

Specialist Autism Advisor (Experts at Hand)

Full time: 37 Hours per Week

Salary: Cognus Band 4 - starting salary of £50,082.90

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.

In response to national reforms aimed at strengthening inclusive education, we are expanding our Experts at Hand (EAH) service. This growth will enable us to offer more schools timely access to specialist SEND expertise, helping to identify needs earlier, develop effective provision, and improve outcomes for children and young people.

We have several new roles within our highly regarded Autism Advisory Service, to deliver our existing outstanding support to schools, young people and families in addition to the new *Experts at Hand* services and are looking for experienced Specialist Autism Advisors who are passionate about improving outcomes for autistic children and young people through consultation, training, collaboration and early intervention.

We welcome a range of expertise in this field. You may be a Specialist Teacher, Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, or Occupational Therapist. Working alongside a skilled multidisciplinary team, you will support schools to build confidence, strengthen provision, and create environments where neurodivergent learners can thrive.

This post is advertised as a year-round position. We welcome discussions about alternative working patterns, so please get in touch if you would like to explore these options.

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

- i) Starting salary of £50,082.90 per annum (Cognus Band 4)
- 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
- viii) Cognus Coaching Programmes
- ix) An ambitious culture with friendly and supportive colleagues

Read more - [Why work for us? Cognus Recruitment Information](#)

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, which can be [downloaded from our website](#), outlining your suitability.





The deadline for receipt is **23rd September 2026, at 12pm**. Candidates are requested to be available for interview on **Friday 9th October**.

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact Helen Taylor, Head of Inclusion at Helen.Taylor@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 before the 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 Sutton's Local Safeguarding Partnership.

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:	Specialist Autism Advisor (Experts at Hand)
DIVISION:	Inclusion – Autism Advisory Service
REPORTS TO:	Head of Inclusion
GRADE/PAY:	Cognus Band 4 - starting salary of £50,082.90
LOCATION:	Cognus Office, First Floor, Cantium House, Wallington, SM6 0DZ

JOB SUMMARY

The Autism Advisor will be a key member of the Autism Advisory Service, delivering specialist advice, consultation, coaching and training to schools, families and professionals. Working across Experts at Hand, commissioned services and traded provision, the post holder will support educational settings to develop inclusive, sustainable and evidence-informed approaches that meet the needs of autistic children and young people.

Working as part of a network of Experts at Hand, the Autism Advisor will build capacity within schools through consultation, professional development, collaborative problem-solving and targeted interventions. The role focuses on promoting neurodiversity-affirming practice, strengthening whole-school inclusion, supporting early intervention and improving outcomes for children and young people by ensuring they receive timely and effective support.

PRINCIPLE ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1. Contribute to the delivery, development and continuous improvement of the Autism Advisory Service across Experts at Hand, commissioned services and traded provision, ensuring high-quality, evidence-informed support for schools, children, young people and families.
2. Provide specialist autism advice, consultation, coaching and support to schools and education settings to promote inclusion and improve outcomes for autistic children and young people.
3. Support educational settings to develop inclusive, neurodiversity-affirming practice through early intervention, capacity building and sustainable whole-school approaches.
4. Design, deliver and evaluate professional development, training and resources that strengthen workforce confidence and expertise in supporting autistic children and young people.
5. Develop and maintain effective partnerships with children and young people, families, schools and partner agencies, contributing specialist expertise within multi-agency planning and decision-making.
6. Maintain accurate records and use data effectively to monitor activity, evaluate impact and contribute to service reporting, quality assurance and performance management.
7. Maintain and apply up-to-date knowledge of autism, neurodiversity, SEND legislation, statutory guidance and evidence-informed practice.
8. Have due regard for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and to follow the child protection procedures adopted by Cognus Limited, schools and Sutton's safeguarding arrangements.
9. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of the post, as reasonably required.



1. Strategic and service delivery

- Contribute to the development and ongoing delivery of the Autism Advisory Service within the Experts at Hand model.
- Work collaboratively with Experts at Hand and Autism Advisory Service colleagues to provide integrated support for schools and educational settings, in addition to colleagues in other services such as SEND and Inclusion.
- Support the planning and delivery of targeted group-based, cohort or whole-school interventions as part of the Experts at Hand model.
- Support schools to identify and respond to emerging needs at the earliest opportunity.
- Develop effective partnerships with schools and gain an understanding of each setting's strengths, priorities and challenges.
- Promote inclusive practice and support educational settings to develop autism-inclusive and neurodiversity-friendly environments.
- Assist schools to improve outcomes for autistic children and young people through evidence-informed approaches and effective provision planning.
- With the support of the team manager, ensure traded orders are recorded and fulfilled.
- Contribute to the development and review of the Service Development Plan.

