Best Start Inclusion Practitioner Applicant Recruitment Pack

Sefton is a really great place to live and work



Sefton Council

Welcome

Hi,

We would like to thank you for your interest in the Portage Advisor role within Sefton Council's Early Years and Family Hubs team, supporting our Best Start in Life Agenda.

Are you passionate about helping young children thrive and ensuring families receive the right support at the right time?

Sefton Council is seeking an enthusiastic and committed **Best Start Inclusion Practitioner** to join our Early Years SEND and Best Start Family Hubs team. This exciting new role will play a key part in strengthening inclusive support for babies and young children aged 0 to 5 with emerging or additional needs, helping to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities from the earliest years.

Working across Best Start Family Hubs and community settings, you will support the early identification of children's developmental needs, provide practical guidance to families, and help develop inclusive practice within universal services. You will work closely with colleagues across health, education, social care and the voluntary sector to ensure children and families can access timely and appropriate support.

The Job Description and Person Specification for this role are included within the job pack. If you have any questions about the vacancy, please refer to the job pack for the appropriate contact details.

If, when you've finishing reading this pack, you like what you see, and Sefton's Vision and Values align to yours then we can't wait to hear from you.

Best of luck!
Jen Teadsale
Early Years Service Manager

Sefton Council

Contents

About the Borough of Sefton 1
Our Vision and Values 2
Our Successes and Key Projects 2
An Inclusive Workplace 3
Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter 4
What We Can Offer You 4
About the Role 6
Top Tips on How to Apply 8
Application and Selection Information 9
Appendix A – Job Description and Person Specification 10

About the Borough of Sefton

Sefton is a confident and well-connected Borough, stretching from Bootle in the south to the coastal resort of Southport in the north. Home to more than 275,000 residents, Sefton encompasses a range of vibrant towns and communities, including Bootle, Litherland, Seaforth, Crosby, Formby, Maghull and Southport.

It is a fantastic place to live and work. As the northern-most Borough within the Liverpool City Region, Sefton offers a unique blend of beautiful coastline, countryside, attractive villages, thriving industrial areas and the busy Port of Liverpool.

With 22 miles of stunning coastline, Sefton is a leading coastal destination with a growing visitor economy. It is home to the iconic Antony Gormley *Another Place* installation, expansive beaches and protected sand dunes that support several rare species.

While each town and village has its own distinctive character, it is the people of Sefton who make the Borough truly special, creating diverse, welcoming and energetic communities in which to live, work, invest and visit.

Alongside its miles of golden sands, Sefton offers those who work here access to a world-renowned racecourse, prestigious golf courses, and National Trust nature reserves, ideal places to unwind, explore and enjoy leisure time.

The Borough benefits from excellent transport links, providing easy access to major North West cities including Liverpool and Manchester, and placing the Lake District and North Wales within reach for weekend breaks.

Whether you prefer vibrant town centres, friendly commuter towns, picturesque villages or stunning rural and coastal locations, Sefton offers a place to suit everyone. With house prices and rents typically lower than in neighbouring Liverpool and Manchester, you can enjoy coastal living while still being close to the buzz of city life.

Our Vision and Values

At Sefton Council, our vision is to deliver high-quality services that make a real difference to the lives of our residents, visitors, and communities. Everything we do is guided by a strong set of values that shape how we work and interact:



- **We put people at the heart of what we do** – ensuring our services are responsive, inclusive, and focused on improving lives.
- **We listen, value, and respect each other's views** – fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual respect.
- **We develop a culture of challenge, ownership, innovation, and improvement** – encouraging creativity and continuous development.
- **We are ambassadors for Sefton** – promoting the Borough positively and proudly representing our communities.
- **We are responsive and efficient** – delivering services that are timely, effective, and customer-focused.
- **We are clear about what we can and cannot do** – being transparent and honest in all our communications and actions.

These values underpin our commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and innovation, ensuring that Sefton remains a great place to live, work, and visit.

Our Successes and Key Projects

Sefton Council is proud of its recent achievements and ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality services. Our Adult Social Care services were recently graded Good by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and our Children's Services also

achieved a Good rating from Ofsted. These successes reflect the dedication and professionalism of our teams and our focus on continuous improvement.

