



Connect to Work Grant Guidance

Appendix B – Delivery Plan template

To access Connect to Work Grant funding, Accountable Bodies are being asked to complete a Delivery Plan, setting out how they intend to use the funding and deliver the programme. The Delivery Plan should be completed in accordance with information contained in the Grant Guidance and technical notes, as set out below.

Since this is the first step in the Government's Get Britain Working Strategy, we are keen that your Delivery Plan not only captures information about your specific plans for delivery of the programme, but also starts a process of considering your wider strategy on work, health and skills, and how this support will fit within it.

Accountable Bodies are asked to develop their Delivery Plan in collaboration with local partners and particularly Additional Delivery Area Members (where appropriate). Plans will need to be agreed by both the Accountable Body and DWP before entering into a Grant Funding Agreement.

Capitalised terms and acronyms referred to in this Delivery Plan Template shall have the meanings given to them in the Grant Guidance or Grant Funding Agreement.

Please note, that when answering the following sections, you are doing so on behalf of your Delivery Area.

This Delivery Plan should be completed with reference to the following documents:

1. Connect to Work Delivery Plan Guidance
2. Connect to Work Grant Guidance
3. All applicable Technical Notes (see Technical Note: General, for a schedule of future Technical Notes)
4. Connect to Work Grant Cost Register

Section 1 – Contact information

The following information is to help support communication during this Delivery Plan process.

1.0 Name and address of the Accountable Body for your Delivery Area:	Dorset Council
1.1 Please provide the following details for the Accountable Body:	
Single Point of Contact Name:	Sarah Rice
Single Point of Contact Email:	sarah.rice@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
Single Point of Contact Phone:	01202 918217

Role of Single Point of Contact:	Head of Curriculum, Quality & Business – Skills & Learning Adult Community Education
----------------------------------	---

Section 2 – Connect to Work delivery

Within this section, please set out your response to how you will deliver your service, who you will work with to deliver and integrate it, and how you will ensure you have a suitably qualified workforce (either in-house or via commissioning) in place, to deliver the Supported Employment model.

2.0 In the delivery of Connect to Work please indicate which delivery method you intend to use across your Delivery Area (Please select one option only)

In-house	Commissioned	Mixed (both in-house and commissioned)
		Yes

2.1 Where a **mixed delivery method** is indicated, please provide details on the proportion and nature of how the model will be split. Is this by provision (IPS and SEQF)? Is it by geographical location? Is it by Participant group? etc.

Dorset Council including arrangements for BCP Council will adopt a mixed model of some direct delivery and the commissioning of some specialist delivery partners.

Neither local authority (LA) currently has an embedded supported employment service that would meet the expectations of the Connect to Work (CtW) grant guidance. Neither local authority has a dedicated skills and employment / workforce team. This proposal therefore reflects a starting point of relative inexperience.

However, both LAs do currently have teams providing support for likely participants of CtW. This includes:

- the shared Adult & Community Education service for the county
- teams in both authorities supporting NEET and care experienced young people (18-24)
- a team at Dorset Council providing a Pathways to Employment service
- a shared youth justice team for the county (18-24)
- work with asylum seekers and refugees including the Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement programmes
- family hubs

The LAs commission employment support provision to support adults with learning and physical disabilities and mental ill health however these programmes do not currently result in significant employment outcomes. Dorset Council is currently undertaking a procurement activity for adult care funded employment support programmes for adults with learning disabilities.

Locally, IPS is being provided through the NHS for those with mental ill health and drug and alcohol addiction.

The LAs have Economic Development Officers (EDOs) with a focus on supporting growth in local businesses. These EDOs have specialist sector knowledge and manage employer network activity where the opportunities of the CtW programme can be communicated.

Direct delivery will include:

- IPS across Dorset
- Initial IAG front door service across Dorset
- Some employer engagement activity across Dorset
- Delivery partner contract management
- Fidelity quality assurance coaching and compliance activity
- Employer support to become disability confident
- Some embedded staff in existing council services including a Pathways to Employment programme in Dorset Council and NEET support in BCP Council.

It is proposed to focus Partner delivery on:

- IPS delivery in specific geographic locations
- Participant type inc. some disadvantage groups
- SEQF delivery

All employment specialists direct & partner will have employer engagement responsibilities

It is proposed to keep to the grant guidance split of 75% IPS model and 25% SEQF model

All 25% of the SEQF model delivery will be commissioned through specialist delivery partners who are already working with the cohort of potential participants who require the extra support of the SEQF model. There may be small amount of mixed delivery in areas of Dorset where the participant caseload may not be significant enough to support a distinct IPS and SEQF pathway with each Employment Specialist. E.g ramp up and ramp down

All of the direct delivery will be IPS as this is the type of support and likely cohort that the local authorities are already working with, on existing pre-employment support programmes and supported employment style programmes e.g. the Dorset Council Pathways to Employment programme that is providing on the job coaching and support for young people (18-24) taking up apprenticeship posts with the local authority and Skill Up BCP, a UKSPF funded employment support programme for the economically inactive.

It should be noted that neither local authority is currently directly delivering either IPS or SEQF models of supported employment and the delivery plan for Connect to Work requires some adaption of current employment support activity to meet the requirements for the Connect to Work grant and for Fidelity.

Of the IPS participant targets, it is proposed that direct delivery accounts for 40% of the delivery and 60% will be commissioned to local delivery partners. This split allows some growth of the similar style local authority programmes that already exist and direct support of local residents

already engaged with local authority services, along with a targeted focus on some of the disadvantaged cohorts, where local providers have experience, skills and staff to support.

Of the proposed participant numbers across the county, 85% will be in the out of work category and 15% will require in work or retention support. This may shift slightly on the basis of fit note data that is being requested.

A Delivery Model Assessment has not been undertaken at this time as there is not currently an IPS supported employment programme being delivered or commissioned for economically inactive residents with disabilities or health conditions in either local authority. Commissioned employment support programmes in the Dorset Council area have to date provided pre-employment support for adults with learning disabilities and have not had particularly successful employment outcomes.

Recent experience of commissioning training providers to deliver on local DfE adult skills and Multiply contracts and UKSPF people and skills strand projects has shown that a mixed delivery model provides sound quality assurance, compliance and assurances of value for money along with local best practice development and growth and capacity building in smaller, local providers who benefit from the shared experience of this approach.

With the single front door IAG service, management, quality assurance / Fidelity assurance and general supervision of the delivery programme remaining the responsibility of the local authority via directly employed staff this allows delivery partners to solely focus on providing Employment Specialist activity and provides better value for money by removing costs associated with layers of management and administrative expense incurred by multiple delivery partners.

The local authorities have access to comprehensive data about local residents and those who are engaging with services.

Connect to Work in Dorset is being planned for all eligible cohorts subject to successful procurement of specialist providers for some categories of disadvantage for example offenders and ex-offenders.

A procurement activity is scheduled for October 2025 to secure specialist delivery providers for the following cohorts:

Procurement Timeline

Timetable Item	Date	Responsibility of
Pre Commissioning Activity to include: Business Case completed Communication plan EIA DIA Stakeholder Mapping and Approval Review Benchmarking Data Data Analysis Cost Modelling SMT Approval Councillor Involvement Service User/individual involvement Legislation restrictions/guidance Insurance Requirements Engage with Legal at outset for contract TUPE consideration Consider who will evaluate project Conflicts of Interest Specification Design Key Performance Indicators _ KPI's	Aug-25	Commissioning
Procurement Decision Record – Define Project Conflict of Interest Assessment	Aug-25	Procurement
Agree Tender criteria: Route to Market Tender stages required, Term, Quality/Price Ratio, Pricing (Bids or fixed pricing) Minimum Quality Thresholds, Mandatory Requirements – Conditions of Participation Stage 4 reweighting Quality/Price/Interview.	Aug-25	Commissioning & Procurement
Pre Market Engagement	09-Aug-25	Commissioning
Following Market Engagement: Are there any tender criteria changes Specification Review required	Review Aug 2025	Procurement
TUPE Information obtained if relevant	N/A	N/A
Is there a requirement to issue Planned procurement notice (advisable if time between Market Engagement and Tender being released) Not Mandatory	N/A	Procurement
Finalised Specification, KPI's, Quality questions and Appendices issued to Procurement for review	31/8/25	Commissioning
Procurement Review and complete Tender Documentation and agree Financial Risk Assessment	01/09/2025-26/09/2025	Procurement

