

## **The Bereavement & Critical Incident Response Team within the Educational Psychology Service**

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The Bereavement & Critical Incident Response Team within the Educational Psychology Service - This service continues to be free for all schools and academies. Head Teachers and Senior Managers are accustomed to managing a huge variety of different situations. However, the sudden death of a pupil or a member of staff is devastating and can have a wide-reaching impact on both the school and the local community.

For over 20 years a specialist team of Educational Psychologists within the Educational Psychology Service, known as “The Bereavement & Critical Incident Response Team”, has been supporting schools following a tragic event. Over the past 10 years the team has supported approximately 150 schools and other educational settings within Shropshire in the following ways:

- Immediate (same day) phone advice to Senior Managers. This includes step by step guidance as to the tasks which need to be undertaken that day to ensure that the institution is supporting its students and the wider community in ways which promote emotional health.
- A staff meeting within days of the incident to advise staff on how best to support students and one another.
- Structured Group Support/Debriefing where young people or staff have witnessed a traumatic event.
- Further access to a specialist individual assessment, arising from a traumatic bereavement or where events have hindered healthy grieving, as agreed by the team.

Educational Psychologists are uniquely placed to support schools in such situations with their familiarity with education and schools, their knowledge of child development, bereavement, trauma and their skills in therapeutic approaches, including CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and trauma-focused rewind.

Despite stringent cost savings within Shropshire, **the Council has remained committed to funding this service for all schools.**