

Job Description

Senior Community Lead (Leisure Partnership Manager)

Reference: CS015

Date: February 2026

Job Family/Sub Family: Community Services/Wellbeing & Community Safety

Level: 3

Band: 10

Career Track: Technical, Professional and Managerial

Job Purpose

The purpose of this role is to encourage, develop and maintain effective partnerships which increase access to sport and leisure activity for the residents of Northumberland, particularly those who may face barriers to participation. The role is responsible for ensuring the requirements set out in the Leisure Operating Contract (LOC) are fully met and that the services delivered by the Operator make maximum contribution to the Council's strategic priorities and objectives. The post holder is also responsible for ensuring that sport and leisure policy, investment and key decisions are informed by comprehensive assessments of evident need, best practice and relevant regional and national strategies.

Duties and Responsibilities

Performance, Monitoring & Governance

- Lead all performance monitoring and reporting for the LOC, ensuring delivery against Core Measures and Strategic Objectives.
- Maintain systems to assess the quality, service standards and performance of the Leisure Operator.
- Manage the full contract governance model, coordinating monthly Contract Meetings and subgroups (Health & Safety, Marketing & Communications, Facilities Development & Maintenance, Healthy Communities).
- Manage Quarterly Leisure Partnership meetings, ensuring all required documentation is provided by the Operator.
- Address issues of interpretation and dispute resolution relating to the LOC.
- Provide direct line management for departmental junior staff, including but not limited to admin.

- Provide advice and direction to multiple teams who may not be under the post holders' direct control to deliver against service priorities as required.

Client Role & Stakeholder Management

- Act as NCC's Principal Client Officer and main point of contact for all matters relating to the delivery of the LOC.
- Responsible for the co-ordination of collaborative working across partner organisations, service providers and internally within the Council.
- Provide specialist technical advice to NCC services (e.g., Children and Young People, Adult Services, Public Health, Legal and Local Services) and key external partners within the sector.
- To advise and co-ordinate annual spend of combined NCC Leisure Remedial and Capital budgets up to £3.5million as required.

Financial & Budgetary Responsibilities

- Oversee all financial transactions associated with the Management Fee in line with the LOBTA. The Contract value is £250million over its term.
- Preparing, monitoring, and reporting on all budgets within the scope of the portfolio.
- Managing, negotiating, and optimizing financial return to the Council with a value of approximately £7million.
- Manage allocated service budgets and project budgets of up to £1.0m each.
- Monitor and manage all grant funding provided by NCC to sports and leisure organisations circa £0.25million
- Maximise opportunities to secure external financial support for leisure and sport activities up to £5million including support for major asset improvement schemes.
- Ensure Developer Contributions align with strategic documents and are fully used to support Council leisure priorities.

Strategic Planning & Development

- Lead the management and review of the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy (IFS) and Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS).
- Responsible for overseeing the development of service plans and performance monitoring programmes for the delivery of all commissioned leisure services
- Ensure that all leisure-related strategic plans and contributions support wider Council priorities.

Compliance & Safety

- Ensure all statutory and mandatory requirements are met in relation to the safe operation and use of facilities, equipment, and vehicles for staff, residents and visitors.

Person Specification

Professional and Technical Requirements

Qualifications

- Level 5 qualification in a related subject e.g. sports science, leisure management, or relevant level of experience

Knowledge and Experience

- Recent senior managerial experience in the leisure, physical activity, or sport sector.
- Experience of initiatives and programmes designed to increase participation in physical activity through Leisure Services.
- Experience of working collaboratively and engaging effectively with others to build productive partnerships in the sport, leisure or physical activity sector.
- Experience of articulating strategic ambitions and corporate priorities into clear aims, objectives and the development of meaningful performance indicators
- Experience of managing contracts / complex partnership agreements.
- Experience of developing and managing performance monitoring systems and frameworks.
- Experience of data and intelligence analysis and presentation.
- Experience negotiating and monitoring service level agreements with service providers and contractors to achieve value for money against specified outcomes.
- Experience of formulating and implementing policy and procedures.
- Knowledge of processes, systems and quality assurance frameworks relating to the operation of sport and Leisure Services eg Quest, Management Information Systems.
- Knowledge of general procurement and contract regulations.
- Understanding of the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act and Employment Legislation.
- Experience of managing a variable workload and adhering to strict deadlines for the production and dissemination of reports, performance and financial information.
- Experience of complex financial management and reporting.

Core Competency Requirements

- **Communication:** Communicates across services to influence outcomes. Adapts style across organisational contexts and manages sensitive communications.
- **Collaboration:** Facilitates collaboration across teams, services, and external partners to deliver joined-up solutions.
- **Service Delivery:** Aligns delivery with strategic priorities and maintains high performance. Improves services using innovation and effective use of resources to deliver value for money.
- **Decision-Making:** Balances risk and impact in decision-making across teams or projects.

- **Digital & Data Literacy:** Uses digital systems to manage performance and inform decisions. Applies ethical judgement and explores new data sources. Analyses complex data to improve service outcomes.
- **Adaptability:** Leads teams through change using structured approaches that support clarity and resilience. Builds team cohesion and sustains service culture during transitions.
- **Problem-Solving:** Enables collaborative problem-solving and challenges existing practices to address cross-service challenges.
- **Community & Customer Focus:** Applies community insight and customer feedback to shape responsive and inclusive services.
- **Leadership:** Aligns team capability and resources to deliver meaningful outcomes. Leads projects and services within areas of expertise and across disciplines.

Strengths

- **Service focussed:** You look for ways to serve customers putting their needs at the heart of everything you do.
- **Strategic:** You look at the big picture. You consider the wider factors and long-term implications of decisions.
- **Analytical:** You seek and analyse information to inform your decisions, based on the best available evidence.
- **Efficient:** You convert resources into results in the most efficient and cost-effective way.
- **Relationship builder:** You quickly establish mutual respect and trust, building long lasting relationships with others.

Desirable

- Experience in a Client role with responsibility for the management of large contracts in the public sector.
- Understanding of the domains of inequality and factors impacting participation in physical activity
- Relevant professional qualification eg Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMPSA).