

Sutton Virtual School - Children Looked After Education Advisor

Full time: 37 Hours per Week (maternity cover August 2026 – March 2027)

Salary: £40,996.66 per annum, Band 3 point 44 on Cognus pay scales

Location: Cognus Office, First Floor, Cantium House, Wallington, SM6 0DZ

Cognus Limited is a Local Authority Traded Company, which is commissioned by the London Borough of Sutton to provide education services to early years providers, mainstream schools and specialist education settings in Sutton. Wholly owned by the local authority, we deliver a wide range of high-quality services to deliver excellent practice that improve the lives of children, young people, and families in Sutton and beyond.

Sutton Virtual School works to promote the educational outcomes of children looked after, previously looked after and children with a social worker and is seeking an energetic and unrelenting candidate to support our children and young people to ensure they make the best educational progress possible. If you want to make a real difference to the educational futures of the most vulnerable children and young people, then please consider applying for this role.

Sutton Virtual School offers guidance and support to professionals, foster carers and schools supporting Sutton's most vulnerable children to ensure the best possible educational outcomes. The post holder will be expected to represent Cognus Limited (the service) and the Local Authority (corporate parent) and be highly knowledgeable within the field of education.

The successful candidate will have experience of working with vulnerable children and young people and an understanding of the complex issues facing children in care and care leavers and how these impact on their learning needs and academic attainment. You will have experience of teaching and learning and an understanding of children with special educational needs. The successful candidate will work with schools and professionals to promote improved outcomes for children looked after, including regular travel to PEP meetings in Sutton and surrounding LAs.

You should have previous experience of dealing with pressure and working to tight deadlines. Casework is demanding and you will need to be able to set your own priorities for this. It is vital that you have the ability to work well as part of a team and to progress case work in a calm and sensitive manner. You will need good communication skills to build positive relations with children, carers, social workers and schools.

A good level of computer literacy is essential and an awareness of statutory guidance for Children Looked After in Education essential.

You will give us great commitment and in return we offer an excellent package including:

- i) Starting salary of £40,996.66 per annum (Cognus Band 3)
- ii) Workplace pension scheme 4% to 8% matched contributions
- iii) 28 days annual leave pro rata (plus Bank Holidays)
- iv) Regular manager support and supervision.
- v) Hybrid and Flexible working
- vi) Staff benefits package; currently including Employee Assistance Programme, life insurance, employee benefits platform and (upon completion of probation) health care [Cognus



reserves the right to adjust these additional discretionary benefits to improve quality of their services provided, maintain affordability for the Company and to ensure benefits remain fit for purpose with staff needs.]

- vii) Staff EDI group and Mental Health First Aiders to support wellbeing and inclusion
- viii) Cognus Coaching Programmes
- ix) An ambitious culture with friendly and supportive colleagues

If you are interested and would like to be considered for this role, please apply to recruitment@cognus.org.uk with the completed [application form](#) downloaded from <https://www.cognus.org.uk/work-with-us/current-vacancies/cognus-application-form/> outlining your suitability. The deadline for receipt is **11:59pm on Friday 5th June 2026**. Candidates are requested to be available for interviews on **w/b 15th June 2026**.

For an informal conversation about the role please contact Kate Leyshon, Headteacher, Sutton Virtual School at kate.leyshon@cognus.org.uk.

All offers of employment are subject to successful completion of recruitment formalities which includes an enhanced DBS check. These checks must have been completed prior to commencement of employment. We expect our staff to have due regard for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and to follow the child protection procedures adopted by the Company and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

We are an equal opportunity employer and value diversity at our company. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, colour, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability status.



JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION:	SUTTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL CLA EDUCATION ADVISOR Full time 37 hours (Maternity cover August 2026 – March 2027)
DIVISION:	SUTTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL
REPORTS TO:	Headteacher, Sutton Virtual School
GRADE/PAY:	Cognus Band 3 Point 44 £40,996.66

1. ROLE PROFILE:

To assist the Headteacher in championing the educational needs of children who are looked-after.

