

Job Description

Section A: Job Profile

The job profile outlines key information relating to the salary and working conditions e.g., location of a job, along with the current focus of the role and a brief description of the main duties.

Job Details

Job Title:	Senior Early Education Payments Officer
Salary:	£31,537 - £34,434
Grade:	G8
Hours:	37
Team:	Schools and Settings (Early Years Sufficiency)
Service Area:	Access to Learning
Primary Location:	The primary location is usually County Hall and you will be required to work from this location and in an agile manner. <i>Your office base may be subject to change as we are currently transitioning between temporary and permanent office locations due to the closure of County Hall. If this is applicable to you, you will be notified, but no reimbursement will apply in respect of travel.</i>
Budget responsibility:	None
Responsible to:	Early Education Funding Team leader
Responsible for:	None
Political Restricted Post:	No

Job Purpose

The Senior Early Education Payments Officer sits within the Payments function of the Children's Education Payments and Early Education Funding Team, which is responsible for the administration and distribution of funding across Children's Education. The post holder will support the team in achieving its objectives.

The role contributes to the Council's statutory duty to ensure sufficient early years and childcare places by supporting the accurate, timely and effective administration of Early Education funding.

The post holder will develop a detailed understanding of early education funding to enable them to respond to complex queries from providers and parents in a timely and accurate manner.

Working with private, voluntary and independent providers, the role will support compliance with statutory requirements and the Council's audit and financial procedures, ensuring funding is administered in line with the Council's terms and conditions.

The post holder will work collaboratively with colleagues, teams and external partners to promote consistent service delivery, support efficient ways of working, and contribute to continuous improvement of processes.

The role involves supporting the prompt and accurate processing of payments on behalf of Education, maintaining high standards of data accuracy, record keeping and audit readiness.

The post holder will ensure that data is entered and maintained accurately, and that established processes and procedures are followed to support effective financial control and service delivery.

Job Responsibilities

1. Lead on the effective distribution and audit of early education funding, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and the Council's audit and financial procedures.
2. Contribute proactively to the implementation of processes and procedures for the distribution of early years entitlements for children aged 9 months to 5 years.
3. Provide a high-quality customer service to providers, parents and the general public by responding to complex queries regarding funding arrangements. Liaise effectively with colleagues and departments to resolve queries, ensuring responses are timely and in line with Council procedures.
4. Contribute to the development and implementation of new systems and processes, including testing, to support the efficient distribution of funding (including System-C and ContrOCC developments).
5. Assess, manage, and process applications for Early Learning 2-year-olds to ensure high take up of entitlement.
6. Produce accurate reports, statistical returns and financial information as required, including the use of Excel and Power BI where appropriate to support data analysis and reporting.
7. Take a proactive part in the work to manage the use of online eligibility checkers and ensure effective use as appropriate to allow maximum take up of places.
8. Develop and maintain all key documentation relating to funding with due regard to security and confidentiality, ensuring documentation is readily accessible to staff and auditors. Ensure the service's web and intranet pages are kept up to date. Develop key documentation and associated web and intranet pages in response to new policies and customer feedback.
9. Process and check compliance of provider applications to join the scheme, process requests to leave the scheme and communicate these to relevant teams.
10. Undertake financial audits of early years providers to ensure compliance with funding terms and conditions and provide guidance to new providers on funding administration processes.
11. Liaise with funding teams dealing with early education payments to schools, ensuring processes dovetail with no duplications.
12. Contribute to meetings with officers and with representatives from the private, voluntary and independent providers
13. Carry out any other duties relevant to the post requested by the Early Education Funding Team Leader or Deputy Early Education Funding Team Leader.

Additional responsibilities

1. Assist the Early Education Funding Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader with developing and embedding new processes for early education funding
2. Take responsibility for preparing accurate reports on take-up and sufficiency to support the Council in meeting its statutory duties, including use of data analysis tools such as Excel and Power BI.
3. Confidently, firmly and assertively inform providers, including headteachers, school governors and business owners and managers about the law and procedures regarding the Early Education Entitlements using written, verbal and face-to-face communications.
4. Lead responsibility for managing financial audits including, visiting providers to challenge practices and creating and reviewing payment reports and carrying out spot checks to ensure accuracy.
5. Overall responsibility to ensure that payments have been made appropriately authorised, entered correctly and within agreed timescales using relevant systems including ContrOCC and SAP. Adhering to all legal requirements and the regulatory framework that governs the operation of accounting and financial systems.

6. Deputise for team leaders, providing operational cover as required
7. Develop specialist knowledge of new areas of the funding entitlements in order to:

Negotiate with providers including school headteachers and owner/managers on interpretation of the Statutory Guidance

Challenge where non-compliance with funding agreements has been identified

8. Train payments officers to equip them to answer complex queries from providers and parents.
9. Troubleshoot problems and answer questions payment officers may have.
10. Look up and interpret information to answer complex queries, including requests for statistical information from internal and external customers.
11. Advocate on behalf of parents with head teachers and owners/managers where entitlements are not being met or inappropriate conditions are being imposed.
12. Direct supervisory responsibility for Payment Officers
13. 13. Provide operational cover for the Deputy Team Leader as required.
14. 14. Ensure that payments have been made appropriately authorised, entered correctly and within agreed timescales using relevant systems including ContrOCC, and SAP.

Our Values

Our organisational values underpin everything we do and say and are supported by policies, processes and guidance. In short, our values describe ‘the way we do things here’ so that we deliver great services for our residents. Our values are:

- Always learning
- Be kind and care
- Equality and integrity in all we do
- Taking responsibility
- Daring to do it differently

Everyone that works for us demonstrates their commitment to these values. We will ask you to demonstrate your commitment to these values, and their associated behaviours, throughout the application process.

