



JOB PROFILE

Job title:	SEND Mediation, Resolution and Tribunals Officer
Grade:	AfC -43 -46 £ £47,511- £50,448
Job family:	Special Educational Needs and Disability
Directorate:	Education Services
Reports to:	Assistant Director of Special Educational Needs

VISION FOR ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN

We support children to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.

CONTEXT

Achieving for Children is an award-winning social enterprise created by Kingston and Richmond Councils in 2014, and responsible for delivering the entirety of both boroughs' children's services. In 2017, we expanded across a third local authority area when the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead joined the company.

Our vision for Achieving for Children is simple: by bringing together professional expertise from three local authority areas, and by putting children and young people at the heart of everything we do, we will be able to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and families.

Since we were established, we have gained a reputation as one of the leading children's services providers in the country. We are one of the Department for Education's sixteen 'Partners in Practice', tasked with leading improvement across the sector.

Achieving for Children continually reviews its structure and business practices in order to provide the best possible services for children, young people and their families, in the most effective and efficient way. As a result, the key tasks in any job profile may be varied and the post-holder will be expected to take on such variations and duties consistent with the level of responsibility of the post.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES/DUTIES OF THE JOB

AfC is committed to effective implementation of the 2014 Children and Families Act. We work tirelessly to identify and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs. Ensuring that our local provision is high quality, responsive to current and planned need so that children can be educated in their local community is a key strategic aim. We want to work in partnership with parents and carers and our providers to secure the most appropriate provision for our children and young people and our decisions are based on matching provision to need, keeping children and young people in their local community and building independence.

This role will work with the EHC coordinators, senior leadership in SEN to manage occasions where views differ and resolution is needed. They will also work closely with our SENDIASS team to hear feedback, understand local issues and to resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity.

- Leading, supervising and managing the end-to-end Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) process. Including all case management, ensuring that all Tribunal casework is conducted in a timely and efficient manner and in line with Tribunal set deadlines.
- Drafting legal submissions to the Tribunal, arranging for any necessary expert assessment to take place
- Acting as the single point of contact for parents and their legal representatives
- Leading and undertaking Telephone Case Management Hearings to ensure the London Borough of Croydon provides a high quality service in relation to the appeals process. This would be in accordance with Audit Commission and Best Value Indicators.
- Ensuring that our model is solution focused, client orientated developing and maintaining a service delivery model with the aim to reduce parental recourse to SENDIST.
- Providing advocacy and representation across Kingston and Richmond at appeal hearings, including managing and supporting expert witnesses and co-ordinating our response during appeal hearings.
- Ensuring that the Achieving for Children complies with Tribunal Appeal orders.
- Maintaining records of Tribunal casework and providing regular data reports, setting out quarterly Tribunals lodged, contested, conceded and hearing outcomes with analysis, which highlights issues, lessons learned and any financial or practice implications.
- Liaising with a range of external stakeholders, including schools, expert witnesses, for example Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech and Language Therapists, to ensure that any and all relevant evidence regarding Tribunal appeals is obtained and quality assured before submission to the Tribunal.
- Managing and leading on the LA's response to Tribunals registered under the SEND Single Route of Redress National Trial. Including detailed and close liaison with colleagues and management in social care and the CCG, including relevant practitioners and commissioners. To present Kingston and Richmond's position in such matters to the Tribunal as a whole following that work with social care and the CCG.
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal Team Leader is responsible for providing expert advice to colleagues and the wider Council in regard to SEND legislation Children and Families Act 2014, Education Act 1996, Equality Act 2010, SEND Regulations 2014, Care Act 2014, Children Act 1989, Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, and Tribunal Procedure Rules – in order to support legislatively compliant practice.
- The Tribunal Officer is responsible for effective problem-solving, assimilating information and making informed decisions often under short time constraints. A high proportion of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal Team Leader's role is working

directly with parental appointed legal representatives, schools and link agencies within the statutory and legal framework related to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal process.

