

Job Description

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Service:	Education & Skills
Job Title:	SEN Caseworker
Grade:	29-32
Reports to:	SEN Casework Manager

2. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF JOB

1. To act as “Named Officer” (SEN Code 2014) and case worker in the management of a caseload of pupils with SEN and to ensure that legislative and policy requirements are met and procedures are administered within statutory timescales prescribed in the Government's Code of Practice and the Council's Performance Indicators and best practice
2. Analysis and synthesis of complex reports, to produce summary documents to be used for a range of purposes, the majority of which is to inform decision making on the allocation of additional resourcing and school placement.
3. To write, maintain and amend statements of special educational needs (Education, Health and Care Plans) and through contact with schools and other education providers, and consideration of annual review reports, monitor the arrangement of any special educational provision specified in the statement, in accordance with relevant legislation.
4. In addition to drafting Education, Health and Care Plans, to draft:
 - a. reasoned and detailed decision letters applying the legal framework in the context of a range of (often conflicting) professional advice, explaining the reasons for the decision
 - b. clear briefs to inform the discussion of senior officers, advisory/moderating panels and others as directed
 - c. responses to complaints, MP and elected member enquiries
 - d. appropriate records for pupil files as instructed
5. Liaising with schools, education settings and parents regarding assessment, placement, support and any other matter of interest or concern to schools and parents that falls within the brief of the SEN Team.
6. To display a genuine commitment to partnership working relationships with parents, pupils, schools, early years settings, colleges, Children's Service staff and other statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that the Council's statutory duties for SEN are effectively undertaken, and that parents and providers are confident in the management of the statutory SEN process.

7. Through professional, objective, clear and discrete interactions with parents and professionals, ensure that personal presentation and style recognises that assessment and related matters, are often stressful for parents.
8. Working within the Council's code of practice for communication with the public, take time and make appropriate phone, meeting or written responses to build confidence and ensure the Council's statutory responsibilities are met.

3.1 PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

4.1 Main duties and responsibilities

Statutory Process

1. Ensure delivery of statutory assessment processes for a defined caseload in a manner that:-
 - Satisfies requirements of the 1996 Education Act and the 2014 Children and Families Act, and associated legislation
 - Complies with DfE guidance
 - Supports and promotes Council policies
 - Promotes locality based and inclusive education
 - Encourages and develops positive relationships with schools, and other education settings
 - Minimises dispute with parents through high quality and bespoke communication
 - Builds on, develops and improves relationships with other agencies, including children's and adult health services health and children's and adults social care
 - Enables local and national performance targets to be achieved
2. In accordance with the regulations and guidance that underpin assessment of SEN and multi-agency interventions, and within LBB operational procedures, ensure that all processes including issuing, amending and reviewing statements are delivered within timescales.
3. Ensure on-going familiarity with Council policies and procedures that apply to the management of SEN casework and placements.
4. Work within defined decision-making processes and within the delegated decisions framework as appropriate.
5. In preparation for decision making through panels or by senior officers, provide analytical briefs on evidence gathered to inform decisions on:
 - Whether or not to undertake a Statutory Assessments.
 - Whether or not to make an EHCP
 - Any other decision stated
6. Analyse and evaluate educational, medical, social care and psychological advice and other relevant information and reports collected under the Statutory Assessment of a child's special needs, through annual review or separately. Following the analysis:
 - Write detailed and specific statements of special educational needs or education health and care plans (EHCPs) according to the statutory guidance and reflecting local guidelines and written policies.
 - amend EHCPs

- explain reasons for not assessing, not issuing an EHCP or not amending a statement
- Write, in liaison with the educational psychologist and/or specialist teacher, a note of needs and provision following a refusal to assess

