



SEN Caseworker

Barnet Education & Learning Service (BELS)

Closing date: 17/5/2024

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Barnet Education & Learning Service (BELS)

Our Services

<https://www.bels.org.uk/>

In September 2020, Barnet Council entered into a new strategic partnership with Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS), a limited company wholly owned by the council, to provide the council's education services.

The partnership was established in consultation with Barnet schools and the steering group of the Parent-Carer Forum.

The aim of establishing the partnership is to

- Maintain and continue to develop Barnet's excellent education offer.
- Maintain and continue to develop the excellent relationship between the Council and schools.
- Achieve further budget savings if required.

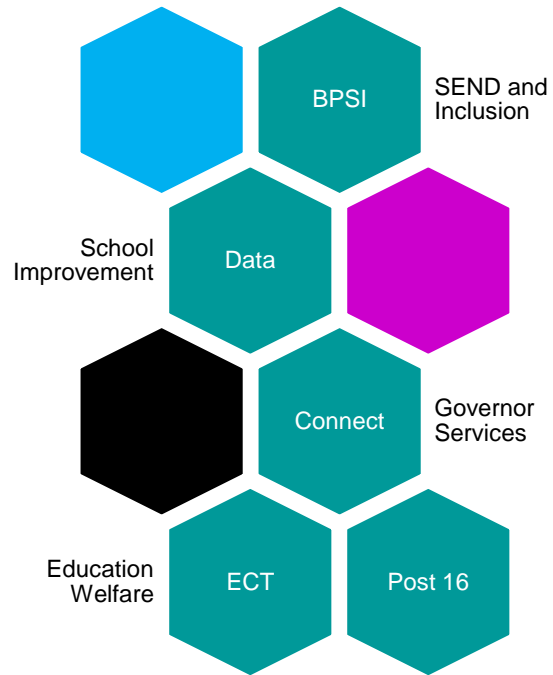
The partnership is governed by a series of boards on which schools, settings and other stakeholders are represented that steer the strategic direction of the partnership in delivering school improvement, services for children with special educational needs and school place planning.

Performance against all three objectives for the partnership has been strong both before BELS was established and since then. Between April 2016 and August 2020 the service was run through a partnership between the council and Cambridge Education. Educational progress and achievement have improved consistently year on year. 97% of Barnet schools are good or outstanding and Barnet is now in the top 10% for almost all measures and the top 5% for many of the measures. The service has met all the budget targets for savings that were agreed with the council over the last five years.

There is also a very strong and experienced management team in place within the Education and Learning service, which has the confidence of schools, members, Council officers and other stakeholders.

BELS is responsible for the following services:

- Development and implementation of the council's education strategy, along with its Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy, SEND and Disabilities Strategy, School Places Strategy and Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy.
- Strategic support and advice to the Schools Forum and oversight of the Dedicated Schools Budget
- School and settings improvement (including early years)
- Statutory local authority services, such as monitoring, supporting and challenging schools, and intervening in maintained schools where necessary
- The Virtual School



- Special Educational Needs statutory processes including assessment and placements
- SEN Transport – assessment, brokerage, contract and budget management
- Educational psychology team
- SEN specialist support services
- Pupil place planning
- Admissions
- Education welfare service
- Post 16 education and skills, including monitoring, tracking and supporting participation
- Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance service
- Traded services to schools:
 - Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI)
 - Governor services
 - Newly Qualified Teachers support
 - Education Welfare Service
 - Educational psychology
 - Inclusion Advisory Team
 - Connect (formerly North London Schools International Network)
 - Foreign Language Assistants
 - Data Service

Staff Terms and Conditions

Staff working for BELS are employed on terms and conditions that are aligned with national agreements for staff working in local authorities except in respect of pensions.

New staff joining BELS who join and want to contribute to a Pension Scheme will become members of AVIVA – the Pension provider for BELS. Staff can contribute 4.5% of their salary into the Scheme and BELS will match this. There is also an option of increasing contributions to 7% with BELS also contributing at this rate. Contributions higher than this will not be matched by BELS.

As BELS is not a Local Authority, the company does not come under the Modification Order and therefore does not recognise continuous employment from other Local Authorities/schools. Your continuous service will start on the date you join the organisation.

Your annual leave is based on the grade and years of continuous service. Upon their start, employees will be entitled to 26 days plus 8 Bank holidays per annum – pro-rated for part timers and this would increase with service.

It is a standard practice that prospective employees are offered the starting point of the pay scale and it is expected that staff will progress through the spine points on an annual basis. However, if there is a strong case to pay above the minimum of the scale, the relevant service Director would consider the case.

Letter to applicants

Department: SEN Department
Telephone: 02083597007

Dear Applicant

Post: SEN Caseworker

Thank you for the interest you have shown in the above opportunity.

This Job Information Pack gives a full explanation of the job and working for Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS), which I hope will encourage you to apply for the post.

To apply for this post, please click on 'Apply' button below. If you need assistance, please email the BELS HR Team at: hr.barnetbels@barnet.gov.uk. quoting job title.

The closing date for applications is 17/05/2024.

Interviews will be held – TBC - 24/05/2024 or 28/05/2024.

If you would like to discuss this position on an informal basis, please contact me on 02083597007.

It is important to us at BELS that our organisation reflects all members of our community and we strongly encourage members of ethnic minority communities to apply.

I look forward to receiving an application from you.

Yours faithfully

Feray Souleiman

Head of SEN Assessments and Placements

Job Title: SEN Caseworker
Contract Type: Fixed-term contract for 12 months), All Year Round
Hours: 36 hours per week (1.0 FTE)
Salary: £39,951 - £42,840 Per Annum (Full Time)

We are seeking to appoint a SEN Caseworker. The successful candidate will have primary responsibility for a caseload relating to a defined group of schools or geographical area. The caseworker will manage the effective co-ordination of the assessment, and review the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) of individual pupils, according to the Children and Families Act 2014.

Experience and/or knowledge of SEND legislation is essential. In return, you will be offered extensive in-house training and an opportunity to develop skills in the SEN environment. You will be given regular supervision and be part of a thriving dynamic team.

For an informal discussion about the post please contact Feray Souleiman, Head of SEN assessments and placements - 02083597007.

The closing date for applications is 17/05/2024.

Interviews will be held – TBC - 24/05/2024 or 28/05/2024.

To apply for this post, please click on 'Apply' button below. If you need assistance, please email the BELS HR Team at: hr.barnetbels@barnet.gov.uk. quoting job title.

Barnet Education and Learning Service are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

An enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) with barred list check is required for all successful applicants. In addition, if this post is likely to come under the requirements of the Childcare (Disqualification) 2009 Regulations, the successful applicant will be required to declare.

We value diversity.

Job Description

1. Service:	Education & Skills
Job Title:	SEN Caseworker
Grade and Salary:	29-32
Reports to:	SEN Casework Manager

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF JOB

1. To act as “Named Officer” (SEN Code 2014) and case worker in the management of a caseload of pupils with SEN and to ensure that legislative and policy requirements are met and procedures are administered within statutory timescales prescribed in the Government's Code of Practice and the Council's Performance Indicators and best practice
2. Analysis and synthesis of complex reports, to produce summary documents to be used for a range of purposes, the majority of which is to inform decision making on the allocation of additional resourcing and school placement.
3. To write, maintain and amend Education, Health and Care Plans and through contact with schools and other education providers, and consideration of annual review reports, monitor the arrangement of any special educational provision specified in the EHC Plan, in accordance with relevant legislation.
4. In addition to drafting Education, Health and Care Plans, to draft:
 - a. reasoned and detailed decision letters applying the legal framework in the context of a range of (often conflicting) professional advice, explaining the reasons for the decision
 - b. clear briefs to inform the discussion of senior officers, advisory/moderating panels and others as directed
 - c. responses to complaints, MP and elected member enquiries
 - d. appropriate records for pupil files as instructed
5. Liaising with schools, education settings and parents regarding assessment, placement, support and any other matter of interest or concern to schools and parents that falls within the brief of the SEN Team.
6. To display a genuine commitment to partnership working relationships with parents, pupils, schools, early years settings, colleges, Children’s Service staff and other statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that the Council’s statutory duties for SEN are effectively undertaken, and that parents and providers are confident in the management of the statutory SEN process.

7. Through professional, objective, clear and discrete interactions with parents and professionals, ensure that personal presentation and style recognises that assessment and related matters, are often stressful for parents.
8. Working within the Council's code of practice for communication with the public, take time and make appropriate phone, meeting or written responses to build confidence and ensure the Council's statutory responsibilities are met.

3.1 PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

4.1 Main duties and responsibilities

Statutory Process

1. Ensure delivery of statutory assessment processes for a defined caseload in a manner that:-
 - Satisfies requirements of the 1996 Education Act and the 2014 Children and Families Act, and associated legislation
 - Complies with DfE guidance
 - Supports and promotes Council policies
 - Promotes locality based and inclusive education
 - Encourages and develops positive relationships with schools, and other education settings
 - Minimises dispute with parents through high quality and bespoke communication
 - Builds on, develops and improves relationships with other agencies, including children's and adult health services health and children's and adults social care
 - Enables local and national performance targets to be achieved
2. In accordance with the regulations and guidance that underpin assessment of SEN and multi-agency interventions, and within LBB operational procedures, ensure that all processes including issuing, amending and reviewing EHC Plans are delivered within timescales.
3. Ensure on-going familiarity with Council policies and procedures that apply to the management of SEN casework and placements.
4. Work within defined decision-making processes and within the delegated decisions framework as appropriate.
5. In preparation for decision making through panels or by senior officers, provide analytical briefs on evidence gathered to inform decisions on:
 - Whether or not to undertake an EHC Needs Assessment
 - Whether or not to issue an EHCP
 - Any other decision stated
6. Analyse and evaluate educational, medical, social care and psychological advice and other relevant information and reports collected under the Statutory Assessment of a child's special needs, through annual review or separately. Following the analysis:
 - Write detailed and specific education health and care plans (EHCPs) according to the statutory guidance and reflecting local guidelines and written policies.
 - amend EHCPs
 - explain reasons for not assessing, not issuing an EHCP or not amending an EHCP

- Write, in liaison with the educational psychologist and/or specialist teacher, a note of needs and provision following a refusal to assess

Relationships and contact with stakeholders and partners

7. Ensure supportive constructive and sensitive liaison and discussion with schools and settings so the decisions made on casework are well supported with evidence and have maximum potential for sustainability.
8. Establish and sustain strong working links with the Virtual School for Looked After Children, ensuring a high level of vigilance to monitoring the special educational provision for those looked after children with EHCPs
9. Develop and maintain high quality relationships with key staff in:
 - schools and settings (especially head teachers and SENCOs)
 - Inclusion and Skills (especially educational psychologists, early years SEN staff and specialists' teachers)
 - Children's Services (especially social workers),
 - Health (especially paediatricians, therapists and CAMHS workers)
 - other agencies, for example youth services, the YOT
 - Parent Partnership Services
 - Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Services.
10. To make positive and constructive responses to telephone enquiries from schools, parents, other services and the public, aiming, through the application of specialist knowledge, to defuse stress and anxiety and where possible provide required information or signpost to other services
11. Liaise with non-educational agencies to ensure that appropriate non-educational services are provided. Influence schools and other relevant parties to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and make best use of SEN funding.
12. Attend individual pupil casework meetings as required, including Annual Review meetings, in order to assist with problem resolution, and/or to monitor progress and provision of pupils with SEN.
13. Provide training, information, guidance and advice as required on statutory procedures to parents, schools and other parties. Represent the SEN Strategic and Casework Team at events organised to provide information sharing and/or training with other agencies related to the SEN Code of Practice, legislation and relevant practice and procedures within Barnet

Casework Management

14. To make timely links with SEN colleagues who have a brief to manage funding, placements, transport – so that the effective co-ordination of these functions with casework management is efficient and effective.
15. To attend and contribute to case review, annual review, parent and other meetings as agreed with or instructed by the SEN casework manager.
16. To work in a structured partnership with SEN Support Officers so that the different tasks within the SEN statutory process are completed with quality, in a coordinated and time efficient manner.

