

## **Education Welfare Officer - Attendance**

**Full Time: 37 Hours per Week – Permanent, Term Time Only plus 2 Weeks**

**Annual Salary: £34,406.60 (pro rata from FTE £38,831.79)**

**Start date: 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 earliest, depending on notice period**

**Location: Borough of Sutton - Head Office Wallington**

Cognus is about education – we exist to support schools, families, and children/young people to access, enjoy and thrive in educational settings in school and in the community.

Cognus is commissioned by London Borough of Sutton to provide a wide range of education services to mainstream schools and specialist education providers in Sutton. The Cognus Attendance Support Team has evolved and expanded in order to meet the revised duties of a local authority. Please see [DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

The core duties of the Cognus Education Welfare Officer are:

- Holding an allocation of schools for whom termly Targeting Support meetings are carried out, using school attendance data to identify those at risk of poor attendance and agree actions for those pupils.
- Provide communication and advice for the schools and trusts in the local area as per the allocation of schools.
- Work together with partners across the local area in order to identify holistic support required to tackle the causes of absenteeism.
- Work together with courts officer on legal intervention where voluntary support has not been successful.

We are seeking to employ an Education Welfare Officer to join our existing team which assists the London Borough of Sutton in carrying out its duties in relation to School attendance and ensure that children and young people achieve their full potential through attendance and engagement with education.

We are looking for professionals who are passionate about the inclusion of children and young people in education and society. Individuals that enjoy a varied workload, are organised, creative, and have excellent people skills. Successful candidates will provide a flexible approach supporting attendance across the organisation and the local area. You will be expected to have the drive, resilience, and enthusiasm necessary for this important role, with a strong background in Education Welfare, Social Care or from within the education arena.

Whilst we continue to work in line with legislation and best practice, we are ambitious about developing the local area attendance agenda and are looking for individuals who are able to think creatively and flexibly about delivering statutory duties, while maintaining a focus on inclusive practice and the best outcomes for the children, young people, and families that we support.

The Education Welfare Officer will be expected to be a role model for the professional behaviours outlined in the company Code of Conduct and to demonstrate Cognus Mission and Values.

**You will give us great commitment and in return we offer a comprehensive package including:**

- i) Starting salary at £34,406.60 pro rata (Cognus Band 3)
- ii) Workplace pension scheme 4% to 8% matched contributions
- iii) 28 days annual leave pro rata (plus Bank Holidays)
- iv) Regular manager support and supervision
- v) Hybrid and flexible working
- vi) Staff benefits package, currently including Employee Assistance Programme, Perkbox and (upon completion of probation) Sovereign Healthcare Cashback plans
- vii) Staff EDI group and Mental Health First Aiders to support wellbeing and inclusion
- viii) Cognus Coaching Programmes
- ix) An ambitious culture with friendly and supportive colleagues

If you are interested and would like to be considered for this role, please apply to [recruitment@cognus.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@cognus.org.uk) with the completed Cognus application form, downloaded from <https://www.cognus.org.uk/work-with-us/current-vacancies/cognus-application-form/>, outlining your suitability. In your application, include a supporting statement outlining how you meet the person specification and noting any relevant experience. CVs will not be accepted. The deadline for receipt is midnight on **12<sup>th</sup> January 2025**. **Interviews will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact Joanna Dalzell, Inclusion Manager, on 020 4570 9272 or [joanna.dalzell@cognus.org.uk](mailto:joanna.dalzell@cognus.org.uk).

At Cognus we recognise diverse talent comes from a range of backgrounds and experiences; this helps our organisation to thrive and better represent the communities that it serves. We would welcome any pre-application conversations to support a broader and more diverse range of applications to this role.