To promote the education of children looked-after by monitoring and championing their educational needs through direct work, the Personal Education Plan process and through organisation of additional support and deployment of resources where required.

This role will support the continuous improvement and development of Sutton Virtual School through support and challenge of all professionals working with Children Looked After to enhance outcomes for Sutton’s children and drive up standards.

2. JOB SUMMARY:

- Manage a caseload of Children Looked After to ensure they are making good progress in school.
- To attend at least one PEP meeting per year in person at the child’s school
- Work collaboratively with educational professionals and social care practitioners to ensure the educational needs for Children Looked After are met.
- Identify and address educational barriers these children are experiencing and work effectively to ensure they have the support to overcome them.
- Effectively use data for monitoring and evaluation purposes for Children Looked After.
- To take a lead role for a Key Stage and develop Sutton Virtual School’s approach to supporting this cohort.
- To work with schools and settings through a Team Around the School approach to support all Children Looked After within those settings.
- Have due regard for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and to follow the child protection procedures adopted by the Cognus Limited, Sutton Virtual School and Sutton Council’s Safeguarding Children’s Board.



- Carry out any other duties as reasonably required.

3. BUDGETARY ACCOUNTABILITIES:

- No significant financial responsibilities.

4. SPECIFIC ACCOUNTABILITIES:

The main duties and responsibilities of the postholder are indicated below although other duties of an appropriate level and nature will also be required.

1. To be responsible for a caseload of Children Looked After, liaising with and advising individual Designated Teachers and Social Workers, ensuring that PEP meetings are organised and written by the Designated Teacher, which are of a high quality: to attend PEP meetings in person once a year for each CLA on caseload and attend professional's meetings as required.
2. To work in an advisory role to secure timely school admissions for all Children Looked After on their caseload, and to progress additional timely assessments or requests for Statutory Assessment in line with the needs of the child.
3. To monitor and maintain an overview of quality of all Personal Educational Plans on the allocated caseload, providing an analysis of quality of PEPs for the Virtual School Headteacher, and where quality is less than satisfactory, taking corrective action.
4. To deliver training to schools, social workers and other professionals to help them develop strategies that improve the educational outcomes of vulnerable children.
5. To work with a group of Sutton schools / settings in a Team Around the School approach to provide targeted advisory case work for Children Looked After, as required, providing additional liaison or outreach in line with needs of the children.
6. To be responsible together with the Headteacher for scrutinising and monitoring the work of Sutton Virtual School within current legislation, regulations, guidance, practice, standards and national and local priorities.
7. To lead on quality assurance and audit activities within Sutton Virtual School to drive up standards and to assist the Headteacher in self-evaluation and service improvement in line with Sutton Virtual School Service Development Plan.
8. To be responsible for monitoring attendance and progress of Children Looked After, against national and local outcomes. Ensuring 'best practice' in the collection and use of management information: to maximise the effectiveness of existing systems and processes for data collection and analysis.
9. All other reasonable requests as required/made by your line manager. Some tasks listed in this job description are subject to change.
10. Carry out any other duties as reasonably required.

GENERIC OBJECTIVES:

Contribute to Cognus Limited's business objectives at the appropriate level by ensuring every child matters and has access to education and learning opportunities, including:

- a. Health and safety
- b. Safeguarding and protection of children
- c. Equal opportunities and management of diversity
- d. Data protection



- e. Outstanding Customer care

GENERAL:

SAFER RECRUITMENT:

Cognus is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children and young people that it works with. An offer of employment is subject to safer recruitment practices which include an enhanced DBS check, two professional references acceptable to Cognus Limited, proof of qualifications, proof of right to work in the UK, proof of personal address and employment history covering 5 years and, fitness to work with children (occupational health assessment). These checks must have been completed prior to commencement of employment. We have a range of policies and procedures in place which promote safeguarding and safer working practices across the organisation.