17. To ensure high quality paper and electronic case file management, following quality standards and guidelines set down, and with support from the SEN support officer for data input, file organisation and filing.
18. Implement the decisions of relevant LA Panels in order that the special educational provision specified in the EHC Plan is arranged, including admission to school or other educational settings
19. Make recommendations on placement and working closely with the Placements Co-ordinator, reach resolution to the placement of pupils with EHC Plans. Work within statutory guidance, agreed procedures and workflow processes in relation to consulting on and finalising placements.
20. Identify potential conflicts and disagreements and emotionally charged situations at an early stage. Plan approach to resolve or reduce conflict and disagreement swiftly, effectively and professionally through mediation and other appropriate conflict resolution techniques, with a focus on the provision of suitable education for the pupils and that the LA discharges its statutory responsibilities. Work in partnership with parents, pupils and schools to promote inclusion and to minimise conflict and disagreement.
21. Supported by SEN Support Officers, ensure that pupil files and all necessary casework records are accurate, kept up-to-date and are filed and stored securely, for those cases for which the post holder is responsible.
22. Have regard to statutory timescales and local performance standards for written correspondence and administration and ensure these are met for the area for those cases for which the post holder is responsible.
23. Ensure relevant statistical and management information is organised and available, including the allocation of different amounts and types of resources to EHCPs .
24. Ensure that the responsibility of safeguarding the welfare of children is a fundamental aspect of this job and that the principles are embedded in all procedures, practices, professional advice and decision making. Ensure full compliance with the Pan-London protocols and Barnet safeguarding standards

4.2 Staff Responsibilities

- 4.2.1 No direct staff responsibility. Some responsibility for occasional staff supervision and induction for less experienced staff within the team. Providing day to day direction and support as required to SEN Support Officers. Assisting other officers within the SEN strategic and casework team to contribute to team efficiency and effectiveness
- 4.2.2 Involvement in the training and development of staff within the team
- 4.2.3 Deputise for the SEN Casework Manager as required
- 4.2.4 Work collaboratively and jointly with other SEN Casework Officers, adopting different and complementary roles in the operation and delivery of whole Teamwork processes.

5.0 PROMOTION OF CORPORATE VALUES

5.1 Ensure standards of customer care are met in accordance with the Council's EHC Plan of Values. To be aware of the Corporate Plan and how it affects the section.

5.2 Ensure that a high level of confidentiality is maintained in all aspects of work.

6.0 FLEXIBILITY

6.1 In order to deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed, and the post holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, will fall within the scope of the post, at the appropriate grade.

7.0 THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

7.1 To deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity both in the provision of services and as an employer. All staff are expected to promote equality in the workplace and in the services the council delivers.

Person Specification

Service:	Children's Service
Location:	2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale
Job Title:	SEN Caseworker
Grade:	29 - 32
Reports to:	SEN Casework Manager

Essential Qualifications required

Type	Level required
Professional qualifications/memberships	None specific – desirable if qualified in children's education or related professional qualification e.g.: Teaching assistant, youth worker, guidance etc.
Education	Desirable if educated to degree level or equivalent (preferably in a relevant discipline) Minimum: GCSE Maths and English or equivalent

Technical / Knowledge Requirements

Type	Description
ICT skills	Competent and confident in the use of standard Microsoft Office products such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint. Proven experience and competency in the effective use of ICT databases and record storage and retrieval systems. Proven ability to handle confidential personal information in an appropriate and secure manner.
Project Management	Ability to carry lead on projects or operational processes related to the work environment

