

Evaluation report regarding the Supervision experiences of Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSAs) within Cheshire West and Chester

Lisa Davies, Child and Educational Psychologist,
Cheshire West and Chester
September 2020

Background to the report

The ELSA programme is a programme of initial training and ongoing supervision, delivered by Child and Educational Psychologists (CEPs). It aims to train and supervise school staff to better support pupils' social and emotional skills from within their own resources. ELSAs are responsible for planning and delivering social-emotional skill interventions within their school, which may be 1:1 or in small groups. For further information about the ELSA Programme, please refer to www.elsanetwork.org. The ELSA programme has been running in Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) since September 2014, as part of the Child and Educational Psychology Service's (CEPS's) traded offer.

This report aims to evaluate the supervision experiences of trained ELSAs within CW&C, with the aim of:

- Helping to improve the supervision experiences of ELSAs,
- Understanding the impact of supervision upon students accessing ELSA support.

It should be noted that data for this report was gathered in Autumn

2019, prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This means that the current report refers to ELSA supervision offered via face to face contact.

The ELSA Programme and Supervision process

ELSA supervision is integral and essential to the ELSA role. Within CW&C, ELSAs can only become registered as an ELSA when they have completed the six days of initial training and attended four supervision sessions. The cost of their initial four supervision sessions is included within the cost of initial training (currently at a cost of £600). Once qualified, schools can buy supervision sessions for trained ELSAs (currently offered at a cost of £150 per academic year for five sessions). Supervision sessions are facilitated by a CEP, and take place in small groups in local schools for 2 hours per session. In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is envisaged that Supervision will be offered online (at least initially) from September 2020. At the end of each supervision session, ELSAs are invited to complete a brief evaluation form

which asks them to rate how helpful they found the session, how empowered they feel to go back to their school and put in place ELSA support, and what they would like to

be covered in the next session. ELSA supervision is overwhelmingly rated positively via these evaluations.

During 2018-19, from 509 completed evaluation forms, ELSAs gave average ratings of:

- 4.84 (where 5 is 'completely helpful') in terms of how helpful they found the supervision session
- 4.7 (where 5 is 'completely empowered') in terms of how empowered they felt to go back to school and put in place ELSA support.

Via these evaluation forms, ELSAs comment on the helpfulness of Supervision in terms of gaining up to date research/ resources, promoting their confidence, the benefit of positive relationships with other ELSAs and on Supervision providing reassurance about their ELSA practice. ELSAs also regularly comment positively about the Solution Circle process (a positive problem-solving structure facilitated by CEPs in the sessions), and on the opportunity to share good practice with other ELSAs. However, there are occasionally negative comments from ELSAs regarding their Supervision experiences and, anecdotally, some ELSAs have commented that they don't feel they gain enough from the Supervision experience to justify the time spent out of school attending sessions.

This report aims to gather a further, in-depth, evaluation of the supervision experiences of ELSAs who trained in CW&C between 2014-2018.

There are subtle differences in how different CEPs facilitate their Supervision groups, in order to meet the needs of individual ELSAs within their group. However, the general format of the two-hour Supervision sessions is:

- Sharing Good News/ Check in activity,
- Chance for each ELSA to share updates about ELSA in their school currently (i.e. in terms of number of students/ groups they are working with, their ELSA space in school, the time they are given for ELSA support, the chance to ask questions regarding practice),
- Sharing of resources and ideas,
- Solution Circles (two per session, if possible).

Background research from other local authorities

Research conducted in other local authorities has recognised that ELSA Supervision is overall rated positively and perceived as empowering by attending ELSAs (Burton, 2008). An in-depth evaluation of ELSA Supervision in Hampshire was undertaken by Osborne & Burton in 2014, gaining the views of 278 ELSAs within the local authority. The majority of ELSAs felt that Supervision was helpful to them and met their needs. ELSAs reported that their Supervision needs generally centred on receiving 'advice and ideas' and 'general support'. ELSAs also commented on the benefits of sharing resources/training, gaining emotional support/reassurance and having the chance to network and receive mutual support from other ELSAs.

