



Job description			
Job title	Alternative Provision Strategic Lead		
Grade	PMG 1		
Directorate	Children's Services		
Service/team	SEND and Inclusion		
Accountable to	Head of SEND		
Responsible for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour support and outreach • Commissioning and quality assurance of alternative provision including the pupil referral unit • Arrangements for the education of children who are permanently excluded • Hospital education and tuition services for pupils unable to attend school due to illness or otherwise • Supporting and strengthening the local offer for children and young people with emotional barriers to school attendance through partnership working 		
JE Reference	B1362	Date Reviewed	March 2026

Purpose of the Job

The Alternative Provision (AP) Strategic Lead provides strategic and operational leadership across services that prevent exclusion and ensure that learners who face barriers to attendance or engagement receive suitable, high-quality education. This includes fulfilling the local authority's duties to provide education for children unable to attend school under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

The postholder will have responsibility for the following key functions:

- Behaviour support and outreach
- Commissioning and quality assurance of alternative provision including the pupil referral unit
- Arrangements for the education of children who are permanently excluded



- Hospital education and tuition services for pupils unable to attend school due to illness or otherwise
- Supporting and strengthening the local offer for children and young people with emotional barriers to school attendance through partnership working

The role places children, young people and their families at the heart of all decision-making. The postholder will champion inclusive practice, ensure that every learner receives the support they need to sustain engagement in education, and work collaboratively with families and settings to secure positive, sustained outcomes.

Duties and Responsibilities

This is not a comprehensive list of all the tasks, which may be required of the post holder. It is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the work to be undertaken.

1. Leadership and Oversight of Inclusion and AP Services

- Provide strategic and operational leadership across behaviour support, alternative provision (AP), exclusions processes, and education for children unable to attend school.
- Develop and implement long-term service plans that improve efficiency, effectiveness, and outcomes for children and young people.
- Oversee AP and PRU commissioning, market management, provider relationships, contract performance, and quality assurance.
- Lead the design and oversight of short-stay and dual-roll pathways that sustain engagement with the home school and reduce escalation to permanent exclusion.
- Ensure robust arrangements and statutory compliance for permanently excluded children, including timely decisions, placement, and reintegration planning.
- Lead the delivery and continuous improvement of hospital education and tuition services for pupils unable to attend school, ensuring suitability, continuity of learning, and reintegration pathways.

2. Quality Assurance and Performance Management

- Implement and maintain QA frameworks covering behaviour outreach, and AP placement quality.
- Audit provision quality and learner progress; ensure individual learning plans are ambitious, reviewed, and lead to positive destinations.
- Use performance dashboards to track compliance (including Section 19 arrangements), timeliness, participation, and outcomes.
- Ensure that commissioned provision meets clear service specifications, statutory expectations, and best-value principles.



3. Strategic Planning and Service Improvement

- Lead behaviour improvement programmes across schools, promoting evidence-informed approaches (including trauma-informed and relational practice) that strengthen inclusive school cultures and reduce suspension and exclusion rates.
- Lead AP sufficiency planning and commissioning models, ensuring the local continuum includes preventative, short-stay, dual-roll, and full-time pathways.
- Align services with wider priorities (early intervention, behaviour in schools, safeguarding, preparation for adulthood, and EET destinations).
- Prepare for and respond to inspections or reviews relating to inclusion, alternative provision, or children out of school; coordinate evidence, self-evaluation, and action plans.

4. Multi-Agency Partnership and Co-production

- Work closely with educational psychology, social care, and health partners (including CAMHS) to deliver a joined-up emotional based school absence (EBSA) and mental-health support offer that improves attendance, prevents long-term non-attendance and supports timely reintegration.
- Provide strategic challenge and support to schools and MATs where exclusion patterns, restrictive practices, or attendance trends indicate inequity, disproportionate impact, or inconsistent application of statutory responsibilities.
- Strengthen pathways with Youth Justice, Public Health and community safety partners to address risks such as exploitation, mental health needs, substance misuse and contextual safeguarding, ensuring that learners with complex vulnerabilities receive coordinated, multi-agency support.
- Work with schools, trusts, settings, health, social care, parents/carers, and young people to strengthen integrated pathways and early help offers.
- Chair or contribute to multi-agency panels linked to inclusion/AP/exclusions and out-of-school education, ensuring transparent, defensible decision-making.
- Promote co-production with parents/carers, children, and young people, embedding feedback and lived experience into service design and review.
- Strengthen transition and reintegration pathways.

