



Department
for Education



Northern
Lights

EARLY YEARS HUB NORTH EAST

Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser for Group-Based Provision NORTHERN LIGHTS EARLY YEARS HUB APPLICATION PACK





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Welcome from the Director of Early Years

Thank you for your interest in joining the Northern Lights Early Years Stronger Practice Hub.



This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a nationally designated initiative, funded by the Department for Education, that is committed to strengthening early years practice across the North East. Our Hub plays a pivotal role in supporting the workforce, driving high-quality provision, and fostering collaboration across sectors to ensure the very best outcomes for children and families.

At Northern Lights, we believe that strong partnerships and shared learning are key to success. We work with a diverse range of settings and professionals, bringing together expertise and innovation to raise standards and promote excellence. Our vision is rooted in engagement, collaboration, and continuous improvement—values that underpin everything we do.

As Director of the Early Years Stronger Practice Hub, my passion is ensuring that every child has the best start in life. Our work is driven by the belief that high-quality early years experiences shape lifelong learning and wellbeing. We place children's experiences and needs at the heart of everything we do. By amplifying the voice of the child and mobilising evidence-based practice, we create a culture of continuous improvement that reflects what truly matters. Through supporting and empowering practitioners, we build capacity, share best practice, and create environments where children can thrive—where their voices are heard, their needs are met, and their development is nurtured for future success.

If you share our commitment to collaboration and have the drive to make a real impact, we would love to hear from you.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Emma Whelam-Tate
Director of Early Years



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Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser for Group-Based Provision

Required to start in September

£500 per day

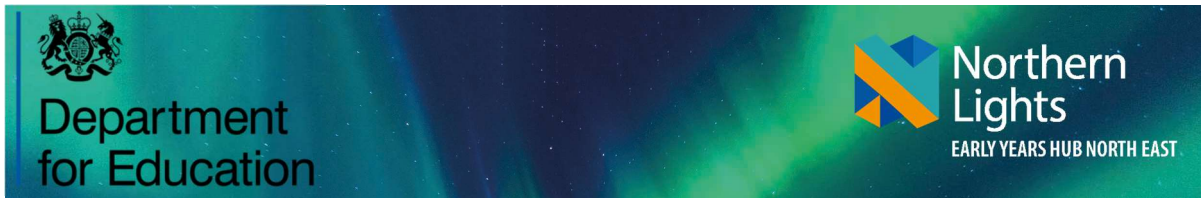
Every child deserves the best start in life. The earliest years shape future learning, wellbeing, and success. Through the Best Start in Life Strategy, the Department for Education (DfE) is driving higher standards and quality in early education so that every child can thrive.

The Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser (EYSPA) Programme is a new iteration of the previous Experts and Mentors programme, which focused on developing the skills of early years professionals to reduce the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's development. An independent evaluation found:

- A positive, statistically significant impact on practitioners' confidence in supporting children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Strong evidence that the programme had a positive impact on practitioners' confidence in supporting children's communication and language development.

The EYSPA programme will build on these foundations by delivering targeted support to eligible settings to boost children's development, improve outcomes and narrow the disadvantage gap, delivered via the [Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs \(EYSPH\)](#).

When a setting is identified by Ofsted as needing to improve, an EY Stronger Practice Adviser will be able to offer one-to-one coaching and guidance using their expertise and experience, to quickly and effectively address the issues. Settings with high numbers of children on roll eligible for EYPP, the 2-year-old disadvantage offer and with SEND will also qualify for support.



Opportunities now open:

Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs are now looking for applicants to join phase 1 of delivery.

Please note that advisers will likely be required to work across more than one Local Authority.

Training will commence in **June 2026**, ahead of delivering support to settings from **September** for the Autumn term of AY26/27. Experienced early years professionals are invited to apply for the role of Stronger Practice Adviser. All advisers need to have completed training before commencing their role, so please only apply if you are likely to have capacity to attend up to 3 days of face-to-face training in June or July.