All offers of employment are subject to successful completion of recruitment formalities which includes an enhanced DBS check. These checks must have been completed prior to commencement of employment. We expect our staff to have due regard for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and to follow the child protection procedures adopted by the Company and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

**We have several other roles we are recruiting to at different levels within Cognus. Please see vacancies page and get in touch for an informal conversation about these and other opportunities if you or anyone else you know may be interested in working with us.**



## Job Description

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>POSITION:</b>      | <b>Education Welfare Officer - Attendance</b> |
| <b>DIVISION:</b>      | <b>Attendance</b>                             |
| <b>BUSINESS UNIT:</b> | <b>Inclusion</b>                              |
| <b>REPORTS TO:</b>    | <b>Attendance Support Team Lead</b>           |

### **JOB SUMMARY**

This role is part of the Inclusion service that provides support to children and young people, families and educational settings and reports to the Inclusion Manager.

The main purpose of this role is to ensure that children and young people achieve their full potential through the receipt of education that is suitable to their age, needs and developmental stages, and to ensure that Cognus, on behalf of the London Borough of Sutton carries out its duties in relation to School attendance.

As a member of the Inclusion Service, you will deliver a professional service, providing information, advice, and support to a range of stakeholders that include parents, carers, schools, multi-agency teams on elements of attendance, inclusion, and the discharge of statutory duties.

You will provide a flexible approach supporting Attendance across the organisation and the local area. You will be expected to have the drive, resilience, and enthusiasm necessary for this important role, with a strong background in Education Welfare, Social Care or from within the education arena.

### **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

1. To have due regard for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and to follow the child protection procedures adopted by the Cognus Limited, the School and Sutton Council's Safeguarding Children's Board.
2. To undertake casework and deliver best practice, advice, and support to schools, regarding improving attendance and punctuality in line with statutory guidance. Record, process and investigate all referrals and provide a specialist service to assist the school in meeting their obligations and targets in relation to school attendance, particularly persistent absence.
3. To deliver statutory duties in the promotion and enforcement of regular school attendance and child welfare.
4. Attendance at strategic multi-agency panels to provide best practice information, advice, and guidance.
5. To take a holistic and multi-agency approach to supporting attendance and continually develop advice, guidance and training practices in line with legislation and best practice to support the inclusion of pupils through attendance.



6. To effectively use data for monitoring of work including KPIs, evaluation and development.
7. To contribute to the sustainability of the service through the promotion of the traded service offer.
8. Carry out any other duties as reasonably required.

## **COMPETENCIES**

- 1. To have due regard for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and to follow the child protection procedures adopted by the Cognus Limited, the School and Sutton Council's Safeguarding Children's Board.**
  - a. Have a good understanding and awareness of safeguarding children and comply with all Safeguarding regulations, policies, and procedures, including national guidance and local policy and practice.
  - b. Attend all required safeguarding training.
  - c. Ensure safeguarding practice is embedded in all areas of work.
  
- 2. To undertake casework and deliver best practice, advice, and support to schools, regarding improving attendance and punctuality in line with statutory guidance. Record, process and investigate all referrals and provide a specialist service to assist the school in meeting their obligations and targets in relation to school attendance, particularly persistent absence.**
  - a. On referral from schools, to record, process and investigate absence and improve attendance rates through providing effective and professional casework support and advice to families and enforcing attendance legislation where necessary particularly in relation to persistent absenteeism.
  - b. To establish reasons for non-attendance, carry out assessments and agree strategies for increasing attendance within a specified time frame.
  - c. To identify and provide timely interventions to identify cases of non-school attendance by means of home/school liaison and parental condoned absence and late after registration absences.
  - d. To ensure schools know which of its pupils are known to a social worker and that their attendance is monitored weekly with follow up action taken as appropriate.
  - e. To contribute to the sharing of best practice for school attendance and absence, providing advice, support, and training for schools, and other multi-agency professionals as appropriate, and other members of the Attendance Team and Cognus staff.
  - f. To support and advise schools on the referral process for children in need of support to the appropriate services.
  - g. Through proactive monitoring of data, to identify with head teachers and designated school staff any concerning upward trends in overall absence patterns



and to develop and promote effective strategies for addressing these issues, including the promotion of Cognus attendance projects.