Role Specific Competencies

Type	Description
Knowledge & Experience	Knowledge, experience and understanding of the main current developments and statutory position relating to children with special educational needs
	Demonstrable knowledge of the main SEN legislation and guidance, particularly the SEN Code of Practice and 1996 Education Act and other related/relevant Children focused legislation
	Experience of the work of other agencies including health, mental health, voluntary sector and others.
	Experience of relevant work preferably in a school setting or within a local authority, or equivalent organisation.
Literacy and written language skills	Ability to make appropriate recommendations and write detailed, grammatical letters, EHC Plans and reports in a clear and structured manner based on an analysis of complex information
	Ability to deal with complex reports, and to demonstrate good analytical skills, synthesis and précis skills
Generalising	Ability to apply learning and technical aspects from one case to another within wider legal framework
Emotional intelligence and resilience	Ability to know when to and how to apply a sensitive and objective empathy without compromising the Council. Ability to manage situations of high stress, anxiety and sometimes anger amongst stakeholders, especially parents.

Behavioural Competencies

Competency	Key to role
Communicating and influencing	Effective verbal and written communication skills
	Ability to communicate complex issues in a clear and effectively manner (oral and written) with a wide range of stakeholders and to advise, persuade, influence, empathise and be assertive as appropriate.
	Ability to participate effectively at case conferences and other forums to secure positive outcomes which make best use of limited resources.
	Proven ability to resolve conflict through mediation and other conflict resolution techniques and find creative, interagency solutions which meet children's needs.
	Ability to ensure a high standard of customer care
	Ability to manage continuous interruptions, including phone calls, ensuring courtesy and attention as required
Political Awareness	Appreciation of the political make-up and decision-making processes of the council and its impact on the role

Leadership	Willingness to take personal responsibility for the delivery of relevant service priorities that pertain to the role.
	Ability to ensure that children and young people and their parents are the focal point for decision making
	Ability to ensure statutory criteria for efficiency and cost-effectiveness are integrated into advice that informs decisions to be made and actions taken
Problem solving	Ability to analyse complex information quickly, reaching and articulating decisions with clarity, to deliver solutions that command support.
	Ability to engage those who disagree to secure agreement through explanation, clarifying, knowledge of the law and tactical case management skills
Striving for excellence	Proven record of achievement in delivering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service improvement • logical and effective decision making • high quality, accurate and timely work
	Ability to manage a complex workload and meet tight timescales, using ICT skills to support office procedures
	Demonstrates a determination to provide a quality service and achieve challenging targets
	Commitment to embrace the principles of equality in the
	delivery of the service
Staff management	Proven ability to support the delivery of effective training relating to the role of the job
Team working	Ability to work effectively, flexibly and constructively with colleagues in a team and make a positive contribution.
	Ability to work effectively with senior managers, staff, schools, external partners and to establish confidence, trust and credibility
	Demonstrable experience of working effectively and participating with other colleagues on an inter-agency basis to ensure an effective response to complex issues
	Ability to work with a range of professional staff and the public

	Ability to build and nurture good working relationships with colleagues and across a wide range of outside agencies
Safeguarding	Sound understanding of the principles of safeguarding and a commitment to improving safeguarding the welfare children and young people.
Partnership working	Recognises the importance to the council of active partnership working and embraces partnership working where relevant to deliver services most effectively and efficiently
	Actively contributes to the creation of an open, and interdependent culture
	Ability to provide accurate guidance, information and advice to parents

How to apply and key dates

The closing date for applications is 17/05/2024.

Interviews will be held – TBC - 24/05/2024 or 28/05/2024.

Completing Application Forms

Particular attention should be given to the Supporting Information section within the application form. Shortlisting is based on the candidate's ability to meet the selection criteria within the person specification. Therefore, it is essential that you outline clear examples and evidence of how you meet the requirements of the person specification. Examples and evidence should also relate back to the duties/accountabilities contained in the job description.

Reply Details

Your application form must reach us by the closing date. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

Please note CVs will not be accepted.

Further Information

Should you have any queries relating to any aspect of this appointment process, or require additional information, then contact the Schools Team.

It is important that you complete ALL sections of the application form.

Next Steps

If you are selected for interview, we will contact you by email and/or text message.