

Role profile

Job Title:	Strategic Commissioning Lead SEN 0-25 years
Department:	Commissioning Service - Planning, Resources & Service Development
Directorate:	Children's Services
Post no.:	63971
Grade:	CB6
Role reports to:	Head of Children's Commissioning Services
Direct reports:	1-2 x SEND Placements Commissioning and Resources Managers 1 x Children's Commissioner
Indirect reports:	C. 3 or 4 people reporting on a matrix basis in programme teams

Job Description

About Ealing

Ealing Council is committed to ensuring every child has access to an excellent education in a high-quality learning environment. Ealing's schools are recognised for strong performance and are responding to significant changes across the education sector. This role is central to delivering the Council's priorities of **Community for Everyone, Growth Across All Seven Towns**, and **Power in Your Hands**, ensuring that children, families and schools are supported to thrive.

Role Summary and Purpose

The Strategic Commissioning and Effective Use of Resources Lead (SEND) is a senior strategic role responsible for the commissioning, planning and effective use of resources for children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND whose needs cannot be met within maintained mainstream provision.

Working under the Council's SEND Strategy, SEND Reform Programme and SEND Sufficiency Strategy, the postholder will lead strategic commissioning and sufficiency planning for Non-Maintained and Independent Special Schools (NMIS), Alternative Provision (AP), specialist placements and Post-16 provision, while contributing to the wider development of inclusive education capacity across the borough.

The postholder will also oversee commissioning in relation to short breaks for children with complex special educational needs and disabilities, including commissioning, procurement, market management, quality assurance and resource planning, ensuring children and young people have access to high-quality provision that is effective and delivers value for money.

The postholder will work closely with the Assistant Directors for SEND and Inclusion and Planning Resource and Service Development, to ensure sufficient, high-quality and financially sustainable specialist provision is available to meet current and future demand, improving outcomes for children and young people while ensuring value for money.

The role will provide strategic leadership for specialist education sufficiency outside the state sector, commissioning, procurement and market management, quality assurance, contract management and resource planning. Working across education, health and care, the postholder will develop local provision and pathways, reduce reliance on high-cost external placements, strengthen inclusion and support the effective deployment of High Needs resources.

As the Council's lead officer for SEND commissioning and resource management, the postholder will provide expert advice to senior leaders, elected members, schools, providers and partners, ensuring compliance with statutory duties and delivery of SEND reform and transformation priorities.

Leading negotiations and relationships with CEOs, board members, NMISS leaders, health and social care providers, college principals and finance directors and other senior leads in provider organisations.

Key Accountabilities

Strategic Commissioning and Development

- Lead the strategic commissioning of SEND services, specialist educational provision, Alternative Provision, and Post-16 provision.
- Develop and implement commissioning strategies that improve outcomes and ensure statutory duties are met.
- Lead commissioning reviews, options appraisals, business case development and procurement activity relating to SEND provision.
- Develop innovative commissioning approaches that promote inclusion, improve quality and achieve financial sustainability.
- Lead market development activity to ensure sufficient, high-quality provision is available to meet future demand.
- Ensure commissioning decisions are informed by robust intelligence, forecasting, performance information and stakeholder feedback.

SEND Sufficiency Planning

- Lead implementation and delivery of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy.
- Maintain strategic oversight of SEND demand forecasting, place planning and capacity management.
- Identify gaps in provision and develop sustainable solutions through local provision development, commissioning and partnership working.
- Lead strategic planning for specialist provision including resource bases, NMISS placements, Alternative Provision and Post-16 pathways.
- Develop and maintain long-term sufficiency plans aligned to demographic growth and changing patterns of need.
- Support the expansion and development of local specialist provision to reduce

reliance on external placements.

NMISS, Alternative Provision and Post-16 Specialist Provision

- Lead strategic oversight and commissioning of Non-Maintained and Independent Special Schools (NMISS).
- Lead strategic commissioning, routes to market, and quality assurance of Alternative Provision.
- Develop and oversee commissioning arrangements for Post-16 specialist pathways and further education provision
- Ensure commissioned provision delivers positive outcomes, complies with statutory requirements and represents value for money.
- Lead provider engagement, market management and partnership development across specialist education sectors.
- Negotiate placement costs, service agreements and contractual arrangements with providers.

Effective Use of Resources and Financial Sustainability

- Support the AD SEND in the strategic oversight of SEND resource allocation and specialist placement expenditure.
- Support delivery of the High Needs Sustainability Programme and DSG recovery initiatives.
- Ensure fair, transparent and effective deployment of resources to maximise outcomes for children and young people.
- Lead and work with accountancy on financial modelling, forecasting and investment planning relating to SEND provision.
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce expenditure and achieve value for money.
- Drive commercial negotiations and contract management arrangements to secure sustainable provision and improved outcomes.
- Provide strategic challenge regarding placement costs, commissioning arrangements and resource deployment decisions.

Placement Commissioning and Contract Management

- Lead strategic oversight of SEND placement commissioning.
- Develop and manage effective commissioner-provider relationships.
- Ensure robust contract monitoring, performance management and quality assurance arrangements are in place.
- Lead provider reviews and service improvement planning where concerns are identified.
- Ensure contractual compliance and effective management of provider performance.
- Monitor provision to ensure positive outcomes, quality standards and value for money.

