

Early Years and Childcare

Area SENCO, Early Years SEND Support Service

Job Description and Person Specification

Reviewed June 2025

Job Description

Job Title:	Area SENCO
Department:	Education & Inclusion
Function:	Early Years and Childcare
Team:	Early Years SEND Support Service
Post number:	EL9615
Grade:	LBR 6
Hours/weeks: <i>E.g. 36 hours/52.14 weeks</i>	36 hours/52.14 weeks
Base location:	Ray Lodge Resource Centre, 91 Ray Lodge Road, Woodford Green IG8 7PG.
Reports to: <i>Job title</i>	Area SENCo Lead
Responsible for: <i>Job titles of direct reports</i>	See job description

<p>Role purpose and role dimensions: <i>Overview of the job</i></p>	<p>To promote and support inclusion within the early years sector across the Borough.</p> <p>To support inclusive practice by offering practical advice in planning appropriate activities and interventions in early years settings.</p> <p>Where appropriate, to assist settings by giving specialist advice on planning the curriculum to meet individual needs as part of an early intervention process.</p> <p>To identify and develop appropriate training through working with practitioners and service colleagues to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess training needs • design and support the delivery of training • support access to appropriate training • contribute to the evaluation and monitoring of training to ensure it impacts on practice <p>To support early years practitioners in implementing Ordinarily Available Provision.</p> <p>To support the implementation of the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and other relevant support frameworks, with specialist advice and guidance.</p> <p>To work with settings and early years colleagues to identify children with additional needs. To promote and support appropriate early intervention for these children through consultation with parents and practitioners including working directly with the setting.</p> <p>To contribute to the data collection and reporting processes.</p> <p>To carry out all duties in accordance with the Borough's equal opportunity policy and equality impact assessment.</p> <p>To work with colleagues to develop quality assessment tools and systems for early years settings.</p> <p>To undertake any other duties that are deemed commensurate with the role.</p> <p>The role will require visiting settings within the Local Authority.</p>
<p>Key external contacts: <i>Organisations</i></p>	<p>Early years settings consisting of private nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. Parents and carers. Schools. Health and social care (out of Borough).</p>
<p>Key internal contacts: <i>Job titles or groups of staff</i></p>	<p>Colleagues within the Early Years SEND Support Service. Colleagues from the Early Years Childcare Improvement Team. Colleagues from social care and health services (in Borough). Special Education and Training Support Service. 0 to 13 SEND Assessment team.</p>
<p>Financial dimensions: <i>Budgetary responsibility & amount. Equipment, cash, property etc. for which employee is responsible.</i></p>	<p>None</p>

Key areas for decision making:	<p>Working with early years settings on support arrangements for individual children with SEND.</p> <p>Liaison with early years colleagues.</p> <p>Links with early years settings to identify training/support programme needs.</p> <p>Delivery of training programmes alongside EYSENDS service and other REIS staff.</p> <p>Managing workload and diary.</p> <p>Business development.</p>
Other considerations: <i>E.g. working patterns</i>	<p>This post may involve occasional out-of-hours work (e.g. twilight sessions for early years providers).</p>

Key accountabilities and result areas:	Key elements:
Business Development	<p>This will involve:</p> <p>Working with team lead and service colleagues to develop the offer to early years settings and other customers, including those beyond the London Borough of Redbridge.</p>
Developing and maintaining appropriate policies and procedures	<p>This will involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With the Service Manager, developing policies for the delivery of services. 2. Monitoring impact and making changes as necessary. 3. Maintaining appropriate records.
Data management	<p>This will involve:</p> <p>Working with team members on uploading and analysing data.</p>
Developing training packages for early years settings	<p>This will involve:</p> <p>Analysing local needs.</p> <p>Analysing training and development needs of the early years sector through close liaison with other team leads within the service and colleagues within the Early Years Childcare Improvement Team.</p> <p>Working with team leads to identify training needs and deliver high quality marketed training programmes.</p>

General accountabilities and responsibilities	
Green Statement	<p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeking opportunities for contributing to sustainable development of the borough, in accordance with the Council's commitment to making Redbridge a cleaner, greener place to live. In particular, demonstrating good environmental practice (such as energy efficiency, use of sustainable materials, sustainable transport, recycling and waste reduction) in your job.
Data Protection/Confidentiality	<p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complying with the Data Protection Act 1998 – treating all information acquired through your employment, both formally and informally, in strict confidence and in accordance with Caldicott principles. ▪ Complying with the Code of Conduct, other practice guidelines and the rules and protocols defining employees' access to and use of the Council's databases and systems. Any breaches could result in disciplinary measures. ▪ Maintaining client records and archive systems in accordance with departmental procedure, policy and statutory requirements.
Conduct and Whistleblowing	<p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complying with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and maintaining high standards of personal conduct, honesty and integrity. You have a duty to raise any impropriety or breach of procedure to the appropriate level of management. Employees making such disclosures (whistleblowing) are protected and may make them without fear of recrimination.
Safer Working	<p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where you work in such a post the Council will require a DBS Disclosure check and references will be taken up prior to interview.
Equalities	<p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complying with the Council's strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity and outcomes in its services to the community and in the employment of people. You are expected to understand, comply with and promote Council policies in your work, to undertake any appropriate training and to challenge any prejudice and discrimination.
Customer Care	<p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complying with corporate and service area customer service standards and promoting the development of high quality, individualised and customer-led services.
Health and Safety	<p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being responsible for your own Health & Safety, as well as that of colleagues, service users and the public. Employees should co-operate with management, follow established systems of work, use protective equipment where necessary and report defectives and hazards to management.

