Department for Education

Expression of Interest:

Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser for Childminder Provision

Deadline for applications: 13.7.26 (noon)

Context

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 childminders and group based 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 coaching and guidance using their expertise and experience to address issues quickly and effectively. Settings with high numbers of children on roll eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), the Early Learning for 2 year olds offer and with SEND will also qualify for support.

The programme is being delivered in two phases; phase 1 included six EYSPHs, with activity starting in April and support to settings being offered in September 2026. This phase is key to providing feedback on the processes and delivery of the programme, ahead of the remaining hubs beginning their activity from June 2026 in phase two.

Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs will each be running their own adviser recruitment drive with the process overseen by DfE. This allows each hub to consider their local need and context in development of their delivery plans and how they intend to meet these. Recruitment of experienced advisers is key to this.

Opportunities now open

Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs are now looking for applicants to join phase 2 of delivery; applicants will need to be able to provide support in the areas covered by their local EYSPH. Please note that advisers will likely be required to work across more than one Local Authority.

Training will commence in **September 2026**, ahead of delivering support to settings from **January 2027** for the Spring term of AY26/27. Experienced childminders are invited to apply for the role of Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser for Childminder provision. 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 between September and December 2026. We hope to be able to confirm exact dates and locations at the interview stage.

Different roles within the programme

- Each EYSPH will function 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 collaborate closely with Local Authorities, to ensure settings most in need have access to the support.
- Each hub will recruit one childminder EYSPA to support a cluster of four childminders (as well as four EYSPAs to support group-based settings).
- The Department have procured a training partner (White Rose Education) who will provide mandatory training for all advisers to attend ahead of delivery and to provide further training as and when needed.

Adviser - Responsibilities

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. It is likely this additional training will be virtual.
- Based on the settings diagnostic report, plan and deliver specific support relevant to your assigned settings and cluster. This will include making initial contact, building trusting relationships with childminders quickly and leading reflective conversations to identify strengths and areas for development at an individual setting and cluster level.
- Provide bespoke, targeted support to childminders to improve practice, build professional confidence, and support continuous improvement across the settings through coaching, modelling best practice and providing opportunities for reflection. As you will be supporting a cluster, this is likely to be done virtually.
- Support settings in how to select, adapt, and embed evidence-informed approaches and interventions.
- Signpost childminders 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 an individualised 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 and your cluster, 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 EYSPH, 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.

Adviser – person specification

Essential Experience and Qualifications:

- Have at least **three years experience** as a childminder or in a childminder setting and **currently** be working in an early years setting that is Ofsted rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ (or expected standard and above in all areas under the new Ofsted Inspection framework) and include working with children across the age range of 0-4. This should include some leadership experience. Ideally you will be working in a childminder setting but we will accept applications from those currently working in a group-based setting if the person holds recent childminder experience.
- We will also accept applications from staff **currently** working in early years roles within Local Authorities (LAs).
- Experience of providing external support beyond their home early years setting, for example to other childminders as part of a local authority network or to settings through EY Stronger Practice Hubs or Family Hubs. This may include offering professional guidance to

early years educators/childminders, delivering training or workshops, supporting staff during inspections, modelling best practice in child development and safeguarding.
- Applicants should have experience in mentoring or coaching other childminders, assistants or early years educators in professional development, and modelling best practice in childcare settings.
- A thorough and up-to-date understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development, to include:
    - The prime and specific areas of learning, safeguarding requirements, and assessment expectations.
    - Knowledge of child development milestones to inform planning, observation, and assessment, ensuring that provision is inclusive.
    - Understanding of the impact of early experiences on long-term outcomes.

Desirable Experience:

- Experience of leading on strategies to address gaps in learning and development, which could include:
    - 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.
    - Implementing strategies to improve early development.
    - Using data from observations and assessments to identify trends and gaps and developing action plans to address these.
    - Collaboration with others to embed inclusive practices, ensuring children with SEND or those from disadvantaged backgrounds receive tailored support.
    - Delivery of coaching to improve educators' confidence and consistency in closing gaps.
- Use of evidence-informed practice to support settings to guide change.
- Has experience of specific areas of interest or expertise that can be applied in their support offer such as:
    - Working with children with SEND
    - Working with children with EAL
    - Inclusion
    - Safeguarding
    - Leadership and Quality improvement
- Other relevant early years, child development, or coaching qualifications.

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 registered Childminders and will then consider applications from LAs.

Time required for the role

- You will be required to complete up to three days of face-to-face training to prepare you for the EYSPA role. In addition, you will be required to complete ad-hoc training throughout the programme when required. This training will likely be virtual.
- For the childminder offer, you must be available for 6 days per term.
- You will support one cluster per term made up of 4 childminders. Included in this are 4 days for working directly with the Childminders, and two additional days for working with the hub or planning. However, if you wish to use some assigned planning time to offer additional support to the cluster, this can be done at the EYSPAs discretion given it is logged accordingly.

Training for the role

The DfE has appointed White Rose Education to provide training to all advisers, before delivering support from January 2027.

The training will involve attending up to 3 days of face-to-face training, as set out by the training partner. This training will take place between September and December 2026. Details on dates and times of this training will be shared with you at the interview stage. 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 White Rose Education will also provide further training opportunities throughout the programme.