- h. To develop and deliver training packages for school staff, including Governors where appropriate, on attendance matters. Use a variety of delivery methods including face to face, virtual or self-help materials on the website including video/podcasts.

### **3. To deliver statutory duties in the promotion and enforcement of regular school attendance and child welfare**

- a. To investigate absence and assist in decisions regarding enforcement measures through the use of statutory sanctions, including referring cases on for possible Penalty Notices/Court Action.
- b. To plan, prioritise and review case lists in consultation with the Court Officer and other multi-agency partners as required.
- c. Develop an understanding of attendance roles, including the Court Officer role to ensure business continuity.
- d. To comply with, and contribute to, the development of standard team operating procedures and materials for use by the whole team, including presentations and training resources.
- e. To act as supervising officer for Education Supervision Orders and Parenting Orders. To prepare and present evidence at Magistrates Courts and the Family Proceedings Court under the supervision of the Court Officer.
- f. Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of changes in all legislation relating to role and inform schools as appropriate, using appropriate methods including network meetings.
- g. Deliver services as required by the LBS in their Cognus Attendance Commissioned Offer.
- h. To offer advice and support to all schools in Sutton on attendance including legislation, staged intervention processes and procedures.

### **4. Attendance at strategic multi-agency panels to provide best practice information, advice, and guidance**

- a. To attend case meetings and school-based support group meetings, including Child Protection Conferences and Reviews, TAC and CIN meetings as appropriate  
  
and so contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the needs of children, their families, and the wider community.
- b. To arrange and chair formal attendance meetings and to produce and circulate minutes and relevant correspondence.

### **5. To take a holistic and multi-agency approach to supporting attendance and continually develop advice, guidance, and training practices in line with legislation and best practice to support the inclusion of pupils through attendance.**



- a. Improve attendance in Sutton through the establishment of close working relationships with key stakeholders and the contribution to specific multi agency projects, best practice and evolution of policy and practice across the service and the local area.
- b. To collaborate and exchange information with parents, headteachers, senior school staff, social workers, police officers, probation officers and other appropriate agencies, regarding pupil attendance and welfare issues.
- c. To promote the service, ensuring schools, Academies and the general public are aware of up-to-date legislation and guidance regarding attendance.
- d. To help develop our traded services offer to local and neighbouring borough schools, and encourage take up of these services.

**6. To effectively use data for monitoring of work including KPIs, evaluation and development**

- a. To maintain clear and detailed records, both written and on the database hosted by Cognus.
- b. Provide accurate and effective Attendance statistics for internal and external stakeholders as and when required.
- c. Produce clear and effective service user reports and collect and record impact measurement and outcomes.
- d. Maintain relevant statistical and management information, provide reports and key performance information (KPI) as required.
- e. Attend and contribute to team meetings and wider organisational meetings and events as required.
- f. Contribute to the completion and development of the company quality framework and cycle of continuous of improvement.
- g. Support company development of business plans, objectives and delivery.

**7. To contribute to the sustainability of the traded service offer.**

- a. To promote the service with schools in Sutton and neighbouring boroughs.
- b. To identify new opportunities for service development, funded and traded.
- c. To support the achievement of traded service targets.

**8. Carry out any other duties as reasonably required**

**GENERIC OBJECTIVES:**

Contribute to Cognus Limited's business objectives at the appropriate level by ensuring every child matters and has access to education and learning opportunities, including:

- a) Health and safety
- b) Safeguarding and protection of children
- c) Equal opportunities and management of diversity



- d) Data protection
- e) Outstanding Customer care

## **GENERAL:**

### **SAFER RECRUITMENT:**

Cognus is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children and young people that it works with. An offer of employment is subject to safer recruitment practices which include an enhanced DBS check, two professional references acceptable to Cognus Limited, proof of qualifications, proof of right to work in the UK, proof of personal address and employment history covering 5 years and, fitness to work with children (occupational health assessment). These checks must have been completed prior to commencement of employment. We have a range of policies and procedures in place which promote safeguarding and safer working practices across the organisation.

