

Job Description

Directorate:	Education and Children's Services		
Service:	Early Help Service		
Location:	Various across Lancashire		
Salary range:	£36,363 - £40,7777	Grade:	8
Reports to:	Neighbourhood & Community Team Manager	Contract:	Temporary until 31/03/2029

Job purpose and scope

The Best Start Inclusion Practitioner plays a key operational role in realising the government's ambition for 75% of children to achieve a Good Level of Development by 2028. The Best Start Inclusion Practitioner supports high-quality early identification and inclusive practice across Family Hubs. Ensuring that all children aged 0–5, particularly those with special educational needs, disabilities, or additional vulnerabilities are identified early, supported effectively and have equitable access to high-quality early years provision.

A Best Start in Life Inclusion Practitioner is there to:

- Spot needs early
- Support inclusive practice
- Empower families
- Bring services together
- Improve life chances from the very start

Post holders will be aligned to one of the twelve district delivery teams across Lancashire, based within a Best Start in Life Family Hub;

- Lancaster
- Wyre
- Fylde
- Preston
- Chorley
- South Ribble
- West Lancashire
- Hyndburn
- Ribble Valley
- Rossendale
- Burnley
- Pendle

The post holder will support early identification of need, promote inclusive practice across early years settings, and work in partnership with families and multi-agency professionals to ensure children receive timely and appropriate support.

Through providing specialist advice, guidance, and practical support, the role aims to build the confidence and capability of the early years workforce, strengthen inclusive environments, and

improve developmental outcomes.

The practitioner will contribute to reducing inequalities, enhancing school readiness, and ensuring every child has the best possible start in life through the provision of family facing support. Practitioners will be visible and accessible to families in hubs, network sites and via home visits e.g drop-in sessions, appointments, group activities, evidence-based interventions or participation in other hub-based services.

The practitioner will also have responsibilities for supporting the development, planning and delivery of inclusive and accessible services and an offer that is responsive to children with additional needs and their families.

In terms of broader system support Best Start Inclusion Practitioners through partnership working will strengthen the achievement of developmental outcomes with Early Years settings, Health, SEND, community-based services and other partners; promoting inclusive practice across the BSFH network. This work will contribute to more joined-up early identification and support for children with additional needs.

Supporting the service in the delivery and continuous improvement of early help services for children, young people, and families in line with the vision for Children and Families in Lancashire developed by the Children and Families Partnership Board which states;

Children, young people and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential

To deliver this vision we have agreed some key outcomes:

Five Outcomes

1. Vulnerable children and young people are safe from harm and build resilience.
2. Children and young people achieve their full potential in education, learning and future employment.
3. Children and young people enjoy healthy lifestyles and know how to help others.
4. Children, young people and families have a voice in shaping the support they receive.

Children and young people live in Lancashire where they can enjoy a good quality of life, be happy and want to stay.

The Lancashire Mindset

Here at Lancashire County Council, we are helping to make Lancashire the best place to live, work, visit, and prosper. To help us achieve this, we have introduced the Lancashire Mindset: Growth, Ownership, Optimism, and Positive Impact. Adopting this mindset across the entire organisation not only brings our values to life but also emphasises the collective commitment to delivering the best for the people of Lancashire.

The Lancashire Mindset serves as a guiding force for a culture rooted in growth, ownership, optimism, and the commitment to making a meaningful positive impact.



Accountabilities/Responsibilities

Promoting Inclusive Practice Across Family Hubs

1. Promote and embed inclusive practice across the Best Start Family Hub network, including within:
 - a. Home Learning Environment and parenting support
 - b. Perinatal mental health services
 - c. Parent–infant relationship support
 - d. Infant feeding services
 - e. Parent carer participation activity
2. Model strengths-based, family-centred and trauma-informed practice in all interactions.

Early Identification and Direct Support

3. Observe children and engage in professional discussions with families, early years practitioners and partners (e.g. Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Area SENCOs and DSCOs) to identify emerging additional needs.
4. Use professional judgement, in collaboration with others and with consideration of the child's home and developmental context, to distinguish between children who may benefit from enhanced supportive interactions and those who may have medium- to long-term additional needs.

5. Use evidence-based screening and observation tools to inform early identification, including Wellcomm the EYFS progress check at age two and insights from the 2–2½-year health review.
6. Provide practical advice, modelling of inclusive practice and short, focused interventions, including delivering or supporting activities such as sensory stay and play sessions.
7. Maintain a flexible approach to support rather than holding long-term caseloads or providing ongoing case management.

Family Empowerment and Navigation

8. Support and empower families to understand concerns, build confidence and access appropriate services at the right time.
9. Offer light-touch guidance to explain local pathways and processes, including SEND and early years support routes.
10. Work alongside Family Hub Navigators and other hub staff to signpost families to trusted voluntary, community and faith (VCF) organisations, peer support networks and local services, including for children with more complex needs.

Supporting Transitions and the Wider Early Years System

11. Promote access to early education entitlements for children with SEND, additional or emerging needs.
12. Encourage inclusive practice across early years settings, including childminders and Reception provision, drawing on specialist expertise and local Stronger Practice Hubs.
13. Support effective transitions from early years into school, ensuring timely information sharing (where appropriate) and continuity for children and families.

