

CROYDON COUNCIL

ROLE PROFILE AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

DEPARTMENT: People

DIVISION: Universal People Services

JOB TITLE: Senior School Admissions Officer

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ROLE PROFILE

Job Title: Senior School Admissions Officer

Department: People

Division: Universal People Services

Grade: Grade 9

Hours (per week): 36 hours

Reports to: Admissions Manager

Responsible for: **None.**

Role Purpose and Role Dimensions:

Croydon has a duty to ensure that all children of school age living within its boundaries have access to a suitable school place. It is responsible for administering young children's start at school (reception places) and their transfer to secondary education. Croydon is also legally responsible for coordinating children's transfer between schools during a school year when this is necessary or when parents' desire this. It must make sure that children are not left without a school place even when individual pupils are vulnerable and have complex needs that make demands upon the schools that they are allocated to or when there is a shortage of places. This work amounts to approximately 15,000 school placements per year.

The work involves liaison with a wide variety of admission authorities and Croydon has to coordinate and agree fair admission arrangements each year. These arrangements are complex. They are derived from many years of legal change and challenge. The arrangements must take account of parent's preferences for their child's school as well as the availability of school places and a variety of admissions priorities.

A key feature of the admissions work is collaboration with the other London authorities and bordering authorities through the Pan London agreements to ensure that children can access places in other borough's schools as well as children from other borough's being able to attend schools in Croydon. The authority is located within the dynamic context of London, which has a mobile population and sharply rising growth in primary

pupil numbers.

Commitment to Diversity:

To take individual and collective professional responsibility for championing the council's diversity agenda, proactively implementing initiatives which secure equality of access and outcomes. Commit to continual development of personal understanding of diversity.

Key External Contacts:

- Head teachers, school governors and school admission officers.
- Nurseries and nursery schools
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
- Department for Education.
- Office of the Schools' Adjudicator
- Diocesan authorities
- Parents and carers
- Other members of the public e.g. dealing with reports of fraudulent addresses; children out of school.
- Health Service representatives and GPs
- Customs and Immigration Service
- Housing authorities
- Police e.g. children fleeing violence.
- Benefits agencies
- Transport authorities/companies
- Colleagues in other local authorities including school admissions; Youth Offending Teams, officers responsible for Looked After Children (LACs) who are in care to other authorities.
- Charities such as Prince's Trust etc.in relation to alternative provision; children at risk; advocacy etc.

Key Internal Contacts:

- Councillors
- Senior managers
- Social care officers responsible for children at risk.
- Officer responsible for Looked After Children (LACs) who are in care to Croydon
- Contact Centre and Access Croydon
- Housing department
- Council tax department
- Audit and fraud office
- SEN service
- School inclusion and achievement officers/school advisers
- Educational Psychologists
- Youth Offending Team
- Education Welfare & children missing education team.
- Family Information Service
- Demographic planning team
- Capital projects and place-planning officers
- Democratic services

Financial Dimensions:

- Referrals to the Fair Access Panel and commissioner for alternative provision where supplementary resources are needed to support the child in a placement.
- Identifying pupils who may require placements outside the mainstream system.
- Information about the shortage and supply of school places to inform planning processes.
- Information about children out of school

Key Areas for Decision Making:

- Decide where amendments and adjustments are required to meet set deadlines, protect the reputation of the council and achieve good practice and to ensure all children out of school are on roll within 20 school days.
- This post holder will chair the children out of school meeting each week and write a weekly report for the Head of Service detailing all children out of school for more than 15 days.
- Assess applications and identifying problems and children with complex needs for separate attention and processes.
- Assess any emerging admission issues in the light of legislation and differing levels of rights and responsibilities as laid out in statutory guidance e.g. amendments to appeal statements.
- Identify complex cases and provide advice where it is judged that the authority should make priority placements and/or use its powers of direction, refer cases/schools to the Schools' Adjudicator or the Secretary of State (academies)
- Broker placements for pupils with complex needs advising head teachers of the statutory context and requirements as appropriate.
- Identify locations where there are particular pressures and shortages of places/surpluses, quantifying level of need and suggest solutions.