5. Workforce Leadership and Professional Practice

- Lead and manage teams delivering behaviour support, AP commissioning/QA, exclusions arrangements, and hospital/tuition services.



- Oversee recruitment, induction, supervision, appraisal, and performance management; address capability and conduct issues where required.
- Ensure staff access CPD on inclusion, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, equality, trauma-informed practice, and relevant statutory frameworks (including Section 19).
- Embed a culture of reflective practice, restorative approaches, and continuous improvement.

6. Finance and Resource Management

- Oversee High Needs Block allocations relating to inclusion, AP commissioning, and out-of-school education (including hospital education and tuition).
- Ensure commissioning and placement decisions are evidence-based, equitable, and financially sustainable, with clear approval controls.
- Monitor provider contracts, costs, and outcomes; challenge under-performance or poor value; re-commission where necessary.
- Forecast pressures, deliver agreed savings or cost-avoidance plans, and contribute to High Needs Block and Dedicated Schools Grant planning, where relevant.

7. Policy, Assurance, and Governance

- Maintain policies and procedures for inclusion, AP pathways (including short-stay and dual-roll), exclusions, and out-of-school education.
- Ensure the authority's arrangements comply with statutory duties for permanently excluded pupils and pupils unable to attend school (Section 19), including suitability and continuity of education.
- Provide clear reports to Senior Leaders, Members, Scrutiny, and inspectorates on performance, risks, finance, and outcomes. Ensure robust complaint handling, dispute resolution, and learning from escalations (including Ombudsman).

8. Case Escalation, Risk Management, and Safeguarding

- Oversee complex, high-risk and contentious cases, ensuring appropriate escalation and resolution.
- Ensure statutory services contribute effectively to safeguarding processes.
- Manage risks and provide professional advice on dispute resolution and legal matters.
- Ensure accurate records, defensible rationales, and timely escalation for legal or reputational risks.

9. Service Integration and Cross-Council Collaboration

- Work closely with SEND support services, statutory SEND services, education improvement, social care, early help, and transport to deliver joined-up support.



- Drive improvements in early intervention, attendance, and placement sustainability.
- Promote inclusive practice across all key stages and settings.

10. Representing the Authority

- Act as the subject matter expert for inclusion and alternative provision in local, regional, and national forums.
- Contribute to Liverpool City Region, Department for Education, or national forums and share best practice.
- Deputise for the Head of SEND & Inclusion as required.

11. Corporate Parenting

- As part of your role with the Council, you share a collective responsibility to support and champion children and young people who are cared for by the Council and young people who are care experienced. Children and young people tell us that including this in all job descriptions “is good” because they want all Council employees to understand how important it is to “treat children in care and care experienced young people as they would their own”. We ask that you do this with the same commitment, care and ambition that any parent would, regardless of your job role or service area. Children and young people tell us that they want all Council employees to be “genuine”, helping to create a supportive environment, remaining alert to any worries and concerns, and ensuring that safeguarding is promoted and responded to appropriately.

Knowsley Better Together – Staff Qualities





Health and Safety

- To use equipment as instructed and trained.
- To inform management of any health and safety issues which could place individuals at risk.

Data Protection and Information Security

- Implement and act in accordance with the Information Security Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection Policy and GDPR.
- Protect the Council's information assets from unauthorised access, disclosure, modification, destruction or interference.
- Report actual or potential security incidents

As a senior officer, you will be expected to support the Council's emergency preparedness, response, and recovery arrangements; this may include, but is not restricted to, participation in appropriate training and exercises, participation in our emergency duty officer rota, and attending Strategic and/or Tactical and/or Recovery Coordinating Groups with our multi-agency partners.