**Commissioned Partner Handbook**

**2024 - 2025**

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**Working in partnership to help the Borough THRIVE**

The Council Plan ‘Play Your Part to Thrive’ outlines what can all do to tackle six key priorities between now and 2024. It sets out a new way of working with a focus on partnerships that really make a difference to everyone who lives and works in the Borough. By working together, we can achieve much more and truly make the borough thrive.

The wheel below shows six values that will guide our behaviour: teamwork, honesty, respect, innovation, value for money and empowerment. (THRIVE)

The outer ring shows the 7Ps that we must adopt to ensure we can be a thriving Council and achieve our priorities

**Introduction**

Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Skills and Employment Service is funded through the Government’s Adult Education Budget (AEB) to provide a variety of learning programmes to meet the requirements of learners with wide ranging needs. We endeavour to support you as an Adult learning provider so that you can carry out your role effectively enabling your tutors to deliver best practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

Please familiarise yourself with all documents to ensure a thorough understanding of your contractual requirements and the Quality Monitoring processes.

**Intent**

Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Skills and Employment service is aimed at adults who face a range of barriers to achieving their life goals. By offering pathways of support and skills development, the service enables these adults to enter employment and/or progress in work. Barriers may include low skill levels, physical and mental health conditions, learning disabilities/difficulties and personal/family circumstance.

The Skills and Employment team is part of the Council’s Economic Growth service and delivers employment support, learning and skills provision across the borough.

**Our Intent** is to support targeted residents and their families to:

***‘Progress in Life and Work’***

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Priority Areas**

Key Performance Indicators are closely matched to the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and form the basis of our Quality Monitoring Processes. Performance against the KPIs is assessed during Observations of Teaching and Learning, focussed Learning Walks, Quality Support Visits and Paperwork Audits, and is used to identify the Key Priority Areas.

For a full list of KPIs and the Priority Areas for the 2024/25 academic year, please see your contract or request a copy from the Quality Team. It is essential that all tutors are aware of the KPIs and Priority Areas in order to be able to plan effectively, prepare for lesson visits/learning walks and to ensure a quality learning experience for learners.

Key Priority Areas may change from January 2025 in relation to actions identified in the Skills and Employment Self-Assessment Report. You will be informed of any changes that are made.

**Tutor Mandatory Training and Qualifications**

All tutors delivering on the Skills and Employment contract must hold a recognised teaching qualification (minimum of Level 3 Award in Education and Training, formally PTLLS), and undertake regular CPD.

In addition to this, it is essential that all staff receive regular Safeguarding training, including PREVENT. This training must be renewed at least once every two years in order to ensure knowledge is current.

The Skills and Employment Team must be provided with a full record of each tutor’s qualification status, CPD record and DBS numbers. Tutors are not to deliver commissioned courses unless the Skills and Employment Team are in receipt of this information.

Please ensure that all tutors are aware of the current safeguarding procedures which are available on the website at: [Policies and Procedures | Cheshire West and Chester Council](https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/further-and-higher-education/skills-and-employment/policies-and-procedures)

**Tutor Health and Wellbeing**

Dealing with pressure and stress can be complicated. Everyone experiences difficult times and sometimes it can get the best of us. Knowing how to handle pressure or knowing where to get support can help us reduce the amount stress in our lives and improve our mental wellbeing.

We recognise that tutors will receive support for health and wellbeing from their line managers. The Skills and Employment Team recommend that you consider highlighting the 5 Ways to Wellbeing. Follow the links below to discover more information, tips and guides to help cope with everyday life. ​

[Cheshire West Health and Wellbeing](https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/health-and-social-care/health-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing.aspx) – includes links to local health and wellbeing services

[Every Mind Matters](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/top-tips-to-improve-your-mental-wellbeing/)

[Kind to your mind](http://kindtoyourmind.org/support-near-me/)

[NHS Choices](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/Mentalhealthhome.aspx) - informative site covering all aspects of mental health.