PROCESSING OF DATA:

- a. You (“the employee”) consent to the holding and processing of personal data provided by you to the Company (“the Company”) for all purposes relating to your employment, but not limited to administering and maintaining personnel records, paying and reviewing salary and other remuneration and benefits, undertaking performance appraisals and reviews, the compulsory Disclosure and Baring Services check (DBS) details in line with its statutory responsibility to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable service users; maintaining sickness and other absence records and taking decisions as to your fitness for work.
- b. You hereby acknowledge and agree that the Company may, in the course of its general and statutory duties as an employer be required to disclose personal data relating to you for legislative purposes during or after the end of your employment. This does not affect your statutory rights under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT:

- a. During the course of your employment, you will have access to and knowledge of Company confidential information and trade secrets.
- b. Disclosure of any of this confidential information and/or trade secrets could have serious financial consequences and/or create serious competitive disadvantages for the Company. There may be material damage, financial or otherwise, deliberate or otherwise, to the Company’s legitimate business interest.
- c. Under the terms of this confidentiality agreement, you agree to keep secret and shall not at any time, either during employment or post-employment, use, communicate or reveal to any person any trade secret or confidential information relating to the Company or any Associated Company.
- d. You are aware of the Company’s policies in relation to compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and undertake to act in accordance with these at all times. Any breach of these policies will be dealt with under the Company’s disciplinary procedure and action taken can include dismissal without notice.

This job description and person specification outlines the summary of key accountabilities and is not an exhaustive list of duties and, is subject to periodical review and changes in line with the business needs.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

No	Description	Criteria
The postholder will be expected to have:		
1.	A strong understanding of the needs of Children Looked After and the barriers to learning that can occur.	E/I/S
2.	Qualified Teacher status is desirable and / or a level four qualification in education appropriate to the phase (Secondary, Post-16)	D/S
3.	Experience and knowledge of working in education settings	E/S
4.	Knowledge of the phases and pathways through education, from Early Years to Post-16 and an understanding of the assessment outcomes for each phase or setting	D/S/I
5.	A willingness to undertake training and development	E
6.	Experience in personalised planning and differentiation for a range of special education needs	D/I/S
7.	Experience in self-evaluation and formulating development plans	D/I/S
8.	Ability to use data and technology efficiently and effectively; experience of electronic assessment database for data collection and analysis.	E/S/I
9.	Experience of planning, monitoring and evaluation of work	E/I
Candidates must be able to demonstrate the ability to:		
10.	Use data analysis to inform PEP targets and improve the attainment and progress of CLA.	E/I
11.	Analyse attendance data, identifying trends and suggesting appropriate action in the best interests of the child.	E/I
12.	Demonstrate a strong partnership working with parents, carers, children and young people, educational professionals and other agencies, ensuring a multi-agency approach.	E/I/S
13.	Demonstrate strong organisational skills and superb with deadlines.	E/S



14.	Demonstrate strong oral and written communication skills.	E/S
15.	Remain objective and act confidentiality.	E/S
16.	Be professional, courteous and strong customer service skills.	E/I/S
17.	Work as part of a team, sharing working knowledge and skills.	E/I/S
18.	Work flexibly, with the ability to travel to schools in Sutton and surrounding LAs regularly in person, able to re-arrange work in relation to changing priorities and to meet the needs of the business.	E/I/S
19.	In line with service delivery needs, the post holder may be required to work outside normal office hours, for which prior notice will be given.	E/I/S
20.	If appointed, it will be your responsibility as an employee of Cognus Limited to treat all sensitive data in line with the mandatory protocols to ensure data protection and compliance at all times in accordance with GDPR regulations	E/I/S

Key:	D	Desirable	I	Evaluated at interview	
E	Essential	S	Short listing criteria	T	Subject to test

