



Northumberland
County Council

Senior OD Lead

(Engagement, Culture & Insight)

Candidate Pack

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining Northumberland County Council as Senior OD Lead (Engagement, Culture & Insight).

This is a new role within a redesigned OD & Culture service, created to strengthen our organisational listening, engagement and insight capability at a time of significant transformation.

From June 2026, OD&C will operate under a new agile OD operating model. You will play a key role in embedding and role-modelling this approach, while bringing specialist depth in how we understand culture, engagement and lived experience across the organisation.

About Northumberland County Council

Northumberland is a county of opportunity – geographically vast, diverse in communities, and ambitious for its future.

The Council is undergoing significant transformation focused on:

- modernisation and financial sustainability
- delivering better outcomes for residents
- strengthening leadership and organisational effectiveness
- embedding an inclusive, values-led culture

Our People & Culture directorate is central to this work, enabling effective services, confident leadership and a thriving workforce.

The People & Culture Central Enabling Function (CEF)

OD & Culture sits within the People & Culture Central Enabling Function, alongside:

- People Service – Employee Relations, workforce planning governance, talent acquisition
- Strategic P&C Partners – early insight at Directorate Management Teams, discovery-lite, and system triage
- OD & Culture – system & behavioural OD, leadership development, capability, culture, Employee Experience, DEI, wellbeing, and change enablement

Together we provide a single People & Culture system, aligned to organisational priorities and resident outcomes

About the OD & Culture Service - How We Work

OD&C is a single service organised into two practices:

Practice 1: Capability & Digital Enablement (System Lens)

- capability architecture
- learning ecosystem
- digital learning & digital confidence
- talent & progression
- DEI equity, data & compliance (including statutory reporting)
- system-side employee experience (EX lifecycle, digital touchpoints)
- organisational insight systems

Practice 2: Culture, Leadership & Engagement (Behavioural Lens)

(This role fits here)

- culture and values
- leadership identity & behaviour
- psychological safety & relational wellbeing
- inclusion & belonging
- organisational listening and engagement
- narrative and employee voice
- behavioural employee experience

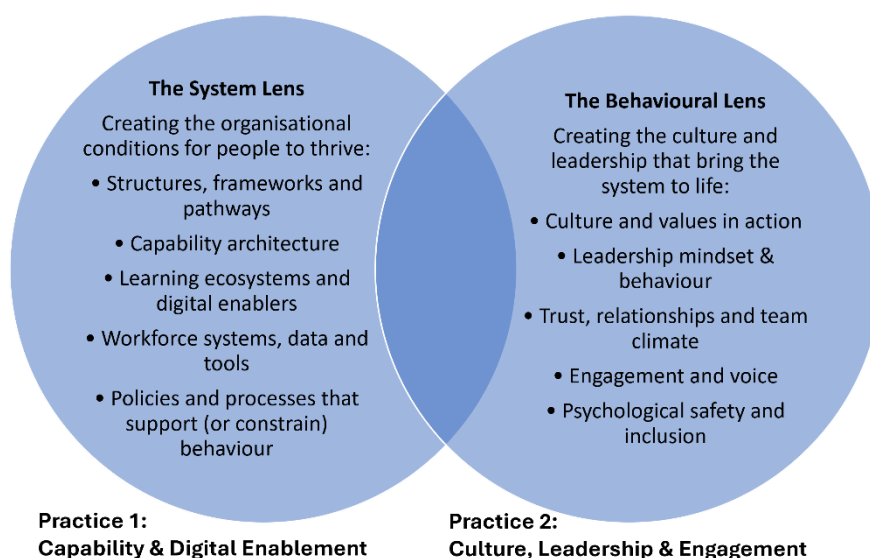
Shared Domains

Some areas require both lenses; these include:

- DEI (equity & compliance + belonging & inclusion)
- Wellbeing (psychosocial + relational)
- Employee Experience (lifecycle + relational/cultural experience)
- Coaching (system + leadership mindset)
- Change leadership & enablement
- OD & culture data and analytics
- Workforce planning (joint with People Service)

These domains are led jointly by both practices and delivered through agile OD squads.

