

Job Description

Job title:	Working for Carers NE Strategic Lead
Accountable to:	Chief Executive (NTCC)
Job Purpose:	To provide strategic leadership and operational oversight for Working for Carers, a specialist employment support programme for unpaid carers across seven local authority areas.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Programme Oversight

- Provide strategic direction for the regional Working for Carers programme, ensuring delivery aligns with the contract, evidence base and funding requirements.
- Lead the development of a consistent regional delivery model, ensuring high-quality engagement, assessment, action planning, barrier removal and progression support.
- Oversee delivery across seven local authority areas, ensuring equitable access and consistent standards.
- Ensure the programme meets all required outputs and outcomes, including distance-travelled measures.
- Lead the development of the programme's exit and sustainability plan, embedding learning into mainstream systems and employer practice.

Partnership Working & System Coordination

- Lead strategic relationships with NEMESA, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), DWP and other regional partners to ensure the programme is embedded within wider employment, health and economic inclusion systems.
- Work closely with Local Authorities and commissioning teams to ensure alignment with local priorities, statutory responsibilities and wider carers' strategies.
- Ensure the programme connects effectively with regional employability provision (e.g., Connect to Work, Working Well and other Trailblazer projects), creating clear referral pathways and a coherent offer for unpaid carers.
- Work with NEMESA to ensure Shine accreditation and Working for Carers are mutually reinforcing, and that employers progressing through Shine understand and can access the programme's support.
- Lead the development of long-term sustainability plans, working with commissioners and partners to evidence impact, influence future commissioning and secure ongoing funding.
- Develop and maintain a regional evidence base demonstrating the impact of specialist employment support for unpaid carers, sharing learning to shape future system design.

- Represent the programme at senior regional forums, ensuring carers' needs and experiences are embedded in employment, health and skills strategies.

Operational Management & Quality Assurance

- Provide strategic leadership and direct line management to the Employability Manager and Employer/Digital Manager, ensuring delivery is high-quality, evidence-based and contract compliant.
- Ensure robust Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place and consistently applied across all delivery partners, covering employability, employer engagement and digital functions.
- Lead the development and implementation of a programme wide quality assurance Framework, including regular audits of assessments, action plans, employer engagement activity, digital tools and delivery consistency across seven local authority areas.
- Oversee the implementation of a comprehensive monitoring & evaluation framework that captures outcomes, distance travelled, impact and learning, enabling continuous improvement.
- Provide strategic oversight of employer engagement and digital innovation, ensuring alignment with regional priorities, the specification and the Shine accreditation framework.
- Ensure strong relationships with employers, business networks, regional partners and NEMESA, and that employer engagement activity contributes to sustainable employment pathways for unpaid carers.
- Maintain oversight of data quality, ensuring consistent use of CRM systems, accurate reporting and timely submission of evidence required by the Trailblazer programme.
- Ensure both managers have the systems, training and governance structures needed to deliver high-quality supervision, induction, performance management and safeguarding compliance.
- Use quality, performance and evaluation data to identify trends, risks and opportunities for improvement, driving continuous improvement across all aspects of delivery.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

- Provide strategic leadership for the programme's monitoring, evaluation and learning functions, ensuring all activity aligns with contract requirements and regional priorities.
- Oversee the development and implementation of a robust monitoring and evaluation Framework that captures outcomes, distance travelled, impact and system level learning across seven local authority areas.
- Ensure the Employability Manager and Employer/Digital Manager have effective systems in place for accurate, timely and compliant data collection, including outcomes, engagement, employer activity and digital interventions.
- Lead the coordination and production of quarterly reports and claims to the funder, consolidating data, evidence and narrative information from all seven local authority areas to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.
- Lead the programme's contribution to regional evaluation activity, working with NEMESA, ICB and commissioners to evidence what works and inform future commissioning and system design.

- Provide strategic oversight of performance reporting and evidence submissions, ensuring alignment with funding conditions and contractual requirements.
- Use performance, quality and evaluation data to identify risks, trends and opportunities for improvement, driving continuous improvement and influencing long-term strategy for supporting carers into and in work.

Safeguarding & Risk Management

- Provide strategic oversight of safeguarding and risk management across the programme, ensuring the team operates within the required local authority thresholds.
- Ensure both managers have robust safeguarding systems, training and escalation processes in place, and that responsibilities are fully understood across all teams.
- Maintain oversight of high-risk or complex cases, ensuring risks are appropriately escalated, recorded and managed in line with local authority procedures.
- Ensure safeguarding learning, themes and trends inform continuous improvement, staff development and programme design.
- Champion a culture of safe, ethical and accountable practice.

General Responsibilities

- Attend team meetings, supervisions, appraisals and regional coordination meetings.
- Participate in training and professional development to meet statutory and programme requirements.
- Undertake any other reasonable duties as required by the Chief Executive or Operations Manager.

Person Specification

Qualifications and Training

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Recognised management, leadership or business qualification OR equivalent experience	X	
Training in safeguarding adults/children		X
Training in employability, coaching or IAG		X
Knowledge and Experience		
Minimum 3 years' experience in a senior leadership or programme management role	X	
Experience of managing managers or multi-layered teams	X	
Experience of delivering employability or workforce development programmes	X	
Experience of employer engagement or influencing workplace practice	X	

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Experience of working with unpaid carers or carer-focused services		X
Experience of multi-agency partnership working	X	
Experience of managing performance, targets and outcomes	X	
Understanding of barriers faced by unpaid carers entering or sustaining employment	X	
Knowledge of health, social care and employability systems across the North East		X
Experience of monitoring, evaluation and reporting to funders	X	
Experience using CRM systems and digital tools for case management	X	
Skills, Abilities and Attributes		
Strong leadership skills with the ability to motivate and support managers and dispersed teams	X	
Ability to develop and deliver a compelling business case to employers	X	
Excellent organisational skills and ability to manage competing demands	X	
Ability to work autonomously, using initiative and sound judgement	X	
Strong analytical skills, able to interpret data and identify trends	X	
Excellent written and verbal communication skills	X	
Ability to build and sustain relationships with a wide range of stakeholders	X	
Ability to provide constructive challenge and support continuous improvement	X	
High level of digital competence, including Microsoft Office and CRM systems	X	
Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion	X	
Ability to work within professional boundaries and maintain confidentiality	X	
Flexible approach to working hours, including evenings/weekends when required	X	
Ability to travel across the North East region efficiently	X	