐	☐
Friday 18/01/08	☐	☐

Week beginning 21 January 2008

	am	pm
Monday 21/01/08	☐	☐
Tuesday 22/01/08	☐	☐

Wednesday 23/01/08	☐	☐
Thursday 24/01/08	☐	☐
Friday 25/01/08	☐	☐

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please contact Dr Divya Jindal-Snape at d.jindalsnape@dundee.ac.uk, telephone (01382) 381472.

[Submit data]

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Focus Group and Telephone Interview Schedule for main grade EPs and SEPs

1. **What is your experience of PDP?**
    a. What is your link or how have you been involved?
        i. Participant
        ii. Coordinator
        iii. Steering group member
        iv. User of PDP output
        v. Selecting themes
    b. How involved have you felt (ownership of the process and product)?
    c. Usefulness to you and your Educational Psychology Service
    d. How has your experience changed over the years?

2. **What are your views about the process of PDP?** *When answering this question, I would like you to think about the PDP in its own right and in the context of the wider range of CPD opportunities for Educational Psychologists.*
    a. What is your understanding of PDP process?
    b. What is your view about its effectiveness?
    c. How does the process fit with the expectation that one of the core functions of EPs is research?
    d. What needs to be changed or improved?
        i. Format
        ii. Themes
        iii. Allocation of projects
        iv. Setting up of project teams

3. **What are your views about the PDP output/s?**
    a. Quality
        i. Research
        ii. Material
    b. Accessibility
    c. Dissemination

4. **What are your views about the current allocation and provision of resources to the PDP?**
    a. Human
    b. Financial
    c. Equal opportunities for all Educational Psychology Services to participate
    d. Others

5. **What are your views about the overall effectiveness of the PDP?**
    a. How PDP research feeds into practice?- examples
    b. Fit with other CPD activities
    c. Outcomes locally and nationally, especially for children and young people- examples

6. **How can the PDP process and output be improved within the existing levels of funding and resources?**

7. **Do you have any other thoughts or comments on any aspect of the PDP?**

KEY:
Red- Main question
Blue- Probes
Green- Further probes for clarification if required

Focus Group and Telephone Interview Schedule for the PEPs/Depute and ASPEP members

Introduction: Clarify perspective as PEP/Depute and ASPEP member

1. **What is your experience of PDP as a Principal Educational Psychologist?**
   a. What is your link or how have you been involved?
      i. Participant
      ii. Coordinator
      iii. Steering group member
      iv. User of PDP output
   b. If you are an ASPEP member, has that played a part in this role?
   c. How involved have you felt (ownership of the process and product)?
   d. Usefulness to you and your Educational Psychology Service/wider stakeholder groups
   e. If it has, how has your experience changed over the years?

2. **What are your views about the process of PDP?** *When answering this question, I would like you to think about the PDP in its own right <u>and</u> in the context of the wider range of CPD opportunities for Educational Psychologists.*
   a. What is your understanding of PDP process?
   b. What is your view about its effectiveness?
   c. How does the process fit with the expectation that one of the core functions of EPs is research?
   d. What needs to be changed or improved?
      i. Format
      ii. Themes
      iii. Allocation of projects
      iv. Setting up of project teams
   e. What is your perspective as an ASPEP member? (*IF RELEVANT*)

3. **What are your views about the PDP output/s?**
   a. Quality
      i. Research
      ii. Material
   b. Accessibility
   c. Dissemination
   d. How can they be improved?
   e. What is your perspective as an ASPEP member? (*IF RELEVANT*)

4. **What are your views about the current allocation and provision of resources to the PDP?**
   a. Human
   b. Financial
   c. Equal opportunities for all Educational Psychology Services to participate
   d. Others
   e. What is your perspective as an ASPEP member? (*IF RELEVANT*)

7. **What are your views about the overall effectiveness of the PDP?**

a. How PDP research feeds into practice?- examples
b. Fit with other CPD activities
c. Outcomes locally and nationally, especially for children and young people-examples
d. What is your perspective as an ASPEP member? (*IF RELEVANT*)

8. **How can the PDP process and output be improved within the existing levels of funding and resources?**
    a. What is your perspective as an ASPEP member? (*IF RELEVANT*)

9. **Do you have any other thoughts or comments on any aspect of the PDP?**

KEY:
Red- Main question
Blue- Probes
Green- Further probes for clarification if required

Focus Group and Telephone Interview Schedule for the PDP Steering Group members

1. **What is your experience of being a PDP Steering Group member?**
   a. Background and roles
   b. Recruitment/appointment process
   c. What are the opportunities for all EPs (grades, years of experience) and are there any barriers for Educational Psychology Services (e.g., small or remote rural EPS)?
   d. Time commitment
   e. Usefulness to you and your Educational Psychology Service/educational psychology/Scottish Government and other stakeholders (e.g., HMIE)

2. **What are your views about the process of PDP as a PDP Steering Group member?**
   a. What is your understanding of the PDP process?
   b. What is your view about its effectiveness?
   c. How does the process fit with the expectation that one of the core functions of EPs is research?
   d. What needs to be changed or improved?
      i. Format
      ii. Themes
      iii. Allocation of projects
      iv. Setting up of project teams

3. **What are your views about the PDP output/s as a PDP Steering Group member?**
   a. Quality
      i. Research
      ii. Material
   b. Accessibility
   c. Dissemination
   d. How can they be improved?