The system & behavioural side of OD

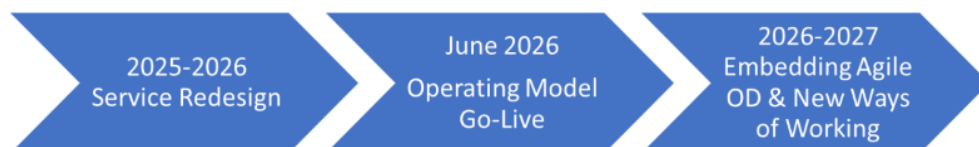


Two Lenses, One OD&C Service

- System work shapes behaviour
- Behavioural work shapes the system
- OD only works when we deliberately connect the two
- Everyone works across system and behavioural OD
- Boundaries guide focus, not limit contribution

Our Future Operating Model (Go-live June 2026)

This describes the model we are transitioning to – not where we are today.



All OD work will flow through a single operating cycle:

1. Requests & signals
From Strategic P&C Partners, People Service, Hub (Online Self-Serve portal) / BOC (Business Operations Centre), leaders or existing relationships
2. Intake – one route into OD&C
3. Triage – is it HR, OD or Joint CEF?
4. Backlogs – work prioritised as a service
5. Allocation & OD squads – cross-practice, time-bound groups
6. Short delivery cycles – 2–6 weeks, with check-ins and showcases
7. Evaluation & learning
8. Handover & sustainment

This model gives us:

- transparency
- fairness
- consistency
- agility
- strong boundaries
- visible, evidence-driven OD

As a Senior OD Lead, you will play a central role in leading and co-lead squads on significant priorities.