Section B: Selection Criteria/Person Specification

This section provides a list of essential and desirable criteria that detail the skills, knowledge, behaviours, qualifications and experience that a candidate should have to perform the job.

Each of the criteria listed below, and your commitment to our values, will be measured through the application form/CV (A) and optionally one or more of the following - a test / exercise (T), an interview (I), a presentation (P) or documentation (D). You must provide a supporting statement as part of your application which includes examples and evidence of when you have demonstrated the criteria listed below.

Essential Criteria	Assessed By:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE maths and English at A*-C (4+) • Evidence of continuing professional development 	A,I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of national priorities in the early years and childcare sector 	A,I

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven administrative experience • Proven front line service experience (e.g. telephone, face to face) • Proficient ICT skills including the ability to use both Microsoft applications, particularly Excel, and business systems effectively, with the ability to apply system knowledge to across IT systems Experience of handling and interpreting complex data and producing reports • Experience of inputting and retrieving data from ICT based systems 	A,I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to communicate effectively using different media and answering complex queries with understanding and empathy. • Ability to handle challenging and sometimes emotional situations and customers • Excellent communication skills both spoken and written. • Methodical and organised with excellent attention to detail. • Ability to effectively work alone and as part of a team • Excellent time management skills and ability to work to under pressure and to deadlines 	A,I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Can do’ approach with a commitment to providing good customer service • Flexible and ability to handle change. • Good problem solver and analytical thinker. 	A,I
<p>The following are the generic behaviours expected from all Early Education Funding staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Willing and flexible, with a positive and optimistic attitude – Always looking to improve ways of working – Inquisitive and actively owns and seeks to solve problems – Takes personal responsibility to find things out, develop and share knowledge – Communicates and collaborates pro-actively – Builds trust-based relationships <p>These staff behaviours will be demonstrated in conjunction with the following key competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is commercially aware – i.e. cost drivers and understands true costs of services and considers the value in everything we do – Able to listen, understand, and respond constructively to viewpoints of others – Able to challenge constructively, join the dots, and see the wider implications, across services, processes and issues. – The ability to communicate clearly and openly with others in order to inform, instruct, persuade and encourage feedback. – Demonstrates a can-do attitude and focuses energy and commitment on achieving positive results that are critical to the organisations success. – Understands the role of the organisation, and the needs and expectations or internal and external customers, working professionally and innovatively to meet or exceed those needs and expectations – Demonstrates an open mind to challenge traditional approaches in a positive way, develops innovative idea, solves problems and continually improves performance. 	A,I

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborates and consults with others effectively, in joint pursuit of team and organisational goals. - Understands the environment in which the organisation operates and considers the financial and wider commercial implications of their decisions and actions. - Demonstrates the appropriate level of specialist knowledge and skills required to effectively fulfil the role and ensure continuous development 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to and understanding of the principles of Equal Opportunities. • Commitment to ensuring that volunteering opportunities are inclusive, and that additional support is available where needed. 	A,I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to travel across the whole County 	A,I
Desirable Criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating skills 	A,I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of procedures around safeguarding children and understanding of the requirements for managing sensitive data under GDPR 	A,I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of early years and childcare sector 	A,I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant experience of using SAP, ContrOCC, Liquid Logic / System-C Children' System • Car driver with current driving licence • Experience of using and developing Power BI Dashboards 	A,I

Section C: Pre-employment Checks

All appointments are subject to standard pre-employment screening. This will include identity, references, proof of right to work in the UK, medical clearance and verification of certificates. Further information can be found here [Pre-employment checks](#)

Additional pre employment checks specific to this role are identified below (those ticked).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check with Children's and Adults Barred List	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check without an Adult/Children's barred list check
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check with Children's Barred List	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check with Adults Barred List
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Standard Disclosure and Barring Service check	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic Disclosure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disqualification for Caring for Children (Education)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overseas Criminal Record Checks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prohibition from Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional Registration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non police personnel vetting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disqualification from Caring
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify):		

Section D: Working Conditions

This is a guide to the working conditions and the potential hazards and risks that may be faced by the post-holder.

Health and Safety at Work

You are responsible for your own health, safety and wellbeing, and undertaking health and safety duties and responsibilities for your role as specified within Oxfordshire County Councils Health and Safety Policy.

The potential significant hazard(s) and risk(s) for this job are identified below (those ticked).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Provision of personal care on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Driving HGV or LGV for work
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular manual handling (which includes assisting, manoeuvring, pushing and pulling) of people (including pupils) or objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other frequent driving or prolonged driving at work activities (e.g. long journeys driving own private vehicle or a council vehicle for work purposes)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working at height/ using ladders on a regular/ repetitive basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted postural change – prolonged sitting
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lone working on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted postural change – prolonged standing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Night work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular/repetitive bending/ squatting/ kneeling/crouching
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rotating shift work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manual cleaning/ domestic duties
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working on/ or near a road	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular work outdoors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Significant use of computers (display screen equipment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with vulnerable children or vulnerable adults
<input type="checkbox"/>	Undertaking repetitive tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Working with challenging behaviours
<input type="checkbox"/>	Continual telephone use (call centres)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular work with skin irritants/ allergens
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work requiring hearing protection (exposure to noise above action levels)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular work with respiratory irritants/ allergens (exposure to dust, fumes, chemicals, fibres)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work requiring respirators or masks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with vibrating tools/ machinery
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work involving food handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with waste, refuse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential exposure to blood or bodily fluids	<input type="checkbox"/>	Face-to-face contact with members of the public
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify):		