- Supervision of the Appeals and Tribunals Support Officer, and all work conducted by it in relation to Tribunal proceedings, as well as mediations and dispute resolutions. To lead on ensuring managers are appropriately briefed in detail on any statutory or legal issues relating to complex mediations and dispute resolutions.
- Leading and developing practice which limits the Authority's exposure to the risk of appeals to Tribunals, litigation and judicial review/complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman. This would include providing all information relating to Ombudsman and Judicial Review complaints, or where appropriate, responding directly if and when appropriate

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Key Accountability - Leading on the development of a solution-focused approach that reduces adversary

- Leadership and management of the end-to-end Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) process. Including all case management, with all Tribunal casework conducted in a timely and efficient manner and in line with Tribunal set deadlines.
- Legal submissions drafted and provided to the Tribunal, with necessary expert assessment arranged to inform submissions,
- Parents and their legal representatives have single point of contact,
- Telephone Case Management Hearings are undertaken and managed effectively in accordance with Audit Commission and Best Value Indicators.
- Leadership of a Tribunal Team that is solution focused, client orientated with the aim to reduce parental recourse to SENDIST and/or parental anxiety.
- Advocacy and representation for the London Borough of Croydon at appeal hearings, including managing and supporting expert witnesses and co-ordinating the Council's response during appeal hearings.
- Compliance with Tribunal Appeal orders.
- Records of Tribunal casework maintained and regular data reports setting out quarterly Tribunals lodged, contested, conceded and hearing outcomes with analysis, which highlights issues, lessons learned and any financial or practice implications.
- Liaison with a range of external stakeholders, including schools, expert witnesses, for example Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech and Language Therapists. Quality assurance of advice before submission to the Tribunal.
- Management of the LA's response to Tribunals registered under the SEND Single Route of Redress National Trial.
- Expert advice is provided to colleagues and the wider Council in regard to the Children and Families Act 2014, Education Act 1996, Equality Act 2010, SEND Regulations 2014, Care Act 2014, Children Act 1989, Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, and Tribunal Procedure Rules – in order to support legislatively compliant practice.

General

1. To ensure that the highest quality services are provided for our children and young people, within the resources available, and are responsive to the expressed needs and aspirations of service users and customers regardless of backgrounds, lifestyles and abilities.
2. To demonstrate a commitment to own personal and professional development and to developing and coaching others.
3. To champion the promotion of diversity and equalities in the development and delivery of services and in all aspects of people management.
4. To ensure the wellbeing of employees and service-users by actively promoting and complying with health and safety regulations, policies and procedures.
5. To undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade of the post, as may be required from time to time, including attending meetings outside of normal working hours.

VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

Evidence that you put children and young people first.	Essential
Evidence that you work in partnership to improve services.	Essential
Evidence that you focus on quality and innovation.	Essential
Evidence that you listen and learn to develop the organisation.	Essential
Evidence that you champion inclusion and value diversity.	Essential

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Qualifications	
Degree level or the equivalent	Essential
Training in SEN Legislation and willingness to attend further training in special educational needs legislation (Children & Families Act/Care Act; SEND Reforms) – short course/day training	Desirable
Post-graduate or legal training	Desirable

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities	
Understanding of relevant legislation - Children and Families Act 2014 / SEND Code of Practice 2015, Care Act 2014 and implications for role	Essential
Knowledge and understanding of government policy and initiatives - and their implication for the role.	Essential
Evidence of continuing professional development and skill enhancement	Essential
High level of analytical skills problem solving abilities and decision-making skills.	Essential
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Excellent and highly developed negotiation/communication skills.	Essential
Highly developed presentational skills, particularly in relation to legal case responses, letter writing and correspondence.	Essential
Excellent inter-personal skills and ability to develop effective and positive	Essential

collaborative working relationships with a range of colleagues, and members of the public.	
Excellent advocacy skills.	Essential
Proven people management skills.	Essential
Substantial legal experience or an equivalent legal qualification/relevant qualification or substantial experience in SEN.	Essential
Proven track record of managing a range of responsibilities and co-ordinating service delivery in a multi-disciplinary environment.	Essential
Effective use of ICT	Essential
Proven track record of effective budgetary awareness, financial planning and systems use and systems development.	Essential
Ability to travel around the borough to visit schools, other education settings and/or other locations as required.	Essential

This job profile is provided for guidance only. It will be reviewed, updated and amended in accordance with the changing needs of Achieving for Children and the specific requirements of the role.