Different roles within the programme:

- Each EYSPH will act as delivery partner for their local area. Each hub will have a dedicated EYSPA lead, who will support the management of the programme, recruitment of advisers and settings, and liaise with the department and training provider.
- The hub will be responsible for mapping need across their area and supporting the identification of eligible settings. They will work closely with Local Authorities, to ensure settings most in need have access to the support.
- Each hub will recruit four advisers to support group-based settings and one adviser to support a cluster of four childminders.
- The Department have procured a training partner who will provide mandatory training for all advisers to attend ahead of delivery and to provide further training as and when needed.

Other details:

The department is providing funding of **£500** per day for a group-based adviser, and this includes any travel and subsistence costs incurred. Payment will be made to the school or setting you work in, in the form of a Section 14 grant. This funding is to release applicants from their setting to take part in the role. Some settings may wish to use part of the funding for additional payments to the applicants such as a 'responsibility payment at the grant holder's discretion. Successful applicants who are invited to our training event will also be reimbursed for this.

Successful applicants must be available to attend training between June and July 2026 and start supporting settings from **September 2026**.



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CLOSING DATE:

Applications must be received by: 9:00am, Thursday 7th May

Shortlisting will take place on: Friday 8th May

Interviews will take place on: Wednesday 13th – Friday 15th May

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST:

We invite you to submit an expression of interest, using the form Expression of Interest Application Form, outlining your relevant skills and experience.

Please submit your expression of interest form to Northern Lights EY Stronger Practice Hub at eyhub@nllt.co.uk by 9:00am 7th May 2026.

This will be assessed by a panel overseen by the EYSPH. We expect to respond to you with the outcome of our application by COP 8th May 2026.

Contact the Early Years Hub team at 0191 933 6771 for any questions, and we'll be happy to help, or email on the above email.

Details of the Early Years Stronger Practice Hub can be found on our website:
<https://northernlights.education/nllt/northern-lights-early-years-stronger-practice-hub/>

Given the focus of this programme is on providing peer-to-peer and setting-to-setting support, we intend to focus first on applications from people currently working within early years settings and will then consider applications from LAs.



JOB DESCRIPTION

As an adviser, you may be responsible for:

- Attending initial face-to-face training ahead of delivering support to settings
- Attending any additional training offered by the training partner during the programme, based on need or department policy changes
- Based on the settings diagnostic report, plan and deliver specific support to your assigned settings. This will include making initial contact, building trusting relationships quickly with setting leaders and leading reflective conversations to identify strengths and areas for development
- Provide bespoke, targeted support to leaders and educators to improve practice, build professional confidence and support continuous improvement across the settings through coaching, modelling best practice and providing opportunities for reflection
- Support settings in how to select, adapt and embed evidence-informed approaches and interventions
- Signpost settings and educators to further support, such as other EY Stronger Practice Hub offers or the Early years Child Development training
- Provide advice for supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- Provide all your supported settings with a clear action plan that allows the setting to continue making sustainable and effective improvements once support has concluded
- Maintain records of time spent with settings, activities undertaken for grant management purposes and identifiable impacts of the support provided at the end of the term, such as changes in leadership confidence, ability to embed evidence-based practice or evidence of improved quality of provision
- Work alongside the EYSPA Lead within your local hub, highlighting any concerns regarding a setting or their involvement in the programme
- Support identification of training offers that would further support yourself or others in their adviser role
- Take part in feedback surveys to support continuous improvement of the EYSPA programme

Time required for the role:

- You will be required to complete training for the EYSPA programme. Please see details below.
- For the role of group-based adviser, you must be available for the equivalent of a total of 14 days per term.



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This includes 4 days per setting, with 3 dedicated to face-to-face support and a fourth per setting for planning or additional face to face support, however the adviser feels this is best spent. Each adviser will also get 2 additional days per term, for planning or working with the hub. Advisers will support 3 settings per term (you will be allocated new settings each term).

- Please note that group-based advisers will be expected to travel within their local hub area to support eligible settings face-to-face.

Training for the role:

The DfE has appointed a partner who will provide training to all advisers, before delivering support from September 2026.