Relationships and contact with stakeholders and partners

7. Ensure supportive constructive and sensitive liaison and discussion with schools and settings so the decisions made on casework are well supported with evidence and have maximum potential for sustainability.
8. Establish and sustain strong working links with the Virtual School for Looked After Children, ensuring a high level of vigilance to monitoring the special educational provision for those looked after children with statements of SEN.
9. Develop and maintain high quality relationships with key staff in:
 - schools and settings (especially head teachers and SENCOs)
 - Inclusion and Skills (especially educational psychologists, early years SEN staff and specialists' teachers)
 - Children's Services (especially social workers),
 - Health (especially paediatricians, therapists and CAMHS workers)
 - other agencies, for example youth services, the YOT
 - Parent Partnership Services
 - Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Services.
10. To make positive and constructive responses to telephone enquiries from schools, parents, other services and the public, aiming, through the application of specialist knowledge, to defuse stress and anxiety and where possible provide required information or signpost to other services
11. Liaise with non-educational agencies to ensure that appropriate non-educational services are provided. Influence schools and other relevant parties to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and make best use of SEN funding.
12. Attend individual pupil casework meetings as required, including Annual Review meetings, in order to assist with problem resolution, and/or to monitor progress and provision of pupils with SEN.
13. Provide training, information, guidance and advice as required on statutory procedures to parents, schools and other parties. Represent the SEN Strategic and Casework Team at events organised to provide information sharing and/or training with other agencies related to the SEN Code of Practice, legislation and relevant practice and procedures within Barnet

Casework Management

14. To make timely links with SEN colleagues who have a brief to manage funding, placements, transport – so that the effective co-ordination of these functions with casework management is efficient and effective.
15. To attend and contribute to case review, annual review, parent and other meetings as agreed with or instructed by the SEN casework manager.

16. To work in a structured partnership with SEN Support Officers so that the different tasks within the SEN statutory process are completed with quality, in a coordinated and time efficient manner.
17. To ensure high quality paper and electronic case file management, following quality standards and guidelines set down, and with support from the SEN support officer for data input, file organisation and filing.
18. Implement the decisions of relevant LA Panels in order that the special educational provision specified in the statement is arranged, including admission to school or other educational settings
19. Make recommendations on placement and working closely with the Placements Co-ordinator, reach resolution to the placement of pupils with statements. Work within statutory guidance, agreed procedures and workflow processes in relation to consulting on and finalising placements.
20. Identify potential conflicts and disagreements and emotionally charged situations at an early stage. Plan approach to resolve or reduce conflict and disagreement swiftly, effectively and professionally through mediation and other appropriate conflict resolution techniques, with a focus on the provision of suitable education for the pupils and that the LA discharges its statutory responsibilities. Work in partnership with parents, pupils and schools to promote inclusion and to minimise conflict and disagreement.
21. Supported by SEN Support Officers, ensure that pupil files and all necessary casework records are accurate, kept up-to-date and are filed and stored securely, for those cases for which the post holder is responsible.
22. Have regard to statutory timescales and local performance standards for written correspondence and administration, and ensure these are met for the area for those cases for which the post holder is responsible.
23. Ensure relevant statistical and management information is organised and available, including the allocation of different amounts and types of resources to statements/ EHCPs .
24. Ensure that the responsibility of safeguarding the welfare of children is a fundamental aspect of this job and that the principles are embedded in all procedures, practices, professional advice and decision making. Ensure full compliance with the Pan-London protocols and Barnet safeguarding standards

4.2 Staff Responsibilities

- 4.2.1 No direct staff responsibility. Some responsibility for occasional staff supervision and induction for less experienced staff within the team. Providing day to day direction and support as required to SEN Support Officers. Assisting other officers within the SEN strategic and casework team to contribute to team efficiency and effectiveness

- 4.2.2 Involvement in the training and development of staff within the team
- 4.2.3 Deputise for the SEN Casework Manager as required
- 4.2.4 Work collaboratively and jointly with other SEN Casework Officers, adopting different and complementary roles in the operation and delivery of whole Team work processes.

5.0 PROMOTION OF CORPORATE VALUES

- 5.1 Ensure standards of customer care are met in accordance with the Council's Statement of Values. To be aware of the Corporate Plan and how it affects the section.
- 5.2 Ensure that a high level of confidentiality is maintained in all aspects of work.

6.0 FLEXIBILITY

- 6.1 In order to deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed, and the post holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, will fall within the scope of the post, at the appropriate grade.

7.0 THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

- 7.1 To deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity both in the provision of services and as an employer. All staff are expected to promote equality in the work place and in the services the council delivers.