[Mind](http://www.mind.org.uk/) - a mental health charity that can help you make choices about treatment, understand your rights or reach out to sources of support.

[One You](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou) - find tips on how to stress less

[Make time](http://www.make-time.org/) - five ways to wellbeing

**Course Delivery**

There is a wealth of information and resources available on the Adult Learning website to help support tutors with their course delivery such as in the areas listed below.

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| Quality of Education and the Education and Inspection Framework (EIF) | Tutor observations (OTLAs) and no-notice, focussed Walkthroughs |
| Continuous Quality Improvement | Setting appropriate SMART Targets |
| Data Protection | Continual Professional Development (CPD) |
| PREVENT and British Values | Complaints and Grievances |
| Performance Management | Course and registration/completion paperwork |
| Careers and Education Guidance (CEG) & Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) | Safeguarding, including Online Safety and Cyberbullying |
| Equality and Diversity | Embedding English and maths |
| Health and Safety | RARPAP and ILPs |
| Learning Technologies | Quality Monitoring Cycle |
| The Professional Standards | Learner Journey |

It is strongly recommended that practitioners familiarise themselves with the broad range of available teaching and support resources by visiting the Adult Learning website. Contract Managers must also be aware of the requirements associated with course delivery so that appropriate support can be provided to tutors to ensure quality of provision and contract compliance.

**Performance Management**

The Skills and Employment Team can offer support to partners developing performance management systems for their staff. Termly tutor performance information is available, and is based on data returned to us, for example, from the Learner Feedback forms. To receive performance information in a timely manner, it is essential that submission of course documents is not delayed.

**Quality Improvement and Support**

The Quality Team will offer appropriate and ongoing support to you and your tutors to ensure you feel confident in meeting the contractual requirements relating to the quality of delivery.

As part of this support, partners will receive guidance regarding course paperwork completion, regular updates on relevant and topical issues related to teaching, for example OfSted requirements, and support with embedding of essential components such as maths/English, Safeguarding, IAG, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion etc.

The Quality Team will also provide supportive feedback to you as a result of regular lesson visits, learning walks and paperwork audits, and assist, if required, with putting steps in place to make any necessary improvements.

**Tuition Fee Guidance**

The 2024/25 Subcontracting Policy and previous Supply Chain Fees are available. Please speak to a member of the Adult Learning Team who will direct you to them.

Further information on the two streams of learning provision (Formula funded accredited provision, and grant funded Tailored Learning provision), the levels of funding (full funding, co-funding, or no funding) as well as definitions of terms can be found in your contract. Alternatively, you can contact Gareth Dudley, Lead Contracting and Finance Officer, for advice.

**Data Returns**

The council reserves the right to define the information, timing and format of data returns that subcontracted providers are required to provide to prove fulfilment of this contract. Returns will be based on, but not limited to, the specification of the individual learner record as defined by the Education & Skills Funding Agency.

To enable prompt inputting of data into our system, fully completed paperwork should be returned to the Skills and Employment Team immediately after a course has finished.

Further information on data returns can be found in your contract (including a summary of MIS forms and timetable for submission), or by speaking to Ben Watts, Senior Manager for Commissioning, Performance & Quality, or by visiting the Skills Funding Agency website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/skills-funding-agency>

**Invoicing**

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| **Payment Process** |
| **When your data returns are input and processed the actual earnings from the ESFA will generate income.  It is this actual income that will be confirmed to you (less the agreed subcontracting service costs – See Appendix H) – actual values for invoicing will be confirmed to you via email on or near to the following dates:** |
| 12th September 2023 | 13th January 2025 | 12th May 2025 |
| 14th October 2023 | 12th February 2025 | 12th June 2025 |
| 12th November 2023 | 12th March 2025 | 14th July 2025 |
| 12th December 2023 | 14th April 2025 | 12th August 2025 |

Further information about the invoicing process is available in your contract or by contacting the Skills and Employment Lead Contracting and Financial Performance Officer, Gareth Dudley.

