

EARLY YEARS INCLUSION ADVISER

1 FTE | Permanent

Salary: £38,831.79 – £52,462.77 (Cognus Band 3 and 4)

Salary dependent on qualifications and experience

Based at Cognus, Cantium House, Wallington, SM6 0DZ, with travel across the London Borough of Sutton

Why join our Early Years Team?

Help shape the future of inclusive early years education in Sutton.

Every child deserves the very best start in life.

Cognus Limited is a Local Authority Traded Company, 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 improve the lives of children, young people and families in Sutton and beyond.

At Cognus, we believe that early identification, strong partnerships and high-quality inclusive practice can transform children's futures.

We are looking for an experienced, enthusiastic and highly skilled Early Years Inclusion Adviser to expand our Early Years Team, considering the SEND Reform changes and the Experts At Hand (EAH) initiative to work directly alongside early years practitioners to strengthen inclusive practice across Sutton.

This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a developing approach to early intervention and inclusion, providing timely, practical and evidence-informed support within early years settings.

The role will focus on working alongside practitioners, modelling strategies, coaching staff (including leadership coaching), and helping settings adapt their practice and environments so children with emerging or additional needs can participate, belong, and thrive.

The EAH approach is about Identifying Cohort needs and working on clear routes to access advice and guidance. It provides expertise when it is needed, building practitioners' confidence and expertise while strengthening ordinarily available inclusive provision.

Whether modelling strategies alongside a practitioner, helping a setting adapt its learning environment, coaching an Early Years SENDCo, supporting the development of an inclusive provision plan or delivering professional development, your expertise will make a genuine difference to children and their families.



About the role

As an Early Years Inclusion Adviser, you will:

- Work directly alongside practitioners in PVI settings and schools to strengthen high-quality, inclusive early years practice.
- Provide practical, timely and solution-focused advice where children are presenting with emerging or additional needs.
- Model inclusive strategies and approaches within children's everyday learning environments.
- Coach and mentor practitioners, Early Years SENDCos and leaders to build confidence and expertise.
- Support settings to identify and remove barriers to children's participation, learning and development.
- Help settings strengthen their ordinarily available provision and the graduated response.
- Support the development of inclusive environments, routines and approaches that benefit all children.
- Work collaboratively within the Early Years Team and relevant professionals.
- Support practitioners to translate professional advice into effective everyday practice.
- Contribute to high-quality transition planning into school.
- Deliver training, workshops and professional development to build sustainable capacity across the Early Years sector.
- Use evidence, feedback and data to demonstrate impact and inform the continuing development of the EAH approach.
- Contribute to Sutton's wider ambitions for inclusion, early intervention and Best Start in Life.

This role provides the opportunity to work flexibly, with a significant element of the role working directly within Early Years settings across Sutton.

Why Join Cognus?

You will join a highly skilled and supportive team recognised for its expertise, innovation and commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred services that enable children and young people to flourish, develop confidence in who they are, and realise their full potential.

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

- i) Starting salary of **£38,831.79 – £52,462.77** per annum depending on experience (Cognus Band 3 and 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 the quality of its services provided, maintain affordability for the Company and to ensure benefits remain fit for purpose with staff needs.]*
- vii) Staff EDI group 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.

Applications should be sent to: recruitment@cognus.org.uk

Closing Date: Thursday 1st October @09.00

Interview Date: Monday 12th October (online) and Wednesday 14th October (face-to-face at Cantium House)

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact:

Nick Banham, Principal Early Years Advisor at Nick.banham@cognus.org.uk so a suitable time can be arranged for an informal conversation

All offers of employment are subject to successful completion of recruitment formalities, which include 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 based on race, religion, colour, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability status.

JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION:	Early Years
TEAM:	Early Years
REPORTS TO:	Principal Early Years Adviser
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Supporting high-quality Inclusive early years provision in PVI settings and schools for all children aged 0–5 years, including those with SEND.
GRADE/PAY	Starting salary: £38,831.79 – £52,462.77 (Cognus Band 3–4; dependent on experience and qualifications).
LOCATION	Cognus Office, First Floor, Cantium House, Wallington, SM6 0DZ

Job Summary

To provide practical, setting-based inclusion support, professional guidance, modelling and coaching to Early Years providers and schools within the Experts at Hand Initiative, to strengthen inclusive practice and improve outcomes for children aged 0–5 years.

The post holder will work alongside practitioners within children's everyday learning environments, helping settings to identify barriers, adapt provision and implement effective strategies at the earliest opportunity.

A central purpose of the role is to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of the Early Years workforce, strengthening ordinarily available provision and the graduated response so that more children's needs can be identified and met effectively within their local setting.

The post holder will work collaboratively with the wider Early Years Team and multi-agency partners, ensuring professional recommendations are translated into practical, sustainable approaches within settings.

The role will contribute to the ongoing development of the Early Years team's approach and to Sutton's wider priorities for early intervention, inclusion and Best Start in Life.