More recently, we are exceptionally proud to have been nominated and subsequently shortlisted by the Local Government Chronicle for the Most Improved Council 2026. These successes reflect the dedication and professionalism of our teams and our focus on continuous improvement and our desire to make a difference across the communities within the Borough of Sefton.

Alongside these achievements, Sefton Council is actively delivering a range of major capital projects that will transform the Borough and stimulate economic growth. These include the Marine Lake Events Centre in Southport, the Strand Shopping Centre redevelopment in Bootle, and exciting developments such as the Cove Resort and Enterprise Arcade in Southport. We are also proud to support cultural and community initiatives like Salt and Tar, Bootle's vibrant events space, which hosts live music, comedy, and family-friendly activities, bringing people together and boosting the local economy.

These projects form part of our strategic investment programme to attract private sector-led development and create vibrant spaces for residents and visitors. We work closely with local communities to ensure these projects reflect their needs and foster a sense of ownership and pride.

For more information on these projects and to stay updated on progress, visit the Sefton Council website at www.sefton.gov.uk

An Inclusive Workplace

We are committed to fostering an inclusive Council that reflects the diverse communities we serve. Our workforce brings a wide range of experiences and perspectives, and we value an environment where everyone feels respected, supported, and able to reach their full potential.

Sefton is proud to be the first local authority in the Liverpool City Region to achieve **Navajo** accreditation, recognising our commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion. We are also a Disability Confident employer and continue to build a workforce that represents our communities.

We support several staff networks, including groups for Black and Ethnically Diverse colleagues, LGBTQ+ staff, women, disabled employees, and a Christian Workplace Group.

As an Equal Opportunities Employer, we base recruitment solely on skills, experience, and



suitability for the role. All applicants are treated fairly, and we have also recognised 'care experienced' as a protected characteristic within Sefton.

For more information, please refer to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter

Sefton Council is proud to support the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Fair Employment Charter, an initiative that promotes fair, healthy, inclusive, and just workplaces across the region. The Charter celebrates good employers and encourages the highest standards in employment practice, including fair pay, secure work, opportunities for progression, strong employee voice, and a commitment to staff wellbeing. By aligning with the Charter, we demonstrate our dedication to providing a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and to fostering an equitable and supportive working environment for all colleagues.

What We Can Offer You

- A supportive and collaborative working environment.
- An agile approach to working.
- Opportunities for professional development and career progression.
- A role where your work makes a real difference across the organisation.
- Flexible working arrangements supporting work-life balance.
- A strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

You will benefit from a comprehensive local government employment package which includes the following:

- Competitive salary in line with NJC Local Government Pay Scales.
- Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), providing a secure, defined benefit pension with employer contributions.

Annual Leave and Work-Life Balance

- Generous annual leave entitlement, 28 days annual leave rising to 33 days with 5 years continuous service.
- Additional public (bank) holidays.
- Flexible working options to support a healthy work-life balance, subject to service needs.
- Option to purchase additional annual leave.
- Sefton operate a 'Shut Down' period over the Christmas period which staff contribute four fifths of a week's pay over a 12-month period.

Learning, Development and Career Progression

- A comprehensive induction programme.
- Access to a wide range of training, apprenticeships, learning, and development opportunities.
- Support for professional development and role related qualifications.
- Opportunities to develop your career within a large and diverse local authority.

Health, Wellbeing and Support

- Enhanced sick pay scheme.
- Employee wellbeing initiatives and access to occupational health support.
- Policies that promote physical and mental wellbeing in the workplace.

Family-Friendly and Inclusive Policies

Our family-friendly policies and flexible working arrangements help staff maintain a healthy work-life balance.

- Family friendly policies, including enhanced maternity, paternity, adoption, neonatal care and special leave to support with time off work to deal with issues when life events happen.

- A strong organisational commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

- Reasonable adjustments and support to enable disabled employees to thrive.

Foster Friendly Employer Commitment

Sefton Council is proud to be a *Foster Friendly* organisation as recognised by The Fostering Network. We actively support employees who are foster carers or who are applying to foster by offering flexible working arrangements, paid time off for fostering-related meetings and training, and a workplace culture that recognises the vital role foster carers play in our communities.

