**ROLE DESCRIPTION**

**Role title:** Policy Officer – Early years and Primary Education

**Department:** Education, Equality, Research and International

**Date:** May 2022

**Reports to:** Lead Policy Officer

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| **Role purpose** (why the job exists and its contribution) |
| To undertake work on policy issues within the Department, enabling it to carry out its work effectively on early years and primary education and supporting and empowering primary members in relation to pupils, the education system and the curriculum.  To undertake work on policy issues in relation to the workplace experiences of, and professional expertise, of primary and early years teachers and support staff in this phase of education; generating policy and campaign outcomes around which the Union can organise these members and developing and maintaining expertise around the early years and primary curriculum and its assessment.  To help ensure that policy work on these areas informs, supports and assists the achievement of the NEU’s wider strategic priorities and that the Union recruits and retains staff in the EY and primary phase of education in Union membership. |
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| **Key responsibilities** (the key areas of the role holder’s work) |
| 1. Work under the direction of and assist the Lead Officers in the Department as appropriate. 2. Support the team in the delivery and development of policy work in relation to primary and early years education and other matters within the remit of the Department, including: 3. Preparing policy statements, briefings, commentaries and research papers and conducting survey work, including analysis and report writing; 4. Preparing materials for use in advice, training and campaigning; 5. Participate in cross team projects, working closely with colleagues in other relevant functions including bargaining, advice, organising, campaigns, communications and recruitment 6. Support for Project management as appropriate   3. Support on policy work on primary and early years education including curriculum, assessment and professional practice, including:   1. Providing detailed policy advice and guidance in this area, including policy statements and responses as required, on the primary curriculum and its assessment, statutory testing, the purposes of the primary and early years phase of education and the professional challenges faced by teachers and staff. 2. Researching information and data and members’ professional experiences in workplaces in order to draft effective policies, guidance and recommendations 3. Supporting strategies to recruit and retain primary and early years members via the policy and campaigning of the NEU and its vision and advocacy on primary education issues 4. Developing policy in relation to the workload and expectations on these members, and providing the specialist expertise around primary for other policy projects 5. Liaise closely with staff in the organising, bargaining and campaigns teams to achieve coherent engagement and mobilisation of these members, including members in nursery schools and early years settings 6. Working closely with regions and branches to understand the needs, priorities and views of members and schools/colleges in relation to this policy area 7. Provide policy support for other specific areas of policy within the remit of the Department as required such as for example the teaching of reading and writing, the social and emotional aspects of learning; the challenges facing nursery schools; the statutory tests in place in this phase; and the needs of different learners such as summer born children. 8. Work with the relevant Lead Officer who will set the strategy and parameters for the policy areas. 9. Represent the NEU and develop constructive relationships with external bodies including Government, external stakeholders, relevant NGOs, campaign groups such as More Than A Score and the Early Years Education Forum, PACEY. 10. Contribute to effective multi-disciplinary cross-team projects, working as required with colleagues in other relevant functions including bargaining, advice, organising, campaigns, communication and recruitment. |

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| **How the National Education Union works**  *These principles set out the culture and approach of the NEU.* |
| The role holder:   * Models professionalism and integrity and acts in accordance with the NEU values. * Supports the democratic processes. * Promotes an organising culture across the union. * Works collaboratively and empowers others * Is committed to innovation, learning and continuous improvement of working practices, organisational culture and resources. * Adopts a proactive and flexible approach. |

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| **Key relationships**  *These are the main working relationships that the role holder will develop.* | |
| **Person(s)** | **Nature** |
| **Lead Officer – EERI** | The role holder will assist and work under the direction of the relevant Lead Officers and will be line managed by one of the Lead Officers for appraisal and development purposes . |
| **AGS EERI**  **Head of Education, Equality and Social Justice** | The role holder will work with the Head of Education and the Lead Officer to develop the Department’s policy and research work on primary and early years. |
| **Education, Equality, Research and International (EERI)** | The role holder will work collaboratively with other members of the department to ensure that NEU policy development and advice work properly addresses, reflects and is consistent with the Union’s policy ideas around ethnicity, social class and inequality.  . |
| **Lead Officer** | The role holder will support the relevant Lead Officer in relation to the policy areas for which the role holder has responsibility. |
| **Other NEU Departments** | The role holder will work collaboratively with colleagues in other relevant NEU functions and in multi-disciplinary teams. |
| **Elected members and Lay Officers** | The role holder will support the Lead Officer to liaise with national executive members, other relevant elected members and lay officers as necessary in relation to the specific areas of the role holder’s work and must provide a professional influence and manage relations diplomatically, being an ambassador for the NEU. |
| **External bodies** | Represent the NEU on occasion with external bodies including Government, and relevant forums, coalitions and campaign groups. |