Final review and agreement of Full Tender documentation	w/c 29/9/25	Procurement to issue, Commissioning to review
Procurement Decision Record – Procure Conflict of Interest Assessment	w/c 29/9/25	Commissioning
Tender Notice Issued	21/10/25	Procurement
Tender Advertised on Pro-Contract (Commissioning to be available for Tender clarifications during this period)	21/10/25	Procurement
Last Date for Raising a Clarification Question	10/04/2025	Procurement
Tender close Submission	18/11/25 @ 2pm	Procurement
Tender Compliance, Stage 1 & 2 Evaluation Matrix completed	18-27 Nov 2025	Procurement
Tender Evaluations Quality (Time depends on how many bids expected, Large Framework of 40+ suppliers requires longer to review)	1 Dec 2025- 31 Dec 2025	Commissioning
Tender Moderation & completion of Evaluation Matrix	w/c 5/01/26	Procurement
Pricing Evaluation Review	w/c 12/01/26	Commissioning & Procurement
Evaluation Matrix Updated	Jan-26	Procurement
Financial Checks	Jan-26	Procurement
Notification of Stage 3 Outcome to Bidders (Bidders invited to Presentation/Interview, portal notification to unsuccessful suppliers through to next stage)	w/c 19/1/26	Procurement
Presentation / Interview Date(s)	26 January – 09 February 2026	Commissioning & Procurement
Presentation/ Interview Moderation	12 February 2026	Procurement
Evaluation Matrix completed	w/c 16 February	Procurement
Procurement Decision Record – Award Conflict of Interest Assessment	w/c 16 February	Procurement
Contract Award Notice – Pre-Standstill & Notification of Presentation / Interview Outcome to Bidders	Mar-26	Procurement
Contract Details Notice – After Standstill	Mar-26	Procurement
Contract Award Date, Issue Contract	Mar-26	Procurement
Contract Register completion	Mar-26	Procurement
Once signed contract returned, issue to Commissioning.	Mar-26	Procurement
Implementation Period	Mar-26	Commissioning
Mobilisation meetings to commence	Mar-26	Commissioning
Contract Start Date	01-Apr-26	Commissioning & Procurement
Contract End Date	Dependant on Term	Commissioning to update Procurement to either confirm extension (if available) or Procurement to issue Contract Termination Notice

Management and quality oversight will be the responsibility of Skills & Learning Adult Community Education, the shared adult learning service for both Dorset Council and BCP Council. This service has experience of commissioning, managing and assuring partner delivery of DfE and UKSPF funded projects locally.

An impartial triage service will be provided by fully qualified and impartial IAG advisers employed by Skills & Learning.

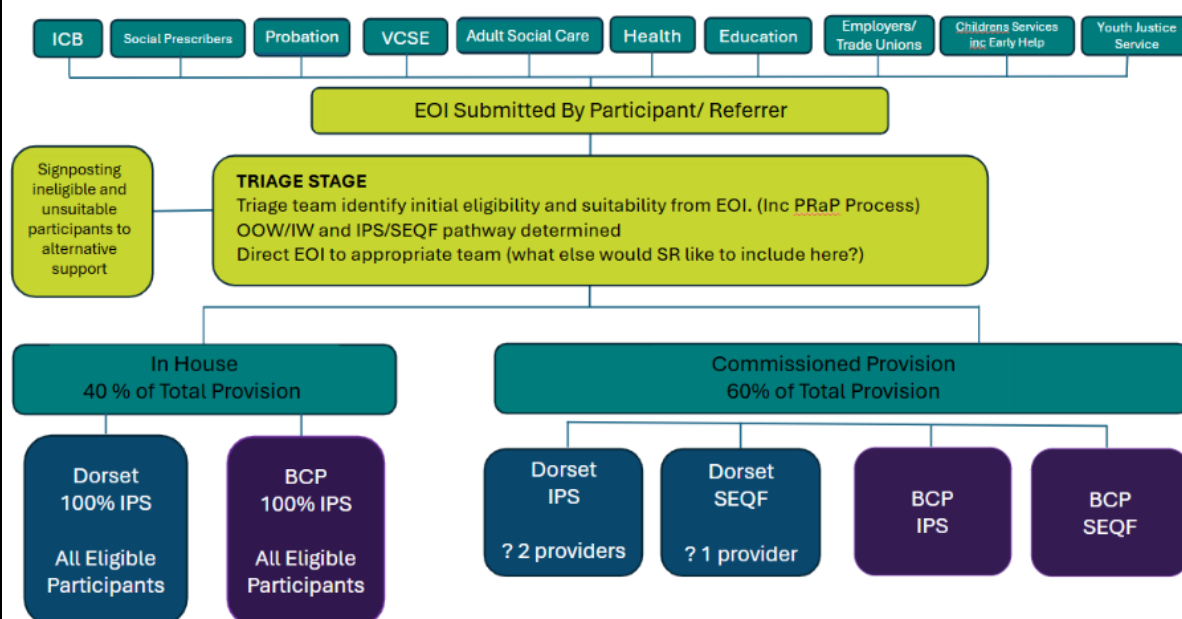
Programme Starts (Volumes)

	Dorset County Council				BCP Council				
Year	In-House Delivery		Commissioned Delivery		In-House Delivery		Commissioned Delivery		Totals
	IPS	SEQF	IPS	SEQF	IPS	SEQF	IPS	SEQF	
Year 1									
Year 2									
Year 3									
Year 4									
Year 5									
Totals	414	0	320	244	622	0	478	367	2445

Programme Starts (Percentages)

	Dorset County Council				BCP Council				
Year	In-House Delivery		Commissioned Delivery		In-House Delivery		Commissioned Delivery		Totals
	IPS	SEQF	IPS	SEQF	IPS	SEQF	IPS	SEQF	
Year 1									
Year 2									
Year 3									
Year 4									
Year 5									
Totals	100%	0%	56.70%	43.30%	100%	0%	56.60%	43.40%	

Calculated as 75% IPS 25% SEQF across the full programme.



2.2 Please detail your high-level plan for delivery which captures the key milestones and indicative timings for implementation activities. These could include:

- The date your team will be in place to start delivering the programme
- The date you will be ready to start receiving 'Expressions of Interest'
- Your anticipated timeframe for scaling up and the associated starts volumes
- The date you plan to be fully operational

Please attach a copy of your draft project plan, which shows your key milestones and timeline.

*Timeline to be reviewed. (Add visual Timeline here once updated/confirmed)

Delivery is planned to commence in November 2025 – this will be for direct delivery only. Direct delivery job roles have been job evaluated and graded and recruitment of the direct delivery team starts in September 25.
Initial team in place end of October 2025
Fidelity training between October and December
Stakeholder liaison between April to August 2025
Procurement market engagement event 8/8/2025
Delivery partner procurement activity live in October 2025
Employer engagement activity from September 25

Participant Expressions of interest can be received from October 2025 and IAG referral officers will be ready to engage with potential participants from October.

Initial meetings with Employment Specialists will start in November

Where appropriate, participants could be directed into Approved Activity

Interested potential participants before this date can be referred to existing local employment support programmes including Skill Up BCP

Start of delivery partner delivery from March 2026

Scaling up during 26/27 to achieve peak volumes between October 2027 and July 2028

**** Embed project plan**

The direct delivery is able to build on existing activity, service staffing structure and systems so is able to go live earlier than procured delivery partners. There is currently a significant lead in time for procurement teams to provide a full support package for securing good quality delivery partners and this timeline means that partner delivery will not start until the very end of year 1 and into year 2

Capacity and Capability

Within this section, please provide details of the capacity and capability to deliver Connect to Work across your Delivery Area.

2.3 Please describe the capacity and capability to deliver Connect to Work across your Delivery Area.

Please include the key capacity and capability challenges you have and what further support you may need to help address these challenges. Please highlight any challenges across your whole Delivery Area.

