



Assistant Tribunal and Mediation Officer

Scale point: 29-32 | Based in Kingston and Richmond | Permanent | Full time

About the service

The Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Service in Achieving for Children (AfC) is a dynamic, innovative and high quality service supporting children, young people and families. We work collaboratively with parents, carers and young people, schools, early years providers, colleges and other educational settings, as well as professionals and agencies to ensure that statutory functions associated with the Children and Families Act 2014 are embedded and understood, and that children and young people with complex SEND achieve their outcomes and move towards their aspirations.

About the role

The Assistant Tribunal and Mediation Officer is a crucial role representing AfC and supporting multidisciplinary professionals through SEND appeals and mediations, including through close working with our legal teams. They will support the Tribunal Manager to develop internal tribunal and mediation systems and processes to ensure that AfC and its partners and stakeholders make effective decisions, are well represented and have impactful outcomes. The postholder will take on casework, prepare responses to and sometimes represent AfC in appeals and mediations. They will seek opportunities to de-escalate issues from formal routes of appeal. They will have current and proven knowledge of the SEND and associated legislation (Children & Families Act; Children Act; Equalities Act etc) and SEND caselaw. They will draw on their persuasion and negotiation skills and have the intrinsic resilience to model and build positive working relationships with children, young people and families particularly in their times of anxiety, crisis and when they might be combative situations. They will attend SEND panels and deliver internal and external training related to SEND tribunals and mediation.

About you: our role specification

Qualifications

- Educated to a degree level with a relevant professional qualification or other relevant level 3 or higher training in SEND related areas (Desirable)
- Credible practitioner with demonstrable experience, knowledge and skills in the complex area of SEND. (Essential)

Skills and experience

- Experience of building strong partnerships, maintaining relationships and co-producing solutions to challenges across a diverse set of stakeholders including children/ young people and families.
- Knowledge of representing the LA as appropriate at the SENs and Disability Tribunal. Particularly those lower risk appeals.
- Knowledge of mediation and disagreement resolution meetings with parents and other professionals in an attempt to settle disputed issues without the need for formal legal redress. This will include negotiating changes to the EHC plans.
- Ability to arrange and chair conferences with witnesses and perform other duties in relation to First Tier Tribunals and appeals.
- Ability to prepare responses for appeal hearings, liaising with AfC's legal services, AfC's SEND Service Managers; EHC Coordinator Managers / Team Leaders and EHC Coordinators, advising on the legal aspects of SEND cases.
- Coordinate and collate information to support the Local Authority where there are disputes about SEND support arrangements including preparing evidence for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman enquiries.
- Attendance and deliver training at Strategic Partnership Boards and other relevant meetings.
- Experience of keeping and maintaining records (in accordance with local policy) and producing accurate reports, presentations, written updates to a range of stakeholders
- Knowledge of statutory legislation (for example Children's Act) and national policy drivers that will affect children's services and your role.

Personal attributes

- A passion for Achieving for Children's vision, mission and values (trust, empower. respect) to support children and young people to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.
- Able to use a range of digital hardware or software to support your work effectively i.e. microsoft or Google software.
- Strong organisational abilities including: time management, creative-thinking, problem-solving and multitasking.
- Able to work flexibly and independently with limited management oversight.
- Personal determination, drive, energy and ambition to achieve challenging objectives, celebrate success and deliver excellent outcomes for children using a strength based approach.
- Commitment to resource-sharing and collaborative working within Achieving for Children and across organisational boundaries in the best interests of children and families.
- Good communication and interpersonal skills that are open, honest, persuasive and pragmatic, including excellent negotiation and influencing skills.

The post holder will be expected to undertake other duties commensurate with the grade of the post, including deputising or working flexibly across the week to meet the business demands. This job profile is provided for guidance only.

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