However, 17% of ELSAs felt that their EP supervisor could do more in their role, including:

- Greater contact with the ELSA's school,
- Direct contact with children in receipt of ELSA support,
- More promotion of ELSA training opportunities,
- Providing 1-1 support, or being available in-between ELSA Supervision sessions,
- Modelling strategies,
- Providing more specific advice on topics, such as parent separation or drug use.

A minority ($N=2$) perceived Supervision to have a negative impact due to the associated amount of time spent out of school attending supervision, and it was felt that this would potentially have a negative impact on students. Responding ELSAs reported that Supervision helped them to extend their knowledge ($N=65$), to offer advice/ information to colleagues ($N=65$) and to try out new ideas with the children they worked with as part of ELSA ($N=95$). 20 ELSAs felt that Supervision gave the ELSA role a higher status and led to greater recognition of the role within the school.

The current evaluation report – Data gathering

An evaluation questionnaire was developed (please see appendix 1), partly based on the evaluation questionnaire devised by Osborne and Burton (2014). 135 ELSAs who trained in CW&C between 2014-18, and were accessing Supervision, were invited (by email and in Supervision groups) to complete the evaluation questionnaire anonymously.

Evaluation information

58 ELSAs responded to the questionnaire, from the following settings:

- 41 were primary school ELSAs,
- 13 were secondary school ELSAs,
- 3 worked in specialist schools.

53% of responding ELSAs had worked in the ELSA role between 1-2 years, with the remaining 47% being an ELSA for 3-5 years.

ELSAs gave the following reasons as being factors that had prevented them from attending ELSA Supervision sessions:

- Having to provide class cover/ respond to other staffing requirements in school – this was the most common reason (N=7).
- Personal reasons (e.g. illness) (N=5).
- Having to respond to safeguarding concerns in school or attend meetings (N=3).

The supervision needs of ELSAs

100% of responding ELSAs agreed that the current Supervision arrangements met their needs. This is a very positive outcome, and suggests that the current model of ELSA Supervision provided in CW&C is effective for attending ELSAs.

Respondents were also more specifically asked about the organisation of their Supervision sessions. These percentages of ELSAs agreed with the following statements:

	% of ELSAs agreeing 'yes'
I am offered the right number of Supervision sessions over an academic year	93%
My Supervision sessions are generally the right length of time	97%
The size of my Supervision session is about right	97%

This is positive, and suggests that the majority of ELSAs feel that the current Supervision arrangements appropriately meet their needs.

ELSAs gave a mean rating of 4.72 (where 5 is 'completely') in terms of how helpful they find their ELSA Supervision sessions. Comments that demonstrate this positive rating include:

“these sessions are both vital for support and advice for my pupils, and also myself as well. This is a group where you can talk openly and know that it will remain confidential”

“no other forum gives this level of case study advice and support”.

ELSAs were also asked to comment on what they seek to gain from ELSA Supervision sessions, and the aspects they find most helpful. Their responses can be organised into the following themes:

