

Job Description

Skills & Employability Specialist

Known as – Lead Employment Support Specialist

Reference: ES007

Date: March 2026

Job Family: Education & Skills/ Skills & Employability
Level: 2
Band: 7
Career Track: Technical, Professional, Supervisory

Job Purpose

This role leads the delivery of high-quality, person-centred employment support across a portfolio of programmes, including Connect to Work, Supported Employment, and wider employability provision. It ensures robust quality assurance, maintaining fidelity to the Supported Employment Quality Framework or quality assurance and consistent standards across other employability programmes in line with funding and assurance requirements. The post holder oversees operational performance, drives outcomes against KPIs, and embeds values-based practice that promotes choice, inclusion and dignity. The post holder manages a small caseload to model best practice, builds strong relationships with employers, stakeholders and partner organisations, and engages participants through local networks. They also maintain compliant, auditable systems for monitoring, claims, and verification in line with NCC and funder requirements, ensuring safe and effective service delivery.

Service Purpose

Northumberland Skills delivers education, training and employability provision, including Connect to Work, for residents across the county. The service operates multiple campuses, including specialist centres for construction and welding, ensuring access to industry-standard facilities that support technical and vocational development. With a strong emphasis on community learning, apprenticeships and employment-focused programmes, we equip people with the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to progress in a competitive labour market. Provision is further strengthened through tailored careers guidance, sector-aligned training and partnerships with key industries. We also offer SEND pathways, ensuring inclusive access to learning and progression into further education and employment .

Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership, Management & Performance

- Support, develop, and coach Employment Specialists delivering face-to-face and digital support.

- Provide leadership and guidance to ensure high-quality, person-centred practice aligned with the Supported Employment Quality Framework and fidelity principles or compliance with the quality assurance expectations across other programmes and delivery models.
- Lead staff performance reviews, appraisals, audits, and observations.
- Promote reflective practice and continuous improvement through structured quality assurance processes, mentoring and CPD.
- Coordinate programme resources, including timetables, facilities, and materials, to ensure consistent delivery.

Programme Delivery & Quality Assurance

- Oversee and guide staff delivering in-work support, ensuring workplace relationships and participant independence are strengthened.
- Lead collaboration with internal teams, external partners, and families/carers to maximise employment outcomes, including safeguarding and disability-awareness guidance.
- Assess the impact of interventions, making recommendations for improvement and contributing proactively to meetings.
- Ensure delivery maintains fidelity to the Supported Employment models or other programme specific models and meets quality assurance standards.

Participant & Employer Engagement

- Manage a caseload, supporting participant progression into work, training, or further opportunities.
- Develop and strengthen partnerships with employers, stakeholders, and support services to generate referrals and sustainable employment outcomes.
- Provide education and support to employers, including negotiating workplace adjustments, return-to-work strategies, and job-retention support.
- Maintain awareness of labour-market developments and welfare-to-work policy to identify opportunities for participants.

Financial Management, Reporting & Compliance

- Manage the discretionary budget, ensuring appropriate use, financial compliance, and approval of expenditure.
- Complete performance reports, evaluations, and presentations, ensuring accurate records and compliance with data protection, health and safety, and safeguarding requirements.

Person Specification

Professional and Technical Requirements

Qualifications

- Good general level of education to A Level standard or equivalent experience.
- NVQ Level 4 in Information, Advice & Guidance or equivalent experience.

Skills, Knowledge and Experience

- Experience of working with people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental ill health, and neurodiverse conditions.
- Track record of promoting inclusive employment practice and supporting people with barriers to work into sustainable employment.
- Understanding of barriers faced by unemployed jobseekers, alongside good knowledge of local labour markets and employment trends.

- Understanding of DWP out-of-work benefits, the wider benefits system, and welfare-to-work provision.
- Detailed knowledge of training and employment support services, multi-agency welfare-to-work infrastructure, and relevant funding streams.
- Experience delivering outcomes on welfare-to-work programmes, including action planning, job search support, and achieving contract targets.
- Proven ability to progress jobseekers into work, including experience identifying vacancies and providing in-work support.
- IT literacy appropriate to the role, including use of web-based tracking systems, word processing, and file management.
- Ability to manage time, information, and resources effectively, working autonomously within delegated responsibility.
- Resilient approach to working with clients who may present emotional or behavioural challenges, including those experiencing mental health difficulties.

Core Competency Requirements

Communication: Tailors communication to audience and context. Uses listening and questioning techniques to clarify complex issues and support team understanding.

Collaboration: Coordinates with colleagues and partners to deliver shared goals and improve service outcomes.

Service Delivery: Identifies and resolves service issues, improves processes, and ensures policy alignment. Promotes efficiency and avoids waste through practical improvements.

Decision-Making: Uses evidence and judgement to resolve issues and improve delivery.

Digital & Data Literacy: Interprets data to improve services. Applies knowledge of digital risks and ethical data use. Uses basic analytical techniques to support decision making

Adaptability: Adjusts approach responsively to evolving needs and priorities. Identifies opportunities for continuous improvement and supports others through change.

Problem-Solving: Analyses problems and applies knowledge to develop practical solutions and suggest improvements.

Community & Customer Focus: Engages with service users and customers to improve delivery, ensure accessibility, and reflect diverse needs.

Leadership: Supervises day-to-day activity and supports team development. Coordinates tasks and resources to meet the needs of the service.

Strengths

Analytical: You seek and analyse information to inform your decisions, based on the best available evidence.

Catalyst: You are self-motivated to act towards achieving a goal. You are confident using your own initiative to take forward actions

Change Agent: You are positive and inspirational in leading and supporting others through change.

Courageous: You are an innovator who tries new approaches. You push yourself to work outside your comfort zone.

Decisive: You use your judgement. You take a considered approach to situations and tasks when making decisions.

Desirable

Understanding of current national and regional welfare-to-work policy.

Level 3 qualification in Individual Placement Support, Supported Employment, or IPS.

Significant experience delivering supported employment services and broader careers/employability support.

Safeguarding

The post holder is expected to promote and safeguard the welfare of children, young people, and Adults at Risk they are responsible for or come into contact with, in line with the organisation's safeguarding policies.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including a check against the barred list for working with children and/or vulnerable adults.