### **PROCESSING OF DATA:**

- a) You (“the employee”) consent to the holding and processing of personal data provided by you to the Company (“the Company”) for all purposes relating to your employment, but not limited to administering and maintaining personnel records, paying and reviewing salary and other remuneration and benefits, undertaking performance appraisals and reviews, the compulsory Disclosure and Baring Services check (DBS) details in line with its statutory responsibility to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable service users; maintaining sickness and other absence records and taking decisions as to your fitness for work.
- b) You hereby acknowledge and agree that the Company may, in the course of its general and statutory duties as an employer be required to disclose personal data relating to you for legislative purposes during or after the end of your employment. This does not affect your statutory rights under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT:**

- a) During the course of your employment, you will have access to and knowledge of Company confidential information and trade secrets.
- b) Disclosure of any of this confidential information and/or trade secrets could have serious financial consequences and/or create serious competitive disadvantages for the Company. There may be material damage, financial or otherwise, deliberate or otherwise, to the Company’s legitimate business interest.
- c) Under the terms of this confidentiality agreement, you agree to keep secret and shall not at any time, either during employment or post-employment, use, communicate or reveal to any person any trade secret or confidential information relating to the Company or any Associated Company.
- d) You are aware of the Company’s policies in relation to compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and undertake to act in accordance with these at all times. Any breach of these policies will be dealt with under the Company’s disciplinary procedure and action taken can include dismissal without notice.



*This job description and person specification outlines the summary of key accountabilities and is not an exhaustive list of duties and, is subject to periodical review and changes in line with the business needs.*





**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

*The main duties and responsibilities of the post holder are indicated below although other duties of an appropriate level and nature will also be required.*

| No          | Description   | Criteria  |                        |                        |                 |
|-------------|---|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| a.          | Values safeguarding practices and the protection of children and young people, understands and engages with policies and practice to achieve this aim.  | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| b.          | Experience of managing a caseload of families and helping them overcome barriers to attendance at school or other barriers such as exclusion.   | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| c.          | Experience of working in, with a working knowledge and understanding of statutory guidance in relation to school attendance and the ability to communicate this guidance to a range of external partners.   | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| d.          | Experience of using a wide range of IT packages, including financial systems, in a business environment, and to use these to deliver a cost-effective and customer-focused service.   | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| e.          | Excellent communication skills, including presenting data and statistics in appropriate formats and able to communicate clearly and concisely.  | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| f.          | Values strong partnership working with parents, carers, internal and external stakeholders, multi-agency working is essential.  | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| g.          | Strong organisation skills and ability to manage time effectively, to work on own initiative to manage and prioritise own workload, setting appropriate objectives and deadlines and attention to detail.   | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| h.          | Ability to provide a customer-focused approach to service delivery, and participate in identifying and implementing opportunities for improving the service.  | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| i.          | Ability to analyse information, and considering alternative solutions, adapting to new ways of working where necessary.   | E, S, I   |                        |                        |                 |
| j.          | Willingness to undertake ongoing learning, training and development.  | E         |                        |                        |                 |
| k.          | Carry out duties in line with the professional behaviours in the Company Code of Conduct, policies and procedures and Leadership Capability documents.  | E         |                        |                        |                 |
| l.          | Work flexibly, able to re-arrange work in relation to changing priorities and to meet the needs of the business.  | E         |                        |                        |                 |
| m.          | Honours and upholds the Company's Equal Opportunity Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Safeguarding and Protection of Children, Health and Safety and Data Protection Policy at all times. Understanding of confidentiality, GDPR and information governance issues and how these are observed and maintained. | E         |                        |                        |                 |
| <b>KEY:</b> | D   | Desirable | I                      | Evaluated at interview |                 |
| E           | Essential   | S         | Short listing criteria | T                      | Subject to test |