- **Opportunities to discuss their work with individual children/ groups**, was valued, particularly in situations where the ELSA feels ‘stuck’. Many ELSAs commented on the benefit of Supervision in gaining an understanding of ‘next steps’ to take in their work with students. Solution Circles were often mentioned as being a supportive framework for such problem solving. For example, *“Having the time to look at a particular child in more depth so that I can adapt the intervention to suit their individual and complex need to have a better impact on/ for them”* and *“help sometimes on how to look or tackle things differently”*.
- **Regular opportunities to gain ideas and learn about different resources/ services** available locally. For example, *“I think it’s great that we can share resources and our experience of using them”*.
- **The support of the facilitating CEP** was often mentioned, with many ELSAs referring to this in the sense of it being ‘expert’ or ‘professional’ support, for example, *“the context of the supervision is so professional and delivered in such a caring and compassionate way”*. One ELSA also commented on the importance of the relationship with their CEP supervisor, *“we have found some sessions more helpful than others, depending on the lead”* [i.e. the facilitating CEP].
- However, the benefit of **peer discussions and the support of other ELSAs** was much more frequently mentioned, than the support of CEPs. For example, *“there is a wide range of knowledge in the group, therefore any worries shared are communicated well and ideas given to put into place”* and, *“we have bonded as a group and feel comfortable in sharing our news, views and ideas”*. This is positive and suggests that ELSA Supervision sessions are well facilitated by CEPs, with plentiful opportunities facilitated for ELSAs to gain peer support, for example, *“professional guidance from the CEP alongside supportive, practical ideas from other ELSAs”*. Having the opportunity to gain different perspective and ideas from other ELSAs was also mentioned as helpful. Some ELSAs also spoke positively about the organisation of their group

being well suited, “we were partnered up with another SEN school so we all met similar difficulties and understand how our schools work”.

- Knowing that there was **flexibility in sessions** (e.g. to discuss individual cases or generally share resources) was mentioned positively by one ELSA.
- **Having a safe space** to discuss any concerns and seek reassurance from peers. For example, one ELSA commented: “a safe place to be able to talk openly and honestly about the role and the challenges that I may face”, and “reassurance that I am following the ELSA model and supporting children in the best way possible”.
- Some ELSAs commented on the benefit of the opportunity to **revisit techniques gained in initial training**.
- Several ELSAs also mentioned the positive effect of Supervision on their own **confidence and wellbeing**, and on gaining a fresh sense of purpose in the sessions, for example, “I enjoy each session and come away feeling confident with how I’m running my sessions”, “it’s good to get reassurance that you’re on the right track and doing well” and “I have gained so much experience and support, which has been essential not only to my CPD but my overall wellbeing, that I am confident I have passed onto the children I work with”.
- Having the opportunity to **focus on positives** was also frequently mentioned, however, one ELSA commented: “on some occasions some group members can present with some negativity or reluctance to participate”.
- Several ELSAs also mentioned the benefit of using the **Solution Circle** format in Supervision sessions and how this had a positive impact upon practice, for example, “having worked with a specific child who is in care, I have been able to support him through many difficult transitions....I had used this child in a Solution Circle during Supervision and was able to access support to build his resilience”.

As the above comments suggest that ELSAs may seek different experiences from Supervision, CEP flexibility in how supervision sessions are delivered (to meet the needs of the group) appears to be very important. The positive responses noted above, suggest that CEPs are working effectively to facilitate Supervision groups, allowing individual ELSAs the opportunity to build relationships and feel safe within the sessions.

The format(s) that ELSAs find most helpful in Supervision sessions seems to be:

- Having the chance to **discuss and share different resources and ideas** for practice (N=25).
- Many ELSAs commented that they couldn't name one part of the session that they found most useful, therefore N=20 mentioned the benefit of having a **mixture of opportunity** in the session (i.e. Solution Circles, sharing resources, discussing individual pupils). Several ELSAs mentioned how they appreciated the flexibility offered session to session, depending on the needs of the group in a particular supervision session.
- The chance to **discuss individual students** (N= 17).
- The **Solution Circle** format (N=8).
- **Peer support** opportunities (N= 5).

Small numbers of ELSAs also mentioned the following: The chance to share **good news** (N=2), **reminders to look after yourself** (N=1), the CEP ensuring that each individual ELSA had **time to speak** within the session (N=2).

This suggests that the most valued aspect of Supervision for ELSAs is the chance to share ideas and gain resources. However, the flexibility offered by CEPs in individual sessions is also noted as being very valued.