Other details

- The department is providing funding of **£400** per day for a Childminder adviser, and this includes any travel and subsistence costs incurred. Payment will be made to the 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. Successful applicants who are invited to our training event will also be reimbursed for this.
- Successful applicants must be available to attend training between September and December 2026 and start supporting settings from **January 2027.**
- EY Stronger Practice Hubs are welcome to request for references from applicants and conduct due diligence visits to the settings of successful applicants if they see fit.

How to submit your Expression of Interest

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

Please submit your expression of interest form to your local participating EY Stronger Practice Hub (Bright Futures Early Years Stronger Practice Hub) at **earlyyears@bright-futures.co.uk**

This will be assessed by a panel overseen by the EYSPH. We expect to respond to you with the outcome of our application by **14.7.26**

If you have any further questions we recommend you contract your local Early Years Stronger Practice Hub. If you need to speak to the Department for Education, please email EYSPA.programme@education.gov.uk

Expression of interest (EOI) form – Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser

1. **Please write your answers to the short-form question in the below table:**

Questions	Answers
Name:	
Current Setting name:	
Current Setting Unique Reference Number:	
Current Setting address:	
Postcode:	
Local authority:	
Current Ofsted Rating:	
Childminder email address:	
I confirm Employers permission to take part in this programme (if not person applying for role):	

2. **As part of the application, you must send a copy of your CV to the Early Years Stronger Practice Hub you are applying to have expressed interest in collaborating with. Please confirm that you have attached your CV alongside the email to submit this form.**

Yes ☐

Long-Form Questions

1. **Please describe any recent and relevant experience of working as a childminder, specifically with children 0-4.**

   You should look to include the following in your response:

   - How many years you have worked in childminder settings
   - Your experience of leadership within the early years sector
   - Any relevant experience outside of working directly within settings
   - Include any experience of working with children with SEND, EAL, or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

   Please ensure you use recent examples in your response. Your answer should be no longer than 400 words. Any words over this limit will not be reviewed.

   Response:

2. **Please describe your understanding of child development and explain why it is essential for high-quality early years practice. Please outline key factors that can influence children's development and how these might impact learning and outcomes.**

   You should look to include the following in your response:

   - Understanding of typical development milestones
   - Ability to link child development to the EYFS

   Please ensure your answer is no longer than 250 words. Any words over this limit will not be reviewed.

   Response:

3. **The Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser programme aims to coach childminders to identify and implement strategies to improve the quality of education and childcare. Please describe your recent experience of coaching and mentoring others within the sector.**

You should look to include the following in your response:

- Experience of using a coaching model of support
- Experience of providing both face-to-face and remote support, how you build trusting relationships and how you tailor your support for different settings or individuals
- Where you have supported others to make improvements and the impact of your support

Please ensure you use recent examples in your response. Your answer should be no longer than 400 words. Any words over this limit will not be reviewed.

Response:

4. **Please describe how you ensure your practice aligns with EYFS requirements and safeguarding standards.**

You should look to include the following in your response:

- How you use child development milestones to inform planning or assessment
- How you have implemented strategies to address gaps in learning and development and how successful these were
- Any experience of embedding inclusive practices and collaborating with specialist teams
- Any experience of using data to identify trends and improve outcomes

Please ensure your answer is no longer than 400 words. Any words over this limit will not be reviewed.

Response:

5. Please describe any areas of particular interest or expertise you have, which you would like to support others with, through this programme.

You should look to include the following in your response:

- For example, expertise in SEND, working with children with EAL, Leadership and Governance in a childminding setting
- Your experience/qualifications in these areas
- How you would use this expertise to help settings through the programme

Please ensure your answer is no longer than 250 words. Any words over this limit will not be reviewed.

Response:

6. Please list relevant qualifications for this role.

6.1. Do you hold the **essential** qualification for this role, please cross the applicable box and list any other essential qualifications below:

- Hold a full and relevant Level 3 Qualification ☐

Please list below:

6.2. Do you hold additional relevant qualifications above Level 3, such as a Level 6 qualification in early years/child development MA, MSc etc? Do you hold any leadership/coaching qualifications or completed any recent relevant CDP? **(Desirable)**

Please list below:

7. Please list up to 5 local authority areas you can provide support to, in order of preference for matching purposes.

If there are not 5 Local Authorities you wish to provide support in, please fill as many options as possible and put N/A in any blank sections.

Preference Order	Local Authority
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Final Confirmation Questions

1. I confirm, as an adviser, I am willing and able to work with settings in the local authority area(s) I have specified above. Support will likely be virtual, but face-to-face if practical.

   Yes ☐

2. Can you please confirm you can meet the minimum time requirements for the adviser role?

   Yes ☐

3. I can commit to more time than advertised and would be open to supporting more settings if needed.

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

Please submit your expression of interest form to the following mailbox, **earlyyears@bright-futures.co.uk**

Your application will be assessed by a panel within the EYSPH. We expect to respond to you with the outcome of your application by 14.7.26. You may also be contacted before that date to discuss your capacity and deployment, or to be invited to a video-call interview.

We will arrange training for successful applicants where you will have the opportunity to hear more about the programme.

If you have any further queries, please email the above mailbox.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Department for Education