Job Description

Job Title: Cognition and Learning Advisor	**Service Area**: SEND – Experts at Hand	
Directorate: Children and Young People Directorate	**Post Number:**	**Evaluation Number:** 7959
Grade: PO6	**Date last updated:** November 2026	
Accountable to: EAH Team Manager – Operational		

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

PROTECTING OUR STAFF AND SERVICES

Adherence to Health and Safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good Health and Safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

Overall Purpose of Job

The Cognition and Learning Advisor helps schools get better at teaching children and young people who find learning hard, so that more of their needs are met well in mainstream classrooms at SEN Support.

This covers children with general learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, and difficulties with memory, processing and executive function. Executive function is one of the five new areas of development in the SEND reforms.

The focus is the school, not the individual pupil. The post holder will work with SENDCos, curriculum leaders and class teachers on adaptive teaching, literacy and numeracy support and the use of good interventions. They will coach staff, lead cognition and learning reviews and help leaders build approaches that last after Experts at Hand steps back.

Experts at Hand is part of Newham's SEND Reform Plan and is free to schools at the point of use. The post holder will work alongside educational psychologists and LCIS specialist teachers. In short, the educational psychologist helps the school understand why a child finds learning hard, and the Cognition and Learning Advisor helps the school change how it teaches them. The role covers KS2 to Year 11, with links to the early years and post-16 offers at transition points.

Key Tasks and Accountabilities

Supporting Schools with Cognition and Learning

1. Work with SENDCos, curriculum leaders and class teachers to improve how the school identifies and responds to cognition and learning needs at SEN Support.
2. Coach teachers in adaptive teaching, including reducing working memory load, explicit instruction, scaffolding and the use of visual supports.
3. Help schools put the Newham Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) guidance into practice for cognition and learning, and write and review Individual Support Plans that are clear and realistic.
4. Advise schools on how to support pupils with difficulties in executive function, such as planning, organisation and attention.
5. Observe in classrooms and use teaching-based assessment to help staff plan next steps, without carrying out diagnostic assessments.

Literacy, Numeracy and Interventions

6. Help schools choose, run and review evidence-based interventions for reading, spelling, writing and maths.
7. Support schools to check that interventions are making a difference, and to stop or change those that are not.
8. Advise schools on dyslexia-friendly and dyscalculia-friendly classroom practice.
9. Advise schools on the use of assistive technology and reasonable adjustments, including how to plan for access arrangements.

Cognition and Learning Reviews and Improvement

10. Lead cognition and learning reviews with schools, using their own data on attainment, progress and SEN Support.
11. Help leaders agree priorities and a short action plan, then review progress with them.
12. Give support and professional challenge where practice is not meeting pupils' needs.
13. Share good practice between schools across the clusters.

Working Alongside Educational Psychologists and LCIS

14. Take part in cluster triage and help decide where Experts at Hand time goes.
15. Bring in the educational psychologist when the reasons for a pupil's difficulties are unclear, and help the school turn EP advice into changes in class.
16. Plan joint work with LCIS specialist teachers where pupils have language needs that affect their learning, so schools get one set of advice.
17. Take part in Team Around the School meetings with the Inclusion Advisor and other Experts at Hand colleagues.
18. Use the same OAP guidance, areas of development and Individual Support Plan format as other Experts at Hand colleagues.

Training and Workforce Development

19. Design and deliver cognition and learning training as part of the Experts at Hand 0 to 19 training offer, for teachers and teaching assistants.
20. Run or support cognition and learning networks for SENDCos and literacy and maths leads.
21. Support schools to build their own expertise, for example by developing a cognition and learning lead in each school.

Transitions and Families

22. Advise on transitions for pupils with cognition and learning needs, especially Year 6 to Year 7 and Year 11 into post-16.
23. Help schools explain support to families, and help run parent workshops on supporting learning at home.

Information, Analysis and Quality Assurance

24. Use data to identify schools that need support, including those that have not asked for it.
25. Keep accurate records in line with council systems, data protection and safeguarding procedures.
26. Report termly on schools supported, actions taken and impact, and contribute to Experts at Hand reporting to the EaH Board and the DfE.

Safeguarding

27. Follow Newham's safeguarding procedures and Keeping Children Safe in Education, and act on any concerns straight away.

General

1. To support the Council's vision to enable every resident under 25 to be safe, happy and cared for, with positive activities to secure their long-term wellbeing.

2. Work in line with the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice, the Equality Act 2010 and any legislation that replaces them.

3. Handle confidential and sensitive information appropriately, including information about pupils and families, in line with data protection requirements.

4. To take part in appropriate staff development programmes, keeping up to date with local and national developments in SEND legislation, policy and practice.

5. To implement Newham Council's equal opportunities policies fully, and to work actively to overcome and prevent discrimination.

6. To undertake any other reasonable duties within the overall function commensurate with the grading and level of responsibility of the post.

1. The post holder may be required to work occasional evenings in order to meet the requirements of the service.

Personal Specification

Job Title: Cognition and Learning Advisor	**Service Area**: SEND – Experts at Hand	
Directorate: Children and Young People Directorate	**Post Number:**	**Evaluation Number:**
Grade: To be confirmed	**Date last updated:** November 2026	
Accountable to: EAH Team Manager – Operational		

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the Method of Assessment is stated to be the Application Form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.

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QUALIFICATIONS:	
Qualified Teacher Status.	Application Form
A postgraduate qualification in SEND, cognition and learning or specific learning difficulties (for example NASENCO or a Level 7 SpLD qualification), or substantial equivalent experience.	Application Form
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE:	
Successful teaching experience in mainstream schools, with significant experience of teaching pupils with cognition and learning needs.	Application Form/Interview
Experience as a SENDCo, specialist teacher or in a similar leadership role for SEND or inclusion.	Application Form/Interview
Experience of coaching, training and challenging teachers and school leaders.	Application Form/Interview/Test

Experience of choosing, running and evaluating evidence-based literacy and numeracy interventions.	Application Form/Interview
Strong knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice, the graduated approach and SEN Support.	Application Form/Interview/Test
Good understanding of the SEND reforms set out in the Schools White Paper, including Individual Support Plans and the five areas of development.	Application Form/Interview
Good understanding of how memory, processing and executive function affect learning, and of adaptive teaching.	Application Form/Interview/Test
Good understanding of safeguarding in education.	Interview
SKILLS AND ABILITIES:	
Ability to build trust with school staff and leaders while giving honest challenge.	Interview
Ability to influence practice without managing the people involved.	Interview
Ability to turn assessment findings and EP advice into practical classroom actions.	Interview/Test
Ability to work as part of a multi-professional team with educational psychologists and LCIS.	Interview
Ability to use data to identify need and show impact.	Application Form/Interview/Test
Clear written communication and accurate record keeping.	Application Form/Interview/Test
Ability to manage work across several schools and prioritise well.	Application Form/Interview
Demonstrable commitment to inclusion, equality and diversity, and a belief that mainstream schools can meet a wide range of needs when well supported.	Application Form/Interview
Good ICT skills, including Microsoft Office and case management systems.	Application Form
Ability to travel across the borough to schools and settings.	Application Form/Interview
Willingness and ability to work occasional evenings to maintain service delivery.	Application Form/Interview