To contribute as an effective and collaborative member of the team	This will involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking responsibility for continuing self-development and participating in training and development activities. Participating in the ongoing development, implementation and monitoring of the service plans. Supporting and contributing to value for money, service efficiencies and improvements.
Flexibility	This will involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The above-mentioned duties are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. From time to time you may be required to undertake responsibilities outside the normal remit of your Job Description as required by the line manager, and are broadly within the grading level and competence of the post.

Person Specification

Job Title:			
<i>Method of candidate assessment: A = Application form I = Interview T = Test. Weighting: 3 = most important, 2 = least important</i>		A - I - T	Weighting
Minimum education/ qualifications:	Educated to at least NVQ Level 3 (ideally early years related)	A, I	3
	Evidence of personal continuous professional development	A, I	2
Minimum experience/ knowledge/ skills:	Experienced and successful early years practitioner	A, I	3
	Evidence of using data to inform practice	I, T	2
	Evidence of developing and delivering high quality training relating to SEND and Early Years	A	2
	In depth knowledge of SEND	A, I, T	3
Minimum behaviours:			
Customer service	Focus on customer service Having a 'can do' approach to problem solving	I	3
Communicating and influencing others	Ability to persuade and influence others	I	3
	Ability to work as part of a team	I	3
	Creative thinker	I	3
	Willingness/ability to deliver training	I	3
Working together	A strong team player	I	3
	Being flexible, willingness to "step in" as required	I	3
	Willingness to take responsibility for decisions	I	3

Analysis and judgement	Knowledge of SEND Code of Practice	I, T	3
	Ability to set up IT systems to input and analyse data from a variety of internal and external sources to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse trends and issues Measure impact Support decisions Support service/Local Authority planning 	A, I	2
Driving improvement	Evidence of delivering service improvement within an early years context	A, I	2
	Commitment to service improvement	I	3
	Willingness to change practice in light of developments	I	3
	Commitment to personal CPD	A, I	3
Adaptability	Creative and flexible approach	I	3
	Evidence of adapting approaches in response to changes in practise	I	3
Leadership and managing people <i>(for those with line management responsibility)</i>			
Strategic perspective <i>(for senior management posts)</i>			
Special conditions:	This post may involve occasional evening work (e.g. twilight sessions for early years providers). The post will involve travelling across the Borough to various settings, access to own transport is desirable but not essential.		

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

In drawing up or revising a job description and person specification managers should:

- a) agree or revise a list of key accountabilities and responsibilities with employee(s)
- b) draft a job description and person specification using the above templates
- c) agree the job description and person specification with employee (s)
- d) get the employee to sign and date the agreed job description and person specification

This would obviously not be appropriate where new post(s) are being created and this should be made clear on the job description by inserting 'New post' in the grade section.

Job descriptions and person specifications should be clear, precise and uncomplicated.

Job Description

Lengthy description should be avoided. It is not necessary to list every job activity that might possibly occur in the job. It is important to identify the key accountabilities and results, which illustrate the full scope of the post.

The job description should therefore:

- use the attached template
- describe each key area of accountability succinctly that will allow a natural introduction to the key elements and will provide clarity in understanding the purpose of the job
- describe each element in a short sentence or two with sufficient precision to enable the reader to understand what is done and why it is done
- avoid the "shopping list" syndrome, i.e. a lengthy list of tasks/functions
- use sentences that start with an action verb e.g. manage, plan, initiate, prepare and use the present tense e.g. monitors expenditure by checking monthly summaries of orders placed to ensure adherence to budget provision
- focus on the significant or key features of the job, distinguishing between the tasks the individual actually carries out and those that he/she has set others to carry out, thus distinguishing between direct responsibility and managerial responsibility
- avoid detail of how activities are undertaken as these should be covered by an appropriate office procedure
- express performance standards using qualitative and quantitative information
- be written in clear, concise language keeping words to a minimum, avoiding duplication and acronyms
- not use language which may be viewed as discriminatory e.g. man management

The template includes space for six key areas of accountability: additional ones can be inserted but it is unlikely that any job cannot be encompassed within twelve key areas.

Person Specification

The person specification should always be kept in the same document following on from the job description. It details the education, qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills, behaviours and other requirements necessary to do the job. These requirements must have a demonstrable link to the job description and they must also be objective, and measurable.

The person specification should therefore:

- use the attached template
- only include education/qualifications that are essential where the individual would not be able to operate in their profession without them, making it clear that equivalent qualifications e.g. those obtained abroad will be considered
- be explicit in the types of experience that are required, recognising that these may be acquired other than in paid work
- only specify length of experience where this is required to meet e.g. registration standards – quality, not quantity is the key
- include the type of knowledge essential for the post holder to perform the job such as certain legislation, industry specific knowledge
- indicate the specific skills and abilities required e.g. people management skills, interpersonal skills, numerical skills
- specify the level required for *all* staff in the six core behaviours, plus the two further behaviours for those who manage others, using the behaviour framework
- include, where necessary, up to a further four technical behaviours, using the behaviour framework
- for posts with access to children and vulnerable adults include specific criteria relevant to this area e.g. ability to understand the difficulties and pressures associated with caring for children/vulnerable adults and to demonstrate appropriate coping mechanisms
- only include items under special conditions that cannot be included under other sections e.g. requirement to travel between sites
- show, for each of the criterion, how it is to be measured

Care needs to be taken to ensure that criteria are not unnecessarily restrictive, excluding some people from applying. For example if there is an occasional need to attend committee meeting in the evenings, careful consideration needs to be given as to whether this is an essential part of the job as it could otherwise be viewed as indirectly discriminatory towards women.