The training will involve attending up to 3 days of face-to-face training, as set out by the training partner. This training is anticipated to begin in June 2026. Details on dates and times of this training will be shared with you, if successful in your application. Attending this training will be mandatory for all advisers and they won't be matched to settings for support until they have completed it.

The training partner will also provide further training opportunities throughout the programme.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Early Years Stronger Practice Advisor for Group-Based Provision

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
APPLICATION FORM	1. Well-presented and complete application form		Application
QUALIFICATIONS	1. Applicants for group-based setting support must have a Level 6 or above early years qualification and have agreement from their home setting manager/owner/head teacher to take part in the programme.	2. Other relevant early years, child development or coaching qualifications.	Application
EXPERIENCE	<p>1. Have at least three years' experience and be currently working in an early years setting that is Ofsted rated 'good' or 'outstanding' (or expected standard and above in all areas under the new framework) and include working with children across the age range of 0-4. This includes those working in schools, nursery schools, a Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) nursery or other early years settings. This should include some leadership experience.</p> <p>2. We will also accept applications from staff currently working in early years roles within Local Authorities (LAs).</p> <p>3. Experience of providing external support beyond</p>	6. Experience of leading on strategies to address gaps in learning and development, which could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supporting children with delays in areas such as speech and language or physical development, through collaboration with specialist teams such as speech and language therapists. b. Implementing strategies to improve school readiness. c. Using data from observations and assessments to identify trends and gaps and 	Application Interview



their home early years setting, for example to other nurseries or schools within their chain or trust, through EY Stronger Practice Hubs or Family Hubs. This may include offering professional guidance to early years educators, delivering training or workshops, supporting staff during inspections, modelling best practice in child development and safeguarding.

4. Applicants should have experience in mentoring or coaching others, such as guiding early years practitioners, apprentices, or volunteers in professional development, and modelling best practice in childcare settings.
5. A thorough and up-to-date understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development, to include:
 - a. The prime and specific areas of learning, Safeguarding requirements and assessment expectations.
 - b. Knowledge of child development milestones to inform planning, observation and assessment, ensuring that

developing action plans to address these.

- d. Collaboration with others to embed inclusive practices, ensuring children with SEND or those from disadvantaged backgrounds receive tailored support.
 - e. Delivery of coaching to improve educators' confidence and consistency in closing gaps.
 - f. Use of evidence-informed practice to support settings to guide change.
7. Has experience of specific areas of interest or expertise that can be applied in their support offer such as:
- a. Working with children with SEND
 - b. Working with children with EAL
 - c. Inclusion
 - d. Safeguarding
 - e. Leadership and Quality improvement

	provision is inclusive. c. Understanding of the impact of early experiences on long-term outcomes.		
OTHER	1. Enhanced DBS with barred list check		DBS certificate

DBS:

EYSPH is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An application for a DBS certificate will be submitted for all candidates once they have been offered the position. For posts in regulated activity, the DBS check will include a barred list check. During the recruitment process, any offences, or other matters relevant to the position will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Any offer of employment will be subject to receipt of a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure.

Safeguarding:

EYSPH is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Equal opportunities:

EYSPH are an equal opportunity employer. We want to develop a more diverse workforce and we positively welcome applicants from all sections of the community. Applicants with disabilities will be granted an interview if the essential job criteria are met.

Artificial Intelligence and Recruitment at EYSPH

EYSPH is committed to embracing innovation while maintaining fairness and integrity in our recruitment processes. We recognise that candidates may choose to use AI tools to support the preparation of their applications. While this is acceptable, we expect all submissions to reflect the applicant’s own experiences, values, and suitability for the role and it is essential that AI is used appropriately.

AI must not be used to:

- provide misleading or false information at any stage of the application journey
- inflate or invent qualifications, skills or experience



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- complete assessments as part of the recruitment process
- create generic responses and copy them into your application

If you have any questions about the use of AI in your recruitment process with us, please email: recruitment@nllt.co.uk