Other Considerations:

- Ability to work across a large borough, travelling as required to meetings and events across the borough.
- Able to represent the authority in the statutory admissions appeals process and investigations by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Able to train and develop other colleagues regarding school admissions and associated arrangements.
- Prepared to work flexibly as part of the role.

Is a satisfactory disclosure and barring check required?
[\(click here for guidance on DBS\)](#)

No

What level of check is required?

Is the post politically restricted
([Click here for guidance on political restriction](#))

No

Is the post exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974
([Click here for guidance on ROA](#))

No

Key Accountabilities and Result Areas:

Knowing the legislative framework

Key Elements:

This will involve:

- Maintaining an up to date knowledge and understanding of education legislation and school governance particularly as it affects school admissions.
- Maintaining an up to date knowledge and understanding of child safeguarding issues to ensure that children potentially at risk of harm are brought to the attention of relevant services.

Understanding education and the challenges schools must address to meet the needs of all children

This will involve:

- Understanding of the National Curriculum, its key stages for different ages of pupil and the demands of the curriculum on resources.
- Knowing the schools in the borough well and understanding their curriculum and premise issues that affect school admissions as well as other factors such as the maintenance of an accurate picture of vacancies, joiners and leavers for each school.
- Understanding the various types of school governance and how this affects school admissions.
- Understanding the principles of Fair Access and able to make full use of the Fair Access Protocol to ensure that vulnerable pupils do not suffer undue disruption to their education.
- Knowledge of school premises, net capacity issues and reasons for the Planned Admission Numbers.

Developing and maintaining positive and effective relationships with schools

This will involve:

- Provision of pupil information that will enable schools to admit a child as quickly as possible.
- Working with schools to ensure that no pupil is out of school for more than a month.
- Regular conversations with school admissions officers regarding weekly school returns.
- Conversations with head teachers/heads of year with regard to admission of pupils with additional needs/issues that need special consideration.
- Efficient and prompt maintenance of waiting lists when appropriate.
- Visiting schools when relationships could benefit from some specialist advice and guidance pertaining to school admissions (new to many own admission schools).
- Provision of training sessions for school admission officers.
- Annual liaison with schools that experience high-levels of appeals so as to strengthen the authority's statements about the consequences of admission over number.
- Actively sharing feedback on School policies and interventions.

Developing and maintaining positive and effective relationships with other departments and neighbouring authorities

This will involve:

- Awareness of the roles and remits of other services and agencies and understanding how they work with children and their families. Contribute to initiatives aimed at how services can work better together for the benefit of children.
- Efficient participation in the Pan London and London Grid for Learning arrangements and efficient electronic exchange of information.
- Efficient document exchange for admission requests.
- Attendance at training events and the London-wide professional groups by arrangement with the Admissions Manager.

Maintaining informative and helpful relationships with parents

This will involve:

- Making sure that the admissions process is managed efficiently and that things do not go wrong, children are not forgotten and communication with parents is clear and timely.
- Prompt and accurate answering of emails and enquiries.
- Helpful and focussed telephone advice and counselling.
- Positive contribution to the composite admissions prospectus.
- Contribute to the council website where admissions information is provided.
- Attendance at parents' evenings arranged for primary and

secondary transfer to provide accurate information and advice, as required. Reduce misunderstandings and help parents to make best use of the admissions process.

- Production of informative Admission Appeal Statements, as required.
- Delivery of local authority presentations in admission appeal hearings in a manner that is informative and cogent, as required.

Contributing to team development and the pursuit of high standards of professional practice

This will involve:

- Training front line staff of the Council to enable them to achieve high-quality inputting of information and to deal with all but the most complex
- Maintain and pursue personal development plans.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of office procedures and processes, striving to continuously improve them.
- Effective maintenance of electronic information systems.
- Effective paper-work management
- Effective casework management and resolution.
- Participating in training to further develop competence.
- Participating in first aid training as required.
- Participating in the on-going development, implementation and monitoring of the service plans.
- Championing the professional integrity of the School Admissions Service and the value of education in an individual's life.