**Policies and Procedures**

The Skills and Employment Team’s Policies and Procedures are available on the Cheshire West and Chester website at [Policies and Procedures | Cheshire West and Chester Council](https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/further-and-higher-education/skills-and-employment/policies-and-procedures) and can be adapted for your own use if required.

All tutors must be familiar with the policies and procedures, especially those relating to Safeguarding, including internet safety. Relevant information should be shared with learners as appropriate.

**Information, Advice and Guidance/Careers Education Guidance (IAG/CEG)**

The offer of impartial IAG, including CEG, is an essential component of course delivery and must be offered to all learners throughout their learning journey. There is a wide range of resources to help you delivery IAG/CEG on the Cheshire West and Chester website, including an IAG handbook for non-qualified practitioners. For further information on how you can offer this essential service, please contact the Quality Team.

**Marketing of Commissioned Courses**

Skills and Employment must be sent copies or links to all marketing materials associated with funded provision. Please contact the Quality Team for electronic copies of logos that must be included.

If appropriate, please also ensure that any materials or links advertising the Earnings Threshold show the revised salary for 2024/25 which is £25,000.

Marketing information should be clear and accurate so that learners are aware of:

* The course content
* What they will achieve by the end
* Progression opportunities available to them

Marketing material must make clear to learners that their Tailored Learning course does not lead to or contribute to achievement of a regulated qualification or unit.

Further information can be found in your contract or obtained from the Quality Team.

**Useful Websites**

The following websites will support you further in offering a quality learning experience to your learners.

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| https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/further-and-higher-education/skills-and-employment | Cheshire West and Chester Adult Learning |
| [www.learningandwork.org.uk](http://www.learningandwork.org.uk)  | Learning and Work Institute |
| <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency>  | Education and Skills Funding Agency |
| [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)  | Public Services |
| <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>  | Careers Advice for Adults |

**Useful Contacts**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** | **Contact for** | **Email** |
| Matthew Smith | Skills and Employment Manager and Safeguarding Lead | Safeguarding, Skills and Employment in general | matthew.smith@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Benjamin Watts | Senior Officer - Commissioning, Performance & Quality and Safeguarding Deputy | Safeguarding, contracts, eligibility and learner data paperwork, quality of delivery | benjamin.watts@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Lewis Belfield | Acting Senior Officer – Work Zones | Work Zone delivery and staffing, DWP for the borough, | lewis.belfield@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Jodie Ronan | Senior Officer – Curriculum Development and Delivery | Safeguarding, curriculum development, tutors and Multiply | jodie.ronan@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| James Holden | Senior Officer Employment Support | Supported Employment | james.holden@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Gareth Dudley | Lead Contracting and Financial Performance Officer | Learner eligibility, paperwork submission deadline, course paperwork returns | gareth.dudley@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Olivia Arnold | Learner Data & Research Assistant | Paperwork submission deadline, course paperwork returns | olivia.arnold@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk |
| Adam Yoxall | Performance Monitoring Officer | Contract payment calculation, payment notifications and supporting activities | adam.yoxall2@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Vicky Davis | Partnership, Quality and Curriculum Officer | Partner support Quality visits, OTLAs, walkthroughs, SARs, questions about course paperwork | vicky.davis@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Amta Xhetani | Partnership, Quality and Curriculum Officer | Partner support Quality visits, OTLAs, walkthroughs, SARs, questions about course paperwork | amta.xhetani@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Bethan Colburn | Partnership, Quality and Curriculum Support Officer | Tutor training updates e.g. PREVENT, DBS numbers, safeguarding, teaching qualifications, and course notifications | bethan.colburn@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Jo Talbot | Chester Work Zone Co-ordinator | Chester Work Zone termly programmes, local provision and employer contacts for the area | jo.talbot@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Sam Jones | Adult Education Curriculum Lead Multiply | Multiply curriculum support | samuel.jones@cheshirewest.gov.uk |
| Simon Dutton | Multiply Project Co-ordinator and Commissioning Officer | Partner support and general queries regarding the multiply project | simon.dutton@cheshirewest.gov.uk |