This commitment helps ensure carers can balance fostering responsibilities alongside career, and reflects our dedication to supporting children, families, and those who care for them.

Additional Benefits

- Access to salary sacrifice and employee benefit schemes (where applicable).
- Opportunities to contribute to meaningful work that supports local communities.
- A supportive, values led organisational culture.
- Free parking at office bases (dependent upon the work location).

About the Role

About the Role

As a Best Start Inclusion Practitioner, you will:

- Support the early identification of children with emerging additional needs.
- Work directly with children and families through targeted interventions, advice and practical support.
- Promote inclusive practice across Best Start Family Hubs and partner services.
- Deliver group sessions and model effective strategies to support children's development.
- Work collaboratively with multi-agency partners to ensure coordinated support.
- Contribute to workforce development through coaching, guidance and sharing good practice.

- Help shape and develop Sefton's local SEND offer and Best Start Family Hub services.

About You

We are looking for someone who:

- Holds a Level 3 qualification (or above) in early years, education, health, SEND, child development or a related field.
- Has experience working with young children and families.
- Has experience supporting children with additional or emerging needs.
- Understands child development and inclusive practice.
- Can build positive relationships with families and professionals.
- Is passionate about early intervention, prevention and improving outcomes for children.
- Can work flexibly across a range of locations within Sefton.

What We Offer

- An opportunity to shape a newly developed role within Best Start Family Hubs.
- A supportive and collaborative working environment.
- Ongoing training, supervision and professional development.
- The chance to make a meaningful difference to children and families across Sefton.

This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

If you are committed to inclusive practice, early intervention and helping every child achieve the best possible start in life, we would love to hear from you.

Join us in making a difference and ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive and be ready for school

Please see **Appendix A (page 10)** for a full copy of the Job Description and Person Specification.

Top Tips on How to Apply

Submitting a strong application gives you the best chance of progressing to the next stage of the recruitment process. The following guidance applies to all roles and will help you prepare a clear, compelling application:

1. Read the Job Description and Person Specification Thoroughly

- Make sure you understand the key duties, expectations, and essential criteria.
- Use the person specification as your guide when writing your application.

2. Provide Clear Evidence of Your Skills and Experience

- Show *how* you meet the criteria using specific, real examples.
- Consider using the **STAR method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your responses.

3. Tailor Your Application

- Avoid generic statements. Focus on experience that directly relates to the role you are applying for.
- Demonstrate how your strengths align with the organisation's values and priorities.

4. Highlight Your Achievements

- Include examples of work you are proud of or significant contributions you have made in previous roles.
- Emphasise impact – improvements, efficiencies, positive outcomes, or innovations.

5. Be Clear About Qualifications and Training

- List all relevant qualifications and professional training, including dates and awarding bodies.
- If you are working towards a qualification, include expected completion dates.

6. Showcase Transferable Skills

- Skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, digital literacy, and organisation are valuable across all roles.

- Provide examples that demonstrate these effectively.

7. Check Your Application Carefully

- Review your responses for clarity, spelling, and completeness.
- Ensure all sections of the application form have been filled in fully.

8. Submit Your Application Before the Deadline

- Note the closing date and allow plenty of time to prepare your application.
- Late submissions usually cannot be considered.

9. Prepare for Potential Next Steps

- If shortlisted, you may be invited to an interview, assessment task, or presentation.
- Be ready to discuss your experience, approach to work, and examples of how you meet the role's requirements.

Application and Selection Information

The closing date for this vacancy is **Wednesday 9th December** (or earlier in the event of high volume of applications being received).

Provisional interview dates are **Monday 14th December**

We are an Equal Opportunities Employer; all candidates will receive equal treatment. Our decision to appoint will be based upon whether an individual's skills, experience, qualifications, and abilities make them the most suitable candidate for the role.

All disabled and care experienced applicants will be offered an interview where they meet all essential criteria on the person specification.

Please ensure that you meet all the essential criteria outlined in the person specification before submitting your application. Only applicants who demonstrate that they meet all essential criteria will be considered and invited to interview.

