

Job description

Job title:	Best Start Inclusion Practitioner
Grade:	Grade 7
Job evaluation reference:	EY610
Job family:	Education and Youth

Purpose and impact

Based in Family Hubs, the Best Start Inclusion Practitioner (BSIP) plays a key role within the Best Start Family Hub (BSFH) network. As a trusted source of specialist early years SEND advice and reassurance for parents and carers, they will contribute to existing work to ensure children aged 0–5 with emerging or additional needs (SEND), and their families, receive timely, consistent and inclusive early support.

This role will provide specific information, advice and guidance about early years SEND and inclusion and does not hold an ongoing caseload of families. BSIPs will spend approximately 75% of their time delivering direct, visible support to families within their locality linked to named Family Hubs, while contributing to wider locality delivery where appropriate. This role is a system-enabling, practice-focused role that improves outcomes working across multiple Best Start Family Hubs and Network Site locations.

The postholder supports the delivery of [Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies](#) by embedding inclusive, preventative and early intervention practice across early years settings, Family Hubs, network sites and partner services to strengthen the early developmental outcomes of children starting school.

What parents and carers can expect

Parents and carers can expect to meet a friendly, knowledgeable practitioner based in their local Family Hub who can offer early help if they have concerns about their child's development or additional needs.

The Best Start Inclusion Practitioner will regularly link with the Early Years Lead and Best Start in Life Advisors to contribute to the appropriate coordination and allocation of support and advice to families depending on need to:

- listen to concerns without judgement or the need for a diagnosis
- provide clear information and advice about child development, SEND and local support
- help families understand what support is available, what usually happens next, and how to access it
- support families to feel confident, reassured and informed, rather than passed between services
- help families access inclusive groups and activities, including SEND-friendly Stay and Play sessions
- support smoother transitions into early education and school, so families feel prepared for next steps.

The role is focused on information, advice and early inclusion support aiming to make support earlier, easier and more accessible for families.



Key responsibilities

Based on national Best Start and SEND expectations, the postholder will provide accessible, early support to parents and carers through the Family Hub network by:

1. Acting as a trusted point of contact for parents and carers with concerns about their child's development, providing early information, advice, reassurance and guidance without requiring a formal diagnosis, including explaining local SEND support, the Local Offer and likely next steps, and supporting families to navigate pathways confidently and make informed choices.
2. Working alongside the support offered by the Best Start in Life Advisors and other specialists to ensure families with children aged 0–5 can easily access information, advice and guidance about SEND.
3. Building parental confidence and reassurance, using a strengths-based and non-judgemental approach so families feel listened to, supported and respected.
4. Improving access to inclusive groups and activities, including supporting, advising and contributing to the development of SEND-friendly Stay and Play sessions alongside delivery staff where appropriate, to support participation, inclusion and family engagement within universal provision.
5. Contributing to improved consistency and quality in local practice by working alongside partners to share learning from practice, support the take-up of agreed evidence-based approaches, and inform wider system improvement in line with Best Start expectations.
6. Collaborating with partners to reduce duplication, helping to minimise the need for families to repeatedly retell their story across services and improving the overall family experience.
7. Supporting smoother transitions into early education and school, helping children and families understand what to expect and supporting them to feel prepared and confident about next steps.
8. Supporting leaders and practitioners by reinforcing agreed approaches, sharing guidance and signposting to Best Start in Life Advisors and specialist support, rather than leading training, workforce development or practice improvement activity.
9. Recognising and responding to barriers to access, engagement and inclusion by adapting approaches, signposting appropriately and sharing concerns with relevant colleagues to support equitable access to services.
10. Adopting a relationship-based approach when working with children, families and practitioners, building trust, confidence and shared understanding over time through consistent, respectful and supportive engagement.
11. Undertaking targeted outreach activity focused on early identification of SEND and inclusion needs to raise awareness of the Best Start Family Hubs SEND offer and support earlier engagement from families who may not otherwise access Family Hub services.
12. Contributing to coordinated support around the child and family in locality planning, working alongside partners to help align input, clarify roles and support joined-up responses.
13. Working alongside partner organisations such as health, SENDIASS, Dorset Parent Carer Council and family voice groups to strengthen shared messages, improve understanding of available support and ensure families receive consistent, accurate information.
14. Maintaining proportionate and accurate records of activity and learning, and contributing to agreed reporting requirements that support assurance, continuous improvement and, where required, national evaluation.
15. Promoting awareness of the Best Start Family Hubs (BSFH) SEND offer across Family Hubs, community partners and local organisations, helping families and professionals understand what support is available through the hub network.