The delivery plan development, implementation and ongoing management and quality assurance will sit with Skills & Learning Adult Community Education, the shared adult learning service on behalf of both Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP Council and Dorset Council with strategic overview from the Director of Education and Skills at BCP Council and the Director of Adult Social Care at Dorset Council.

The adult education service already has a footprint across the county, local learning centres, established relationships with potential referral organisations, experience of sub-contracting delivery of grant funded programmes including: adult skills fund, Multiply, UKSPF. The service has a governing board consisting of representatives and members from both local authorities plus sector and employer governors who will help provide oversight of the delivery and performance will be monitored through quarterly board meetings.

The Councils have established support services teams who support economically inactive residents from a number of the identified participant groups although this hasn't to date included Supported Employment. Engagement with these local authority teams supporting

adults who may be potential participants of the programme has helped identify referral routes and key practitioners who will be trusted advisers.

As well as disabled adults and 18-25 yr olds with SEND, the teams work with carers, ex-carers, care experienced young people, refugees and resettled Afghans, those on the Ukrainian scheme and young people involved or at risk of being involved in serious violence. The neighbourhood, communities and housing teams are also being consulted on opportunities to engage with potential participants.

To meet the requirements of Connect to Work it will be necessary to expand capacity to extend current referral routes and meet planned participant volumes. We will build on current expertise around engagement and support for participants within the teams, across the Council and its network.

Existing local supported employment provision with small local providers has been identified and potential partners invited to contribute to the development of the delivery plan.

The strength of existing local partnerships with the voluntary and community sector, ICB, primary care networks, JCP, community care settings, employment and skills providers and business networks will ensure the successful integration of Connect to Work locally

Representation in ICB

Performance of delivery partners will be reviewed at monthly check-in reviews and quarterly contract reviews and continuous improvement plans in line with current Skills & Learning ACE sub-contracting quality arrangements.

Recruitment and training of Employment Specialists – early activity will also include building relationships with integrated service providers.

Challenges will include the fact that across Dorset, 90% of businesses are SME or Micro employers.

Locally since the NIC changes in April 2025, employers are slowing down on recruitment, freezing possible vacancies, reorganisation and in some cases laying off staff. Key larger employers like the NHS and local authorities are having to make significant changes to their operations and workforce.

Existing Supported Employment providers have had limited success in progressing people into paid work. Most are providing work preparation activity, employability support and coaching but not much in work / supported employment success.

There are a larger % of the population of Dorset who are intentionally economically inactive

Transport in rural areas and congestion in the main conurbation of BCP creates additional barriers to success placing of participants in work.

The learning from delivery of recent UKSPF People & Skills projects including Skill Up BCP and Skill Up Dorset will provide a good baseline for development of the CtW service.

2.4 Please provide details of how your project will be administered. Where possible, please describe the individual posts within the team(s) that will be delivering the project:

- How is the team set up to manage the project?
- What resources, expertise, skills, responsibilities and experience do they have?
- Will existing staff be employed, or will new staff be recruited (if recruited, how and when)?

Where you have indicated some, or all your delivery will be done in-house, please also provide the following details:

- Staff roles and responsibilities, including volumes.
- Recruitment plans and timelines, including any specific skills and knowledge needed for those roles

Please refer to job titles rather than the actual names of individuals.

Responsibility for delivery of the service across the county will sit with Skills & Learning Adult Community Education. The Head of Curriculum Quality & Business (Head of Service) will have accountability for the service delivery. The Funding, Finance and Business Manager will oversee the delivery of data and compliance requirements.

A Project Manager has been appointed for a year to be able to fully develop the delivery plan and grant cost register and then support all the recruitment, procurement, system set up, governance arrangements and implementation.

The management and organisation of the service will be provided by a joint team across BCP Council and Dorset Council.

The direct delivery team will consist of a:

Project Manager initially, moving to a Programme Manager by July 2026

Contract & Partnership Manager to manage and monitor the partner delivery and compliance

Quality Assurance Officer to support progress towards fidelity across the direct and partner delivery

Employment Specialist Supervisor

Team of Employment Specialists*

Employer Engagement Officers*

LAG Referral (Triage) Adviser team* for initial front door engagement and referral to the programme

MIS / Data & Compliance Officer

*recruitment may come from existing IAG advisers and economic / employer engagement officers within the local authorities

All direct delivery staff will have Fidelity training

Staff will be recruited to and dedicated to a particular location / patch in either the BCP conurbation or in other parts of Dorset. All staff will be employed by BCP Council but as with other shared services, they will understand that their work spans both local authorities and has to take into account the differing LA priorities, demographics and employment opportunities.

The existing Skills & Learning team of teaching of learning staff can support any necessary delivery of employability skills, English, maths, ESOL and digital skills and qualification training for any pre-employment / on the job learning required.

Skills & Learning ACE have experience of successfully commissioning, managing and quality assuring sub-contracted partners who deliver on adult skills funded delivery and project delivery including projects funded by UKSPF. Robust contract management arrangements are already in place, along with additional support and guidance from commissioners in adult social care and children's services.

There will be dedicated resource identified or recruited into the Employment Pathways team at Dorset Council and the Education Improvement Team at BCP Council. These teams already have a dedicated focus on specific cohorts of residents and will reshape their current programme to better meet the requirements of CtW and Employment Specialist support. These teams can also support the pre-employment coaching of certain cohorts and individuals including young people who are NEET, young people with SEND, young people starting on apprenticeship training, care experienced young people, those preparing for adulthood and those progressing from supported internships.

The new service will also align with the county wide, shared Dorset Youth Justice service:

1. Shared Target Groups and Objectives

Both services aim to support individuals with complex needs, including:

- Young people at risk of exclusion or offending.
- Those with disabilities, long-term health conditions, or socio-economic barriers.
- Individuals who are economically inactive or unemployed

DCYJS works to **divert young people from the justice system**, improve their **education and employment outcomes**, and **build pro-social identities**

These goals align closely with Connect to Work's mission to help people into sustainable employment.

2. Existing Programmes That Bridge Justice and Employment

DCYJS runs initiatives like **Discover You**, which provides:

- **Educational sessions** (English, Maths, CV writing).
- **Work experience** (e.g., in conservation, hospitality).
- **Life skills training** (budgeting, communication).
- **Career guidance and access to qualifications**

These activities directly prepare young people for employment and could be integrated or expanded through Connect to Work, offering a seamless transition from justice support to job readiness and paid employment.

3. Multi-Agency Partnership Infrastructure

DCYJS is a **statutory partnership** involving:

- Dorset Council and BCP Council
- Dorset Police
- NHS Dorset
- Probation Service
- Public Health Dorset

This structure enables **cross-sector collaboration**, data sharing, and coordinated support. Connect to Work could leverage this network to:

- Identify eligible participants early.
- Provide wraparound support (mental health, housing, education).
- Ensure continuity between justice interventions and employment pathways.

4. Strategic Priorities and Opportunities for Collaboration

DCYJS's 2025/26 strategic priorities include:

- **Improving education outcomes.**
- **Reducing reoffending.**
- **Supporting transitions to employment or college**

These priorities create a natural synergy with Connect to Work's goals. Joint planning, co-location of services, and shared funding bids could enhance impact and efficiency.

5. Practical Steps for Engagement

To support delivery, Connect to Work will:

- **Co-design referral pathways** with DCYJS.
- **Offer tailored employment support** for justice-involved youth.
- **Embed Employment Specialists** within youth justice teams.
- **Collaborate on outreach and engagement events.**

Values based recruitment:

We aim to recruit individuals whose values align with the ethos and mission of our service. To achieve this, we plan to:

1. Co-Design the Recruitment Process with Lived Experience

- **Involve service users** or peer mentors in designing interview questions or participating in panels.
- Ask candidates how they would support someone with complex needs or how they demonstrate empathy and resilience.

2. Use Scenario-Based Interviews

Present real-life situations and ask candidates how they would respond. For example:

- *“A client with anxiety misses their first job interview. How would you support them?”*
- *“You’re working with a young person involved in the justice system. What values guide your approach?”*

This will help reveal values like compassion, adaptability, and non-judgmental support.

