



Job Description: Careers Advisor & University Counsellor

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| Job Title: | Careers Advisor & University Counsellor |
| Salary: | £25,800 - £30,800 |
| Location: | Greater Manchester |
| Hours of Work: | Monday-Friday 8:15-16:00 – Term Time Only |
| Line Manager: | Head of Education |
| How to apply: | www.firststepseducation.uk/apply |
| Contact Details: | 0330 118 0974 |

Job Purpose

The purpose of this role is to design and deliver a high quality careers and transitions programme for students across First Steps Together, supporting approximately 150 young people with a range of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The postholder will ensure every student receives personalised, meaningful, and accessible guidance that helps them recognise their strengths, explore interests, and develop a clear understanding of future pathways. Working across multiple sites, the Careers Advisor will provide consistency, structure, and ambition for students preparing for life beyond school.

A central aim of the role is to equip students in Key Stages 4 and 5 with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to progress into appropriate further education, higher education, training, apprenticeships, employment, or supported adult pathways. This includes delivering one to one guidance, leading the UCAS and college application processes, and coordinating employer encounters, work related learning opportunities, and transition support. The advisor will ensure that all guidance is tailored, trauma informed, and responsive to the individual needs of students with SEMH and ASD profiles.

The role also exists to strengthen partnerships between students, families, staff teams, external agencies, and education or employment providers. By contributing to EHCPs, liaising with professionals, and maintaining robust tracking systems, the post-holder will play a vital part in ensuring every young person moves on to a positive, sustainable destination. Ultimately, the Careers Advisor and University Counsellor will champion aspiration, inclusion, and independence, helping students build foundations for successful futures.

Safeguarding

Here at First Steps Together, we're committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and promoting that commitment. We expect all our staff and volunteers to share in it, too, which is why, as part of the selection process, we will carry out all the necessary checks to ensure you don't pose any risk of harm in your role here.

Join us and you'll be expected to actively contribute to our safeguarding commitment and promote child welfare in line with the school's Child Protection Policy. If ever there's a concern or issue, you'll be ready to report it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, any Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Key Responsibilities

1. Careers Guidance & Student Support

- Provide high quality, impartial 1:1 careers guidance for students across KS4 and KS5, tailored to the needs of learners with SEMH and ASD profiles.
- Carry out strengths assessments, interests profiling, and personalised transition planning to support informed decision making.
- Support students with CV writing, job applications, interview preparation, personal statements, and skills development relevant to their chosen pathways.
- Deliver small group sessions, workshops, and in class guidance that builds confidence and prepares students for life beyond school.

2. Post-16 and Post-18 Pathways

- Manage the UCAS process for students applying to university, including course research, application completion, and personal statement guidance.
- Support students applying to FE colleges, sixth forms, specialist providers, apprenticeships, supported internships, and employment.
- Arrange and facilitate college visits, university open days, employer visits, and transition events across multiple sites.
- Ensure all students have access to appropriate and aspirational progression routes that suit their abilities, interests, and support needs.

3. CEIAG Curriculum & Programme Delivery

- Design, implement, and continuously develop a careers programme that aligns with the Gatsby Benchmarks and independent school expectations.
- Plan and deliver careers education lessons, enrichment activities, and themed events that engage learners with diverse needs.
- Organise employer encounters, visiting speakers, career fairs, and work related learning opportunities.
- Work collaboratively with teaching staff to embed careers learning across the curriculum.

4. Multi Site Coordination & Partnership Working

- Ensure equitable, well structured careers provision across all First Steps Together sites, managing your time and presence effectively.
- Build strong relationships with site leaders, pastoral teams, SEND staff, therapists, and external professionals.
- Develop partnerships with local employers, colleges, universities, and training providers to expand opportunities for students.
- Maintain clear communication with families and carers, supporting them through decision making and transition processes.

5. EHCP & Transition Planning

- Provide detailed, high quality input for EHCP reviews, including recommended outcomes, suitable destinations, and support needs.
- Contribute to multi-agency meetings, preparing documentation that supports smooth transitions into adulthood.
- Develop personalised transition plans for students moving to further education, higher education, training, employment, or adult support services.