Person Specification

Service:	Children's Service
Location:	2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale
Job Title:	SEN Caseworker
Grade:	35 - 38
Reports to:	SEN Casework Manager

Essential Qualifications required

Type	Level required
Professional qualifications/memberships	None specific – desirable if qualified in children's education or related professional qualification e.g.: Teaching assistant, youth worker, guidance etc.
Education	Desirable if educated to degree level or equivalent (preferably in a relevant discipline) Minimum: GCSE Maths and English or equivalent

Technical / Knowledge Requirements

Type	Description
ICT skills	Competent and confident in the use of standard Microsoft Office products such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint. Proven experience and competency in the effective use of ICT databases and record storage and retrieval systems. Proven ability to handle confidential personal information in an appropriate and secure manner.
Project Management	Ability to carry lead on projects or operational processes related to the work environment

Role Specific Competencies

Type	Description
Knowledge & Experience	Knowledge, experience and understanding of the main current developments and statutory position relating to children with special educational needs
	Demonstrable knowledge of the main SEN legislation and guidance, particularly the SEN Code of Practice and 1996 Education Act and other related/relevant Children focused legislation
	Experience of the work of other agencies including health, mental health, voluntary sector and others.
	Experience of relevant work preferably in a school setting or within a local authority, or equivalent organisation.

Literacy and written language skills	Ability to make appropriate recommendations and write detailed, grammatical letters, statements and reports in a clear and structured manner based on an analysis of complex information
	Ability to deal with complex reports, and to demonstrate good analytical skills, synthesis and précis skills
Generalising	Ability to apply learning and technical aspects from one case to another within wider legal framework
Emotional intelligence and resilience	Ability to know when to and how to apply a sensitive and objective empathy without compromising the Council. Ability to manage situations of high stress, anxiety and sometimes anger amongst stakeholders, especially parents.

Behavioural Competencies

Competency	Key to role
Communicating and influencing	Effective verbal and written communication skills
	Ability to communicate complex issues in a clear and effectively manner (oral and written) with a wide range of stakeholders and to advise, persuade, influence, empathise and be assertive as appropriate.
	Ability to participate effectively at case conferences and other forums to secure positive outcomes which make best use of limited resources.
	Proven ability to resolve conflict through mediation and other conflict resolution techniques and find creative, interagency solutions which meet children's needs.
	Ability to ensure a high standard of customer care
	Ability to manage continuous interruptions, including phone calls, ensuring courtesy and attention as required
Political Awareness	Appreciation of the political make-up and decision-making processes of the council and its impact on the role
Leadership	Willingness to take personal responsibility for the delivery of relevant service priorities that pertain to the role.
	Ability to ensure that children and young people and their parents are the focal point for decision making
	Ability to ensure statutory criteria for efficiency and cost-effectiveness are integrated into advice that informs decisions to be made and actions taken
Problem solving	Ability to analyse complex information quickly, reaching and articulating decisions with clarity, to deliver solutions that command support.
	Ability to engage those who disagree to secure agreement through explanation, clarifying, knowledge of the law and tactical case management skills
Striving for excellence	Proven record of achievement in delivering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service improvement • logical and effective decision making • high quality, accurate and timely work
	Ability to manage a complex workload and meet tight timescales, using ICT skills to support office procedures
	Demonstrates a determination to provide a quality service and achieve challenging targets
	Commitment to embrace the principles of equality in the

	delivery of the service
Staff management	Proven ability to support the delivery of effective training relating to the role of the job
Team working	Ability to work effectively, flexibly and constructively with colleagues in a team and make a positive contribution.
	Ability to work effectively with senior managers, staff, schools, external partners and to establish confidence, trust and credibility
	Demonstrable experience of working effectively and participating with other colleagues on an inter-agency basis to ensure an effective response to complex issues
	Ability to work with a range of professional staff and the public
	Ability to build and nurture good working relationships with colleagues and across a wide range of outside agencies
Safeguarding	Sound understanding of the principles of safeguarding and a commitment to improving safeguarding the welfare children and young people.
Partnership working	Recognises the importance to the council of active partnership working and embraces partnership working where relevant to deliver services most effectively and efficiently
	Actively contributes to the creation of an open, and interdependent culture
	Ability to provide accurate guidance, information and advice to parents