Appendix A – Job Description and Person Specification

Department: Early Years SEND / Best Start Family Hubs

Location: Across Best Start Family Hubs, outreach settings and community locations

Division:
A5302

Job Evaluation Number:

Section:
Practitioner (BSIP)

Post: Best Start Inclusion

Grade: F

JOB PURPOSE

To provide early identification and inclusive support for babies and young children (0–5) with emerging or additional needs and their families across Best Start Family Hubs (BSFHs) and community locations.

The postholder will strengthen inclusive practice, improve developmental outcomes, and support families to access the right help at the right time through partnership working, practical guidance, and evidence-informed approaches.

The role complements existing Early Years SEND and early years roles focusing on flexible, preventative support rather than ongoing case management.

Work within a systemic, relationship-based practice framework, recognising the interaction between family relationships, social networks, culture, community, professional systems and wider social contexts in shaping experiences and supporting sustainable change.

Apply curiosity and systemic thinking to understand patterns of interaction, relationships, beliefs, culture, power and environmental influences, and how these affect behaviour, meaning-making and family functioning.

Seek, value and integrate multiple perspectives, recognising that children, families, practitioners and partner agencies may understand situations differently.

Recognise and respond to the impact of power, inequality, discrimination and access to resources on children, young people and families, considering how these factors influence experiences and outcomes.

- Observe children and engage with families to identify emerging additional needs.
- Use evidence-based tools (e.g. ELIM, EYFS progress check at age 2, health review insights) to inform professional judgement.

- Work collaboratively with practitioners (e.g. BSIL hub staff, early years staff, SALTs, HVs, EPs, OTs, SENCOs) to assess needs holistically.
- Distinguish between children requiring enhanced support and those with potential longer-term needs.

2. Direct Work with Children and Families

- Provide practical advice, modelling and short-term targeted interventions to support children's development.
- Deliver or contribute to group-based interventions (e.g. sensory stay and play, communication groups).
- Empower families to support their child's development at home.
- Provide clear, accessible guidance on local SEND pathways and available services.
- Signpost families to appropriate services, peer support, and voluntary/community organisations.

3. Promoting Inclusive Practice

- Support BSIL family hub staff, community settings and partners to develop inclusive approaches.
- Share strategies and model inclusive interactions within universal services.
- Embed inclusive practice across BSFH services such as:
  - Home Learning Environment (HLE)
  - Parenting programmes
  - Infant feeding and perinatal services
  - Parent–infant relationship support

4. Partnership and Multi-Agency Working

- Work collaboratively with health, education, social care and voluntary sector partners.
- Contribute to joined-up planning and delivery of support for children and families.
- Participate in multi-agency discussions and transition planning where appropriate.
- Share relevant developmental insights to support continuity of care, including transitions to school.

5. Workforce Development

- Support the development of confidence and skills in the wider workforce around:
  - early identification
  - child development
  - inclusive practice
- Contribute to training, coaching, and modelling good practice across BSFH teams.

6. Supporting the Local SEND Offer

- Contribute to the delivery and promotion of the BSFH SEND offer for 0–5s.
- Support access to early education entitlements for children with additional needs.

- Promote awareness of services across communities and partner organisations.

7. Systems and Practice Development

- Provide feedback and insight to inform service development and local SEND pathways.
- Support implementation of emerging national initiatives (e.g. National Inclusion Standards, SEND reforms).
- Work flexibly across multiple hub sites and outreach settings to meet local need.

8. Professional Responsibilities

- Maintain accurate and appropriate records in line with data protection requirements.
- Adhere to safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Engage in continuous professional development and reflective practice.
- Engage actively in reflective supervision, using reflection, feedback, evidence and professional curiosity to inform analysis, test hypotheses, enhance decision-making and support continuous practice development.
- Uphold equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the role.

Key Principles of the Role

- Early intervention and prevention
- Strengths-based, family-centred practice
- Inclusive, non-diagnostic approach to support
- Partnership and co-production with families
- No ongoing caseload management or formal case coordination

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

The post is customer facing therefore you must have the ability to fulfil all spoken aspects of the role with confidence through the medium of English.

The post you are applying for is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore you are required to declare any convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings that are not 'protected' (i.e., filtered out) as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013.