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| **Demonstrable key skills, knowledge and experience**  *The role holder must be able to demonstrate these capabilities to fulfil the role to a satisfactory standard.* |
| **Qualifications**   * Highly developed literacy and numeracy skills, commensurate with degree level; * Significant policy and research experience on early years and primary education and curriculum and assessment in this phase * Significant understanding gained from working with, or researching, primary or early years education and campaigns or coalitions around primary education;   **Resource management & Planning**   * Ability to plan, set goals and prioritise work; * Good project management skills;   **Thinking challenge**   * Relevant policy experience around the contribution of high quality early years education to social justice and equity and the value of nursery schools; * Understanding and experience of the priorities, issues and concerns of early years, nursery school and primary teachers to enable credible representation and relevant and timely policy development in this area; * Policy experience in the field of primary assessment and curriculum and understanding the policy approaches and contexts which support high quality teaching and learning in this phase and a range of good pupil outcomes; * Recent and relevant experience in a policy or research environment including policy development and promotion and developing recommendations and project goals; * Knowledge of, and ability to operate within, the NEU’s political, educational and legal contexts; * Good research skills including, experience of designing research to underpin policy development and of using of a range of research methods; * Ability to quickly assimilate a working knowledge of other areas of expertise necessary for the performance of the role; * Good analytical skills and ability to understand complex information; * Ability to exercise judgement and make decisions within accepted parameters; * Ability to think innovatively to resolve problems and devise new solutions including where there may be conflicting interests;   **Communication**   * Ability to write analytically and persuasively in a variety of styles for a range of audiences; * Ability to produce clear and detailed written communications. For example, policy advice, policy statements and consultation responses; * Ability to develop and maintain positive working relationships with internal and external stakeholders including colleagues, activists and members; * Good public speaking, influencing and presentation skills; * Ability to support the team to promote its policy goals through the media and drafting social media content;   **Operational delivery**   * Demonstrable knowledge in the area of child centred early years education and primary practice and the principles of inclusive and equitable education; * Knowledge in the policy field of how the social context affects learners and outcomes and the impact of social disadvantage in relation to educational inequalities * Experience and understanding gained from working on some of the current issues relating to the direction of primary education in England and Wales, and how educational quality is assessed in those countries, and an understanding of the goals and values of primary education in other countries; * Ability to plan, manage and deliver a range of activities and projects within critical deadlines; * Experience of working collaboratively; * Experience of working with key stakeholders and within coalitions or partnerships to develop, disseminate and challenge policy, within the education sector; * Strong IT skills including Microsoft Office Suite together with any other IT applications necessary for delivery of the role; * Understanding of the principles of organising members in a trade union and of how this may influence the strategy to give primary and EY members greater professional agency and the ability to influence and change their workplaces; * Ability to support research projects, draw on the findings of research; understand a range of research methods; and analyse research evidence in this policy field |

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| **Additional** |
| **Work demands**   * The ability to work under pressure and deliver to critical deadlines. * The requirement to work evenings, weekends or flex working arrangements which are necessary for the performance of the role; * The requirement to travel to attend activities, conferences and meetings away from the normal place of work, and which may involve stays away from home. These could be locally, regionally, nationally;   **Additional relevant requirements**   * Is firmly committed to the trade union movement and in particular to the role of education unions. * Understanding of equal opportunities issues in education and has a commitment to promote diversity and oppose unfair treatment; * Knowledge and understanding of current legislation, political and economic issues, including those relating to employment rights, trade unions and the public sector; (desirable) * The requirement to undertake professional development and training as necessary for the performance of the role. |

This role description will be kept under review and can be adapted to meet the changing needs of the National Education Union, subject to appropriate consultation.