

## Contract and Payments Officer – Pupil Services

The post holder will perform daily financial functions for the processing of High Needs funding for children and young people (0 to 25 years) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or the recoupment of funding for Care Experienced young people, Permanently Excluded or Alternative Provision pupils. The post holder will also support the strategic development, commissioning, and procurement of provision for children and young people with SEND and Alternative Provision pupils, assuring value for money in all activities.

- Service area: Learning and Achievement
- Grade: PO2
- Reports to: High Needs Funding Manager
- Your team: Children and Young People, Pupil Services, Special Educational Needs (SEN)

### Our mission

We are determined to create a more equal Islington, where everyone who lives here has an equal chance to thrive.

To do this, everyone who works at Islington Council lives by a set of values which guide us in everything that we do: collaborative, ambitious, resourceful, and empowering. They spell out 'CARE', which is what we think public service is all about.

[Watch our video](#) to hear more about our mission and how you can help us achieve it from the Leader of the Council, Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz.

### Primary job function

- To perform the day to day financial and service activity for commissioned places in schools, colleges and independent service providers (ISPs) both within and outside of the Islington Borough. This will include in year and end of year financial processes, review of invoices, payment calculations, comparison of invoices received against approved placements/orders and other related activities.
- To produce, issue and maintain accurate contracts, contractual schedules and monthly payment schedules
- To maintain accurate records and process data in line with GDPR
- To develop and maintain efficient and effective systems to record and track costs and other demographic data for placements in schools, colleges and ISPs
- To ensure all payments are auditable, validated, processed and reconciled on time and clearly linked to funding agreements for contracted services and service-level agreements

- To work closely and in partnership with schools, colleges, ISPs and Council staff to resolve contract, placement and payment queries
- To collate and analyse statistical and budgetary data and prepare, produce and submit reports as necessary
- To advise on service costs and secure value for money for externally commissioned services and service-level agreements.
- Liaise with suppliers to complete the council's supplier agreement and use of financial management systems to set up new suppliers.

## Duties and responsibilities

1. Support the commissioning of places for High Needs pupils in schools, colleges and other educational settings and ensuring appropriate contracts and their schedules are in place
2. Maintain and contribute to the further development of effective systems to monitor contracts with education providers including:
  - recording decisions about high needs placements
  - recording and tracking changes of high needs placements or providers
3. recording progress made against agreed outcomes.
4. Maintain comprehensive auditable records of all financial activity for services being commissioned by SEND, Alternative Provision & Permanently Excluded/Fair Access pupils. This will involve using Microsoft Excel, Softbox, Alusta, Cedar and other systems/applications.
5. Ensuring invoicing is in line with the contracts and schedules in place.
6. Generating and sending out monthly SEN top up funding remittance advices to schools.
7. Checking the completed Education, Health and Care plans and EHC Management Board outcomes to ensure accurate and timely payments.
8. Recording on the Out of Board record sheet any payments which have not been reflected at Education, health and Care Management Board.
9. Liaising as appropriate with Finance, Virtual School, SEND colleagues and External partners and education providers to ensure all information about projected and actual High Needs payments made are accurate.
10. Troubleshoot placement and financial enquiries/queries from education providers, working to resolve issues quickly and independently documenting the issues consistently.
11. Advise the SEN Operations, SEN Tribunal, SEN Legal & Virtual School teams and Panels/Boards (as appropriate) on placement cost, quality, and suitability of provision for High Needs pupils.

