

Job Description

Portage Officer

Role Profile	Specialist Grade G
Service/Team	Education and Skills / SEND / Early Years Service
Reports to	Portage Team manager and/or Senior Portage officer
Responsible for	N/A
Number of posts	N/A
Post number	105275
Career Grade	N/A

My job improves the quality of life for the people of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole by delivering specialist advice and impactful support and quality services to secure positive outcomes for pre-school aged children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families.

Job Overview

- To work as a member of the SEND /Early Years Service/Portage Service operating peripatetically across the BCP council area leading and delivering high quality specialist SEND teaching/early intervention to children aged 0-3 years with significant and complex SEND; plus, information, advice, support and coaching to parents, in order to safeguard and improve the outcomes of children with SEND.
- To implement the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014 and play a key role in working collaboratively with parents and other professionals, ensuring risks are managed and securing positive outcomes for children through robust multi-agency case work, including thorough assessment of needs including safeguarding, ensuring desired outcomes are achieved and/or the timely transfer of cases to statutory services when required.
- To lead on the successful transition from home learning to an early years setting or school, identify and reduce barriers for children with SEND and their families, and help to ensure inclusion for the child within the family and wider community.

Key Responsibilities

- To provide specialist information, advice and practical support on a wide range of issues to parents of children with SEND and other professionals to support early identification of needs, assessment and intervention with young children with a vast range SEND needs, ensuring that the child is kept at the centre at all times.
- Provide specialist professional input and work collaboratively with parents and other professional teams across a broad range of stakeholders (Health, Education, Social Care, Voluntary sector) to plan specialist interventions; writing and reviewing S.M.A.R.T. targets and Individual Learning Plans to achieve collective objectives and improve outcomes for children with SEND and their families.

- Design and lead on delivering bespoke teaching and coaching both face to face and virtually, to individual and groups of parents and other professionals, to improve their skills, knowledge, and confidence in identifying strengths, needs, and appropriate strategies to support and enhance each child's learning and development.
- Manage and deploy Portage resources / equipment when needed in response to children's needs cost effectively.
- Facilitate and ensure a smooth transition from home learning to an early years setting or school via the provision of information, advice and guidance to the setting/school SENCo. Ongoing collaboration with the SENCo/Key Person to ensure continuity and consistency of learning strategies.
- Act as a case holding lead professional for children with the most complex needs; undertaking appropriate assessments in order to assess risks, providing early specialist advice, and initiating the Team Around the Child/Family approach; bringing the child, family, and other professionals together to create a more collaborative approach.
- Analyse outcomes data and case records to identify where children are not making expected progress or where there are safeguarding concerns and use this to inform decision making, resulting in timely requests for statutory assessments/intervention where appropriate (e.g., EHCNA / CiN / Child Protection).
- Apply principles of anti-discriminatory practice and provide professional challenge if needed to ensure that children and families are treated with dignity and respect and not disadvantaged.
- To work under the direction of the team manager or senior portage officer and engage in reflective peer group and individual case supervision to enhance existing practice, seek and share advice on individual cases, especially where complex, develop personal resilience, and promote continuous professional development.
- Deliver high quality services, share and embed best practice principles and a positive learning culture within service area with enthusiasm and commitment, supporting and coaching colleagues as necessary.
- To work to a high standard in accordance with agreed policies and procedures of the Council and the National Portage Association.

Specific Qualifications and Experience

- 3 A levels, NVQ 4, HND or diploma in early years education (or equivalent experience)
- Accredited Portage qualification (or be prepared to undertake this training)
- Specific SEND training (e.g., Total Communication Approaches, Autism, Sensory Integration, Severe/Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties)
- Proven experience of delivering direct SEND advice and interventions on a wide range of issues which contribute improved outcomes for children and their families.
- Excellent EYFS practitioner with a very good understanding of how young children learn.
- Good knowledge of the work practices, ICT systems/case management, processes and procedures of this area of work.
- A flexible and inclusive approach to case work, understanding different customer needs.

- Experienced in completing high quality written assessments, plans and reports and making evidence based and outcome focussed decisions using proactive risk management within set procedures.
- Working knowledge of relevant legislation & statutory guidance (SEND Code of Practice, Children Act, Equality Act, Human Rights & Data Protection)
- Experience of appropriate sharing of information & sound understanding of GDPR/confidentiality.
- Experience and understanding of Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- A good understanding of the Local Offer.

Personal Qualities & Attributes

- Able to build positive, trusting and supportive relationships with parents and professionals and seek to resolve any barriers to collaborating with others by communicating sensitively, honestly and openly.
- Able to think on your feet and adapt quickly in response to new and/or unpredictable situations.
- Remain calm and show emotional intelligence whilst respecting professional boundaries in challenging and emotionally charged situations (e.g., when parents become distressed or angry).
- Appreciate diversity in both customers and colleagues and consider their specific needs, proactively approach interactions with customers, using diplomacy and tact where issues could become contentious.
- Able to coach, mentor, motivate and enthuse others (including parents and other professionals).
- Plan and organise own workload/calendar in an environment of change and where there are competing demands. Co-ordinate processes and systems in relation to workflow/case management.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills both written and verbal and able to establish effective relationships with children, families/ carers and a wide range of professionals.
- Remain curious, solutions focused and able to make recommendations to managers and colleagues about more complex decisions and improved ways of working.
- Ensure materials and equipment are managed ensuring the effective use of resources/ value for money.
- Committed to learning and CPD.

Job Requirements

- Enhanced DBS check
- Must be able to travel, using public or other forms of transport where they are viable, or by holding a valid UK driving licence with access to own or pool car.

This job description is not exhaustive and reflects the type and range of tasks, responsibilities and outcomes associated with this post.