

Post title	Early Years Strategic Development Officer
Division / Section	Schools and Lifelong Learning
Department	Communities and Families
Responsible To	Education Officer Early Years
Number of post holders	4
Acting up/ Secondment	No

Purpose of Job

To take forward policies and developments to ensure that the Council fulfils its duties as outlined in the Children and Young People's Act (2014), the national Early Years Framework, Edinburgh's Early Years Strategy and Action Plan, and Edinburgh's Parent and Carers Strategy and Action Plan.

To work as an effective member of the early years team to support the quality delivery of early learning and childcare for children aged 0-5 years, the development of affordable childcare for children aged 0-12 years, and the development of support to parents and carers to ensure positive outcomes for children.

To ensure that the practices of services are consistent with the quality indicators of the Pre Birth to Three Framework and Curriculum for Excellence, and that the needs of children and families are addressed within the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child.

To develop and maintain the workforce strategy required to ensure the quality delivery of the Council's responsibilities.

To work in collaboration with Children and Families staff, and with all other relevant agencies in the voluntary, private and public sectors to ensure a partnership approach to service development and delivery, taking forward the council's priority to work to develop co-operative practices.

MAJOR TASKS/JOB ACTIVITIES

Develop coherent Council policies in relation to all aspects of early learning and childcare services for children aged 0-5 years, out of school care, support to parents and carers - including affordable childcare, and workforce development.

Develop early years and childcare services and resources to improve outcomes for children as defined within the Children's Services Plan, in response to current and updated legislative guidance and requirements, and in response to city wide and local demographic changes.

Provide support and advice to relevant agencies and organisations working in partnership to deliver children's entitlement of early learning and childcare, to those delivering learning care and support to children aged 0-3 years, to the voluntary sector providing community based early years services, and out of school care organisations.

Lead in the development and delivery of a workforce strategy working in partnership with council employee development staff and external training providers and organisations to design and deliver appropriate training/support/ workplace assessment and CPD to existing staff, modern apprentices and trainees, and to staff from other providers of early learning and childcare, including out of school care.

Develop and maintain effective support to voluntary sector providers of community based services, encouraging collaborative and co-operative practices for mutual support, problem solving, and innovative practice.

Monitor the quality and performance of early years and childcare services being provided by the council, by organisations across the early years and childcare sector on behalf of the council, including those that are subject to commissioning and procurement processes..

Supervision and Management of People (Numbers and type of staff)

The postholder will share responsibility for

- directing the work of a team of business support staff who support the Early Years service.
- providing training, mentoring and workplace assessment for 30 Early Years and Childcare trainees/modern apprentices paid at Grade 3, on work placements within Council early years settings.
- Workplace Assessments of 10 staff at a time (across Grades 5 and 6), who have undertaken PEEP training.

The post holder will carry out work place observations and support for the development of portfolios for the purposes of gaining their SQA Award.

Creativity and Innovation

Formulate and develop innovative ideas and plans for early learning and childcare provision.

Engage with all stakeholders including children and their carers to develop innovation in the delivery of provision.

Actively promote the principles of early intervention and inclusion in all aspects of strategic and operational work.

Develop innovative approaches to the provision of accessible and affordable high quality childcare Research and assess the implications of relevant city wide and national strategies on the development of early years and childcare provision.

Contribute to the Department's strategic and operational planning processes including those associated with organisational change.

Develop effective ways of promoting user engagement in service development and delivery in line with departmental principles and practice.

Contribute to establishment and thematic reviews as required.

Analyse complex information and statistics and produce written reports with recommendations to senior management in order to plan and develop appropriate provision.

Establish information systems to support strategic and local planning functions.

Influence workforce planning to meet the needs of developing services.

Develop effective and innovative ways of developing high quality services.

Contacts and Relationships

The post holder is required to establish and maintain effective relationships with the stakeholders of early learning and childcare services on a daily basis. These include officers from other council departments, representatives from voluntary and private providers of early learning and childcare, community based services and out of school care, representatives from other local authorities and NHS services.

The post holder will provide information to members of the public who make queries by telephone or email, as well as engaging children and young people and their parents/carers, professional and vocational staff for the purposes of service and policy development and delivery.

The post holder will be required to communicate with senior managers and elected members, providing them with written and oral briefings for the purposes of decision making and public communications.