Quality Assurance and Performance

- Develop comprehensive quality assurance frameworks across commissioned SEND provision.
- Contribute to and coordinate the monitoring of quality, effectiveness and outcomes of commissioned services.
- Ensure compliance with legislative requirements, Ofsted frameworks and the

SEND Code of Practice.

- Lead strategic performance reviews and benchmarking activity.
- Develop performance indicators and reporting arrangements for senior leaders and governance boards.
- Champion continuous improvement across commissioned provision.

SEND Reform and Transformation

- Lead relevant elements of commissioning activity supporting delivery of education placements SEND Reform Plan.
 - Support redesign of SEND pathways and service models.
 - Deliver projects that improve outcomes whilst addressing demand and cost pressures.
 - Contribute to local area SEND improvement priorities and inspection readiness.
 - Promote innovation and evidence-based commissioning practice.
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Partnership Working and Strategic Leadership

- Build and maintain effective relationships with schools, trusts, colleges, providers, health partners, social care services and voluntary organisations.
- Engage with parent and carer forums to inform service development and commissioning priorities.
- Represent the Council at local, regional and national SEND commissioning forums.
- Provide expert advice to Directors, Assistant Directors, elected Members and strategic partnerships.
- Lead collaborative commissioning and partnership initiatives across education, health and care sectors.
- Support the Council in fulfilling its statutory duties relating to Education, Health and Care Services
- Contribute to mediation and prevention strategies to avoid and respond to disputes with providers.
- Ensure commissioned provision supports compliance with Education, Health and Care Plans and statutory requirements.
- Maintain awareness of legislative developments and national policy reform.
- Ensure SEN services have a full view of the pathways available, providing materials and training supporting the development of effective working relationships

Leadership Behaviours

- Leads with integrity, credibility and professionalism.
- Champions inclusion, innovation and continuous improvement.
- Builds strong partnerships across organisational boundaries.
- Demonstrates resilience and sound judgement in complex environments.
- Promotes accountability, collaboration and high performance.
- Maintains an unwavering focus on outcomes for children, young people and families.
- Ensures effective stewardship of public resources and value for money.

Safeguarding

The postholder will be expected to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and work in accordance with all safeguarding, health and safety, information governance and equality requirements. This role is subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

Authority Level

- Strategic lead for SEND commissioning and effective use of resources.
- Responsible for significant SEND commissioning budgets and placement expenditure.
- Authority to negotiate contracts and commissioning arrangements on behalf of the Council.
- Lead officer for SEND sufficiency planning relating to NMISS, AP and Post-16 provision.
- Responsible for development of commissioning strategies, policies and transformation plans.
- Provide expert strategic advice to senior officers, elected Members and external partners.
- Lead major commissioning programmes, service redesign initiatives and market development activity.

Essential Knowledge, Experience and Skills

1. Experience of working at a senior level within a local authority, education setting, public sector organisation or equivalent complex multi-agency environment. providing strategic advice to senior leaders and partners to enable decision making.
2. Significant experience of strategic commissioning within SEND, education, or equivalent such as children's services, health or social care.
3. Extensive knowledge of SEND legislation, the SEND Code of Practice, education funding and local authority statutory responsibilities.
4. Proven experience of SEND sufficiency planning, place planning and specialist provision development.
5. Experience of commissioning and managing NMISS, Alternative Provision, specialist placements and/or Post-16 provision.
6. Strong understanding of High Needs funding, financial sustainability and value for money principles.
7. Experience of managing substantial budgets, financial forecasting and resource allocation.
8. Proven expertise in procurement, contract management and provider relationship management.
9. Experience of leading transformation, service improvement and change programmes.

10. Strong commissioning, market development and provider engagement capability.
11. Excellent analytical skills with the ability to use data, forecasting and intelligence to inform strategic decisions.
12. Demonstrable ability to develop strategies, policies, business cases and recommendations with political acumen for senior leaders and elected members.
13. Excellent negotiation, influencing and stakeholder management skills, including the ability to provide constructive challenge.
14. Strong partnership-building skills with experience of working across education, health, social care, schools, providers and families.
15. Strong programme and project management capability, with the ability to balance strategic planning and operational delivery.
16. Excellent communication, presentation and report-writing skills, with a commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Essential Qualifications

- Degree level qualification or equivalent professional experience in education, commissioning, public service, business management, finance, social care or a related discipline.
- Evidence of continual professional development relevant to SEND, commissioning, leadership or service transformation.
- Relevant professional qualification in commissioning, education leadership, procurement, project management, finance or leadership is desirable.

Values and Behaviours

Improved life for residents	Trustworthy	Collaborative	Innovative	Accountable
• Is passionate about making Ealing a better place • Can see and appreciate things from a resident point of view • Understands what people want and need • Encourages change to tackle underlying causes or issues	• Does what they say they will do on time • Is open and honest • Treats all people fairly	• Ambitious and confident in leading partnerships • Offers to share knowledge and ideas • Challenges constructively and respectfully listens to feedback • Overcomes barriers to develop our outcomes for residents	• Tries out ways to do things better, faster and for less cost • Brings in ideas from outside to improve performance • Takes calculated risks to improve outcomes • Learns from mistakes and failures	• Encourages all stakeholders to participate in decision making • Makes things happen • Acts on feedback to improve performance • Works to high standards