Workforce Development and System Contribution

14. Contribute to building workforce capability across the BSFH network by supporting staff confidence in early identification, child development and inclusive practice.
15. Promote the use of evidence-informed approaches and, when available, the National Inclusion Standards and associated digital resources.
16. Support delivery and promotion of the BSFH SEND offer and contribute to its continuous development, including through feedback from families and partners.
17. Identify and act upon opportunities for improving day-to-day procedures and processes within the team or work area, to support the continuous improvement of services.
18. Act as a professional point of technical reference for the team, providing suggested practice strategies, guidance on the more complex issues and monitoring adherence to relevant standards.

Partnership and Multi-Agency Working

19. Collaborate at a working level with health, SEND services, early years settings, schools, parent groups and VCF partners to deliver joined-up support for families.
20. Contribute to strengthening local inclusive practice through regular information sharing, joint problem solving and coordinated delivery.
21. Where relevant, share appropriate developmental insights with children's social care and contribute to multi-agency transition planning to support confident transitions into early education and school.

22. General

23. Attend regular training and development opportunities to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding, health and safety, and local policy developments
24. Undertake administrative tasks which assist with maintaining effective recording and evaluation systems for group work
25. Respect confidentiality and be able when necessary to explain to parents/carers when there is need to share information with others to protect children.
26. Demonstrate consistently high standards of practice that put the needs of children at the forefront of all activities.
27. Identify opportunities for improving day to day procedures and processes within the team or work area, and contributing these to team planning, to support the continuous improvement of services.
28. Operating in accordance to service policy and procedures and relevant standards for group work practice development.
29. Monitoring, review and evaluate their own performance against the team's objectives by engaging with the County Council's Performance Engagement process. Take appropriate corrective action as necessary.
30. Visibly and actively supporting and promoting the corporate activities and the values of the Council.
31. Contribute to the development of the Service through team meetings including representing the team at internal and external meetings and working groups.
32. Support the health and well-being of team members including the promotion of a positive work- life balance.
33. Visibly and actively supporting and promoting the corporate activities and the values of the Council.
34. Lead people in an inclusive way to deliver their operational objectives.

Other Requirements

Work flexibly to meet the needs of families, including evening, weekend, or school-holiday work when required.

The key tasks and responsibilities outlined above provide an overview of the expectations of the role. This is not an exhaustive list, and the post-holder may be required to undertake other reasonable duties in line with service needs.

Other

- **Equal Opportunities**
We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in the way we deliver services to the community and in our employment arrangements. We expect all employees to understand and promote this policy in their work.
- **Health and Safety**
All employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others when carrying out their duties and must help us to apply our general statement of health and safety policy.
- **Customer Focused**
We put our customers' needs and expectations at the heart of all that we do. We expect our employees to have a full understanding of those needs and expectations so that we can provide high quality, appropriate services at all times.
- **Safeguarding Commitment**
We are committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- **Skills Pledge**
We are committed to developing the skills of our workforce. All employees will be supported to work towards a level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy if they do not have one already.

Our Values

We expect all our employees to demonstrate and promote our values:

- **Supportive**
We are supportive of our customers and colleagues, recognising their contributions and making the best of their strengths to enable our communities to flourish.
- **Innovative**
We deliver the best services we possibly can, always looking for creative ways to do things better, putting the customer at the heart of our thinking, and being ambitious and focused on how we can deliver the best services now and in the future.
- **Respectful**

We treat colleagues, customers and partners with respect, listening to their views, empathising and valuing their diverse needs and perspectives, to be fair, open and honest in all that we do.

- **Collaborative**

We listen to, engage with, learn from and work with colleagues, partners and customers to help achieve the best outcomes for everyone.

Person Specification

All the following requirements are essential unless otherwise indicated by *

Your ability to meet the job requirements will initially be assessed by the information provided on your application but further assessment will be undertaken at interview and, in some cases, by using other types of assessment(s).

Requirements	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Identified by Application Form (A) or Interview (I)
Qualifications:		
Minimum level 3 qualification in Early Years, Education, Health, SEND, Child Development or a related field.	E	A
Experience:		
Substantial experience of working directly with individual children aged 0-5 years and families in groups and 1:1 within a Early Years and / or SEND context	E	A, I
Experience of working with a wide range of other professionals to develop and deliver shared initiatives for children, young people and families.	E	A, I
Practical experience of supporting inclusive practice and early identification of additional needs.	E	A, I
Knowledge and Skills		
Well-developed interpersonal skills, with the ability to establish and maintain good relationships with service users on a 1:1 basis and in the delivery of group work programmes / activities	E	A, I
Strong understanding of child development from pre-birth to five years and the ability to use observation, screening tools and professional judgement to inform early support.	E	A, I
Comprehensive working knowledge and understanding of local SEND systems, early years provision and family support pathways	E	A, I
Strong range of staff management skills and workforce development techniques that includes the ability to informally coach, guide and mentor less experienced staff and influence others practice based on technical or professional expertise.	E	A, I

Good written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to influence outcomes and convey empathy and sensitivity to the complex and often competing needs of children, families, staff and partner agencies.	E	A, I
Ability to work as member of a team.	E	A, I
Ability to work flexibly in order to respond to the access needs of children and families, including occasionally in the evening, or at the weekend and during school holiday periods.	E	A, I
Ability to use and interpret management information systems to ensure ongoing review of performance of teams and progress towards targets and objectives within the service	E	A,I
Other (including special requirements)		
1. Commitment to equality and diversity	E	I
2. Commitment to health and safety	E	I
3. Display the LCC values and behaviours at all times and actively promote them in others	E	I
4. Ability to or willingness to train to drive the mobile information vehicles	D	A