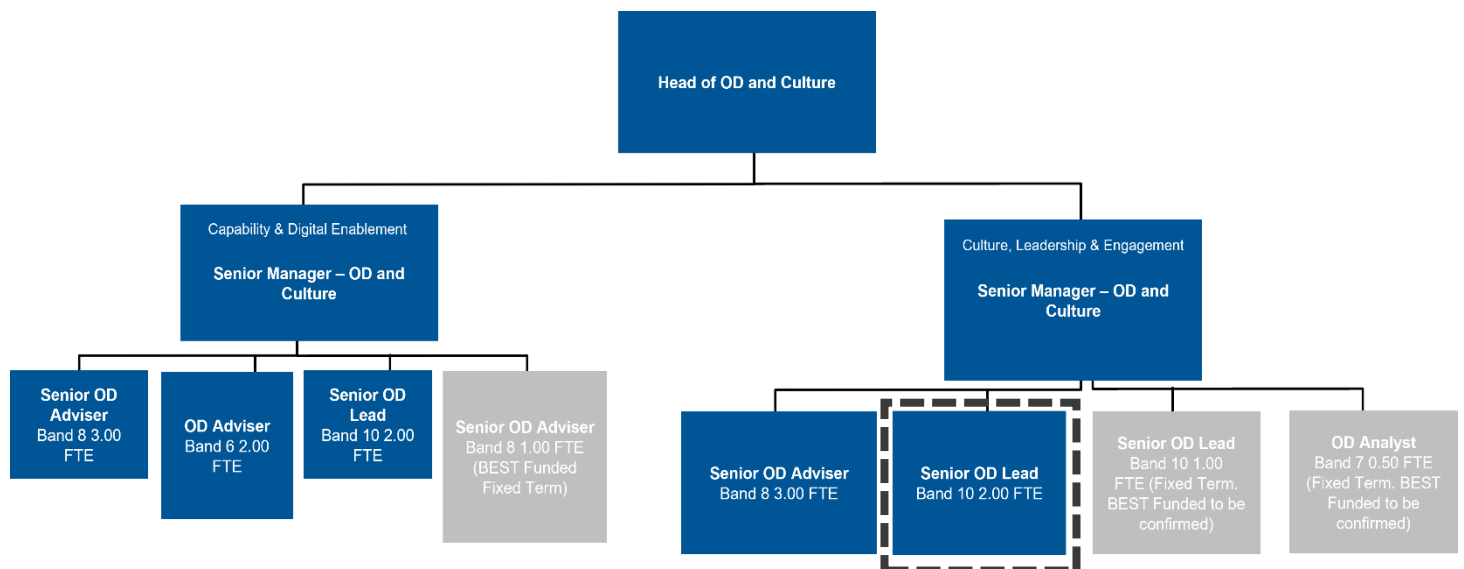
About the Role

Senior OD Lead provides OD leadership as a generalist practitioner, alongside deep specialist expertise in how the organisation listens, understands itself and turns insight into cultural action.

You will operate OD-generalist first – able to flex across the breadth of organisational development and work across practices as organisational priorities and workflow demand.

Alongside this, you will bring depth in engagement, organisational listening and culture insight, working across services and with senior leaders to ensure evidence meaningfully informs behaviour, leadership and decision-making.

Where this role sits



You will lead and deliver work across:

OD Generalist Practice

- Lead complex OD/change activity, managing projects and resources
- Shape and implement OD strategy and priorities aligned to organisational need
- Design and deliver OD programmes, frameworks and interventions across system and behavioural challenges

Organisational Listening & Engagement

- Lead the design of staff survey and pulse methodology
- Design engagement methods, listening tools and feedback loops
- Develop scalable, digital-first engagement approaches

Insight, Narrative & Sense-Making

- Conduct thematic and sentiment analysis
- Synthesise multiple organisational signals into insight
- Visualise complex data into accessible, compelling summaries
- Shape organisational narrative and storytelling

Culture & Lived Experience

- Lead culture diagnostics and activation
- Integrate staff network and lived-experience insight
- Engage leaders in understanding and responding to culture signals

Portfolio & OD Leadership

- Take a portfolio view across multiple OD interventions and priorities
- Contract, influence and challenge with confidence at senior level
- Provide thought leadership for engagement, culture and insight practice
- Enable high-quality, insight-led OD delivery through coaching and mentoring
- Support capability development and consistent practice across both OD practices

Cross-system partnership

You will work closely with:

- People Service
- Strategic P&C Partners
- Transformation colleagues
- Senior leaders across NCC
- Colleagues, Staff networks and lived-experience groups

Digital-First Engagement & Insight - We are introducing HIVE, a new employee engagement platform, to broaden how colleagues engage with the organisation and how we gather insight at scale. HIVE will support asynchronous, digital-first listening, pulse activity and feedback, complementing our wider organisational listening and engagement approach. This role will help shape how HIVE is used as part of our overall engagement and insight strategy, ensuring insight is inclusive, meaningful and translated into action.

What We're Looking For

OD Leadership & Judgement

- Senior OD practitioner experience in complex organisations
- Strong diagnostic capability and systems thinking
- Confidence influencing leaders and managers

Engagement & Insight Expertise

- Deep experience in qualitative and quantitative insight design
- Strong sense-making, narrative and storytelling capability
- Ability to translate insight into action

Ways of Working

- Comfortable working iteratively and transparently
- Collaborative, enabling leadership style

Values & Personal Qualities

- Curious, evidence-led and reflective
- Inclusive and relational
- Courageous, credible and grounded

What the Selection Process Will Assess

- Your OD judgement and diagnostic capability
- Your expertise in engagement and organisational insight
- Your experience in influencing others
- Your contribution to agile, portfolio-based OD delivery
- Assessment centres will take place on 29th May & 1st June 2026. You will only be required to attend 1 session.

Why Join Us?

You will join at a pivotal moment:

- A new OD&C operating model is going live from June 2026
- A rare opportunity to shape how an organisation listens and learns
- A senior OD role with real influence and visibility
- The chance to build enterprise-level engagement and insight capability
- A modern OD&C service with strong senior sponsorship
- You will be part of a joined-up People & Culture system with strong senior backing
- Agile working, generous local government benefits and wellbeing support