In the course of specific tasks the post holder will have contact with Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate, SSSC, training agencies, and officers from neighbouring authorities.

Decisions (Discretion)

The post holder will provide feedback, guidance and support to providers of early learning and childcare services, and individual staff in relation to the quality of their provision. This will be given particularly when providers are requesting formal partnership with the Council, and when an existing partner provider has been assessed as not performing satisfactorily through council contacts or external inspection processes.

The post holder will monitor and assess the performance of organisations commissioned by the council to deliver services using council commissioning and procurement structures and procedures, notifying senior managers where there are concerns about ineffective or inefficient use of council resources.

The post holder will respond to complaints made by the public or council staff, and involve their line manager if these cannot be resolved by their own actions or reference to council procedures.

Decisions (Consequences)

The work of the post holder will contribute to decisions about partnership arrangements being made with a new provider, or continuing with an existing partner provider. This is likely to lead to implications for the

reputation of organisations, childcare arrangements for parents, but ensure that the council continues to secure quality provision to ensure positive experiences and outcomes for children.

The post holder's training and development role will inform PRD processes for staff, and in the case of modern apprentices and trainees directly determine whether or not they may be qualified and registered to be employed in early learning and childcare. This will ensure the quality of the provision being delivered, and contribute to increasing staffing capacity within the workforce.

The monitoring of the commissioned services may lead to termination of contracts with providers of service, requiring the council to identify alternative arrangements but ensure the more appropriate use of resources.

Resources

Support the preparation of funding bids to government and other bodies and take day to day responsibility where required for the recording, reporting, and evaluation of use of funds acquired.

The post holder will have responsibility for monitoring the budgets allocated to their specific area of work, evaluating whether or not the sums allocated are appropriate for the level of service required to be delivered and making reports on a regular basis to their line manager and senior managers in the department.

Environment – Work Demands

Gathering data from a wide network of sources, disseminating materials appropriately, and responding to requests for information whilst keeping focused on day to day demands and deadlines.

Preparing information materials at short notice for senior managers and elected members.
Providing telephone and email responses to queries from members of the public on a daily basis.

While the post holder will be allocated specific areas of responsibility these may change as the demands of the service and duties of the council are modified due to developing legislative and council priorities.

The post holder will be expected to develop their allocated areas of work with a high level of self direction, and will be provided with monthly supervision by their line manager.

Environment – Physical

Although the post may be exposed to some physical demands such as moving training materials and equipment using safe manual handling procedures but will be predominantly within the range of normal office based activities.

Environment – Working conditions

The post will be predominantly within the range of normal office based activities.

Visits to providers of early learning and childcare will require the postholder to function in different environments and at child level i.e. on floor level or on small furniture.

Environment – Work Context

Although the post will have some requirement to take care in relation to the working environment, work activities and dealing with people this will not be more than the normal required of a council employee.

Knowledge and Skills

The post holder will be educated to degree level or recognised equivalent in a relevant professional discipline e.g. Early Learning and Childcare, Social Work, Education, Health, Community Learning and Development, Policy and Planning.

The post holder must have proven experience in a similar role, preferably in the field of early years/and or childcare provision.

Proven verbal and written communication and negotiation skills are required.

Proven abilities to plan and analyse statistical information and develop policy is required.

Experience in delivering training and assessment of early years and childcare practice is required.

Experience of working with IT is required.

Health and Safety

The Council must abide by relevant health & safety and employment law, as well as the common law duty of care. All members of staff are required take care for their personal health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions or inactions. You are therefore required to carry out your duties in a safe manner in accordance with instructions and in compliance with safety rules/procedures, regulations and codes of practice. You are required to advise your line manager if you become aware of any unsafe practice or condition or if you have any other safety concerns and should comply with accident and near-miss reporting procedures.

If you supervise, manage or lead other staff, you are also responsible for ensuring that the Council's operations are carried out in such a way that ensures, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of those staff and that of any others who may be affected. You will therefore conduct relevant risk assessments and assign duties with appropriate instructions, in compliance with safety rules/procedures, regulations and codes of practice. You will address and/or escalate any issues of any unsafe practice, condition or any other safety concerns you identify or that are brought to your attention, taking appropriate advice as necessary and will ensure that accident and near-miss reporting procedures are understood and complied with.

Organisation Structure

(attach structure - specific to area of operation).