

Job description

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| Job title: | Principal Educational Psychologist |
| Grade: | Soulbury Scale B SCP 9 – 12 (plus 3 SPA) |
| Job evaluation reference: | Soulbury |
| Job family: | Education and Learning |

Purpose and impact

1. To lead the strategic vision for Educational Psychology (EP) practice and delivery of the service aligning it with the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and Education priorities. To lead change of the educational psychology practice and offer in response to DfE legislation and reforms.
2. Ensure a good quality and value for money service is delivered in a timely way to provide psychological advice towards EHC Needs Assessments.
3. To provide strategic direction to improve services for children and young people aged 0–25, especially those with SEND and emotional wellbeing and mental health needs leading Dorset's specialist SEND workforce. Lead Dorset's Graduated Approach and ensure it is consistent and flexible in how it is delivered.
4. Represent the Educational Psychology Service at strategic meetings, panels, and multi-agency forums locally and nationally using psychological knowledge to inform policy and practice.
5. Promote inclusion and belonging contributing to the strategic work of the Children's Services Directorate with respect to the development of a continuum of provision in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and other vulnerable groups.
6. To provide system leadership for emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Key responsibilities

7. Provide strategic direction to deliver an effective and supportive EP service for children and young people from 0-25 and ensure the EP service contributes to the work of Children's Services in Dorset.
8. To line manage the senior educational psychologists and lead the locality educational psychology offer ensuring all educational psychologists, assistant psychologists and trainee educational psychologist receive professional line management and supervision.
9. To be the lead for the specialist teacher offer and ensure good quality practice contributing to the Dorset's strategic plans.
10. Ensure that educational psychology and specialist teacher evidence and expertise is used to best effect in all SEND Strategic Improvement work across the Dorset Area.
11. Co-ordinate Critical Incident support and the debrief of the associated professionals following an incident.



12. Ensuring the service provides high quality and timely psychological advice for EHC needs assessments.
13. Lead strategic developments across Children's Services including contributing to the Local Authority's Inclusion and Belonging agenda.
14. Working in collaboration with children, young people, their families, education providers and other stakeholders, to maximise outcomes for children and young people at a strategic and operational level across Dorset Council area.
15. Ensure Educational Psychology and Specialist Teaching play an active role in the development of integrated practice and integrated service delivery within localities.
16. Lead the development of the Educational Psychology and Specialist Teacher practice through the application of research informed practice to enhance, support and challenge stakeholders and partners.
17. Lead on the implementation of Dorset's Graduated Approach across the system including commissioned services evaluating effectiveness and impact seeking feedback from education settings and parents and carers.
18. Plan, implement and monitor the allocation and activity to support service delivery and ensure that budgetary targets are met.
19. Ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the work of the Educational Psychology and Specialist Teacher Service is in place and informs practice development.
20. Manage recruitment, supervision and performance systems to ensure that the Educational Psychology and Specialist Teacher Service is delivered efficiently and effectively.
21. Provide strategic leadership to the promotion of positive emotional wellbeing and mental health, inclusion and belonging for children and young people, liaising with schools, Public Health and the NHS partners.
22. Collaborate and report to Heads of Service informing sufficiency and provision planning.
23. Lead special school admissions alongside Learning and Belonging Service Managers and be the relationship and practice lead for specialist provision.
24. Ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are adhered to and concerns are raised in accordance with these policies.
25. Deputise for the Head of Children Thriving when needed.

NB: The duties and responsibilities of this post are not restrictive, and the post holder may be required on occasion to undertake other duties. This will not substantially change the nature of the post.



Supervision and management

Reporting to: Head of Children Thriving in Education
 Responsibility for: Senior Educational Psychologists and Physical and Medical Needs
 Senior Advisor

In addition to the key responsibilities, as a people manager you will also:

- Lead and manage team dynamics and performance by setting clear expectations, providing regular feedback, and ensuring high-quality delivery through effective quality assurance practices.
- Create an inclusive and supportive team environment that ensures continuous learning, professional development and good wellbeing, aligning to the council plan priorities, people and culture strategy, and responsibilities set out within our people management policies and requirements.
- Lead and champion opportunities for service improvement, innovation and change by taking accountability for its successful implementation, ensuring team members are engaged, motivated, and supported throughout transitions, whilst role modelling new ways of thinking and working.

