

Job Description

Job Title:	Early Years Education SEND Advisor
Salary Grade:	Grade 10
Directorate:	Education
Work Environment:	Bunny Hill Centre / agile working across Sunderland
Reports to:	Senior School Improvement Officer
Direct Reports:	Family Hub Inclusion Navigators x 6
DBS Requirement:	Enhanced

About Us

Established in 2017, Together for Children Sunderland is on a mission to improve services in social care, early help and education and engage the whole community in giving children and young people in Sunderland the best possible opportunity to thrive.

Our dedicated workforce strives to make a difference, irrespective of work vocation or specialism. We value diversity and actively seek candidates from all backgrounds. Our inclusive workplace culture fosters collaboration and excellence.

Purpose of the Role

To lead and deliver high-quality early years education improvement support across Sunderland, working with schools, academies, maintained nursery schools, private, voluntary and independent providers, childminders and partner agencies to improve educational outcomes for children from birth to five.

The postholder will provide specialist advice, challenge, support and intervention to leaders and practitioners, supporting the delivery of local and national priorities including school readiness, Good Level of Development, communication and language, inclusion, SEND, safeguarding, family support and the Best Start in Life agenda.

The postholder will directly manage the Family Hub Inclusion Navigator team, ensuring effective early intervention and inclusive practice for children and families, while contributing to continuous improvement across the early years sector so that children receive the best possible start in life.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership and Improvement

- Lead and be accountable for strategic approaches that improve outcomes for children aged 0 to 5, translating national and local priorities into evidence-informed policy, service development and improvement activity.
- Provide advice and briefings to senior leaders, boards, partnerships and elected members, representing Together for Children at local, regional and national forums.

Quality Improvement and School Readiness

- Lead targeted support, challenge and intervention across early years providers, holding leaders to account through educational review, quality assurance and robust improvement planning.
- Drive sustained improvements in curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, narrowing achievement gaps and strengthening communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and school readiness.

Leadership and Management of Family Hub Inclusion Navigators

- Provide professional and operational leadership to the Family Hub Inclusion Navigators, with accountability for supervision, performance, attendance, wellbeing, safeguarding and professional development.
- Set priorities and deploy workloads and resources, assuring the quality and impact of support and leading partnership and workforce arrangements that secure continuous service improvement.

Inclusion and SEND

- Provide leadership for inclusive practice, early identification and effective graduated responses across early years provision.
- Work with SEND services, specialist professionals and providers to shape local strategies, pathways and interventions that improve provision, outcomes and transitions for children with additional needs.

Workforce Development and Training

- Set strategic workforce development priorities and design, commission and evaluate professional learning that responds to service and sector needs.
- Lead coaching, professional challenge, networks, conferences and briefings that strengthen leadership, educational practice and sector-wide improvement.

Data, Performance and Evaluation

- Analyse national, regional and local intelligence and establish robust performance and evaluation arrangements to identify priorities, risks, inequalities and service impact.
- Present clear reports and recommendations to senior leaders and partnership boards, using evidence to influence planning, commissioning and resource allocation.

Partnership Working

- Build and sustain influential relationships with schools, trusts, early years providers, childminders and wider partners, securing shared ownership of improvement priorities.
- Lead system-wide collaboration with Family Hubs, health, social care and the voluntary sector to improve outcomes and deliver wider corporate and partnership priorities.

Safeguarding, Compliance and Governance

- Provide leadership and assurance on safeguarding, welfare, statutory and regulatory standards, holding providers and services to account and directing proportionate support or intervention.
- Ensure effective governance, risk management, organisational compliance and accurate management information across the postholder's areas of responsibility.

General Responsibilities

- Model Together for Children's values and behaviours, champion equality, diversity, inclusion and continuous improvement, and maintain professional knowledge through continuing development.
- Undertake other duties commensurate with the scope, accountability and Grade 10 level of the post.

Our Expectations

- Promote safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion, support value for money and risk management, and ensure confidentiality and high data-quality standards.
- 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 UK GDPR principles in the management and handling of personal 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 job description is a guide to the duties expected of the postholder. It is not exhaustive, and the postholder may be required to undertake other tasks and duties that are reasonably commensurate with the role and grade. Where a fundamental change is needed, this will be discussed with the postholder before changes are made.

Date: October 2026

Person specification

Job Title: Early Years SEND Advisor

Requirement	Method of Assessment
Qualifications - Degree or equivalent professional qualification. - Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Teacher Status or an equivalent relevant professional qualification. - Evidence of substantial continuing professional development in early years education, leadership or school improvement.	Application form and pre-employment checks.
Experience - Significant experience in the early years sector, including leading educational improvement activity that has demonstrably improved outcomes for children. - Experience of providing challenge, support and advice to leaders and practitioners, and designing and delivering effective professional development. - Experience of using data and quality assurance evidence to identify priorities, manage complex projects and drive sustained improvement. - Experience of leading and managing staff and working in partnership across education, health and family support services.	Application form and interview.
Knowledge and Skills - Excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, child development from birth to five, and current early years, education and childcare policy. - Comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding and SEND legislation, graduated responses, inclusive practice, effective leadership and workforce development, including approaches that promote school readiness, address educational disadvantage and improve outcomes. - Ability to provide strategic leadership, influence change, evaluate educational practice and identify improvement priorities. - Excellent communication, presentation, analytical and report-writing skills, with the ability to use evidence and data to inform planning and decision-making. - Ability to build credible relationships, lead and develop staff, facilitate partnership activity, and manage budgets, resources and competing priorities effectively.	Application form, interview and practical or written exercise.
Personal Attributes - Commitment to improving outcomes for children and families and to promoting inclusion, equality and safeguarding. - Strong leadership presence and professional credibility, with a collaborative and solution-focused approach. - Resilient and adaptable, with the ability to work effectively under pressure, manage changing priorities and meet deadlines. - Enhanced DBS clearance and the ability to travel throughout Sunderland and the wider region, with flexibility to work occasional evenings and attend partnership events as required.	Application form and interview.