

Expression of Interest: Strategic Lead, Experts at Hand and Inclusion Development

Are you passionate about creating a more inclusive education system where children and young people receive the right support, at the right time, in their local community?

We are seeking an experienced system leader to shape and deliver Southwark's Experts at Hand approach and the wider development of an inclusive continuum of SEND provision.

About the Role

The **Strategic Lead, Experts at Hand and Inclusion Development** will play a pivotal role in delivering Southwark's SEND transformation agenda. The postholder will lead collaboration across education, health, care and local authority services to strengthen mainstream inclusion and improve earlier intervention.

Working closely with the Assistant Director for SEND, Headteachers, Trust Leaders, special school leaders and strategic partners, you will provide visible leadership across a complex and evolving SEND system. You will need to build credibility, navigate competing priorities, negotiate across organisational boundaries and secure collective commitment to sustainable change.

The role will ensure that the Experts at Hand model is effectively coordinated, deployed and embedded across Southwark's inclusion system, enabling schools and partners to access specialist expertise, develop sustainable practice and strengthen inclusion within local communities.

The role will also bring together the development of special-school outreach, Inclusion Bases across primary, secondary and post-16 phases, curriculum pathways for children and young people with the most complex needs.

You will oversee the delivery team, programme resources, milestones, and risks. As a senior point of contact for the Department for Education and other strategic partners, you will lead delivery discussions, provide clear assurance and ensure that agreed commitments translate into practical improvements for children, young people and families.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide strategic leadership for Experts at Hand and the wider development of Southwark's inclusive SEND system, translating agreed priorities into a coherent and deliverable plan.
- Build trusted relationships with Headteachers, Trust Leaders, special school leaders, health, care and local authority partners, using influence, challenge and negotiation to secure shared ownership and action.
- Provide strategic oversight and support to five Neighbourhood Inclusion Leads, ensuring consistency, quality and impact of Experts at Hand delivery across all localities.
- Lead the development of a connected continuum of support, including special-school outreach, Inclusion Bases, adapted curriculum pathways and special-school provision aligned with changing need and local sufficiency.
- Work with school leaders, curriculum specialists and multi-agency partners to strengthen curriculum delivery and access to specialist expertise for children and young people with the most complex needs, including those in mainstream settings.
- Manage the programme budget and resources, ensuring robust financial planning, effective use of funding, value for money and appropriate reporting and assurance.
- Lead delivery meetings with the Department for Education and other strategic partners, managing challenge, dependencies and shared commitments and securing timely action.
- Use data, intelligence, quality assurance and performance information to evaluate impact, inform strategic decisions and provide clear delivery and financial assurance to governance groups.

Who We're Looking For

We welcome expressions of interest from individuals who:

- Have substantial senior leadership experience of SEND within an education setting and a strong track record of leading complex system change.
- Have worked successfully with Headteachers, Trust Leaders and special school leaders to strengthen inclusion and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Demonstrate high-level influencing and negotiation skills across education, health, care, local government and national or strategic partners.
- Have a strong understanding of the SEND reforms and how Experts at Hand, outreach, Inclusion Bases, curriculum pathways and special-school provision should operate as a coherent continuum across phases.
- Bring experience of developing specialist or inclusion provision and a strong understanding of curriculum delivery for children and young people with complex SEND.
- Have substantial experience of managing budgets, resources and delivery teams, with clear accountability for performance, risk, assurance and value for money.
- Use data, financial and performance information confidently to identify need, evaluate impact and support timely decision-making.
- Bring political awareness, sound judgement, resilience and a collaborative style, with the confidence to challenge constructively and maintain momentum across a complex partnership.

Funding and time commitment

This is a fixed-term secondment opportunity to support the implementation and mobilisation of Experts at Hand and wider SEND reforms from January 2027 to August 2029. Time commitment, release arrangements and funding support will be agreed following appointment and will reflect the scope and priorities of the role. The scope and continuation of the role will be reviewed by the SEND and Inclusion Strategic Partnership Board in 2028.

How to Apply

If you are ready to provide the system leadership needed to strengthen inclusion, develop a coherent continuum of SEND provision and improve outcomes for children and young people across Southwark, we invite you to submit an Expression of Interest by **Friday 16 October 2026**. Invites for interview anticipated for W/C 2 November 2026.

Please provide a brief personal statement of no more than two pages, outlining:

- Your relevant senior leadership experience within SEND, School Leadership or a similarly complex system and the impact you have achieved.
- Your experience of working with school leaders and negotiating with partners across education, health and care to secure strategic change.
- Your vision for Experts at Hand and a connected continuum of mainstream support, outreach, Inclusion Bases and specialist provision across Southwark.
- Your experience of developing outreach, Inclusion Bases, specialist provision or curriculum pathways for children and young people with complex SEND.
- Your experience of managing budgets, resources and team delivery, including how you maintained oversight, accountability and value for money.
- Your experience of working with the Department for Education or other strategic partners to manage delivery, risks and shared commitments.

For further information, please contact **Cathrine Milmine, Assistant Director for SEND** (Cathrine.Milmine@southwark.gov.uk).