

Early Years Language Lead
(Setting Support)
NORTHERN LIGHTS EARLY
YEARS HUB
APPLICATION PACK



Department
for Education



Northern
Lights

EARLY YEARS HUB NORTH EAST

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 HUB NORTH EAST

Early Years Language Lead (Setting Support)

Required to start in August 2026

£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 strengthening the improvement system so that every child can thrive.

To support delivery of commitments made in the Best Start in Life strategy, DfE will be introducing Early Years Learning Leads (EYLL) for personal, social and emotional development (PSED), early language and early maths in each of the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs (EYSPH) to provide support and training to early years educators. EYLL will be based in EYSPH and will be responsible for:

- Improving outcomes for children by:
 - strengthening PSED, early maths and early language provision across early years settings by delivering high-quality Stronger Practice continuous professional development (CPD).
 - providing targeted subject specific support to early years settings to strengthen practice in PSED, early maths and early language.
- Actively engaging with subject-specific professional development and networks to deepen expertise, share good practice, and support high-quality delivery across the EYSPH area.

This document relates to EYLLs for language ONLY.

EYSPH help early years settings to adopt evidence-informed practice and build trusted networks for sharing effective practice. There are 18 Stronger Practice Hubs in England - 2 per region. The Best Start in Life strategy committed to doubling the number of hubs to 36.

The hubs are strong providers of early years education with sound expertise and knowledge of the evidence base on what works to support child outcomes – trusted local experts that other early years providers can look to for advice and support.

For more information about EYSPH please visit:

<https://www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk/>



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Opportunities now open

- Experienced early years professionals are invited to apply for the role of Early Language Lead (ELL). Applicants can apply as an individual or be released by their current employer.
- A comprehensive package of support including induction, training and follow up support will be provided to all ELLs.
- Induction and training for successful applicants will take place in **September 2026**, ahead of delivering support to educators and settings from **October 2026**.

CLOSING DATE:

Applications must be received by: 9:00am, Wednesday 24th June

Shortlisting will take place on: Friday 26th June

Interviews will take place on: Wednesday 1st July – Friday 3rd July

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST:

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

Please submit your expression of interest form to the Early Years Stronger Practice Hub via recruitment@nllt.co.uk by 9:00am, Wednesday 24th June.

Your application will be assessed by a panel overseen by the EYSPH. We expect to respond to you with the outcome of our application by COP Friday 26th June, applicants will be invited to a short interview in person.

If you have any further queries, please contact the Early Years Hub team at 0191 933 6771, 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/>

We look forward to receiving your application.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Early Language Lead (ELL) – responsibilities

Overseen by the EYSPH lead and working closely with PSED and early maths leads, ELLs will be responsible for:

- Attending training delivered by a DfE appointed subject matter expert and engaging with follow up support provided.
- Developing and delivering a locally specific early language delivery plan outlining plans for sustained support to educators and settings, based on local needs analysis and mapping of existing provision.
- Providing bespoke support on early language to a minimum of four settings per term underpinned by coaching approaches, modelling of practice and opportunities for reflection. This will include supporting settings to develop bespoke action plans to address identified needs and strengthen practice.
- Supporting early years settings/educators to select, adapt and embed evidence-informed approaches and interventions.
- Being an active member of a national and regional ELL network, to share best practice and promote a joined-up approach across the 0–5 agenda, fostering greater coherence, consistency, and impact in service delivery involving English Hubs where appropriate.
- Working with local authorities across the North East and other relevant stakeholders e.g. Best Start Family Hubs, English Hubs etc to understand local needs, identify gaps, prevent duplication of services, and reduce the risk of fragmentation, thereby strengthening coherence across the local system.
- Working in partnership with Best Start Family Hubs, English Hubs, local speech and language therapists and health services (including the ELSEC programme where it runs locally).
- Encouraging settings to identify and use, in conjunction with high quality communication friendly practice, an effective screening tool annually with all children, to identify language delays and SEND.



- Maintaining accurate records of progress against Key Performance Indicators, impact and feedback from settings and other local stakeholders to inform practice and share with hubs and DfE.
- Lead network meetings and professional development sessions in line with hub delivery plan.

