

**ELSA Network Minimum Standards**

**Please ensure that your service meets these minimum standards in order to call your intervention ‘ELSA’.**

1. **All training and supervision are delivered by educational psychologists**

The ELSA Network only recognises qualified educational psychologists (EPs) as legitimate providers of ELSA training and supervision. This is in recognition that ELSA is a psychological intervention focussed in the educational domain. It requires applied psychological knowledge and skills together with a professional understanding of the education system.

1. **Your initial ELSA training is a minimum of 5 days**

The initial published training model was five days and most areas have since extended this in the light of experience to six days. ELSAs are not required to have any pre-existing qualifications so less than five days is not considered adequate time for delivery of essential content, (underlying psychology in key areas of intervention and core practice skills.)

1. **Your initial training includes support around planning sessions and identifying how to set SMART programme aims**

Because they will not normally have had any experience in developing support programmes or setting SMART targets, it has been found essential to offer support to ELSAs in how to plan sessions and set focussed aims for their interventions. Good sessions require clear objectives addressed via the means of engaging activities and games. These should include recap of previous learning within the programme to match programme pace to pupil understanding. Sessions should be progressive in working towards clearly defined pupil targets. Aims therefore need to be evaluated by measuring outcomes in some way; at the simplest level this would be by noting the achievement or non-achievement of pre-stated programme aims.

1. **You run supervision sessions for all trained ELSAs every half term?**

It is considered essential to be providing small group (approximately 8) supervision every half term to promote and enhance appropriate ELSA skills. In supervision, EPs are expected to keep referring ELSAs back to the training content, to help them identify reasonable programme aims, to consider children’s needs from a psychological perspective, and provide continuing professional development through supervision discussions. They also have a responsibility to oversee safe practice, empowering ELSAs to resist inappropriate requests by parents, school staff or other professionals, ensuring ELSAs are supported to stay within the remit of their role and to ensure ELSAs are receiving suitable support for their role within school. Where ELSAs are not being given time to fulfil the ELSA role or are not being released regularly to attend supervision meetings, EPs are expected to help ELSAs rectify the situation or, ultimately, to ensure they are de-registered until they are in a position to fulfil all the role requirements. EPs have a safeguarding role within supervision to both ensure the well-being of the ELSA and the quality of their practice. Without an appropriate level of supervision, intervention in school cannot be legitimately recognised as ELSA.

1. **ELSAs that do not attend supervision regularly followed up and de-registered as necessary**

All ELSAs are expected to attend their group supervision meeting each half term. If schools are not facilitating that, this needs to be addressed with the ELSA’s line manager. If there is a legitimate reason for non-attendance (illness, family funeral, hospital appointment) ELSAs should be expected to notify apologies for absence in advance to their supervisor. Reasons for absence that are not legitimate (such as ELSAs being asked to cover other duties or staff absence in school) should be followed up with the ELSA and /or school as appropriate. If an ELSA misses two consecutive meetings, supervisors are advised to arrange some individual telephone supervision. This reinforces the value put upon supervision by the EP service and their duty of care. If an ELSA needs to be de-registered, the school needs to be advised that the person should not be used in this capacity and may no longer use the role title of ELSA. The EP service may reinstate their ELSA status once the role requirements are able to be met, (half-termly supervision attendance and ring-fenced time in school to deliver bespoke programmes of support.)

**Whilst it is not a minimum standard to register with the ELSA Network, we advise this because it:**

* **keeps training providers up to date with ELSA developments**
* **provides support to ELSA training providers**
* **gives access to additional free resources**
* **facilitates communication between those providing ELSA training**
* **allows training providers to access regional Network meetings**

If you feel you meet these standards, you may be eligible to apply for our ELSA quality mark. Please refer to the document entitled ‘ELSA Network Quality Mark Standards’ for further details.