3. Host Values-Based Recruitment Events

- Run open days or information sessions where potential applicants meet the team, hear from service users on similar programmes, and learn about the service’s values.
- We will use these events to observe how candidates engage with others and reflect on the mission.

4. Integrate Values into Job Descriptions and Adverts

- Clearly state the values of the service (e.g., inclusion, respect, empowerment, collaboration).
- Ask applicants to submit a values statement or respond to a question like: *“Tell us about a time you helped someone overcome a barrier to employment.”*

We are considering the use of psychometric or values aligned tools and will seek support from the internal HR team. R team.

5. Partner with Local Organisations for Inclusive Recruitment

- Work with the Dorset Youth Justice team, community groups, or disability organisations to reach candidates with lived experience.
- This supports diversity and brings in people who naturally align with the service's mission.
- Work with the local JCP to identify and signpost potential applicants for the roles based on their values and experience – this partnering is underway.

6. Reflect Values in Onboarding and Induction

- We will include values-based training and reflective practice from day one and will encourage new recruits to explore how their personal values connect with the service's goals.

Competency based recruitment

Lived experience

Induction and probation

Interview skills

IPS training

Regular 1:1s

Formal reviews

BCP Council values and performance management principles

Supervision and peer support

Training on vocational profiling and action planning

Training on job analysis

Commissioned delivery

Where you have indicated that some, or all, of your delivery of Connect to Work will be commissioned, please provide the following:

2.5 A summary of the procurement process (including timeline) that will be followed to identify and appoint Delivery Partner(s), including how the process will ensure the following is met:

- Requirements of the Grant Guidance
- Conditions of the Grant Funding Agreement
- Support for all eligible and suitable Participants
- Full coverage across your Delivery Area

Please refer to the Procurement Timeline which can be found in Section 2.1

Direct awards will be made where possible to local delivery partners already providing SE programmes on behalf of either local authority.

Specialist providers will be needed for specific cohorts including offenders / ex offenders, those considered homeless (To be expanded)

Micro businesses and SME supported

The procurement activity is being undertaken by the BCP Council procurement team as the lead Skills & Learning service is hosted by BCP Council and the staff involved in the development and delivery of the delivery plan are employed by BCP Council. Skills & Learning has good experience of procuring good quality delivery partners for DfE contract delivery and for a UKSPF funded project – the BCP Council procurement team have supported all the Skills & Learning procurement activity.

The panel for screening, shortlisting and interviewing potential delivery partners will be made up of a Skills & Learning manager, the Connect to Work Project Manager, a member of the procurement team and experts from both local authority adult social care commissioning teams as a control measure.

Local support services and employment support organisations have been consulted during the development of the delivery plan to gather expert local knowledge, identify where potential participant cohorts and create referral channels into the service

2.6 If you intend to appoint a managing agent to oversee the implementation and delivery of Connect to Work, please provide details below, including your rationale for this decision.

N/A

2.7 Please provide details of the market assessment and engagement strategy for your commissioning activity.

Initial engagement and awareness raising webinars have happened.

Both local authorities have provided details of existing commissioned services

Individual conversations have taken place with potential delivery partners identified as maybe being in scope to support, subject to the running of a procurement activity.

Dorset Chamber

2.8 Are there any Delivery Partners that have already been identified or commissioned? Please provide details of how they were identified and commissioned and how you plan to utilise existing contracts, if applicable.

Potential delivery partners have been identified but no commissioning yet.

Dorset Council is currently undertaking an engagement activity in readiness for a procurement activity for supply of Supported Employment activity provided by Adult Social Care, that specifically focuses on services for adults with learning disabilities, mental ill health and physical disabilities. This is not Connect to Work Supported Employment activity and instead commissions programmes that provide employment support, employability skills coaching, work placements and volunteering opportunities. There is the potential that interested organisations may also consider Connect to Work contracts if they can adapt their current models to provide quicker progression into work.

BCP Council has some SE contracts with local providers who have been engaged and involved in design of the delivery plan. Some have expressed interest in submitting bids to become delivery partners.

Most potential partners are experienced and skilled in pre-employment support and coaching even if they haven't had as much of a 'place, train & maintain' approach. Delivery partners will be supported to reach fidelity.

Specialist local service supporting employers to become disability confident

Colleges.....

Dorset Widening Participation Network

BCP Day Opportunities strategy group and supported employment working group inc. trusted reviewers and Community Catalyst

Preparing for Adulthood

DSTPN

Section 3 – Connect to Work design

Design principles

You will recognise from the Grant Guidance the importance of adhering to the principles and the five stages of the Supported Employment model for both IPS and SEQF. This section is to understand how you will design your overall programme in line with these principles.

3.0 Please provide a clear description of your proposed Connect to Work offering and how this meets the requirements set out in the Grant Guidance.

The Connect to Work programme in Dorset will use the 'place, train and maintain' model to support disabled people, people with health conditions and people in specified disadvantaged groups with multiple and complex barriers to move into and maintain or retain employment. A holistic approach will be taken to integrate other local support services into the participant journey.

This will be achieved by following the 5 stages of the Supported Employment model that underpins both SEQF and IPS:

Stage 1: Engagement

through existing network of internal and external partners. Referral routes for eligible participants to access the CTW service are in development, to include the in work and out of work cohort.

A single front door approach with a specialist IAG referral / triage team in key locations and online to meet and support residents into either the CtW programme, other training, pre-employment programmes or health support interventions. Tell your story once approach before signposting or referral as necessary. Better off in work calculations can be provided.

Individuals will be referred to provision that is the best fit for their needs, even if this is not Connect to Work.

Employment Specialists will be aligned to specific participant groups and referral partners to ensure a clear and smooth process exists for resident engagement, warm handover and onboarding of new participants. This will also allow for expertise to develop across the team.

Pre-employment support including confidence building will be provided by the existing employability provision provided by S&LACE.

Stage 2: Vocational Profiling

Adopting a strength-based skills assessment, we will develop a clear action plan for each participant which identifies their transferable skills, job requirements, areas of interest, employment goals and the steps needed to achieve this outcome. Where available additional information from key workers, supporters and family will be sought.

A suitable skills development framework will be introduced in a phased approach to help participants articulate their core skills, competencies and potential whilst also being able to see the progress made in targeted areas throughout their time on programme.

Stage 3: Employer Engagement

Using an advocacy approach to employer engagement when working with specified participant groups, and a more commercial 'grow your business' approach in other situations, the team will adopt a person-centred model to business engagement for out of work participants. This will involve using the vocational profile to identify a list of potential opportunities or businesses to target. Efforts around employer engagement will be supplemented by our sector specific employment brokers who will be accessing vacancies at scale for all participants supported by the service, some of which will be directed to the CTW cohort.

Stage 4: Job Matching

To support job search and placement at the earliest opportunity, the team will coach businesses through the process of job carving, reasonable adjustments and adapting recruitment & selection processes to ensure participants are provided the best possible chance of securing a role. Matching participants to vacancies will be centred around the vocational profile and the advocacy model described above. Specialist support packages to guide employers to becoming disability confident will be procured.

Stage 5: On and off the job support

On and off the job will be provided by the employer and CtW team. Regular contact between the participant and Employment Specialist will be vital. Businesses will be coached in the principles of inclusive employment and supported by our employment specialists or employer engagement officers to establish good practice regarding onboarding, workplace support, reasonable adjustments, training and performance reviews, inclusion and belonging

Employment Specialists with the support of the Employment Specialist Supervisor will co-ordinate access to integrated health and wider support (for example – debt, housing, skills) working through Integrated Care Systems and other key stakeholders.

The support will be personalised and will recognise positive wellbeing outcomes

Participant potential.....

The CtW team will also provide on-going pastoral and employability support to participants throughout their time on programme, including regular reviews to identify and coach participants through workplace challenges, engage directly with employers where needed and continue to record skills development through and appropriate skills framework.

