



Special Educational Needs (SEN) Caseworker

Band: 5, £25,652 - £27,363 per annum pro rata

Full time: 37 hours per week

Contract: Permanent

Reports to: SEN Team Leader

Portsmouth Local Authority is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Every post is subject to PCC and Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Board safer recruitment procedures.

The SEN Team is a specialist team within Education's Inclusion Service with links and positive working relationships with many other teams across the council. We are an established team with a strong commitment and drive to support children, young people and their families in the city. We strive to work in partnership with our schools, early years settings and colleges and other agencies. Our approach is needs-led to ensure all children and young people are supported. The council has been selected by the DfE to lead on the SEND and AP Change Programme for the South-East which provides a unique opportunity until July 2025 to shape the future of special educational needs and alternative provision. The SEN Team will have an important role to play in the delivery of this programme. If this sounds like a team you would like to be part of, we would welcome your application to join us.

The Team

The SEN team's work is entirely statutory and involves co-ordinating and managing the statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment process including issuing, maintaining and reviewing EHC Plans; securing and monitoring appropriate educational placements and provision for children and young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities (aged 0 – 25) and co-ordinating and managing the response to appeals to the First Tier Tribunal (SEN & Disability) against decisions in relation to children's and young people's EHC needs assessments and EHC plans; assessing eligibility for home to school travel assistance, free school meals (traded service) and SEN finance.

The team works with a wide range of professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Paediatricians, Social Workers, Speech & Language Therapists, Headteachers, and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (or SENCOs). The team regularly works with parents both in responding to their requests and supporting them through complex statutory processes.

The impact of the SEN team's work is both immediate and far reaching – the processes that the team manage and deliver directly affect the educational arrangements and life chances for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the city.

The team operates within a highly complex and changing legislative framework.

What is the role?

The role of SEN Caseworker is busy, challenging and requires the successful candidate to demonstrate and develop a wide range of skills, knowledge and abilities including the capacity to work under sustained periods of pressure.

The SEN Caseworker will support the SEN Team through undertaking the administration of the statutory process in identifying, assessing, issuing and reviewing the education, health & care planning arrangements of children and young people's special educational needs and disabilities. The SEN Caseworker will routinely request, receive and distribute reports from education, health and social care professionals. These tasks require the SEN Caseworker to have an excellent grasp of written and spoken English, have a keen eye for detail and be confident in their administrative skills, knowledge and abilities.

The SEN Caseworker will have to demonstrate exceptional empathetic skills in working with vulnerable families who might feel overwhelmed by their circumstances and their concerns for their child's education. SEN Caseworkers are routinely the first point of contact for parents and young people known to the team. Equally, the same role requires the SEN Caseworker to routinely work with and give accurate information and advice to education, health and social care professionals.

In addition to being able to get along well with people, the SEN Caseworker must possess a high level of proven administration skills. The statutory processes delivered by the SEN Caseworker include a high percentage of casework administration. The local authority's compliance with statutory processes and timelines are performance managed, and the SEN Caseworker is central to our team's compliance with these standards.

As the processes that the SEN team deliver are all monitored within statutory time and quality assurance frameworks (which have significant consequences for the local authority if they are not adhered to), the SEN Caseworker will need to have genuinely excellent time management skills, including the ability to prioritise often competing pressures to ensure delivery of work on time or earlier and to at least the required standard. This inevitably requires the SEN Caseworker to work flexibly and sometimes beyond standard office hours at peaks of the business cycle.

Key tasks and responsibilities will include:

- Being the first point of contact for enquiries to the SEN Team.
- Covering the shared email inbox and being the duty caseworker (based in the office) on a rota basis.
- Administering EHC needs assessments and the annual review processes including communicating with parents, young people, and professionals in writing, by telephone and in person; arranging meetings; booking venues etc.
- Requesting evidence from all agencies when a request for EHC needs assessment has been received or through the annual review process.
- Receiving, collating and distributing reports.

- Liaising with education, health and social care professionals such as Teachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, Educational Psychologists, Paediatricians, Health Visitors, Therapists and Social Workers.
- Providing information and advice to parents of children and to young people with special educational needs and disabilities and signposting them to services as necessary.
- Providing information and advice to schools and signposting them to services, as necessary.
- Using Microsoft Office and other ICT and regularly using the telephone/ MS Teams.
- Carefully recording decisions and data onto a database, including funding and personal budgets, and accurately maintaining pupil records.
- Monitoring advice from education, health and social care contributors and other professionals and ensure that this is relevant to their area of expertise and meets the requirement of the SEN Code of Practice and Children and Families Act 2014.
- Ensuring that statutory timescales are adhered to and that all cases are progressed effectively and alerting the SEND Adviser / SEN Team Leader to delays.
- Supporting the Access and Entitlement Officer with processing funding to schools for children and young people with SEN.

This role is office based and does not involve direct contact with children

Who is the person?

Ideally, you will provide demonstrable knowledge, experience and skills in the following areas:

1. Higher level administrative experience of statutory or time bound processes, including dealing with customer's (e.g., schools) and clients (e.g., parents) enquiries through various methods of communication i.e., in writing, by phone or in person.
2. Experience of working in a professional setting directly related to supporting work with children and families (e.g., in a school, a local authority such as an education or social care department, a hospital or community health setting etc).
3. A demonstrable ability to work inclusively and in a people-focused way with people in challenging and / or sensitive circumstances.
4. A demonstrable ability to show respect and empathy.
5. Demonstrable experience of working with senior staff (such as Headteachers or Heads of Service).
6. Excellent communication skills – clear and effective oral communication, and written skills – demonstrated and developed in a workplace.

7. Demonstrable ability to communicate difficult messages, with the integrity to hold to difficult or unpopular decisions.
8. Has attention to detail ensuring accuracy when recording decisions and data onto a database and accurately maintaining pupil records.
9. An understanding and proven ability in working to the bounds of confidentiality, as you will be dealing with records of children and their families.
10. Proven ability to successfully work to tight deadlines and to use a range of techniques in order to effectively manage competing priorities when under pressure.
11. Demonstrable ability to use and work on own initiative.
12. Demonstrable information & communication technology skills, e.g., ability to use Microsoft Office include Word, Excel, Power Point, Microsoft Teams, and Outlook.
13. Demonstrable ability and willingness to collaborate well as part of a team, including working to support the team and business needs (i.e., being flexible)
14. A knowledge of Special Educational Needs and Disability legislation and an understanding of the role of the Local Authority in relation to Special Educational Needs & Disability.

You will need to demonstrate that you have the Right to Work in the UK. No post will be offered without it.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

As part of any recruitment process, Portsmouth City Council collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. Portsmouth City Council is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses that data and to meeting its data protection obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Completing and sending an application in for a vacancy is your consent for us to process your data for the purpose of recruitment. Your data is not used in any other way and you can withdraw your consent at any point in the recruitment process and we will destroy or delete your information.

For more detailed information on what we collect, how we use, store, delete data and your rights you can access a privacy statement on our Job board.

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