16. Promoting inclusive, SEND-friendly universal activities within Family Hubs and Network Sites, helping families feel confident that services are welcoming, accessible and appropriate for their child.
17. Contributing practice-based insight to the development, review and improvement of the local BSFH SEND offer by sharing learning from practice and engaging with parents, carers and partners, rather than leading service design or implementation.
18. Using the National Inclusion Standards and associated tools (when available) to support Family Hub-based identification and response to additional needs, in line with agreed guidance and under the direction of relevant leads.

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: Best Start Workforce and Practice Lead

Responsibility for: No supervisory or line management responsibility

Other factors

19. The content and direction of this work is overseen by the Best Start Family Hubs and Best Start in Life leads, and a matrix-management approach may be taken whereby joint supervision, and support meetings will take place.
20. The post holder will be based in locality Best Start Family Hubs and Family Network Points and are responsible for managing their time and travel commitments within the agreed parameters.
21. Travelling across Dorset working in Best Start Family Hubs, Family Hub Network Sites or to attend meetings. 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.
22. Responding to emergency situations for example, should there be an allegation or safeguarding concern raised in the course of the work.
23. There may be some evening or weekend work expected to attend training or workshops.
24. There may be some requirement for lone working.
25. Contacts are wide ranging and the postholder will be required to respond to a range of queries and issues, within the remit of the post, where the responses may require the use of judgement and interpretation.
26. The post holder is not responsible for a budget.
27. An Enhanced DBS check is required.

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:
1. Minimum Level 3 qualification in early years, education, health, SEND, child development or related field	Application form
Experience	
2. Working directly with families and young children with additional or emerging needs	Application form
3. Effective multi-agency working including, for example, with early years settings, schools (particularly transition points), local authority, voluntary sector organisations, health visitors, speech and language therapists and, or Educational Psychologists	Application form
4. Recognising and understanding children's needs to inform appropriate early support, signposting and next steps	Application form
5. Supporting the delivery of activity and specialist Stay & Play sessions alongside designated delivery staff for other sessions	Application form
Knowledge	
6. Strong understanding of local SEND systems and experience of direct family work and multi-agency practice	Application form Interview Assessment
7. How to support early child development (0-5 years) with children, families and settings	Application form Interview Assessment
8. Safeguarding children and child protection procedures	Application form Interview Assessment
9. Relevant legislation and frameworks including Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework , SEND Code of Practice and Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies: guidance for local authorities and the SEND White Paper	Application form Interview Assessment
10. Understanding of early years education entitlements and local Best Start in Life support offer for children and families	Application form Interview Assessment
Skills and abilities	
11. Communicating with children, parents, carers and other professionals in a variety of contexts e.g. In person, in stay and play sessions and using technology	Interview Assessment
12. Using and understanding evidence-based identification and screening tools (e.g. ELIM, EYFS progress check, WellComm) to support early conversations, identification and appropriate signposting	Interview Assessment
13. Maintaining accurate electronic records using a range of packages e.g., Teams, Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel, and Word	Interview Assessment



14. Effective organisation and self-management e.g., prioritisation, time management, record keeping	Interview Assessment
15. Communicating developmental information in a clear, reassuring and accessible way	Interview Assessment
16. A commitment to continuing professional development	Interview Assessment
Our values	
17. Respect	Interview Assessment
18. Together	Interview Assessment
19. Accountability	Interview Assessment
20. Openness	Interview Assessment
21. Curiosity	Interview Assessment
Other	
22. Ability to fulfil the travel requirements of the post	Application form
23. Enhanced DBS check is required	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:
24. Certificate of accreditation in basic Portage	Application form
Experience	
25. Supporting children identified as having SEN or complex needs	Application form
26. Using and writing Individual Education Plans	Application form
27. Supporting parents and/or families in a professional capacity	Application form
28. Facilitating or delivering inclusive group sessions for families and young children	Application form
29. Supporting families to navigate SEND pathways, the Local Offer or multi-agency support systems	Application form
Knowledge	
30. Knowledge of specialised teaching techniques or equipment relating to Early Years special educational needs and, or disabilities e.g., Signing or PEIC-D	Application form Interview Assessment
31. Relevant Dorset Council strategies and plans e.g., Babies, Children Young People and Families Plan 2023-2033	Application form Interview Assessment

Approval

Manager's job title: Principal Lead for Best Start in Life

Date: April 2026



Dorset
Council

