

Autism and Early Intervention Team Manager

Full time: 37 hours per week – permanent

Salary: Cognus Band 4 – starting salary of £53,815 (scale point 63)

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.

As part of the national drive to strengthen inclusive practice and early intervention, we are expanding our highly regarded Autism Advisory Service and developing our innovative Experts at Hand model, and are seeking an experienced and ambitious leader to manage and develop two specialist services:

- The Autism Advisory Service
- The Paving the Way Early Intervention Service

This is a unique opportunity to combine operational management with specialist advisory practice. The successful candidate will lead a team of Autism Advisors, Advisory Teachers, and Behaviour Specialists, ensuring that services are delivered effectively, meet local priorities and demonstrate measurable impact.

Alongside management responsibilities, you will maintain a reduced specialist caseload, providing consultation, coaching, training and support to schools, families and professionals. We welcome a range of expertise in this field - you may be a Specialist Teacher, Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, or Occupational Therapist.

We are looking for someone who:

- Has significant experience supporting neurodivergent children and young people
- Has experience of managing or leading staff teams
- Understands inclusive practice, neurodiversity and SEND legislation
- Is skilled in consultation, coaching and workforce development
- Can build strong partnerships across education, health and social care
- Is passionate about improving outcomes through early intervention and capacity building

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

- i) Starting salary of £53,815 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.

Candidates will be notified separately about interview dates.

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:	Autism and Early Intervention Team Manager
DIVISION:	Inclusion – Autism Advisory Service
REPORTS TO:	Head of Inclusion
GRADE/PAY:	Cognus Band 4 – Starting salary of £53,815 (scale point 63)
LOCATION:	Cognus Office, First Floor, Cantium House, Wallington, SM6 0DZ

JOB SUMMARY

The Autism Advisory and Early Intervention Team Manager is responsible for the operational leadership, development and quality assurance of the Autism Advisory Service and Paving the Way Early Intervention Service.

The postholder will lead and develop a team of specialist practitioners, ensuring the delivery of high-quality, evidence-informed and outcome-focused services that improve inclusion, build capacity within educational settings and promote positive outcomes for children and young people.

Working closely with the Head of Inclusion, the Team Manager will contribute to strategic planning, service development, performance monitoring, workforce development and continuous improvement across commissioned, traded and Experts at Hand services. The postholder will ensure that services are responsive to local need, aligned with organisational priorities and able to demonstrate measurable impact for children, families and schools.

Alongside leadership responsibilities, the postholder will maintain a reduced specialist caseload, providing consultation, coaching, training and expert advice to schools, families and professionals. Through this work, they will model exemplary practice, support the development of inclusive and neurodiversity-affirming environments, and contribute specialist expertise to complex casework, multi-agency planning and service innovation.

As a senior member of the Inclusion Service, the Team Manager will champion early intervention, collaborative working and whole-system improvement, supporting schools to identify and respond to need at the earliest opportunity and enabling children and young people to thrive in their educational communities.

PRINCIPLE ACCOUNTABILITIES:

- 1. Provide operational leadership of the Autism Advisory Service and Paving the Way Early Intervention Service**, ensuring high-quality, evidence-informed and outcome-focused service delivery that supports inclusion, early intervention and improved outcomes for children and young people.
- 2. Lead, develop and support staff across both services**, providing effective line management, supervision, workforce development, performance management, recruitment and wellbeing support to ensure a skilled, motivated and high-performing workforce.



3. **Manage and continuously improve service delivery** across commissioned, traded and Experts at Hand provision, including workload allocation, quality assurance, service development planning, performance monitoring, KPI reporting and the effective use of resources.
4. **Maintain a reduced specialist caseload**, providing expert autism advice, consultation, coaching, training and support to schools, families and professionals, while modelling excellent practice and contributing to complex casework and multi-agency planning.
5. **Build capacity within educational settings** through early intervention, workforce development, consultation and the promotion of inclusive, neurodiversity-affirming approaches that improve outcomes for autistic children and young people.
6. **Develop and maintain effective partnerships** with children and young people, families, schools, commissioners and partner agencies, contributing specialist expertise to strategic developments, service improvement and multi-agency decision-making.
7. **Ensure effective governance, safeguarding and accountability**, including maintaining accurate records, using data to evaluate impact and inform service improvement, promoting compliance with statutory guidance and safeguarding responsibilities, and maintaining up-to-date specialist knowledge to inform service delivery and development.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Operational leadership and service development

- Provide operational leadership for the Autism Advisory Service and Paving the Way Early Intervention Service, ensuring both services are responsive, evidence-informed and aligned with local and national priorities.
- Lead the development, implementation and review of Service Development Plans and Business Continuity Plans.
- Contribute to the ongoing development of the two services, including the Experts at Hand model, commissioned services and traded provision, ensuring offers remain relevant, sustainable and responsive to local need.
- Identify opportunities for service innovation, growth and continuous improvement, supporting the development of new initiatives and approaches.
- Contribute to funding applications, project reports, business cases and development opportunities that enhance service capacity and impact.