2. Consultation and specialist advice

- Provide specialist advice, consultation and coaching to professionals including school leaders, SENCOs, teachers and support staff.
- Observe practice and learning environments and work collaboratively with staff to identify strengths, barriers and solutions, and to ensure the inclusion of neurodivergent pupils.
- Support schools to implement strategies that promote engagement, participation, emotional wellbeing and successful learning.
- Contribute to support planning for children and young people whose needs may place them at risk of exclusion or placement breakdown.
- Assist schools in evaluating and developing autism provision using recognised quality frameworks and best practice guidance.
- Support the Autism Advisory Service in the development and training of Cognus Autism Champions to deliver advice sessions to parents and professionals.
- Provide one to one support to children and young people, across a range of settings as appropriate.
- Pro-actively signpost parents, carers and schools as required and support referrals as appropriate.

3. Training and workforce development

- Design and deliver professional development programmes for school staff across all phases.
- Facilitate workshops, network meetings and communities of practice that encourage collaboration and professional learning.
- Develop guidance materials, practical resources and tools to support sustainable improvements in school practice.
- Share current research, developments and evidence-informed approaches relating to autism and neurodiversity.



- Support the Autism Advisory Service in running the Sutton school Autism Leads programme, facilitating training and the sharing of resources and strategies at regular network meetings.
- Develop and deliver parent/carers workshops and training programmes, both in person and online.

4. Partnership working

- Build effective relationships with families, educational settings and partner agencies.
- Participate in multi-agency meetings and planning processes where specialist autism advice is required, representing Cognus effectively.
- Support a coordinated response around children and young people through collaborative working with professionals across education, health and social care.
- Manage the publicity of the service with key stakeholders.
- To coordinate and develop Cognus' programme of activities associated with key autism and neurodiversity awareness, acceptance and celebration days and weeks, engaging schools, families and stakeholders to promote understanding, belonging and inclusion.

5. Using data for monitoring and evaluation purposes

- Produce clear and effective service user reports and collect and record impact measurement and outcomes data
- Maintain relevant statistical and management information, provide reports and key performance information (KPI) as required.
- Attend and contribute to team meetings and wider organisational meetings and events as required

6. Quality assurance and continuous improvement

- Maintain accurate records and contribute to service monitoring, evaluation and impact reporting.
- Collect and analyse information that demonstrates service effectiveness and outcomes.
- Contribute to service development, innovation and continuous improvement activities.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of legislation, statutory guidance and developments relating to SEND, autism and inclusion

7. 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 Cognus Limited, the School and Sutton Council's Safeguarding Children's Board.

- Demonstrate awareness of and comply with Safeguarding regulations, policies and procedures.
- Attend all required safeguarding training

8. 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 Barring 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

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

No	Description	Criteria
Qualifications and Knowledge		
1	Candidates must be fully qualified as either a Specialist Teacher, Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, or Specialist Teacher, and have the relevant professional registration to practise in their profession	E, S, I
2	Specialist autism training and substantial experience supporting autistic children and young people (across education, health, therapies or other relevant backgrounds)	E, S, I
3	Strong understanding of neurodivergent learners and neurodiversity-affirming practice	E, S, I
4	Knowledge of evidence-informed interventions and support approaches	E, S, I
5	Strong knowledge of SEND legislation and statutory guidance	E, I
Experience		
6	Experience advising and supporting educational staff	D, S, I
7	Experience delivering training and professional development	E, S, I
9	Experience working within multidisciplinary teams	D, S, I
10	Experience supporting autistic children and young people in educational settings	E, S, I
11	Experience working collaboratively with families and partner agencies	E, S, I
12	Experience evaluating impact and producing reports	D, I
13	Experience of developing and delivering resources, guidance or training materials	D, I
Skills and abilities		
14	Excellent communication and relationship-building skills	E, I
15	Ability to deliver consultation, coaching and advice to a wide range of stakeholders	E, S, I
16	Ability to design and facilitate training programmes	E, I
17	Ability to build capacity within schools through coaching, mentoring and modelling practice	E, S, I
18	Ability to evaluate school provision and identify priorities for improvement using evidence-informed frameworks	E, S, I
19	Strong organisational and workload management skills	E, S, I
20	Ability to work independently and as part of a wider team	E, S, I
21	Commitment to inclusion, equality and strengths-based practice	E, S, I
22	Ability to use technology effectively and maintain accurate records	E, S, I
Key:		D Desirable I Evaluated at interview
E	Essential	S Shortlisting criteria T Subject to test