Key Responsibilities

Inclusion Advisor Support

- Provide timely, practical and solution-focused inclusion support, working alongside Early Years practitioners to identify and address barriers to children's participation, learning and development.
- Model and embed inclusive strategies, supporting practitioners to adapt environments, routines, teaching approaches and everyday provision.
- Build practitioner confidence in supporting communication and interaction, emotional regulation, sensory needs, engagement and participation, according to each child's presenting needs.
- Promote a strengths-based, inclusive approach that increases children's independence, participation and sense of belonging within their Early Years setting.

Strengthening Ordinarily Available Provision

- Strengthen inclusive universal and targeted provision, supporting practitioners to identify emerging needs early and implement an effective assess, plan, do, review graduated response.
- Build practitioner confidence to use existing resources, professional advice and evidence-based approaches, evaluating impact and adapting provision accordingly.
- Promote sustainable whole-setting inclusion, while helping settings recognise when additional specialist advice is required and access the appropriate pathway.

Coaching and Capacity Building

- Build the confidence and expertise of Early Years leaders, SENDCos and practitioners through coaching, modelling, professional dialogue and reflective practice.
- Support practitioners to translate specialist advice into practical, sustainable everyday approaches, strengthening problem-solving and inclusive practice.
- Develop and share effective practice, resources and practical tools across Early Years settings.

Training and Professional Development

- Design, deliver and evaluate high-quality training, workshops and professional development.
- Contribute to Early Years SENDCo networks, clusters and other professional forums.
- Provide targeted training in response to emerging themes and needs identified across the borough.
- Support settings to embed learning from training into practice.
- Contribute to the development of a confident and skilled Early Years workforce across Sutton.

Partnership Working

- Work collaboratively with the Early Years Team and multi-agency professionals to ensure coordinated, joined-up support for settings and effective implementation of specialist recommendations.
- Promote strong partnership working with parents and carers, ensuring their knowledge and views inform support for their child.
- Contribute to multi-agency working and effective transitions, including transitions between Early Years settings and into school.

Early Intervention and SEND Pathways

- Promote early identification and proportionate intervention, ensuring children receive the right support, at the right time and at the right level.
- Support settings to evidence and evaluate provision, understand Sutton's Early Years SEND pathways and access further advice when required.
- Work closely with Early Years SEND Advisers and other professionals to inform appropriate next steps where specialist assessment, funding or statutory consideration may be required.

Strategic Development and Evaluation

- Contribute to the development, implementation and evaluation of the Experts at Hand Early Years Inclusion approach, gathering evidence of activity, impact and outcomes.
- Use data, professional evidence and learning from settings to identify emerging needs, inform quality assurance and drive service and workforce development.
- Support Sutton's Early Years Inclusion and Best Start in Life priorities, strengthening early intervention and reducing unnecessary escalation to higher levels of SEND support.

General Responsibilities

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, championing equality, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of service delivery.
- Work collaboratively, positively and flexibly with colleagues, settings, families and partner organisations to meet service requirements.
- Maintain accurate and timely records, reports and evidence of impact, ensuring confidentiality and compliance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and Cognus policies and procedures.
- Maintain high professional standards and up-to-date expertise through supervision, appraisal, continuous professional development and evidence-informed Early Years, SEND and inclusion practice.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

No	Description	Criteria
Qualifications		
a.	Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) or relevant Level 6 qualification	E (S)
b.	Current professional development relevant to SEND and Early Years	E (S)
c.	National Professional Qualification for SENDCo (NPQ SENDCo) or equivalent SEND qualification	D (S)
d.	Additional specialist qualifications in SEND, Inclusion or Child Development	D (S)
Experience		
e.	Significant experience working within the Early Years Foundation Stage	E (S/I)
f.	Experience supporting children with a wide range of SEND in inclusive settings	E (S/I)
g.	Experience advising, coaching or mentoring practitioners	E (S/I)
h.	Experience delivering training and professional development	E (S/I/T)
i.	Experience working collaboratively with families and multi-agency professionals	E (S/I)
j.	Experience contributing to strategic developments or service improvement initiatives	D (S/I)
k.	Experience working across PVI, maintained and school settings	D (S/I)
Knowledge		
l.	Excellent understanding of child development from birth to five, the EYFS Statutory Framework and the SEND Code of Practice (2015)	E (S/I)
m.	Understanding of inclusive practice, person-centred approaches and the graduated response	E (S/I)
n.	Understanding of SEND funding arrangements, support pathways and current national SEND/Early Years developments	E (S/I)
Skills and Other Attributes		
o.	Ability to assess needs, analyse evidence and make informed recommendations	E (S/I)
p.	Excellent written and verbal communication, report writing and presentation skills	E (S/I/T)
q.	Ability to coach staff and leaders	D
r.	Ability to design and deliver engaging training programmes	E (I/T)
s.	Ability to build effective relationships with professionals and families	E (I)
t.	Ability to influence, challenge and support practice constructively	E (I)
u.	Strong organisational and time management skills	E (S/I)
v.	Ability to work independently and as part of a team	E (I)
w.	Ability to use data to monitor impact and inform improvements	E (S/I)

KEY:		D	Desirable	I	Evaluated at interview
E	Essential	S	Shortlisting criteria	T	Subject to test