



Cumberland Council

Post Specification

Date	June 2025
PG Number	8623
Post Title	Connect to Work - Contract Manager
Job Family	Organisational Support
Job Family Role Profile	OS14
Final Grade	14

To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile

Service Area description

Connect to Work is a new DWP funded programme delivered by local authorities across the country to tackle economic inactivity. In Cumbria, Cumberland Council is the Accountable Body for delivery with the programme and role being hosted within Enterprising Cumbria.

The programme and role is countywide across the whole of Cumbria. Connect to Work is a five-year programme.

The Contract Manager will play a pivotal role in ensuring delivery partners and suppliers operate within contract terms, performance standards are achieved, and all legal and financial obligations are met.

Purpose of this post

The Contract Manager will be responsible for the end-to-end management of contracts within the Connect to Work programme, including compliance, monitoring, and performance improvement. This role will sit within Enterprising Cumbria.

Reporting to the Head of Connect to Work, the postholder will work closely with service delivery partners, programme teams, and internal council functions to ensure contracts are robust, risk-aware, legally compliant, and effectively managed. The role will also support cost control, dispute resolution, and continuous improvement across all contracted programme delivery.

Key job specific accountabilities

1. Prepare, review and negotiate relevant contracts, variations and extensions, ensuring they align with strategic and operational objectives including Enterprising Cumbria, Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council.
2. Work within defined delegated authority and programme governance structures to ensure and maintain effective contract management.
3. Ensure that all contracts reflect delivery expectations, supported employment fidelity models, and DWP requirements.
4. Ensure all contracts comply with relevant legislation, regulatory standards, council policies, and procurement rules.
5. Identify, assess and mitigate contractual risks, working proactively to prevent potential compliance issues.
6. Maintain clear audit trails and ensure documentation is stored and managed in accordance with legal and data governance standards.
7. Act as the primary contact for contract-related matters between the programme team, service coordinators, delivery partners, and internal teams (e.g. legal, procurement, finance).
8. Build strong, professional relationships to support issue resolution, contractual clarity, and successful delivery.
9. Track all contract deliverables, milestones, financial obligations and KPIs.
10. Develop and maintain a contract performance dashboard to enable real-time monitoring and reporting.
11. Ensure timely submission of reports and returns from providers and support contract review processes.

12. Lead on the development and agreement of Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) where underperformance is identified.
13. Monitor implementation of PIPs and escalate persistent issues through the appropriate governance channels.
14. Ensure alignment with the programme's outcomes, delivery models, and DWP performance standards.
15. Manage contract disputes in collaboration with legal and procurement teams, aiming to resolve issues constructively and efficiently.
16. Negotiate settlements or corrective actions that protect programme outcomes and contractual integrity.
17. Escalate legal or financial risks through appropriate governance routes including through Enterprising Cumbria and Cumberland Council as Accountable Body.
18. Ensure all contract terms align with approved budgets and financial forecasts.
19. Track expenditure against contracted commitments and highlight variances or risks.
20. Contribute to forecasting and reporting processes in partnership with programme finance leads.
21. Contribute to the continuous improvement of contract management processes and systems.
22. Share lessons learned and support knowledge transfer across the programme team and partner organisations.
23. Support procurement and commissioning activity to ensure future contracts are fit for purpose and aligned with evolving programme needs.

Please note annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process

Key facts and figures of the post

Budget Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the management and monitoring of programme funds, ensuring efficient resource use and alignment with DWP expectations. • Monitor programme funding received from DWP to be utilised effectively and efficiently • Monitor the spend and forecast future spend for the delivery of the programme • Oversight of contract-level budgets in line with overall programme funding from DWP
Staff Management Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages relationships with delivery partners, internal council services (legal, procurement, finance), and external providers. • General management experience will be beneficial in order to support the development of the team and developing ways of working.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract spans countywide service delivery across Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness.

Essential Criteria - Qualifications, knowledge, experience and expertise

Qualification

- Degree-level or professional qualification in contract management, procurement, or a related field, or equivalent relevant experience.
- Commitment to continuous professional development (e.g. CIPS, APM, or similar certifications desirable).

Experience

- Proven experience in end-to-end contract management in a complex public sector, programme, or commissioning environment.
- Experience in contract drafting, negotiation, and legal compliance.
- Track record of managing supplier performance, risk mitigation, and budget oversight.
- Experience in resolving disputes and implementing performance improvement plans.
- Familiarity with employment, skills, welfare-to-work, or supported employment programmes (desirable).

Knowledge, Skills and Ability

- Strong understanding of public sector procurement, contract law and governance frameworks.
- Skilled in managing multiple contracts and coordinating across multiple stakeholders.
- High level of commercial awareness and risk management capabilities.
- Ability to interpret and communicate complex contractual and financial information clearly.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, and negotiation skills.

- Able to work independently while contributing to wider programme objectives and team collaboration.

Other

- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Commitment to health and safety.
- Willingness and ability to travel across Cumbria and beyond when necessary.
- Agile/hybrid working arrangements apply.

Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS Checks

- This post does not require a DBS check.

Job working circumstances

Emotional Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate – required ability to work in a high pressure delivery focussed environment
Physical Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited
Working Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office environment

Other Factors

- Able to travel around Cumbria and occasionally beyond. Agile working applies