2. Service management, quality assurance and performance

- Ensure effective allocation of staff, schools, caseloads and resources to meet service demands and priorities.
- Develop and maintain effective service procedures, systems and SOPs that support high-quality, consistent and compliant service delivery.
- Monitor service performance, quality and outcomes, ensuring accurate record-keeping, KPI reporting and effective use of management information.
- Produce reports and performance updates for stakeholders and manage enquiries, concerns and complaints in accordance with organisational procedures.



3. Team leadership and workforce development

- Provide effective line management including regular supervision, appraisal, performance reviews and professional development discussions and employee wellbeing.
- Lead regular team meetings, reflective practice sessions and case triage meetings to promote high standards of practice, promoting a positive team culture that values collaboration, continuous learning, inclusion and professional curiosity.
- Support the recruitment, induction, retention and ongoing development of staff.

4. Specialist advisory practice and early intervention

- Maintain a reduced specialist caseload, modelling high-quality practice and providing support in complex or challenging cases involving children and young people with Autism.
- Provide specialist autism advice, consultation, coaching to schools, educational settings, families and professionals to promote effective, evidence-informed practice.
- Support educational settings to identify and respond to needs early, developing inclusive, neurodiversity-affirming environments that improve engagement, wellbeing and outcomes.
- Observe practice and learning environments, identifying strengths, barriers and opportunities for improvement, and supporting sustainable capacity-building within schools.
- Contribute specialist expertise to multi-agency assessments, planning and decision-making, supporting children and young people at risk of exclusion, placement breakdown or poor educational outcomes.

5. Training, capacity building and workforce development

- Develop and deliver workshops, training and information sessions for parents and carers.
- Provide consultation, coaching and mentoring to build confidence, capability and inclusive practice across the workforce.
- Develop and promote evidence-informed resources, guidance and approaches relating to autism, neurodiversity and inclusion.
- Support service and school improvement through Autism Leads/Champions programmes, networks and recognised quality standards.

6. Partnership working and system leadership

- Develop and maintain effective partnerships with children, young people, families, schools, senior leaders and partner agencies to support positive outcomes.
- Represent the Inclusion Service at meetings, networks and multi-agency forums, contributing specialist expertise to planning, service development and improvement initiatives.
- Promote co-production and meaningful participation, ensuring the voices of children, young people and families inform service delivery and development.
- Champion awareness, acceptance and understanding of autism and neurodiversity through collaborative initiatives, events and community engagement.

7. Governance and professional practice

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of autism, neurodiversity, SEND legislation and evidence-informed practice, applying this to service delivery and decision-making.



- Ensure compliance with organisational policies, statutory requirements and professional standards, including health and safety, data protection, information governance and confidentiality.
- Use service data, outcomes and stakeholder feedback to evaluate impact, drive continuous improvement and maintain high standards of professional and ethical practice.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the level and responsibilities of the post as reasonably required.

8. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people

- Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people at all times.
- Demonstrate awareness of and comply with Safeguarding regulations, policies and procedures.
- Follow the child protection procedures adopted by the Cognus Limited, the School and Sutton Council's Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Attend and contribute to safeguarding training and other mandatory professional development activities.

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

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
2	Leadership or management qualification	D
3	Specialist knowledge of autism and neurodiversity, and substantial experience supporting autistic children and young people (across education, health, therapies or other relevant backgrounds).	E, S, I
4	Detailed knowledge of SEND legislation and statutory guidance	E, I
Experience		
5	Experience leading or managing staff teams	D
6	Experience using data to monitor performance and evaluate impact	E, S, I
7	Experience delivering training and professional development (including the development of materials and resources)	E, S, I
8	Experience working within multidisciplinary teams	D, S, I
9	Experience supporting neurodivergent children and young people in educational settings	E, S, I
10	Experience working collaboratively with families and partner agencies	E, S, I
Skills and abilities		
11	Ability to lead, motivate and develop staff teams	E, S, I
12	Ability to manage change and service improvement	D, S, I
13	Ability to identify priorities and manage competing priorities	E, S, I
14	Excellent communication and relationship-building skills, including the ability to communicate effectively with senior leaders and strategic partners.	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	Strong organisational and workload management skills	E, S, I
18	Ability to work independently and as part of a wider team	E, S, I
19	Ability to use technology effectively and maintain accurate records	E, S, I
Key:		
D	Desirable	I
E	Essential	T
		Evaluated at interview
		Subject to test