6. Administration, Tracking & Compliance

- Maintain accurate records of all careers guidance interactions, destinations, and progress for internal and external reporting.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the careers programme, contributing to school improvement planning.
- Ensure all practice adheres to safeguarding, data protection, CEIAG standards, and First Steps Together policies.
- Stay updated on labour market trends, post-16/18 pathways, and best practice in SEMH and ASD support.

Person Specification

Qualifications

Essential

- Level 6 or above qualification in Careers Guidance (e.g., QCG, Level 6 Diploma in Careers Guidance, CDI-recognised qualification).
- Evidence of continuous professional development related to careers education, SEND, or youth support.

Desirable

- Level 7 qualification in careers guidance or higher education advising.
- Additional qualifications in SEND, autism, SEMH, or trauma informed practice.
- Training in safeguarding, mental health support, or neurodiversity affirming approaches.

Experience

Essential

- Experience delivering careers guidance to young people in an educational, youth, or community setting.
- Experience supporting progression into FE, HE, apprenticeships, or employment.
- Experience working with young people with SEMH and/or ASD, or other additional needs.
- Experience providing 1:1 guidance and supporting students through transition pathways.

Desirable

- Experience working within a specialist or SEND school.
- Experience leading or coordinating CEIAG provision across multiple sites.
- Experience supporting UCAS applications and Post-16/Post-18 transition processes.
- Experience building partnerships with employers, colleges, universities, and external agencies.

Knowledge & Understanding

Essential

- Strong understanding of post-16 and post-18 pathways, including FE, HE, apprenticeships, traineeships, supported internships, and employment routes.
- Knowledge of the Gatsby Benchmarks, statutory CEIAG expectations, and best practice in careers education.
- Awareness of the needs and barriers faced by students with SEMH and ASD, and how to adapt guidance accordingly.
- Understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and confidentiality within an educational setting.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the EHCP process and the SEND Code of Practice.
- Understanding of trauma informed and neurodiversity affirming approaches.
- Awareness of local labour market information and progression opportunities.
- Knowledge of independent school structures and expectations.

Skills & Abilities

Essential

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to engage and motivate diverse learners.
- Strong organisational skills and the ability to manage a multi-site caseload effectively.
- Ability to produce high quality written reports, personal statement guidance, and transition documentation.
- Skilled in building rapport, fostering trust, and adapting communication for students with SEMH and ASD needs.
- Ability to work collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.

Desirable

- Ability to design and deliver engaging workshops, lessons, and group activities.
- Competence in using digital platforms for tracking and careers programme delivery.
- Ability to innovate and adapt careers education to meet complex or changing needs.

Personal Qualities

Essential

- Empathetic, patient, and responsive to individual needs.
- Reflective and committed to ongoing professional development.
- Resilient, reliable, and able to maintain professional boundaries.
- Passionate about empowering young people and raising aspirations.
- Flexible, adaptable, and creative in responding to challenges.

Desirable

- Demonstrates initiative and confidence in developing new partnerships or opportunities.
- Strong advocate for inclusion, neurodiversity, and student voice.

Safeguarding**Essential**

- A strong commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- Understanding of safeguarding principles, including recognising concerns, responding appropriately, and following reporting procedures.
- Ability to maintain professional boundaries, confidentiality, and safe working practices.
- Ability to record concerns accurately and promptly using agreed systems.
- Willingness to work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow all statutory and organisational policies.

What We Offer

- Competitive salary and holiday pay
- Term-time working pattern with potential for additional hours supporting school trips
- Comprehensive induction and ongoing training in SEN awareness, first aid, and safeguarding
- A supportive team culture driven by shared purpose and continuous improvement
- Opportunities for career progression within our expanding SEN transport and care network

Review

The nature of this role means that this job description will be subject to an annual review with the potential for amendment or modification at any time after consultation directly with you. It by no means acts as a comprehensive statement of procedures and is just a way of setting out all the main expectations we'll have of you, here in the role as you deliver an impassioned and truly caring experience to our young people.