

Early Years Officer

Role Description

Role Purpose

The Early Years Officer leads Dorset NEU's work relating to early years education, ensuring that the voices, experiences and concerns of members working in early years settings are represented within the district. The role promotes high-quality, play-based early education, supports members working in nurseries and early years classrooms, and highlights issues around funding, staffing, workload and inclusion in the early years sector.

Key Responsibilities

1. Representation of Early Years Issues in Dorset NEU

- Act as Dorset NEU's lead representative for members working in early years settings including nurseries, reception classes and early years units.
- Ensure early years perspectives inform Dorset NEU campaigns, priorities and planning.
- Highlight issues such as underfunding, staffing shortages, unsafe ratios, role creep, workload pressures, SEND challenges and curriculum expectations in early years.

2. Supporting Early Years Practitioners

- Engage with early years teachers, support staff and leaders to understand local pressures, needs and best practice.
- Share NEU guidance on early years pedagogy, staffing, SEND provision, assessment and professional expectations.
- Promote safe, inclusive and developmentally appropriate practice.

3. Communication & Engagement

- Keep early years members informed about Dorset NEU activity, NEU national early years campaigns, and CPD opportunities.
- Encourage participation in early years-focused training, networking and organising activity.
- Support reps in raising early years issues within their workplaces.

4. Campaigning & Advocacy

- Promote the NEU's Early Years policy priorities including improved funding, play-based practice, fair pay and safe staffing levels.
- Work with the Campaigns Officer to amplify early years-related issues locally.
- Advocate for high-quality early education and challenge harmful policy or practice affecting the early years sector.

5. Monitoring & Reporting

- Monitor local issues affecting early years provision across Dorset including funding cuts, staffing crises, SEND pressures, inspection challenges and workload trends.
- Provide updates at Dorset NEU meetings on early years activity, concerns and opportunities for action.
- Feed Dorset insights into regional or national NEU early years networks.

6. Collaboration

- Work closely with the District Secretary, Equality Officer, SEND Officer, Support Staff Officer, Organising Officer and other Dorset NEU officers.
- Liaise with the NEU Regional Office and national early years policy teams.
- Build links with early years networks, local authority early years leads, and community groups where appropriate.

Skills & Attributes

- Strong understanding of early years pedagogy, policy and practice (or willingness to develop this).
- Good communication and relationship-building skills.
- Ability to represent early years members' concerns clearly and empathetically.
- Organisational skills to support networks, CPD and ongoing activity.
- Commitment to NEU values of inclusion, play-based learning and child-centred education.

Time Commitment

- Attendance at Dorset NEU meetings.
- Regular engagement with early years members and relevant networks.
- Participation in NEU early years CPD or briefings where possible.