Other factors

The postholder will require:

26. Registration as an educational psychologist with the Health and Care Professions Council.
27. Enhanced Child and Adult Barring list level DBS check.
28. This position has a significant travel requirement. This means that there is a requirement for a vehicle (or transport deemed to be suitable by the Council) to be available on most working days in order to carry out normal duties. Employees in positions with a significant travel requirement are required to provide a replacement vehicle if their usual vehicle is not available over an extended period.

Our values

Our values act as guiding principles, defining what we believe is important in the ways we work together. Our values are Respect, Together, Accountability, Openness and Curiosity. You will need to be able to demonstrate these values in action through the way you work, regardless of your role within the organisation. Information about our values can be found on our website.



Person specification

Your application will be assessed based on your demonstration of how you fulfil the following criteria; you should include clear examples of how you meet these criteria within your application form and during the assessment process.

Essential

Essential criteria are the minimum requirement for the above post and will be assessed through a combination of your application form, assessment and interview (as specified below). We'll also use references to confirm that you meet the criteria for this role. We will require evidence of the qualifications, training or registrations listed below.

| Qualifications, training or registrations Required by law or essential to the performance of the role or both | Assessed through: |
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| 1. Honours degree in psychology or equivalent, which confers Graduate Basis for Registration with the British Psychological Society | Application form |
| 2. Postgraduate qualification (MSc or Doctorate) in Educational Psychology, including registration with the HCPC | Application form |
| 3. Evidence of relevant continuing professional development including Leadership course/s | Application form |
| Experience | |
| 4. Substantial experience as a Senior Educational Psychologist | Application form |
| 5. Experience of line managing staff, conducting appraisals and managing absences | Application form |
| 6. Experience of operational and strategic multi-agency working with professionals and stakeholders demonstrating the ability to work collaboratively whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions | Application form |
| 7. Experience of promoting the inclusion and safeguarding of children | Application form |
| 8. Experience of developing, managing and bringing to fruition projects for the local authority and delivering on a action plans | Application form |
| 9. Budget management and responsibility, including trading and delivering a sustainable service | Application form |
| 10. Experience of using consultation and solution focused models in EP Service delivery | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 11. Experience of involving children and families in developing and evaluating the delivery of services | Application form |
| 12. Experience of working with vulnerable children and young people and their families across all age ranges from 0 – 25 | Application form |
| Knowledge | |
| 13. Knowledge of current SEND legislation and other relevant legislation such as section 19 and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and how these impact upon practice | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 14. Knowledge of research methodologies, data analysis and the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of educational psychology services | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 15. Knowledge of a wide range of psychological theories and research regarding child development, leadership and its application to meeting children's needs developing practice and partnerships | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 16. Have a deep understanding of the benefits of inclusion and strength-based approaches | Application form |



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| 17. Knowledge of approaches to supervision and support for EPs and other professionals | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 18. Demonstrate compassionate and collaborative leadership, supporting the wellbeing and development of team members | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 19. Knowledge of effective use of ICT to collect, analyse and interpret data | Application form |
| Skills and abilities | |
| 20. Excellent communication, interpersonal and organisational skills | Interview Assessment |
| 21. Ability to translate and apply psychological theory into inclusive practice for the LA, education practitioners and parents | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 22. Ability to manage complex and difficult situations positively | Interview Assessment |
| 23. Ability to work independently on your own initiative and as part of a diverse team | Interview Assessment |
| 24. Ability to develop high performing people and teams | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 25. Ability to write and present reports to a high standard to senior managers, Directors and Elected Members | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 26. Demonstrate a commitment to promoting inclusion and valuing diversity | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 27. Strong analytical skills and ability to develop and implement effective strategies | Application form Interview Assessment |
| Our values | |
| 28. Respect | Interview Assessment |
| 29. Together | Interview Assessment |
| 30. Accountability | Interview Assessment |
| 31. Openness | Interview Assessment |
| 32. Curiosity | Interview Assessment |
| Other | |
| 33. An Enhanced Child and Adult Barring level DBS check is required | Application form |
| 34. Ability to fulfil the travel requirements of the post | Application form |

Desirable

Desirable criteria will be used in the event of multiple applicants meeting the minimum essential requirements and if applicable, will be assessed through a combination of your application form, assessment and interview (as specified below). We'll also use references to confirm that you meet the criteria for this role. We will require evidence of the qualifications, training or registrations listed below.

| Qualifications, training or registrations | Assessed through: |
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| 35. Teaching or social work qualification | Application form |



Approval

Manager's job title: Head of Children Thriving in Education
Date: November 2025