Useful qualitative comments include: *"I have found the Solution Circles really helpful as it broke down the situation and enabled fresh eyes to help with a child"*. But equally, *"I have found the Solution Circles a bit restrictive... therefore I have found discussing specific cases but more of them for a shorter period of time far more useful generally"*.

The impact of resources gained on ELSA practice was clear: *"I have used many resources that have been shared or suggested... this becomes a valuable part of my ELSA toolkit, which broadens the range of work I can deliver in my sessions"*.

Relationship between ELSAs and their CEP supervisor

ELSAs were asked about their experiences of working with their CEP supervisor, in order to help better understand the aspects they find helpful. The following mean ratings were evident (with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'very much so'):

My CEP supervisor....	Mean rating
Helps me feel at ease with the Supervision process.	4.91
Checks that I am getting what I want from Supervision	4.84
Enables me to become actively involved in Supervision sessions	4.93
Helps me to clarify how best to work with / set targets for pupils involved in ELSA sessions	4.77
Encourages me to consider new ways of working with pupils involved in ELSA support	4.79
Supports me with any issues/ concerns I have about putting ELSA support in place across my school	4.83

These responses are overwhelmingly positive and suggests that CEPs are providing optimum Supervision experiences for trained ELSAs. CEPs appear to be working hard to meet the individual needs of ELSAs within sessions, to ensure that they each can contribute to the sessions and to help them to put in place ELSA support in their school.

Qualitatively, some ELSAs commented on how friendly, caring and approachable their CEP supervisor is, suggesting that CEPs have worked to create positive relationships with ELSAs and a Supervision environment in which they feel safe. Many ELSAs commented positively about the responsiveness of CEP support, not only within but also outside of Supervision sessions. This was in relation to the CEP sending additional resources following the Supervision session, to later responding to ELSA queries, to within-school contact and also the CEP taking the time to later 'check-in' with ELSAs regarding their queries and/or concerns raised in the supervision sessions.

For example, *“my supervisor has been intensively supportive at Supervision sessions, 1:1 at school and by email. I feel I can contact her about any concerns and she will be helpful about the case in hand, but also considerate of my personal well-being”*.

One ELSA commented about the difficulty experienced when their CEP supervisor changed: *“I did find it [changing groups] a little difficult as some of the group had been together several years.... [they] clearly had a format that worked but was alien to us”*. This highlights the importance of CEPs regularly gathering ELSA views (perhaps privately in some cases) about their Supervision experiences and what they find most helpful, as well as using

group relationship techniques to allow all in the group to feel bonded and supported.

One ELSA shared frustrations about psychological questioning / reframing techniques used by the CEP in Supervision sessions,

"it can sometimes be frustrating when you don't get a straight answer when asking a specific question, can redirect the question back to you".

ELSAs were also asked if there was anything further that their CEP supervisor could do to support them. The majority of responding ELSAs responded 'no' in response to this, sharing comments about the positive support already provided. A small number of ELSAs commented that they felt their supervisor could further support them in their ELSA role by:

- Providing ideas for SMART targets, planning and recording sessions.
- Reminding senior school leaders on an annual basis of the contract they originally signed (in training the ELSA). These concerns were discussed by one ELSA in relation to feeling under supported at school in terms of budget and her salary. The ELSA commented that s/he would like a leaflet to be produced by the CEPS that ELSAs could use in school to help explain the benefit and importance of their role to other staff members.
- To be provided with additional resources for secondary settings. The ELSA in question commented on how many of the produced resources are primary focussed.
- Having a day or time that the CEP supervisor could be contacted in between sessions for support.

Impact of supervision on practice as an ELSA

ELSAs were also asked about the impact they felt their Supervision had across a number of areas relevant to ELSA practice. The following mean ratings were evident (with 1 being 'no impact' and 5 being 'great impact'):

Impact felt upon:	Mean rating
The ELSA's personal-professional development	4.6
The ELSA's school as a whole	4.12
Their ability to identify what support pupils need from ELSA sessions and monitoring their progress	4.47
The self-esteem and resilience of pupils accessing their ELSA sessions	4.45
The behaviour of pupils accessing their ELSA sessions	4.31

The social skills of pupils accessing their ELSA sessions	4.34
The mental health and well-being of pupils accessing their ELSA sessions	4.48

These ratings regarding perceived impact are very positive and suggests that ELSAs feel that their Supervision experience has a positive impact on a wide range of areas and pupil need.