This model will also apply to those in work at the point of referral. These participants are likely to be referred via the primary care network, Dorset Work Matters or may be a self-referral having identified the need for support via a partner organisation or their employer. As support is for 4 months, it will be more intensive and focussed on how the participant may be supported to stay in their current role. This means most participants will move from stage 1 to stage 5 where the Employment Specialist will work with employers to make necessary workplace adjustments. However, if an individual wants to transition into a new role or to a new employer the full 5 steps may be implemented.

3.1 Please provide details of how you intend to ensure the support provided to Connect to Work Participants, adheres to the fundamental principles of Supported Employment, Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF). This should include:

- supporting people into competitive employment in the open labour market.
- ensuring Participants receive commensurate pay for work carried out.
- providing appropriate support through all the stages of the five-stage process.

(See Technical Note: Supported Employment Delivery Model for more information)

A team of direct delivery Employment Specialists are being appointed to support participants on the IPS model.

Delivery partners will be appointed to deliver SEQF.

A single front door IAG service provided by the local authority will provide initial engagement information to potential participants to help them understand the service and make an informed decision. They will help to direct potential participants to the best support option for them and their needs, even if this isn't immediately onto the Connect to Work programme or includes some additional approved activity alongside onboarding to CtW. The referral to the most appropriate route will be in consultation with either the direct delivery IPS team or one of the delivery partners for IPS or SEQF.

Quality Assurance and progress towards Fidelity will be supported by a single post holder (or 2 x part time) based within the local authority direct delivery team and this role will support and coach all direct delivery and partner delivery to reach Fidelity.

Quality standards:

Skills & Learning as a DfE funded adult learning service has good experience of evidence-based quality assurance activity and quality improvement activity in line with the Education Inspection Framework and also has evidence-based matrix accreditation that recognises the quality of the impartial IAG provided by the service. The service is experienced in providing staff development opportunities, moderation and standardisation activities and applying current knowledge to the Fidelity quality framework would require some development but would not be a huge leap.

Existing Internal Quality Assurances policies will be adapted to accommodate Fidelity.

The service is also experienced in delivery and assessing evidence based qualifications to learners and understands the principles of

As point 3

Building on the experience and learning from recent UKSPF projects Skill Up BCP and Skill Up Dorset which were both targeted at the economically inactive....

Where local provision already exists including some local authority commissioned employment support programmes that have focussed on work experience, work placements and preparation for work, Connect to Work will be a potential progression opportunity for those who now want and feel confident to apply for paid work having developed some skills on previous programmes.

Trusted local employers who are already offering unpaid placement, supported internship and work experience opportunities will be supported to consider how they can also offer good quality paid work opportunities Progression from work placements and supported internships with trusted local employers

People with disabilities and/or disadvantages can make a positive contribution in the workplace.

People with disabilities / disadvantage should have access to a real job where

-wages are paid at the going rate for the job,

the employee enjoys the same terms and conditions as all other employees;

the job helps the person to meet their life goals and aspirations;

the role is valued by managers and colleagues;

the job has similar hours and times at work as other employees, with safe working conditions.

There's a "zero rejection" philosophy of supported employment so that, with the right job and the right support, everyone who wants to work, can work.

Supported employment does not adhere to a work readiness model and a 'place, train and maintain' approach is implemented.

Job search should happen at the earliest opportunity.

People are encouraged to exercise choice and control in achieving their career aspirations. Support is individualised and all options assume successful employability.

7. There is genuine partnership between the person, their family carers, employers, community supports and the provider of supported employment.

8. People are supported to be full and active members of their workforces and wider communities, both socially and economically.

9. Support services recognise the importance of the employer as a customer of supported employment in their own right with requirements that need to be satisfied.

10. Supported employment draws on Social Role Valorisation (SRV) in recognising that employment is a valued social role and becoming employed can help reverse societal devaluation, with wider positive consequences for the person.

11. Supported employment draws on the social model of disability recognising that disability is the product of the physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers present within society. The removal of discrimination requires a change of approach and thinking in the way in which society is organised, in this case removing barriers to employment.

12. Supported employment should encourage the career development of individuals by promoting training opportunities and seeking options for increased responsibility.

These 12 Core Values are recognised within the National Occupational Standards of Supported Employment. Supported Employment practitioners are expected to be aware of and to apply a value-based and ethical approach in their practice.

- Use of a Fidelity toolkit for example the materials provided by BASE.
- Identify gaps
- Involve the wider team, check understanding, enable team to take ownership
- Tell the story once
- What evidence
- Mock Fidelity assessments
- Inclusive culture, team working, staff are valued, continuous improvement, provide supervision / peer support
- Educate those in other local authority teams in line with the support employment values
- Consistent approach

3.2 Please provide details on how you will engage with local employers, to support them to develop more inclusive employment practices, ensuring their jobs are accessible to Connect to Work Participants and individuals are supported to sustain those roles.

The direct delivery team of Business Engagement Officers will support the development, nurturing, sharing and maintenance of leads and employers contacts for all direct delivery and partner delivery across Dorset and BCP, acting as a single point of contact for employers, partners and Employment Specialists. They will create (update) and maintain a CRM system that can be accessed by all who need to access employer information.

Where delivery partners already have or establish relationships with employers, these will continue to be nurtured by that delivery partner and they will be requested to share data for the CRM. All local opportunities will be shared across all Employment Specialists – direct delivery and partner delivery.

We are planning to further develop existing Employer Engagement Strategies that sit within both local authorities and in Skills & Learning Adult Community Education to create a more comprehensive Employer Engagement Plan for Inclusive Employment.

1. Objectives

- Increase the number of inclusive employers in Dorset and BCP.
- Ensure job roles are accessible to Connect to Work participants.
- Support employers to retain and develop individuals with barriers to employment.
- Lead by example with both local authorities modelling inclusive employment practices
- Develop paid progression opportunities with trusted employers for younger people graduating from supported internships, placements and volunteering

2. Key Activities

A. Mapping and Outreach

- **Identify priority sectors and employers:** Business Engagement Officers (BEOs) in Skills & Learning and Economic Development Officers (EDOs) in BCP and Dorset Councils hold information on industries with growth potential. EDOs have knowledge and experience of local sector specialisms. The Local Skills Improvement Plan includes data about priority sectors and information about local employer need – this intelligence will help shape further contact
- **Use and further develop our employer database:** employer databases exist in both LAs that include contact details, previous engagement and sector specialisms and will be further updated to include inclusion readiness and key recruitment support info. Other local authority teams also have employer contact and this identification and mapping is ongoing
- **Conduct further outreach:** via email campaigns, LinkedIn, local business networks, and Dorset and associated town chambers of commerce.
- **Identify SMEs and micro businesses:** over 90% of Dorset employers are SMEs and micro businesses.
- **Identify businesses already offering apprenticeships, supported internships and placement / work experience:** support to consider what adaptations could provide opportunities for CtW participants

B. Awareness and Education

- **Host Inclusive Employment Workshops:** Cover topics like reasonable adjustments, neurodiversity, trauma-informed practice, and supporting justice-involved individuals. A Neurodiversity in the Workplace conference is already scheduled for 8th October 2025 and we are involved in another local event in November.
- **Develop an Employer Toolkit:** in development and building on existing resources to include guidance on inclusive recruitment, onboarding, and retention. Adapt to suit SMEs and micro businesses

- **Share success stories:** use case studies from Connect to Work participants and employers to inspire others via social media channels and the CtW website. Build on existing good practice in the local authority teams and existing SE providers and using case studies and a marketing campaign to bring this to life.
- **Encourage employers to access LiveWell at Work Dorset:** for an assessment and to explore creating a healthy workplace and be recognised as a healthy workplace in line with the LiveWell at Work Charter.