12. Provide routine and ad hoc reports to Service Accountant, High Needs Funding Manager and SEN management regarding financial activity and quality of services, providing clear management information and intelligence about the usage of contracted services.
13. Manage and maintain effective working relationships with both the front-line or senior staff in key agencies or education provider organisations.
14. Maintain efficient systems for notifying relevant parties (for example, schools, finance officers, transport providers and service managers/budget holders) of changes in pupil circumstances which may impact on financial responsibilities or other service delivery undertaking.
15. Contribute to, follow and implement policies and propose changes to practice/procedure for general work compliance and efficiency of the services.
16. Assist or support the development and implementation of technological solutions to enhance the business functions of the services.
17. Willing to extend knowledge and skills by undertaking further training that may be required, in addition to, keeping up with general developments.
18. Raise invoice requests for sign off for Pupil Services Teams.
19. Raise Invoices from signed off requests for Pupil Services Teams, such as permanent exclusions.
20. Monitor and raise outstanding debts (unpaid Invoices or Refunds).
21. Check, Query and Compile Statutory returns for sign off in a timely manner.
22. Complete In-year & End-Year financial processes/functions for SEND, Alternative Provision and Perm Exclusion Teams.
23. Arrange for the order, opening, renewal and closure of pre paid cards for Personal Education Budgets.
24. Setting up the supplier for personal education budgets.
25. Calculation of the payment schedules and instructing direct payment team to make payments for Personal Education Budgets.
26. Monitoring of Personal Education Budgets against invoices received.
27. Monitoring the closing balance of the pre-payment cards at the end of the academic year and arranging for claw back of funds or consideration of funds to be used towards the next academic year.
28. To support the operational management of Pupils Services by:
  - Supporting data collection, reports, monitoring and the completion of relevant data returns (such as freedom of information requests, inspections, place change notification returns), as necessary.

- Supporting the development of Council, Directorate & Unit Service strategy through research, data collection and analysis, report writing and collaborative work with internal officers or from other agencies.
  - Monitoring of commissioned education providers to ensure a high standard of activity, engagement and care that reflect good practice.
  - Challenging inappropriate behaviour from service users and education providers as appropriate.
  - Keeping up to date with National, London-wide, and local policies, frameworks, regulations and guidance regarding High Needs funding.
  - Taking precise and detailed minutes and action notes at meetings and proactively monitor the delivery of tasks arising from those meetings.
  - Providing advice on areas of expertise as appropriate.
29. To take responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.
30. Any other tasks as required.
31. Promote and ensure we adhere to Islington's 'CARE' values - ambitious, resourceful, and empowering in everything we do.

## Resources and Financial Management

Ensure effective Financial Management, cost controls and income maximisation in an ever-changing environment, fluctuating demands and priorities. Ensure resources are well managed and effectively deployed to the best possible effects assuring value for money in all activities.

## Compliance

Ensure legal, regulatory and policy compliance under GDPR, Health and Safety and in area of your specialism, identify opportunities and risks, escalating where appropriate.

## Work style

Office-Based/Flexible

# Person specification

You should demonstrate on your application form how you meet the criteria. Please ensure you address all the criteria as this will be used to assess your suitability for the post.

## Essential criteria

### Qualifications

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
E1	Level 2 or above AAT or relevant financial qualification or experience	Application

## Experience

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
E2	Experience of Contract and Service-Level agreement management and monitoring.	Application/Interview
E3	Experience of using financial management information systems and performing day-to-day financial activity.	Application/Interview
E4	Experience of monitoring and reconciling large complex budgets.	Application/Interview
E5	Experience of converting information from differing sources (such as management info systems, sharepoint, MS applications) into actual financial payments & data.	Application/Test
E6	Proven understanding and commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children and young people and or vulnerable adults.	Application/Interview
E7	Proven understanding of how schools and FE colleges organise and fund support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).	Application/Interview
E8	A good understanding of local government & schools' financial regulations.	Application/Interview
E9	Some knowledge and understanding of SEN, relevant Education legislation including the Children's and Families Act or the ability to develop this rapidly.	Application/interview

## Skills

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
E10	Proven ability of excellent data entry and using/creating systems to keep accurate and detailed financial and pupil records.	Application/Interview
E11	Proven ability to use advanced functions and formulae in the Microsoft Office applications suite.	Application/Interview/Test
E12	Proven ability using clear, concise and effective written and verbal communications..	Application/Interview
E13	Proven ability to effectively work under own direction or on own initiative under fluctuating demands and priorities, with the capacity to manage competing demands and meet deadlines.	Application/Interview
E14	Ability to represent the local authority and schools in negotiations with external organisations and government agencies.	Application/Interview
E15	Ability to interpret government legislation in relation to SEND, High Needs Funding and Service level plans	Application/Interview
E16	Ability to work as part of a team and development effective partnerships based around mutual confidence and respect.	Application/Interview

### Special requirements of the post

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
E15	This role will require you to obtain a Standard satisfactory clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service	Application

### Our accreditations

Our accreditations include: the Healthy Workplace award; Timewise; London Living Wage Employer; Disability Confident Committed; The Mayor's Good Work Standard; Stonewall Diversity Champion; and Time to Change.