Qualitative comments regarding the perceived impact of ELSA Supervision on their practice can be organised into the following themes:

- **Positive impact of Supervision on **ELSA confidence and wellbeing:**** several ELSAs commented on how the support and reassurance, gained in Supervision sessions, had been invaluable to them. For example: *"it has given me confidence to continue. This is a hard and quite lonely role otherwise"; "The impact has been personal to me, and my wellbeing, as well as my confidence. I feel stronger and more confident in dealing with the children I work with.... The feedback from our supervisor is always complimentary which is wonderful to hear"* and *"it [Supervision] grounds me and I am more able to be effective for the young people I support"*
- **Promoting a better understanding across school about student need:** ELSAs spoke positively about how their Supervision experiences had led to a change in perspective across the school, for example, there being a better understanding of 'behaviour as communication'. Also, *"[Supervision helped] improve [my] professionalism...I have been able to design a proforma for staff to complete when asking for a student to access ELSA, it has helped clarify the role"*.
- **The student voice:** Many ELSAs commented how students themselves had spoke positively of the ELSA support they had received.
- **Positive recognition of the ELSA role across school:** For example, *"I have teachers who come to ask for advice on a regular basis before referring a child to me"* and *"ELSA is embedded in our school...all staff use ELSA resources....we have an individual referral process which increases the support level to an ELSA"*. Such comments were often related to Supervision helping ELSAs to feel more confident to bring about systemic ELSA change in their school.

- **Positive recognition of the ELSA role within the wider community:** For example, “[ELSA] impact has been noted by Child Protection chairs, social care, virtual school and new ways of working [a trauma basis intervention team]”. Several ELSAs also commented on how teachers, senior school leaders and parents of the students accessing ELSA intervention had also noticed positive changes.
- **Positive impact on students’ skills:** ELSAs discussed positive improvements in terms of confidence, happiness, friendships, emotional literacy, active participation in the classroom and behaviour within the classroom. For example, “I could see a definite increase in the mental health and wellbeing of pupils involved in ELSA, and that they knew they had someone in school to listen, understand and support them” and “[students] like the fact that the focus is totally on them, they can discuss their worries and know I have time to listen!”. Some ELSAs commented that impact was quantitatively measurable (e.g. in terms of improved SDQ scores). One ELSA directly attributed the impact of Supervision to such skills progress: “Supervision has made the impacts as the guidance and ideas [have] allowed me to deliver quality sessions to the children I work with”.

One ELSA commented that, although pupils enjoy the sessions, those experiencing difficulties managing feelings of anger often struggle to put the skills learnt into practice. Some also acknowledged that ELSA intervention had been less successful for some students, due to them having other needs and concerns and it being felt that ELSA intervention wasn’t the best course of action for him/ her.

One respondent similarly reflected that it can feel difficult to support some areas of need, although improvements can also be generally evident:

“I continue to struggle more with raising resilience....however, I do feel that once the children know that their time during ELSA is protected and feel that sense of importance...their self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing all improve. I also find that the children I work with show improvements in behaviour and social skills through the activities we do during the time.

Another ELSA, working in a specialist setting, commented how impact can take a long time to become evident, “several months down the line they

may react in a more positive way to a situation than they would have done before ELSA”.