Time required for the role

ELLs will be funded to work two days per week during term time only. All ELLs will be required to complete relevant training for the role. Please see details below.

Training for the role

The DfE has appointed a Subject Matter Expert (SME) who will be responsible for providing training to all ELLs before they start delivering support from October 2026. Full details will be provided by the SME but is likely to include:

- **September 2026:**
 - Half day online induction session including evidence-informed approaches to practice.
 - Half day online session on coaching and mentoring approaches and effective improvement planning.

Dates and times of the training will be shared with successful applicants.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) will provide input and support to the SME on evidence-informed practice, professional development and implementation.

The SME will also:

- provide follow-up support and quality assure training delivery through 1-2-1 supervision sessions, observation of workshops/webinars delivered by leads, group webinars/drop-in sessions and peer to peer reviews.
- facilitate networking and collaboration to share best practice including one face to face and two online events during the year.



Other details

Successful applicants will be reimbursed for travel costs to attend training and national and regional networking events.

ELLs will be expected to provide support to educators and settings across the whole of the North East covered by the EYPSH.

ELL will be expected to start by 31st August and attend training in September 2026. Funding for ELL is available until the end of March 2028, with the possibility of extension to the end of March 2029.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Early Years Language Lead (ELL)

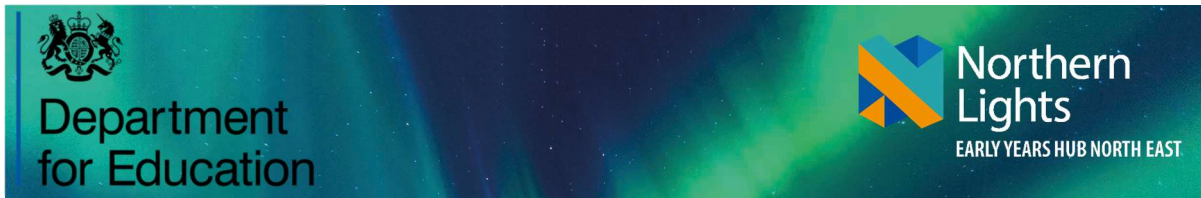
CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
APPLICATION FORM	1. Well-presented and complete application form	Application
QUALIFICATIONS	1. Level 6 qualification 2. Level 3 in speech, language and communication is desirable	Application
EXPERIENCE	1. Has experience of working with children aged between 0 to 4 years old in an early childhood education context. 2. Has experience working in, or with, a range of different childcare provider types (i.e. PVI's, childminders, school-based settings). 3. Has experience of leading professional development in early language. 4. Has experience of mentoring others or using a coaching model of support, demonstrating the ability to build and nurture professional relationships. 5. Has experience of developing and implementing a delivery plan which addresses the specific needs of early years settings and staff with input from key stakeholders including local authorities across multiple areas. 6. Has experience of working collaboratively with multi-agency teams and/or local authority services.	Application Interview
KNOWLEDGE	1. Understands the importance of evidence-informed practice and able to identify evidence-informed approaches, training and resources.	Application Interview



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Extensive knowledge of the key areas of early language learning and able to communicate these clearly and confidently to educators and settings, while modelling a positive attitude to early language. 3. Enthusiastic to learn more about early language practice and to engage in further reading and research. 4. Demonstrates a commitment to inclusive practice and reducing inequalities in early outcomes. 5. Understands the safeguarding requirements within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. 6. Has completed some professional development in early childhood language, such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the Early Years Professional Development Programme (EYPDP) early language module. b. the Early Years Child Development Training (EYCDT) early language module. 	
<p>LEADERSHIP SKILLS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build trust and credibility beyond their setting. 2. Able to deliver the key programme content with rigour whilst being responsive and sensitive to educators' needs and prior experiences. 3. Aspirational to support the improvement/facilitate the development of the quality of early language practice. 4. Open to reflecting on their practice as an Early Years Learning Lead. 5. Ability to provide bespoke support to early years settings, tailoring approach to meet the unique needs of each context. 6. A self-starter, able to work independently, make strategic decisions, proactively generate work, and collaborate effectively as part of a team. 	<p>Application Interview</p>
<p>OTHER</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced DBS with barred list check 	<p>DBS certificate</p>

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
- 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