

Cumbria Combined Authority Role Profile

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| Post Title: | Head of Work, Health and Skills Strategy |
| Date: | April 2026 |
| Term: | Secondment (for up to 18 months) |
| Tier Level: | Three |
| Grade: | 18 (to be confirmed) |
| Reports to: | Director of Policy and Strategy |

Purpose of the Role

The purpose of this role is to provide strategic leadership and expert advice on work, health and skills across Cumbria, supporting the Combined Authority Board and Chief Executive to shape and deliver integrated, evidence-based policy that improves outcomes for residents and businesses. The postholder will play a central role in aligning employment, skills provision and health priorities, ensuring a coordinated approach that supports inclusive growth and tackles economic inactivity.

The role will lead the development and implementation of key strategies associated with devolved Adult Skills Funding (ASF), including commissioning and delivery frameworks, while ensuring strong governance through the Skills and Employment Policy Subgroup and the Work and Health Board. A key focus will be building effective partnerships with constituent authorities, government departments, education providers, and health partners to ensure joined-up delivery and maximum impact.

The postholder will also establish a strong evidence-led approach to policy development, using data, stakeholder insight and local intelligence to inform decision-making. Ultimately, the role is responsible for driving a coherent, collaborative and future-focused work, health and skills system that meets the needs of Cumbria's communities, supports workforce development, and contributes to long-term regional prosperity.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide expert advice to the Combined Authority Board and Chief Executive on key issues, opportunities and strategic priorities as they relate to work, health and skills policy in Cumbria, working through the Skills and Employment Policy Subgroup of the Combined Authority, as well as the Work and Health board.
- Build relationships and act as a key point of contact on work, health and skills matters between the Combined Authority and:
 - the constituent authorities;
 - national government departments (DfE, DHSC and DWP);
 - local partners (colleges, jobcentres, ICBs etc); and
 - national bodies (Skills England).
- Develop and lead the team responsible for implementing devolved Adult Skills Funding in Cumbria, working closely with programme leads for Skills Bootcamps, Careers Hubs, and Connect to Work.

- Ensure the Combined Authority takes a robust approach to data and evidence, working closely with constituent authorities, while building on engagement with communities, businesses, and local education providers.
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Key deliverables:

- Provide strategic leadership for development of the Skills and Commissioning Strategies required for implementation of ASF devolution.
 - Set the direction and workplan for the Work and Health Board and provide an effective secretariat function.
 - Advocate for a review of integrated care boundaries across Cumbria
 - Build effective partnership working with Team Barrow to ensure that skills and employment initiatives are aligned and mutually beneficial.
 - Provide strategic input to the development of a Spatial Development Strategy for Cumbria and ensure integrated working arrangements with constituent authorities around evidence gathering.
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Knowledge, Skills & Experience (Essential Summary)

Knowledge

- Degree-level education or equivalent experience.
- Knowledge of the local work, health and skills landscape, as well policies operating at the regional and national level.

Skills

- Ability to build strong working relationships and collaboration, both within Cumbria and at the regional level.
- Strong analytical skills, able to turn data and evidence into strategic insights.
- Ability to communicate complex technical information clearly to decision-makers and the public, including writing reports, presenting strategies, engaging with stakeholders.

Experience

- Experience in formulating strategies and policies in a local or regional government context.
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Other Requirements

- Ability to work the hours that are reasonable and necessary to fulfil the requirements of the post.
- Ability to travel across Cumbria and attend meetings outside of the region.