Although detailed case studies regarding impact were beyond the scope of the current evaluation report, the below comments illustrate the impact that ELSAs feel supervision has had on improved outcomes for students:

I worked with a young boy who couldn't tolerate any emotions he deemed 'negative' and had struggled with this since a young age. Over the course of his sessions with me he became confident in naming, describing, drawing, accepting and talking about when he feels those emotions. He can now use those skills in and outside the classroom regularly enabling his access to his education and learning to increase and he is much happier

I was given advice [in Supervision] in how to deal with 2 siblings with attachment issues. The feedback and advice I got from the Supervision sessions really helped with how I dealt with the situation. The parent came into school to say how well ELSA had worked for her children.

A former ELSA pupil has progressed from being identified with behaviour problems in class to becoming a class school councillor.

All additional support and learning has an impact. It is important to remember the Supervision is as important to the ELSA as it is to the school and children we work with. When you are holding the emotions of others the safe and supportive space the ELSA Supervision provides helps to refocus and reassure.

Pupils appear happier, and are able to talk about how they feel more freely once trust has been built. They are more likely to verbally express how they feel and understand themselves better.

A child I worked with on identifying emotions continues to check in with me informally (e.g. on playground) and does find it easier to talk.

In year 3 one particular child struggled to manage and regulate his own behaviour along with building positive relationships with adults. He used to hide under tables, crawl at adults and refuse to express his feelings. Through 3-point scales, the blob tree etc, now in Year 4, the child engages in lessons and will speak to adults when experiencing

Future training and support needs of ELSAs

Looking towards the future, ELSAs stated that they would ideally like to access the following training and support opportunities:

- Training around attachment needs/ supporting children in the care system/ Theraplay,
- How to best plan and monitor ELSA sessions,
- Parenting support,
- Motivational interviewing,
- Anger management,
- Mental health, with some ELSAs mentioning that they'd like to particularly know how best to support the mental health of adolescents,
- Bereavement,
- Domestic abuse support,
- Secondary ELSAs mentioned that they would like more secondary focussed resources, given that many of the available resources tend to be primary focussed.

Several ELSAs also spoke positively about attending an ELSA Conference in a local area, and having the opportunity there to attend both formal talks and workshops. Many ELSAs also mentioned that they would generally like the opportunity to regularly attend ELSA 'Refresher' training sessions to gain knowledge about other areas of support and to refresh skills gained in initial training.

Discussion

This report offers an evaluation of the Supervision experiences of ELSAs within CW&C. Encouragingly, the findings of this report are in line with those of Osbourne & Burton (2014).

The data suggests that, overall, ELSAs attending Supervision within CW&C perceive their experiences very positively. Indeed, 100% of responding ELSAs felt that the current Supervision arrangements met their needs. Between 93%-97%

of responding ELSAs state that the Supervision model offered is effective for them in terms of number of sessions offered over an academic year, the length of sessions and the group size. In cases where ELSAs disagreed with the statements, there was some difference of opinion. One ELSA stated that s/he would like more sessions (6 per year to include one in Autumn term) and one ELSA stated that 3 or 4 sessions an academic year would be sufficient (as opposed to the five sessions currently offered). One ELSA commented that s/he would like longer sessions and one ELSA comments: *"I feel a smaller group works better. In our group last year, the numbers seemed to increase towards the end. I feel the group was too big to talk about different cases and get round everyone"*. The ELSA in question attends a group of 9 ELSAs. This is above the service's preferred maximum group size (8 ELSAs) and is a learning point for our service.

ELSA's experiences of working with the CEP facilitating their session are also overwhelmingly positive, and suggest that CEPs are working effectively in Supervision sessions to ensure that ELSAs feel comfortable with the process and are each given the opportunity to become actively involved in Supervision. It also suggests that CEPs are continually checking that ELSA Supervision is meeting ELSAs' needs

and that they are empowering ELSAs to plan their interventions, giving the opportunity for solution finding around any barriers experienced.

