Newcastle Educational Psychology Service: Position Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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Introduction

As Educational Psychologists working in Newcastle upon Tyne, we are committed to enhancing the wellbeing, learning, and inclusion of children and young people. We recognise the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI (e.g. Microsoft Copilot), in supporting our work. This position statement outlines our current stance on the ethical, responsible, and contextually appropriate use of AI in our practice, aligned with Newcastle City Council's digital strategy and national professional standards.

1. The Role of AI in Educational Psychology

- **Augmentation, Not Replacement:** AI is a tool to support—not replace—professional judgement. It may assist with task-based processes such as drafting reports, summarising information, or analysing data. It will not replace knowledge processes, such as those that require human knowledge, interpretation and decision-making; these remain central to our work.
- **Empowering Practice:** We feel AI can be a helpful tool to enhance our capacity to deliver timely, evidence-informed support to schools, families, and children, particularly where workloads are high and resources limited.

2. Ethical and Professional Considerations

- **Professional Standards in Educational Psychology:** in our profession, we must meet the standards of proficiency as set out by the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) and the Code of Ethics and Conduct from the British Psychological Society (BPS). We ensure our AI practice fits within these standards.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** AI systems can reflect and amplify societal biases. We will remain vigilant in identifying and mitigating bias in AI-generated content,

ensuring our work upholds the principles of the Equality Act (2010) and promotes fairness for all learners.

- **Accuracy and Verification:** AI-generated content will be critically reviewed and fact-checked, and we will ensure that outputs are reviewed for accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness. We acknowledge the risk of misinformation and commit to using AI outputs as a starting point for professional analysis, not as definitive conclusions.
- **Privacy and Data Protection**: We adhere strictly to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) laws and Newcastle City Council's AI Privacy Policy. No personal or sensitive data will be entered into non-approved AI tools. Use of AI will comply with the Council's guidance on managed tools and data governance (see more details in the next section).
- **Environmental Sustainability:** We are aware of the environmental impact reports of AI infrastructure and recognise that decision-making around the use of AI must be informed. At Newcastle City Council, we use Microsoft 365. Microsoft have a published sustainability statement with commitments for environmental sustainability. Newcastle City Council have an action plan to reach Net Zero status by 2030. For our EPS team, all members are encouraged to apply the same values to AI use as they would to other aspects of their life.

3. Local Governance and Compliance

- **Council AI Governance:** We align with Newcastle City Council's AI Governing Rule, which states that AI may automate task-based processes but must not replace knowledge-based decision-making. AI should support informed, data-centric decisions while preserving human oversight; we take <u>responsibility</u>. We also align with Newcastle City Council's AI Golden Rule, which states that we are responsible for any of our AI outputs; we take <u>accountability</u>.
- **Transparency and Notification:** We support Newcastle City Council's commitment to transparency through the Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard (ATRS). Where AI is used in processes that affect others, we will ensure transparency and, where required, publish details in line with the Council's ATRS commitments. When we use AI in our personal tasks that do not affect the processes and decisions for others, we will not provide specific notification. This is aligned with Newcastle's AI Privacy Policy.
- **Microsoft 365 Copilot:** Where M365 Copilot is used (e.g., for drafting or summarising), we will follow the Council's Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) guidance.

4. Professional Development

- **Continuous Learning:** We will engage in ongoing professional development to understand the capabilities, limitations, and ethical implications of AI. This

includes training on digital skills as outlined by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

- **Collaboration and Contribution:** We will collaborate with colleagues across the Council, other Local Authority Educational Psychology Services, and national bodies to contribute to the evolving understanding of AI within our profession.
- **Research and Evaluation:** Where there are opportunities, we aim to support and participate in research that explores the impact of AI on learning, inclusion, and psychological wellbeing, ensuring that our practice remains evidence-informed.

5. Conclusion

AI presents both opportunities and challenges for Educational Psychology. By embedding ethical principles, aligning with local governance, and maintaining a commitment to professional integrity, we can use AI to enhance—not compromise—our support for children, families, and schools in Newcastle.

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Acknowledgements