

Job Title:	Expert at Hands Service Lead
Team/Service Area:	SEND / Experts at Hand
Salary/Grade:	Grade 10
Line Manager:	Strategic SEND Lead
Direct Reports:	2
Location:	Bunny Hill Centre, with requirement to work at any Company recognised workplace

About the Role

To lead, manage and develop the Experts at Hand service functions relating to the early identification, assessment and support of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities within Sunderland education settings, in line with Sunderland's Experts at Hand model. The postholder will support the shift to earlier, advice-led and solution-focused intervention by working with education, health, social care, family hubs, schools, settings and parent carer partners to strengthen ordinarily available provision, improve mainstream inclusion, reduce escalation to statutory routes where appropriate and ensure children and young people receive the right support at the right time. The role will involve significant multi-agency working across Educational Psychology, Specialist Support Teams, Early Help, Social Care and Health providers, alongside close working with the Statutory SEND Service and SEND and Alternative Provision Taskforce.

This role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore requires a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead and manage the operational implementation and delivery of the Experts at Hand service in Sunderland, aligned to SEND reform, the Ordinarily Available Offer and local area partnership priorities.
- Lead and support implementation of policies, procedures, protocols and practice standards that promote early identification, inclusive practice and timely access to specialist advice across universal, targeted and targeted plus levels of support.
- Work with schools, settings, colleges and family hubs to strengthen inclusive practice, support early intervention and reinforce clear understanding of

ordinarily available provision before escalation to targeted, targeted plus or statutory pathways.

- Develop effective multi-agency working with Educational Psychology, Specialist Support Teams, Early Help, Social Care, Health providers, Mental Health Support Teams, 0–19 services, Family Hubs and parent carer partners.
- Support access to specialist consultation, modelling, coaching, training, group intervention and targeted support through the cluster-based multidisciplinary Experts at Hand model.
- Promote advice-led, solution-focused practice across casework, panel and partnership discussions, including facilitating multidisciplinary meetings for individual children and young people where required.
- Use data, performance information and feedback to monitor demand, impact and risk, support continuous improvement, inform service planning and meet relevant Department for Education monitoring requirements.
- Contribute to SEND reform governance arrangements, including SEND Improvement Group, SEND Strategic Board reporting routes, Joint Commissioning Group discussions and Experts at Hand steering group meetings as required.
- Support co-production and ensure the voice of children, young people, families, schools and partners informs service development, reform communications and continuous improvement.
- Provide clear briefings, updates and reports on progress, demand, risks, outcomes and operational issues, including representing the Strategic SEND Lead where required.
- Line manage direct reports, support workforce development and promote efficient, flexible and resilient teamwork to deliver statutory duties, service objectives and SEND reform milestones.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- Champion equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of your work and the communities you assist.

Our Expectations

You must undertake this role in accordance with the requirements set out below:

- Comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act requirements in relation to records, information management and privacy of personal information held by Together for Children Sunderland.
- Comply with Together for Children's Code of Conduct, People policies and procedures, Health and Safety Policy and EDI Statement.
- Uphold all relevant professional policies, standards and legislative requirements

- Adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR principles in relation to the management and handling of personal and/or sensitive information and respect the privacy of personal information managed by Together for Children Sunderland.
- Comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- This position is a politically restricted post as identified by Together for Children Sunderland and in accordance with The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (LGHA).
Follow Together for Children Sunderland's and NHS ICB's information security standards.

This job description is a guide to the duties you will be expected to perform. It is not an exhaustive list, and you may be required to undertake other tasks and duties not listed that are reasonably commensurate with the job role and grade of the post. Where a fundamental change to the job description is needed this will be discussed with the postholder prior to any changes being made

Date: Pamela Robertson, August 2026

Person Specification – Expert at Hand Service Lead

The essential requirements for this post and how candidates will be assessed are set out below. Where ‘application form’ is the method of assessment, candidates should evidence that they meet these criteria, to be successful at the shortlisting stage.

Essential Requirements	Method of Assessment
Qualifications • Educated to degree level or equivalent, or other relevant qualification in social work, teaching, psychology, education, health, SEND or a related discipline. • Commitment to personal and professional development of self and staff.	Application Form
Experience • Substantial recent experience of Special Educational Needs, EHCP processes and/or specialist inclusion services. • Experience of working with multi-agency partners including School staff, Social Care staff and Health colleagues and developing effective partnerships • Proven experience of leading, motivating and managing people through change. • Experience of service improvement, data-led planning, performance management and budget or resource planning. • Experience of implementing innovation and change in complex systems, preferably including early intervention, graduated response or multi-disciplinary support models.	Application Form / Interview
Knowledge and Understanding • Comprehensive knowledge of SEND legislation, the SEND Code of Practice 0–25, local authority statutory duties and the graduated response. • Understanding of ordinarily available provision, inclusive mainstream practice and barriers affecting vulnerable	Application Form / Interview / Skills-based assessment

groups including children with SEND, children in care, children with social, emotional and mental health needs, neurodiversity, trauma, attachment and speech, language and communication needs. • Knowledge of multi-agency working across education, health, social care, Family Hubs and community partners.	
Skills and Abilities • High standard of literacy, with ability to interpret legal, technical and performance information and explain it clearly. • Strong analytical skills to interpret complex datasets, identify risk, monitor impact and use intelligence for planning • Excellent communication, presentation, influencing and negotiation skills. • Ability to chair complex meetings and make lawful, defensible, evidence-based decisions • Ability to work under pressure, prioritise competing statutory and reform deadlines, and support others through change. • Ability to develop solution-focused practice, strengthen co-production and build confidence with schools, families and partners	Application Form / Skills-based assessment / Interview
Other Requirements • Commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion, safeguarding, co-production and improving outcomes for children, young people and families. • Commitment to financially and operationally sustainable SEND practice, with inclusion as the default and specialist provision used appropriately. • Ability to meet the travel requirements of the post • Willingness to participate in the TfC in-house Leadership and Management Programme (Cultivate/Empower/Elevate) • Willingness to form part of the TfC Coaching Programme and commitment to the development of other TfC future leaders and managers through Thrive@TfC	Interview

Date: August 2026