

Job Description

Directorate:	Education, Culture and Skills		
Service:	Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health		
Location:	County Hall / Hybrid		
Salary range:	£36,363-£40,777	Grade:	8
Reports to:	Access to Resource Team (ART) Manager	Staff responsible for:	

Job purpose and scope

The ART Contracts Manager is responsible for the effective contract monitoring, performance management, and oversight of Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), ensuring high-quality placements and best value for money is achieved.

The role leads on the development and maintenance of strong, professional relationships with contracted placement providers, working proactively to monitor performance, manage risk, and address emerging issues. This includes delivering robust provider risk profiling, identifying concerns early, and escalating or intervening where required to protect children, placements, and the local authority.

The post holder is responsible for reviewing and managing contracts and agreements, ensuring that services are of high quality, compliant with contractual requirements, and deliver value for money. This includes checking the accuracy of fees and costs, ensuring agreed discounts are applied, and leading negotiations with providers where variations, additional services, or fee discussions are required.

The role works closely with Legal Services to ensure appropriate handling of contractual matters, including mergers, takeovers, contract variations, notations, and formal agreements.

The post holder leads activity to resolve concerns and complaints relating to providers within their portfolio, ensuring issues are addressed promptly, proportionately, and in line with agreed processes.

Performance Indicators

- Quality of advice/service against legal, safety and best practice standards
- Achievement of relevant service targets
- Adherence to internal/external quality standards if applicable
- Adherence to policies and procedures
- Accuracy and timeliness of information recording and processing
- Customer and stakeholder feedback
- Leading Lancashire Framework

The Lancashire Mindset

Here at Lancashire County Council, we are helping to make Lancashire the best place to live, work, visit, and prosper. To help us achieve this, we have introduced the Lancashire Mindset: Growth, Ownership, Optimism, and Positive Impact. Adopting this mindset across the entire organisation not only brings our values to life but also emphasises the collective commitment to delivering the best for the people of Lancashire.

The Lancashire Mindset serves as a guiding force for a culture rooted in growth, ownership, optimism, and the commitment to making a meaningful positive impact.



Accountabilities/Responsibilities

- The ART Contracts Manager is responsible for reviewing and managing contracts and agreements, ensuring that services are of high quality, compliant with contractual requirements, and deliver value for money. This includes checking the accuracy of fees and costs, ensuring agreed discounts are applied, and leading negotiations with providers where variations, additional services, or fee discussions are required.
- The post holder is responsible for reviewing and managing contracts and agreements, ensuring that services are of high quality, compliant with contractual requirements, and deliver value for money. This includes delivering robust provider risk profiling, identifying concerns early, and escalating or intervening where required to protect children, placements, and the local authority.
- The role works closely with Legal Services to ensure appropriate handling of contractual matters and formal agreements.
- The timely review of education services
- The post holder leads activity to resolve concerns and complaints relating to providers within their portfolio, ensuring issues are addressed promptly, proportionately, and in line with agreed processes.

Other

- **Equal Opportunities**
We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in the way we deliver services to the community and in our employment arrangements. We expect all employees to understand and promote this policy in their work.
- **Health and safety**

All employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others when carrying out their duties and must help us to apply our general statement of health and safety policy.

- **Customer Focused**

We put our customers' needs and expectations at the heart of all that we do. We expect our employees to have a full understanding of those needs and expectations so that we can provide high quality, appropriate services at all times.

- **Safeguarding Commitment**

We are committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- **Skills Pledge**

We are committed to developing the skills of our workforce. All employees will be supported to work towards a level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy if they do not have one already.

Our Values

We expect all our employees to demonstrate and promote our values:

- **Supportive**

We are supportive of our customers and colleagues, recognising their contributions and making the best of their strengths to enable our communities to flourish.

- **Innovative**

We deliver the best services we possibly can, always looking for creative ways to do things better, putting the customer at the heart of our thinking, and being ambitious and focused on how we can deliver the best services now and in the future.

- **Respectful**

We treat colleagues, customers and partners with respect, listening to their views, empathising and valuing their diverse needs and perspectives, to be fair, open and honest in all that we do.

- **Collaborative**

We listen to, engage with, learn from and work with colleagues, partners and customers to help achieve the best outcomes for everyone.

Person Specification

All the following requirements are essential unless otherwise indicated by *

Your ability to meet the job requirements will initially be assessed by the information provided on your application but further assessment will be undertaken at interview and, in some cases, by using other types of assessment(s).

Qualifications

- Professional and/or academic level qualification or equivalent or substantial vocational experience in a relevant technical, scientific, specialised, or operational field or
- Significant experience in a technical/specialist advisory role within a large and/or complex operation/function/service

Experience

- Experience supporting commissioning, contracts, and service development within education, SEND, or children's services.
- Experience of developing and managing relationships with providers, including monitoring performance and taking appropriate action where standards or expectations are not met.
- Experience contributing to commissioning and procurement activity, including reviewing service quality, and considering cost and value for money.
- Experience of helping to develop, implement, or monitor contract frameworks.
- Experience using data, research, and intelligence to understand needs, inform decisions, and support service improvement.
- Experience of working within the SEND, education, or children's services system, for example in local government, schools, health, voluntary/community organisations, or specialist providers.
- Experience of managing urgent or complex work, including responding to placement pressures, safeguarding concerns, or time-critical situations.

Essential knowledge, skills & abilities

- Strong understanding of the SEND legal framework, including the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice.
- Strong understanding of SEND education and support systems including Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) and Alternative Provision (AP) in meeting statutory duties
- Knowledge of INMSS provision, including how specialist education providers support Local Authorities to deliver SEN packages.

- Awareness of the role of education providers, schools, and AP providers in meeting statutory SEND duties.
- Understanding of the importance of safeguarding, quality assurance, and value for money in placement and service decision-making.
- Ability to keep up to date with relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and best practice.
- Demonstrates tact, diplomacy, and sensitivity when holding complex and sometimes challenging discussions with providers about individual children.
- Strong negotiation, influencing, and persuasive skills, with the ability to challenge constructively and reach balanced outcomes.
- Ability to listen carefully, gather and interpret information, and make sound professional judgements in pressured situations.
- Ability to analyse cost, quality, capacity, and risk data to produce clear management information and reports.
- Ability to contribute to the development and understanding of the INMSS market, providing regular intelligence to inform commissioning, sufficiency planning, and decision-making.
- Ability to build and maintain strong, professional relationships with providers, working proactively to monitor performance, manage risk, and address emerging concerns.
- Ability to support placement-finding activity, particularly in complex, high-risk, or time-critical situations, working closely with ART colleagues and operational teams.
- Ability to think strategically about the future development of placement-finding systems and processes.
- Ability to communicate clearly and confidently with a range of audiences, both verbally and in writing.
- Ability to work collaboratively within multi-disciplinary and multi-agency environments.
- Resilience and tenacity, recognising that placement breakdowns and emergency situations do arise and may require urgent action.
- Calm, professional approach when working under pressure and managing competing priorities.
- Collaborative and supportive, with the ability to support colleagues dealing with challenging or distressing situations.
- High level of professional judgement, integrity, and accountability.

Other essential requirements

- Commitment to equality and diversity.
- Commitment to health and safety.
- Display the LCC values and behaviours at all times and actively promote them in others.
- This is an essential car user post*

You will be required to provide a car for use in connection with the duties of this post and must be insured for business use. In certain circumstances consideration may be given to applicants who, as a consequence of a disability, are unable to drive