C. Partnership Development

- **Establish Employer Champions Trusted Employers:** recognise businesses that model inclusive practices and encourage peer learning – further development of this required.
- **Create sector-specific working groups:** we aim to collaborate with employers to co-design accessible job roles and pathways using some of the existing local networks e.g. Dorset Manufacturing & Engineering Network supported by local EDOs
- **Offer co-location or job carving support:** tailor roles to match participant strengths and employer needs.
- **Large employer focus building on existing relationships:** e.g. NHS, local authorities, Sunseeker

D. Practical Support for Employers via Employment Specialists

- **Provide job coaching and in-work support:** Employment Specialists will offer on-site or remote support to participants and employers.
- **Support with Access to Work applications:** Employment Specialists will help employers and participants navigate funding for adjustments.
- **Offer recruitment support:** Employment Specialists will help employers write inclusive job descriptions and screen candidates fairly and to understand and implement inclusive recruitment practices such as job carving, workplace adjustments and business mentors. Known employers will be supported to consider adapting job roles and apprenticeship roles to recognise the additional support that CtW participants may require.
- **Provide job analysis and recruitment solutions for hard to fill vacancies:** support employers to recognise opportunities to grow their own
- **Support for employers to become disability confident:** Employment Specialists and some commissioned delivery of disability confidence coaching and training will be available to all employers – direct delivery and partner delivery.
- **Support employers to recognise transferable skills:** guide through qualification validation and support. We will

E. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Track employer engagement metrics:** number of employers engaged, jobs created, retention rates.
- **Collect feedback:** use surveys and interviews to understand employer experiences and improve support.

- **Report impact:** share outcomes with stakeholders, partners and governance to demonstrate value and inform strategy. Share case studies from local authority inclusive employment successes
- **Continuous improvement:** use employer and participant feedback to identify trends, successes and risks and make any necessary changes

3. Communication Channels

- Local authority newsletters and websites in both BCP and Dorset
- Social media
- Business forums, networking events and jobs fairs
- Dorset Chamber and associated local Town Chambers – newsletters and events
- Dorset Skills & Workforce Board, Dorset Digital Skills Partnership and other employer focussed boards and working groups
- Direct engagement via Employment Specialists, Business Engagement Officers and Economic Development Officers
- Local colleges, Bournemouth & Poole College and Weymouth & Kingston Maurward College already have good employer contacts and will support by including the CtW programme for adults 18+ in their general offer out to employers via their Employer Engagement teams
- There is a concern locally that employers are being bombarded with requests for providing work experience and placement opportunities so there is a local consensus to coordinate employer contact to minimise employer fatigue. This is a regular agenda item for the Dorset Skills and Workforce Board and there is an ambition to create a one stop shop for employers to access all types of employment and skills guidance

Our employer engagement activity aims to:

- take the time to understand the business
- understand the processes and procedures that will help settle new staff into the organisation
- work with the employer and not expect them to change too much
- offer help and advice
- be considered as a trusted adviser
- help employers see alternative approaches to recruitment
- help employers and their staff see the ability not the disability
- recognise the time, effort and expense involved in recruiting and supporting new recruits
- develop true partnership through a mutually beneficial relationship
- embed Employment Specialists in their business and advise from within
- widen employer vision / open their eyes to opportunities
- try and make things easy for the employer
- tailor the service for the employer – provide individual strategies
- support participants to be able to demonstrate to employers what they can do and not just talk about it
- lead by example through our won inclusive and supportive employment practices
- support employers to adapt policies to make them clearer for new staff
- support employers to stand out and add value to CtW participants

Employment Specialists and Business Engagement Officers will:

- simplify the language used and avoid jargon

- see the employer as the customer
- be flexible
- ensure good team communication around vacancies and opportunities
- communicate regularly with the employer
- develop and share a written employer engagement strategy
- provide employers with examples and case studies of the benefits of a diverse workforce
- build trust and support longer term mutual benefits
- be present and visible – events, walking the beat, social media and professional platforms, networking groups
- do the desk based research before making an approach

Identification of Participants

Identification of the appropriate volumes of eligible and suitable Participants is an important element of Connect to Work, with the programme being targeted at the right people, at the right time and based on individual circumstances. Take up of Connect to Work will be promoted and marketed to citizens to help identify eligible/suitable potential participants in your Delivery Area.

3.3 Please provide details of how you will generate interest, including marketing of Connect to Work to meet your expected profile volumes?

Marketing & Promotion Strategy

Data driven decisions

- **Use local data:** Leverage Jobcentre Plus, local authority data, and community organisations to identify hotspots of eligible individuals. NOMIS data, former LEP insights data, Diis data, Mosaic
- **Build on Skills & Learning ACE existing learner base:** (including those with sub-contractors)

Digital Marketing

- **Existing local authority channels:** councils' website employment pages, social media pages and newsletters plus Skills & Learning ACE website and social media channels, marketing material in council community and family hubs and libraries.
- **Social Media Campaigns:** Use targeted ads on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to reach specific demographics.
- **Local Influencers & Community Voices:** Partner with trusted local figures to share stories and testimonials.
- **Email Campaigns:** Collaborate with local services to send newsletters to potential participants.
- **Existing local authority and affiliated services website and newsletters:** a new CtW webpage is in development that will be hosted on the Skills & Learning website with links in from other local authority websites and all other potential referral route websites. Use all LA channels to communicate with residents including newsletters and social media pages
- **2 x local third sector service finder websites / portals:** these link to a wide range of services and will be updated to contain links and up to date information about the CtW programme. Used by individuals and professionals.

Targeted promotion through known internal and external services

- **Disabled adults** – identified through the Councils' adult social care commissioned

services and local disability forums, day opportunities working groups and networks currently working with the internal teams.

- **People with health conditions** – identified and referred via the Dorset Work Matters programme and embedded within primary care settings across the county.
- **Young people with care experience or at risk of serious youth violence:** identified and referred by the councils' education and youth justice teams supporting NEETs & care leavers.
- **Refugees, resettled Afghans and persons under the Ukrainian scheme:** identified and referred by the councils' resettlement teams where links are well established and through local advocacy organisation ICS
- **Employment Specialists linked to the VCSC:** will form relationships with organisation such as CAN and DCA to identify those from other specialist groups eg. those who are homeless, carers, ex armed forces, victims of domestic abuse and / or modern slavery.
- **Align Employment Specialists to a specified participant group:** build links with appropriate referral partners

Community Outreach

- **Pop-up Events & Job Fairs:** Host events in community centres, libraries, and shopping centres. Build on the events already supported by Skills & Learning and other council teams. High visibility
- **Local Radio & Newspapers:** Advertise through community media channels
- **Flyers & Posters:** Distribute in GP surgeries, food banks, schools, and council offices, leisure facilities, Family Hubs, libraries, inside of toilet doors! Bus and bus stop advertising
- **Printed materials:** for those without access to IT / the internet
- **Raise ambitions:** supporting local events and key workers and being ambitious for their residents
- **Day services:**
- **Employment Specialists embedded in local services:**
- **IAG Triage rotating in local community and council settings:** inc libraries, Skills & Learning centres, locality services, Family Hubs,
- **Accessible buildings for face to face meetings:** and flexibility with timings

Referral Networks

- **Partner with frontline services:** Jobcentre Plus, housing associations, health services, and charities.
- **Incentivise referrals:** promote the mutual benefits to VCSC organisations or individuals who refer eligible participants.
- **Trade unions:**
- **Co-location:** Employment Specialists will be co-located where possible to fully embed in local front line teams
- **Local authority teams:** working with care experienced young people, refugees and asylum seekers,
- **VCSC:**

- **Referral routes to include:**

- Local SEND services
- JCP – disability advisers
- Housing teams in both LAs
- Housing associations including BCHA, Synergy, Sovereign
- GP Surgeries
- CAB
- Local authority customer service hubs
- Access Wellbeing
- Dorset Work Matters (joint project between Dorset HealthCare and Dorset Mental Health Forum and helps people who are accessing mental health services across the county to find paid employment)
- NHS Dorset HealthCare University Vocational Services and Employment Advisers
- Steps to Wellbeing services
- Dorset Livewell
- Family Hubs
- Early Help
- Trade Unions
- Preparing for Adulthood teams in both LAs

Partner referral organisations / potential delivery partners:

- Minstead Trust
- Tricuro inc. Coast programme
- Mencap
- Autism Unlimited
- Dorset Community Action

Messaging & Branding

- **Clear, positive messaging:** Focus on benefits like confidence building, skills development, and potential income.
- **Real-life success stories:** Share participant journeys to build trust and relatability.
- **Accessible language and materials:** Ensure materials are inclusive, easy to understand and available in different formats. Accessibility and translation tools on website. Be mindful of language, colours, readability

Monitoring & Adaptation

- **Track engagement:** Use analytics to monitor which channels are most effective.
- **Feedback loops:** Regularly gather feedback from participants and partners to refine messaging and outreach.
- **Adjust campaigns seasonally:** Align with times of higher job-seeking activity (e.g., post-summer, New Year, end of the summer season).