It appears that ELSAs most value the opportunity in Supervision sessions to gain ideas and resources to support their ELSA practice. It also seems that supervision has a vital role in promoting ELSAs' confidence and wellbeing, which many ELSAs comment had a positive effect on their ELSA practice. In some cases, this also appears to have brought about positive systemic change in the ELSA's school (i.e. as they felt more empowered following Supervision to put in place new structures and support). Positive peer to peer relationships within Supervision sessions appear to be vital to ELSAs and this support was more frequently mentioned than the support of the facilitating CEP. However, it appears from ELSA comments that CEPs are working hard to appropriately facilitate supervision sessions; creating a safe space for ELSAs and ensuring that all participants feel able to contribute.

Having the chance to discuss individual students also appears to be very important to ELSAs. This appears to be in relation to both feeling certain about 'next steps' to take, having appropriate resources

and supporting ELSA wellbeing and confidence. Although the Solution Circle approach was often mentioned positively, many more ELSAs valued the opportunity to more informally discuss individual pupils. This highlights the importance of CEPs ensuring that Supervision sessions are flexibly offered, and so respond to the needs of all ELSAs within the group.

ELSA comments regarding the impact of their Supervision experiences on student outcomes is again positive. There appears to be an impressive perceived impact of ELSA Supervision on a range of student needs, on the personal-professional development of ELSAs, on identification and support for students, as well as a wider impact

upon their school as a whole. The lowest ratings were evident upon *'impact upon the school as a whole'* and the *'behaviour of students accessing ELSA sessions'*, perhaps reflecting the complexity of impact around these areas. Supporting a student whose behaviour is causing concern is often an emotive area. Anecdotally, ELSAs have also commented that it can be challenging for them to support other staff to understand that ELSA intervention does not 'fix' a student and that behaviour is communication. Qualitatively, the brief case study comments suggest an impressive impact for individual pupils. Wide and long-term impact is suggested in some cases, which is pleasing.

Taken together, the current report suggests the following learning points for our service:

- The current model of Supervision offered is positively received and should continue to be provided in its current format.
- Flexibility in sessions is however vital, and CEPs should regularly gather ELSA views about their Supervision experiences and what they would find most helpful in sessions. Ensuring that there is the opportunity in each Supervision session to discuss individual students and resources/ techniques is important. The Solution Circle approach is often well received by ELSAs, but its use may be checked in each Supervision session, to determine whether ELSAs would like to access this or another approach to discuss individual students/ situations.
- CEP awareness, and support for, group dynamics is vital in order that a safe and secure space is created within the Supervision session for ELSAs. Our service needs to be particularly aware of occasions when

CEP supervisors or groupings are changed, and consider how best to support this.

- A safe Supervision space is vital to help promote the confidence and wellbeing of ELSAs. ELSAs acknowledge that this then has a positive impact on their ELSA practice and student outcomes.
- Further targeted support in Supervision sessions to help ELSAs to generate SMART targets for students and to plan and record sessions is likely to be well received by ELSAs.
- There is an opportunity for CEPs to have a more systemic impact in schools to ensure that ELSAs feel more supported within their role. ELSAs may sometimes feel disempowered in terms of having a positive impact in a larger school system. This remains an important role of CEP support, ensuring that ELSAs feel empowered in supervision sessions to impact change in their school setting, as well as CEPs working to promote systemic change and value for ELSA intervention throughout their own contact with school staff. Suggestions from ELSAs included CEPs regularly reminding senior school leaders on an annual basis of the contract they originally signed (in training the ELSA).
- Providing further training opportunities and resources for ELSAs, with particular reference to secondary specific resources. It is hoped that an ELSA Conference will be possible during Spring 2021 to help meet this need. Producing a bank of secondary specific resources would also likely be very well received by secondary ELSAs, and is likely to have a related positive impact on outcomes for secondary students.
- Ensuring that group sizes do not exceed 8 ELSAs.
- CEPs have an ongoing role in communicating and supporting the function of ELSA support in schools, as well as continually offering a psychological perspective regarding behavioural responses.
- It is also important to note, that completed questionnaires were returned during Autumn 2019 (i.e. prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic). Since this point in time, ELSA Supervision has been offered virtually in CW&C. This is also, at least initially, the intended Supervision format for 2020-21. With this in mind, it is important that CEPs work to create a safe, virtual Supervision space for ELSAs. CEPs will need to continue to seek ELSA views regarding their Supervision experiences and allow flexibility in how the supervision sessions are offered. This will be particularly important in current circumstances, given that ELSAs may