Exercising well-developed IT skills and confidence in using specialist software

This will involve:

- Proficiency in use of the Capita admissions software package.
- Identification of inaccurate or inadequate data from the under-pinning EMS system and/or the admissions module used to make school placements.
- Provision of regular management reports as required by senior managers and policy advisers.
- Training colleagues.

Green Commitment

- Ensuring both individual and teamwork meets the Council's Green Commitment Policy goals in reducing energy consumption and waste, increasing renewable energy use and recycling, contributing to a reduction in traffic congestion and using sustainable materials.

Data Protection

- Being aware of the council's responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the security, accuracy and relevance of personal data held, ensuring that all administrative and financial processes also comply.
- Maintaining customer records and archive systems in accordance with departmental procedures and policies as well as statutory requirements.

Confidentiality

- Treating all information acquired through employment, both formally and informally, in confidence. There are strict rules and protocols defining employee access to and use of the council's databases. Any breach of these rules and protocols will be subject to disciplinary investigation. There are internal procedures in place for employees to raise matters of concern regarding such issues as bad practice or mismanagement.

Equalities and Diversity

- The council has a strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity in its services to the community and in the employment of people. It expects all employees to understand, comply with and promote its policies in their own work, undertake any appropriate training to help them to challenge prejudice or discrimination.

Health and Safety

- Being responsible for own Health & Safety, as well as that of colleagues, service users and the public. Employees should co-operate with management, follow established systems of work, use protective equipment and report defects and hazards to management. Managers should carry out, monitor and review risk assessments, providing robust induction and training packages for new and transferring staff, to ensure they receive relevant H&S training, including refresher training, report all accidents in a timely manner on council accident forms, ensure H&S is a standing item in team meetings, liaise with trade union safety representatives about local safety matters and induct and monitor any visiting contractors etc, as appropriate.

**Contribute as an effective
and collaborative team
member**

This will involve:

- Participating in training to demonstrate competence.
- Undertaking training as required for the role.
- Participating in the development, implementation and monitoring of service plans.
- Championing the professional integrity of the service.

Person Specification

Job Title: Senior Admissions Officer

Essential knowledge:

- Legislation affecting education and in particular school admissions such as the Admission and Appeal Codes; the School Standards Framework Act 1998, Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Academies Act, 2010.
- Legislation and guidance affecting the size and location and organisation of schools place including Net Capacity, Published Admission Numbers.
- The National Curriculum and its implications for children's year groups, class sizes, infant class size restrictions, PANs etc.
- Understanding of additional needs and rights that some children have such as Special Educational Needs (including SEND), exclusions from school and the type of education available for children with behavioural difficulties, safeguarding, Looked After Children (LACs), parental rights and residence of children, children from overseas.
- Types of schools and governance issues affecting how pupils are admitted such as use of SIFs, over-subscription criteria, banding and selection by ability.
- Local policies and agreements such as the annual Admission Arrangements; Fair Access Protocols and Panels.
- The admissions cycles and the key milestones involved.
- IT, its potential use and the secure transfer of confidential data.

Essential skills and abilities:

- High-level reading and writing skills-able to understand and be familiar with statutory guidance and regulations.
- Data-handling skills. Able to manipulate electronic information to extract reports that provide an overview of school admissions and the issues associated with annual patterns and take-up of places.
- To contribute to admissions policy development.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills-able to explain complex admissions arrangements simply and clearly.
- Listening skills and the ability to work flexibly and co-operatively within a team.
- Influencing skills with confidence in dealing with people who occupy positions of authority such as head teachers, governors etc.
- An orderly and sequential approach to systems, procedures and paper management.
- Good thinking skills that can be applied to achieve the resolution of problems.
- Project management skills-able to agree realistic work-plans with targets and timescales.
- Willingness to continuously learn and adapt.

Essential experience:

- Work in a political environment where elected representatives make policy.
- Proven success in delivering projects within agreed timescales.
- Working in partnership with schools and their governing bodies.
- Working with the general public including parents.
- Providing support to a school in relation to admissions and school governance issues.
- Confident use of IT including Word, Excel and specialist software packages.

Special conditions:

Ability to travel to offices and schools across the borough, including occasional attendance at evening meetings.