Eligibility and suitability checks:

- will be carried out and assured by the CtW IAG Referral and Triage Officers who will work alongside Employment Specialists and the MIS / Data & Compliance Officer to carry out relevant checks.

- **Skills & Learning front facing teams:** customer service and admissions and progression staff will be trained to check eligibility status as they do for DfE funded programmes

3.4 Which introduction channels would you expect 'Expressions of Interest' to come from and how do you expect to monitor and manage these routes in live running to ensure they remain effective throughout the grant period?

Resident engagement will take place across multiple sites, including established co located premises and adult community education settings, new co-location arrangements with VCS partners, the Councils' Customer Service and Family Hubs in across the county. The CtW team will work across multiple sites and where possible will be co-located with in certain localities which will be put in place during the implementation phase.

Expressions of Interest will first come through any of these routes using the process set out (tbc):

- an IAG Referral and Triage Officer
- the Customer Service team at Skills & Learning ACE
- any of the referral partners identified
- local authority customer service help desks / call centres,
- primary care partners,
- social workers or SEND teams
- adult social care or transition teams for young people and adults
- job and careers centre work coaches / specialist disability employment advisers (signposting rather than referring)
- colleges training providers and special schools
- careers advisers / SENCOs
- community mental health teams
- social prescribers
- VCS organisations and peer support networks
- Self referrals and family referrals
- Employer referrals

Preliminary eligibility checks will be undertaken at this point and ineligible participants referred to alternative / more suitable provision.

Data will be captured using the designated CRM system to ensure a consistent

approach to data capture and recording. Data will include the source of each EOI, date received, outcome.

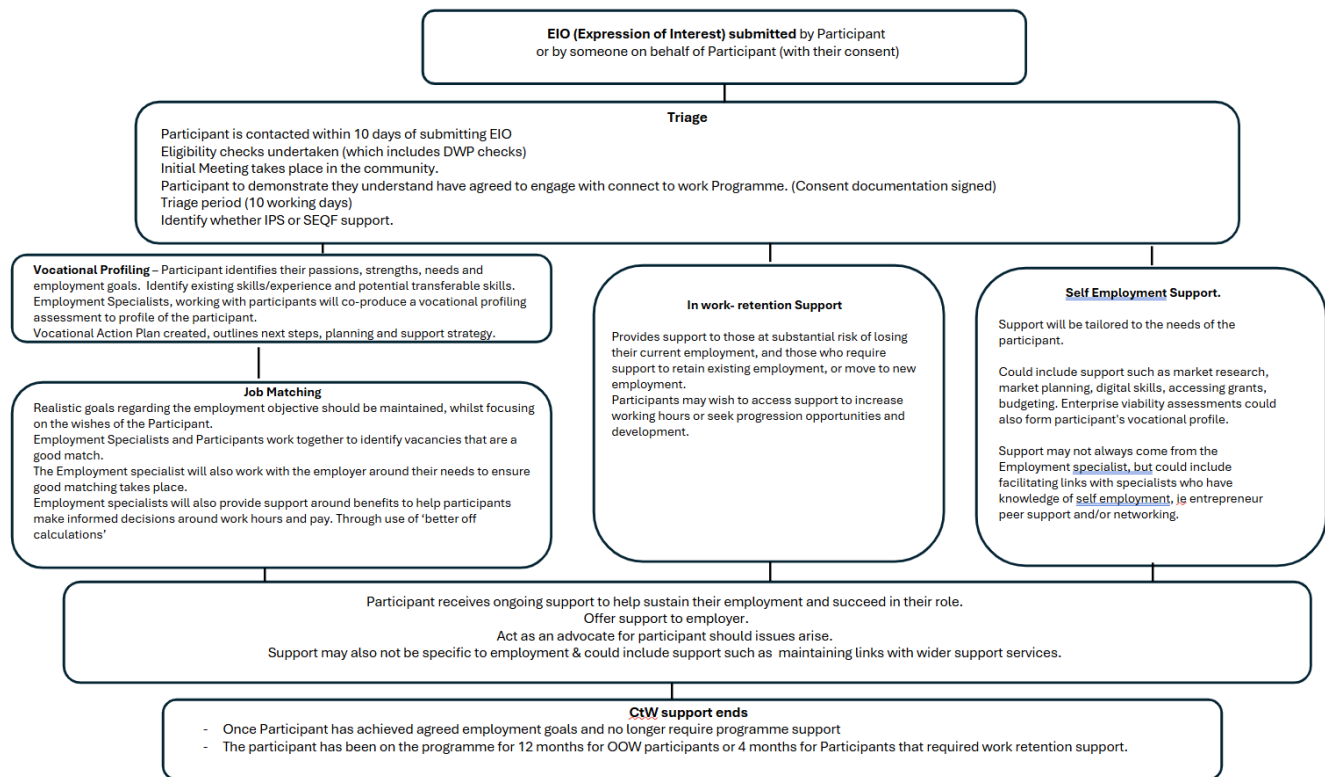
The MIS / Data Compliance Officer and Quality Assurance Officer will run regular reports from the CRM system, carrying out spot checks against KPIs to ensure quality standards are being maintained. KPIs will include volume of EOIs, conversion rate to active support, drop off or disengagement rates. Thresholds will be set to flag underperforming routes.

Regular monthly or quarterly reviews with data dashboards, feedback from frontline staff and partner engagement insights, feedback loops (partners, referrers and participants)

Digital monitoring e.g. using web analytics to track traffic sources and to monitor form completion rates and drop offs.

Adapt referral channels as necessary.

Participant Journey Flowchart



3.5 If you propose to prioritise specific groups of people, please describe your rationale and describe how you will do so within the agreed Eligibility and Suitability Criteria.

The service will primarily focus on support for disabled adults and those with health conditions and neurodivergence. The provision will be open to all eligible specified groups (zero exclusion) though our main focus will be in areas where we have an established track record of support and direct access to eligible residents through other council services and referral organisations.

Care experienced young people, those at risk of youth violence and young refugees will be an important group of referrals from other local authority services.

Analysis of the headline data about the growing NEET population (18 – 24) in Dorset, in particular the BCP area suggests that many of this population would be eligible for the CtW service however they will require a more supportive and longer pre-employment period which will be provided through existing local authority services using CtW grant funding.

The fact that referrals will in the main come via a council department or commissioned service provides a level of eligibility assurance. However, required documentation will be sought for all participants at the point of an expression of interest.

There is a well developed local support focus on ex armed forces personnel and a passionate advocate within BCP Council who will support engagement with this specific group.

A potential delivery partner has good relationships with the probation service and offenders and was supporting Multiply delivery with offenders in recent years – this will be a specific group that is identified for support in the procurement of delivery partners.

Participant journey

This section is to outline how you will support and manage Participants through the Connect to Work process.

3.6 Please provide details on how you will provide tailored support for each Participant, as described in the Grant Guidance?

We will provide **tailored support for each participant** in the **Connect to Work** programme, as outlined in the Grant Guidance and best practices from delivery partners, the approach in Dorset will be rooted in the **Supported Employment model**—specifically the “**place, train, and maintain**” methodology. Here's how this will be effectively implemented:

- **Referral or Expression of Interest:** Participants will be referred to the CtW programme by a council service / team or external partner or participants may self-refer. See flow chart
- The expression of interest will be received by an IAG referral / Triage Officer who will confirm the participant's eligibility and suitability for the service and determine, based on data held at that point, if the participant should be considered for an IPS or SEQF route. The participant will be invited to an impartial IAG triage style appointment and will either be recommended for onboarding to the CtW service or will be signposted or referred to other suitable provision based on their individual need including learning & skills development, health intervention support or a programme of pre-employment support. The aim is for a participant to only tell their story once.
- The case will then be passed to a CtW Employment Specialist in either the direct delivery team or a delivery partner team based on assessment of need and geography / participant type, who will arrange a face-to-face introductory meeting with the participant based on the information gathered at the initial Triage appointment. At this meeting, participants will be made aware of the support available to them through the service and the nature of the fidelity model, so that they understand early on the need to be open about their health condition, disability or other complex barriers as a core feature of this type of employment support.

