

Role descriptor: Strategic Lead for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Provider Organisations

Purpose of the role

The Strategic Lead for SEND will:

1. Provide effective leadership and strategic direction to support the provider organisation in meeting statutory duties and quality standards around SEND.
2. Lead the development and oversight of the organisations' SEND development plan in conjunction with local area and local partnership strategic priorities.
3. Facilitate the provider organisation to meet the requirements of the new CQC/Ofsted Joint SEND Inspection Framework.
4. Strengthen partnership working between provider organisation and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to improve quality of services for disabled children and young people and children and young people with special educational needs and their families.
5. Act as SEND Champion, for improved outcomes and experiences for SEND, within the organisation.
6. Be accountable to a senior leader (equivalent to a Director) within the provider organisation or provider collaborative.

Knowledge and skills

The Strategic Lead for SEND will:

1. Have a senior leadership role within the provider organisation.
2. Develop and maintain SEND subject matter knowledge in line with SEND training assurance framework Level 5.
3. Promote a collaborative leadership culture both internally and within the local SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership influencing change across service and organisational boundaries in relation to SEND.

Benefits of the role:

1. Positive impact on the experiences of children and young people with health needs relating to SEND and their families.
2. Provides a key point of contact within the provider organisation to facilitate local area strategic partnerships in relation to SEND, avoid duplication across services and escalate queries or concerns.
3. Provide a focus on SEND quality improvement, positive patient experience aiming to support mediation and avoid complaints and tribunals.
4. Strengthens health provider leadership for SEND and strengthen health provider voice, alongside health commissioners, to facilitate joint working across the local SEND and alternative provision partnership.
5. Improve quality of health contributions to statutory assessment process and annual review of EHCPs through joint work with Designated Clinical Officer (DCO).

Key areas of work

The Strategic Lead for SEND will:

1. Oversee the organisation's SEND development plan ensuring there are links to reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for disabled children and young people and children and young people with special educational needs e.g. Core 20 Plus 5 agenda.
2. Ensure that the organisation's SEND development plan is delivered in line with current legislation, policy, and statutory guidance.
3. Ensure SEND is included in the organisation's governance structure.
4. Work in partnership with other operational and strategic leaders in the provider organisation, ICB, parent carer forums, provider collaboratives, local authorities, and voluntary sector organisations.
5. Escalate risks within the organisation and to partner organisations such as the ICB.
6. Raise the profile of SEND with corporate functions such as quality improvement, patient experience/engagement, complaints, HR (to add SEND responsibilities to JDs).
7. Attend strategic SEND Partnership Boards.
8. Work jointly with the DCO.
9. Champion co-production and engagement with families, children and young people, making sure their voice can influence strategically and operationally.
10. Have oversight of key and emerging themes from mediations and tribunals to support understanding and learning about what works, areas for improvement and scope potential unmet need.

Quality Assurance

The Strategic Lead for SEND will:

1. Work with DCO to implement quality assurance frameworks across the organisation.
2. Ensure advice for EHC needs assessment for all services is quality assured before submitting to the local authority.
3. Coordinate and report on internal quality audits of advice for EHC needs assessment.
4. Monitor and report on the organisation's SEND quality compliance e.g. compliance to 6 weeks statutory timescale to return EHC needs assessment advice.
5. Oversee risk management and escalation processes relation to SEND.

Workforce development

The Strategic Lead for SEND will:

1. Work with the DCO to map the training needs of the organisation's SEND workforce.
2. Establish a network of SEND champions in all services.
3. Support the development and maintenance of appropriate governance and communication across different services, business units or directorates including both children's and adult services.
4. Promote learning and development on opportunities relating to SEND.
5. Coordinate and support service input to SEND First Tier Tribunals.
6. Promote consistent practice for SEND within the organisation and across the provider collaborative.

Information and signposting

The Strategic Lead for SEND will:

1. Provide subject matter expertise in relation to SEND.
2. Act as a key point of contact for SEND within the organisation.
3. Set up processes to ensure organisational information on the local offer is up to date and meaningful for families.
4. Ensure SEND key performance data is available, quality checked and shared with SEND partners as per local agreement protocols.

This role descriptor has been co-designed by a group of Designated Clinical Officers Designated Medical Officers, Senior Responsible Officers and SEND Experts.