encounter difficult situations that they may not have experienced pre-pandemic, and so may need additional support and reassurance to navigate such situations.

For any further information regarding this report, or the ELSA Programme in CW&C, please contact:

Lisa Davies, lisa.davies@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk, or

Kate Hughes, kate.hughes@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

REFERENCES

- 1 BURTON, S. (2008). EMPOWERING LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS TO ENHANCE THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOL. *EDUCATIONAL AND CHILD PSYCHOLOGY*, (25, 2), 40-56.
 - 2 OSBORNE, C. & BURTON, S. (2014). EMOTIONAL LITERACY SUPPORT ASSISTANTS' VIEWS ON SUPERVISION PROVIDED BY EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS: WHAT EPs CAN LEARN FROM GROUP SUPERVISION. *EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE*, (30, ISSUE 2), 139-155.
-

Appendix 1: Questionnaire completed by responding ELSAs

The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Programme

Evaluation of Supervision: For completion by ELSAs

School type: Primary Secondary Specialist
Date completed: _____

1. Your general involvement in ELSA supervision

a. How long have you been an ELSA for?

1 – 2 years 3 - 5 years

b. If relevant, what factors have prevented you from attending some supervision sessions?

.....
.....
.....

c. Do you feel that *(please tick)*:

	Yes	No
You are offered the right number of supervision sessions over an academic year?		
The supervision sessions are generally the right length of time?		
The size of your supervision group is about right?		
If you answered 'no' to any of the above, please give further details:		

2. Your supervision needs

a. What do you look for from supervision?

.....
.....
.....
.....

b. Do the present supervision arrangements meet these needs? *(please circle)*

YES / NO

If you answered no, how could it be improved?

.....
.....

c. In general, how helpful do you find the supervision sessions? (please circle)



Please explain your answer, providing examples where possible:

.....
.....
.....

d. What session format, offered by your CEP supervisor, do you find most helpful in ELSA supervision sessions?

.....
.....

3. Your supervisor

a. To what extent does your supervisor (*with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'very much so'*):

	1	2	3	4	5
Help you feel at ease with the supervision process					
Check with you that you are getting what you want from supervision sessions					
Enable you to become actively involved in supervision sessions					
Help you to clarify how best to work with/ set targets for pupils involved in ELSA sessions					
Encourage you to consider new ways of working with children involved in ELSA sessions					
Support you with any issues/ concerns you may have in putting in place ELSA support across your school					

Please give any further details regarding your responses

b. How else does your supervisor support you in your work?

.....
.....

c. Is there anything else your supervisor could do to support you in your work? If so, what?

.....
.....

4. Impact of supervision on practice

a. Please rate the impact ELSA supervision has had on (with 1 being 'no impact' and 5 being 'great impact'):

	1	2	3	4	5
Your personal-professional development					
Your school as a whole					
Identifying what support pupils need from ELSA sessions and monitoring their progress					
The self-esteem and resilience of pupils accessing ELSA sessions					
The behaviour of pupils accessing ELSA sessions					
The social skills of pupils accessing ELSA sessions					
The mental health and well-being of pupils accessing ELSA sessions					

Please give any further details regarding impact seen

b. Are you able to provide an example of good practice, in terms of the impact supervision has had on your ELSA practice? If so, please describe this below:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6. What further training/ support would you like to receive from the Psychology Service to help you in your role as an ELSA?

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Do you have any other comments?

.....

.....

.....

.....