4. **What are your views about the current allocation and provision of resources to the PDP as a PDP Steering Group member?**
   a. Human
   b. Financial
   c. Equal opportunities for all Educational Psychology Services to participate
   d. Others

5. **What are your views about the overall effectiveness of the PDP as a PDP Steering Group member?**
   a. How PDP research feeds into practice?- examples
   b. Fit with other CPD activities
   c. Outcomes locally and nationally, especially for children and young people-examples

6. **How can the PDP process and output be improved within the existing levels of funding and resources?**

7. Do you have any other thoughts or comments on any aspect of the PDP?

KEY:
Red- Main question
Blue- Probes
Green- Further probes for clarification if required

Focus Group and Telephone Interview Schedule for Stakeholders

Introduction: Clarify the role and particular perspective of that stakeholder (i.e., Scottish Government, SDEP, ADES, COSLA, HMIE

1. **What is your experience of PDP?**
   a. What is your link or how have you been involved?
      i. Suggesting themes
      ii. User of output
   b. How involved have you felt (or ownership of the process and product)?
   c. Usefulness to you and your organisation
   d. If it has, how has your experience changed over the years?

2. **If you are aware of the PDP process, what are your views about it?** *When answering this question, I would like you to think about the PDP in its own right <u>and</u> in the context of the wider range of CPD opportunities for Educational Psychologists.*
   a. What is your understanding of the PDP process?
      i. Format
      ii. Themes
      iii. Allocation of projects
      iv. Setting up of project teams
   b. What is your view about its effectiveness?
   c. How does the process fit with the expectation that one of the core functions of EPs is research?
   d. What needs to be changed or improved?

3. **If you are aware of the PDP outputs, what are your views about them?**
   a. Quality
      i. Research
      ii. Material
   b. Accessibility
   c. Dissemination

4. **If you are aware, what are your views about the current allocation and provision of resources to the PDP?**
   a. Human
   b. Financial
   c. Others, specific to your organisation or interest group

5. **What are your views about the overall effectiveness of the PDP?**
   a. How PDP research feeds into practice?- examples
   b. Fit with other CPD activities
   c. Outcomes locally and nationally, especially for children and young people-examples
   d. Effectiveness for your own organisation or interest group

6. How can the PDP process and output be improved within the existing levels of funding and resources?

7. Do you have any other thoughts or comments on any aspect of the PDP?

KEY:
Red- Main question
Blue- Probes
Green- Further probes for clarification if required

Technical information about the Statistical analysis undertaken in this study

Information about these tests is available in Siegel, S. & Castellan, N., Jr. (1988). *Nonparametric statistics for the behavioural sciences* (2nd edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

1. Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance by Ranks: p.206ff.

This is a nonparametric test (i.e., when you do not have a reasonable approximation to equal interval data but the data are at least ordinal (the rank order on the numbers are meaningful) or for equal interval data when the necessary parametric assumptions are not met).

It compares (looks for a statistically significant difference among) the scores in a number of conditions (if only 2 conditions, the Mann-Whitney test is used). Finding a statistically significant effect does not tell you which conditions differ from which others – only that there is *some* difference somewhere among the conditions. Therefore, when a statistically significant effect is found, it is common to make comparisons between pairs of conditions (using the M-W test) to find out which conditions differ from one another significantly.

2. Jonckheere Test for Ordered Alternatives: p. 216 ff.

The first paragraph above applies equally to this test.

This is an extension of the K-W test that looks for a significant *trend* in the data – i.e., if the conditions can be meaningfully ordered (like seniority of role in the service) scores on the dependent variable increase regularly as you move from the lowest seniority to the highest (or in the reverse direction).

3. Mann-Whitney U Test (U is the symbol used for the statistic that is calculated): p.129 ff.

This is a nonparametric test (i.e., when you do not have a reasonable approximation to equal interval data but the data are at least ordinal (the rank order of the numbers are meaningful) or for equal interval data when the necessary parametric assumptions are not met). It is the non-parametric alternative to the independent groups (between-subjects) t-test.

It compares (looks for a statistically significant difference between) the scores in two conditions that have different participants in each of the conditions.

Further details of these tests in the context of this study

3.3.2 Usefulness of the role and experience

A Kruskal-Wallis test showed a significant difference among grade groups (among the top four grades excluding assistant, trainee and other): $\chi^2 (3) = 12.29$; $p < .01$. It looks as though the difference is between promoted grades (PEP, DPEP, SEP) and the main grade EPs. This was tested using Mann-Whitney test: Z (141) = 3.0; p < .01. It suggests that EPs in promoted grades were significantly more positive than main grade EPs about the usefulness of participation in a PDP project. However, even amongst the main grade EPs, 28 strongly

agreed or agreed that this experience was useful as compared to 4 who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

3.3.4 Perceptions regarding change in experience

As it seemed that there was a difference between the PEPs and the other three EP grades, a Chi-square test was conducted on these two grade group differences: χ^2 (1) = 14.96; p < .001. The result of this test indicates that the experience of PEPs has changed significantly more than that of other EP grades.

3.4.1 Involvement in selection of themes

A Kruskal-Wallis test was carried out to test the difference between grades (among the top four grades excluding assistant, trainee and other). The result showed a significant difference between these four grades (PEP, DPEP, SEP and EP): χ^2 (3) = 31.49; p < .001. The Jonckheere Trend test is also significant: J (3) = 1734; p < .001 (2 tailed). This means that there is a trend from low to higher grades with increasing number of times involved in decision making.

GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH

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