

SEND Officer

Role Description

Role Purpose

The SEND Officer leads Dorset NEU's work relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The role ensures that SEND-related issues—impacting educators, support staff and learners—are understood, raised and acted upon within Dorset NEU. The SEND Officer promotes inclusive practice, champions fair treatment for staff working in SEND contexts, and supports the union's campaigning for properly funded, accessible SEND provision across Dorset.

Key Responsibilities

1. Representation of SEND Issues in Dorset NEU

- Act as Dorset NEU's lead representative on SEND matters across early years, schools, specialist provision and post-16 settings.
- Ensure SEND issues inform Dorset NEU campaigns, priorities and planning.
- Highlight concerns such as inadequate funding, staffing pressures, unsafe workloads, poor training provision, or inappropriate inclusion/exclusion practices.

2. Supporting Members Working in SEND

- Engage with members working in SEND roles (e.g., SENDCos, support staff, specialist teachers) to understand local pressures and needs.
- Share NEU guidance on SEND roles, responsibilities, workload expectations and legal duties.
- Promote clarity around SEND roles and challenge practices that contribute to excessive workload or unsafe conditions.

3. Encouraging Inclusive and Effective SEND Practice

- Promote NEU guidance on high-quality SEND provision, inclusive education and reasonable adjustments.
- Support reps to raise SEND-related issues within their workplaces, including staffing levels, training needs, workload concerns and wellbeing risks.
- Champion inclusive practice and highlight barriers that disproportionately affect SEND staff or students.

4. Communication & Engagement

- Share updates on national NEU SEND campaigns, resources and policy developments.
- Keep Dorset NEU members informed about local SEND issues, training opportunities and events.
- Encourage participation in SEND-related CPD and NEU equality or organising activity.

5. Monitoring & Reporting

- Identify and track local issues affecting SEND provision across Dorset, including funding gaps, role creep, unsafe workload, or unmet needs.
- Provide regular SEND-focused updates at Dorset NEU meetings.
- Feed Dorset perspectives into regional and national NEU SEND networks.

6. Collaboration

- Work closely with the District Secretary, Equality Officer, Support Staff Officer, Organising Officer, Post-16 Officer and other Dorset NEU officers where SEND issues overlap with equality, workload or campaigning priorities.
- Liaise with the Regional Office and NEU national SEND teams where needed.
- Build relationships with local SEND networks, parent groups, and external organisations where appropriate.

Skills & Attributes

- Understanding of SEND legislation, policy and practice (or willingness to learn).
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills.
- Ability to represent member concerns clearly and empathetically.
- Organisational skills to support tracking issues, sharing information and planning activity.
- Commitment to NEU values of inclusion, equality and collective advocacy.

Time Commitment

- Attendance at Dorset NEU meetings.
- Regular engagement with members working in SEND contexts.
- Participation in relevant NEU SEND CPD, regional briefings or national network activity where possible.