For further information, please refer to DBS filtering guidance at www.gov.uk/dbs.

GENERAL:

This job description is a representative document. Other reasonably similar duties may be allocated from time to time commensurate with the general character of the post and its grading.

All staff have a duty to take care of their own health & safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Staff must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

The Authority has an approved equality policy in employment and copies are freely available to all employees. The post holder will be expected to comply, observe and promote the equality policies of the Council.

Since confidential information is involved with the duties of this post, the postholder will be required to exercise discretion at all times and to observe relevant codes of practice and legislation in relation to data protection and personal information.

Undertake, and participate in training, coaching and development activities, as appropriate.

The person appointed will be expected to work flexibly and the exact nature of the duties described above is subject to periodic review and is liable to change.

Prepared by: **Name:** Jen Teasdale

Designation: Early Years Service Manager

Date: September 2026

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post: Best Start Inclusion Practitioner

Department: Education Excellence

Personal Attributes Required (considerations)	Essential (E) Or Desirable (D)	Method of Assessment (suggested)
QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING		
• Level 3 qualification (or above) in early years, education, health, SEND, child development or related field	E	AF/Certificate of Attainment
• Relevant Level 5/6 qualification or specialist SEND training	D	AF/Certificate of Attainment
• Evidence of continuous professional development in SEND or early childhood	D	AF/Certificate of Attainment/I
EXPERIENCE		
• Experience of working directly with young children (0–5) and families	E	AF/I
• Experience of supporting children with additional or emerging needs	E	AF/I
• Experience of multi-agency working (health, education or social care)	E	AF/I
• Experience of engaging and supporting parents/carers	E	AF/I
• Experience within a Family Hub or community-based setting	D	AF/I
• Experience delivering group-based interventions or training	D	AF/I
• Experience working within SEND systems or early years provision	D	AF/I

SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE/APTITUDES		
Knowledge:		
• Knowledge of child development (0–5 years)	E	AF/I
• Understanding of early identification of additional needs and SEND	E	AF/I
• Awareness of local SEND pathways and services	E	AF/I
• Understanding of inclusive practice and early intervention approaches	E	AF/I
• Knowledge of evidence-based tools (e.g. ELIM, EYFS progress check)	D	AF/I
• Awareness of national SEND reforms and Best Start Family Hub model	D	AF/I
• Knowledge of parenting interventions and home learning environment approaches	D	AF/I
• Knowledge of systemic and relationship-based practice approaches and their application in working with children, young people and families	D	AF/I
Skills and Abilities:		
• Strong observational and assessment skills	E	AF/I
• Ability to communicate effectively with families and professionals	E	AF/I
• Ability to build trusting relationships with diverse families	E	AF/I
• Ability to work collaboratively across services	E	AF/I
• Ability to provide practical advice and model inclusive practice	E	AF/I
• Good organisational and time management skills	E	AF/I
• Ability to work flexibly across multiple sites	E	AF/I
• Ability to use professional curiosity and analysis to understand behaviour beyond presenting issues	E	AF/I
• Ability to incorporate multiple perspectives into assessment, planning and decision-making.	E	AF/I
• Facilitation and group delivery skills	D	AF/I
• Coaching or mentoring skills	D	AF/I
Personal Attributes:		

• Compassionate, approachable and non-judgemental manner		
• Commitment to inclusion and reducing inequalities	E	AF/I
• Reflective and solution-focused approach	E	AF/I
• Ability to use initiative and professional judgement	E	AF/I
• Commitment to partnership working and co-production	E	AF/I
• Reflective practitioner who is open to challenge, learning and exploring different perspectives	E	AF/I
• Demonstrates curiosity, humility and comfort with complexity and uncertainty.	E	AF/I
• Values collaboration and actively seeks the voices of children, young people, families and partners.	E	AF/I
• Committed to relationship-based practice, continuous learning and professional development.	E	AF/I
	E	AF/I
OTHER REQUIREMENTS	E	AF/I
• Ability to travel independently across the local authority area	E	Certificate
• Enhanced DBS clearance	E	AF/I
• Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children		

Assessment Methods
AF: Application Form
I: Interview
C: Certificates

Prepared by: Jen Teasdale
Date: 12th October 2026

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