1. Individualised Assessment & Planning

- **Initial Meeting:** within 10 days of expression of interest. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of each participant's circumstances, including health conditions, employment history, aspirations, strengths, interests and barriers to work
- **Co-produce a vocational profiling assessment:** Employment Specialists and participants will capture their circumstances, abilities, strengths, aspirations, needs and importantly potential, across employment, health, personal and wider factors. This may take place over several sessions. Opportunities for out of work residents, based on the vocational action plan and any additional support needs.
- **Personalised Vocational Action Plan:** co-produced detailing next steps required, career planning, outline goals, preferred job types, support needs, timelines and a support strategy. The

Employment Specialist will begin working with the participants and Employment Engagement Officers to identify suitable employment.

- **Other support** may be introduced at this stage, particularly if the participant requires certain skills or qualifications for the type of work they aspire to.
- **Eligibility & Suitability Checks:** Ensure participants meet the criteria and are matched to appropriate support levels
- **Job matching phase,** 'out of work' participants and Employment Specialists will work together to identify suitable employment opportunities that are a good match in relation to the employer, the role and the participant with all three needing to align.
- **In-work participants:** for those being supported to stay 'in work' this stage is around discussions with the employer about adjustments, Access to Work and reasonable support that can be put in place to ensure employees can sustain their employment long term. Employers will be supported to make any necessary adjustments.
- **Individual support in recruitment & selection process:** Participants will be supported to progress through the recruitment and selection process by their Employment Specialist. Working in accordance with the fidelity models, job application and interviews will be front and centre, helping the participant to improve their confidence and develop the key skills needed to successfully navigate these processes and secure employment.

2. Integrated Support Services

- **Health & Wellbeing Integration:** Collaborate with local health services, including mental health teams and GPs, to ensure wraparound support
- **Skills Development:** Offer access to training, qualifications, and soft skills development tailored to the participant's goals through Skills & Learning Adult Community Education or other local training providers as most appropriate for individual need
- **Benefits Advice:** Provide counselling to ensure participants are not financially disadvantaged by entering work – use the 'better off in work' tool
- **Other support:** Once work has been secured, the participant may be able to access additional financial aid through the discretionary fund to remove any further barriers to employment such as; initial assistance with childcare, PPE, travel and subsistence.

3. Employment Specialist Support

- **Dedicated Employment Specialists:** Maintain small caseloads of 25 for IPS or 20 for SEQF to allow for intensive, one-on-one support.
- **Rapid Job Search:** Begin job search activities within four weeks of onboarding, focusing on roles aligned with participant preferences
- **Regular contact:** The participant will go on to meet their Employment Specialist on a regular basis as determined by both parties and in line with their specific needs as well as the requirements of their fidelity pathway
- **Employer Engagement:** Match participants with employers who understand and support inclusive hiring practices.

4. Sustained on the job support

- **On-the-Job Coaching:** developed with the employer Employment Specialists will offer support during the transition into work, including workplace adjustments and mentoring.
- **In-work support plan developed:** developed with the employer and participant, workplace training, and a workplace mentor. The Employment Specialist will maintain regular contact with their participant for the full duration of their time engaged with the service to help them sustain employment and further develop their careers. This may involve coaching around further education, securing additional hours, gaining more responsibility in the workplace or potentially moving into a new role.
- **Retention Support:** Continue engagement post-placement to address any emerging challenges and support career progression.
- **Employer Liaison:** Maintain communication with employers to ensure a supportive environment and resolve issues early
- **Ramp down:** Support may ramp down towards the end of the 12 month support period (or 4 months for in work support) and participants will be coached to develop resilience and problem-solving skills. They will be directed to other sources of continued support including workplace mentors and buddies or online mental health and wellbeing apps and services. The aim is to reduce dependency on the Employment Specialist (where dependency may have developed) and to help participants feel confident as they graduate from the service.

5. Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

- **Fidelity Assurance:** Use the IPS Fidelity Scale and Supported Employment Quality Framework to ensure high-quality delivery
- **Feedback Loops:** Regularly collect feedback from participants and employers to refine support.
- **Data-Driven Adjustments:** Use MI data to track outcomes and tailor interventions based on what works

6. Strategic Integration

- **Join-Up with Local Services:** Align with adult social care, housing, further education, Preparing for Adulthood and economic development teams to provide holistic support
- **Referral Pathways:** Build strong relationships with referral organisations, including health services and community groups

3.7 How will you safeguard Participants, including those who are subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Agency (MAPPA) arrangements and embed the public sector equality duty into the design and operation of your service e.g. through appropriate ongoing equality impact analysis?

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) and Dorset Council are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and equitable treatment of all participants, including those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

To uphold these commitments, robust safeguarding protocols have been embedded into the programme design, specifically tailored to support individuals under MAPPA supervision. The Public Sector Equality Duty is integrated throughout all aspects of service delivery to promote fairness, eliminate discrimination, and advance equality of opportunity. In addition, collaborative working with relevant agencies ensures appropriate risk management and effective information sharing.

1. Risk Identification and Information Sharing *(MR to discuss & confirm below with MAPPA Co-ordinator)*

- **Early Identification:** Work with referral partners (e.g. probation, police, Jobcentre Plus) to identify MAPPA participants at the point of referral to allow for early risk assessment
- **Secure Information Sharing:** Use secure systems like ViSOR (Violent and Sex Offender Register) to access and share relevant risk information
- **Verify the MAPPA status of individuals referred:** at the Expression of Interest (EOI) / Triage stage through Self declaration. *(SR to review and confirm?)* This check will be repeated at the initial meeting stage.
- **Case is confirmed as MAPPA:** we will coordinate with the MAPPA Coordinator and the Probation Practitioner to ensure that any services or activities the participant engages in are consistent with their risk management plan. This includes adhering to any restrictions related to employment or training.
- **MAPPA Meetings:** where appropriate, we will participate in MAPPA panel meetings to remain informed of any dynamic risk factors and to adapt support plans accordingly. This approach ensures that participants are managed safely throughout their journey on the programme, with consideration for their wellbeing, the safety of staff, and the wider public. The specific role responsible for attending these panels is yet to be confirmed, though it is anticipated that the participant's Employment Specialist will fulfil this function.

2. Tailored Risk Management Plans

- **Individual Safeguarding Plans:** Develop bespoke plans that align with MAPPA risk assessments and include workplace risk mitigation strategies.
- **Change of circumstances:** If a participant's circumstances or risk level change to the extent that continued engagement with the programme is no longer viable, they will be temporarily withdrawn. Re-engagement will only be considered once it is confirmed that the associated risks can be effectively managed.
- **Employer liaison:** Where a participant secures employment or training, we will liaise with the employer or training provider to gather relevant details, including site address and the presence of individuals under the age of 18, where this is pertinent to the participant's offending history. This information will enable MAPPA partners to conduct a suitability assessment
- **Work placement:** Before proceeding with any opportunity, we will consult with the MAPPA Coordinator and the participant's Probation Practitioner to confirm that the placement aligns with current restrictions. The opportunity will only move forward once written agreement has been obtained.
- **Staff Training:** we will ensure staff are trained in trauma-informed practice, safeguarding protocols, and defensible decision-making
- **Rapid Response Protocols:** we will establish escalation procedures for deteriorating behaviour or increased risk, including emergency MAPPA liaison

3. Multi-Agency Collaboration

- **Duty to Cooperate:** Engage with local MAPPA Responsible Authorities (police, probation, prison) and Duty to Cooperate agencies (e.g. NHS, housing, social care)
- **Integrated Support:** Coordinate with mental health, housing, and substance misuse services including We are With You, to provide wraparound support.

Referral Forms: will include a section for disclosing MAPPA status (with appropriate consent and data protection safeguards).

Information Sharing Agreements and establishing of protocols with MAPPA agencies to share relevant information securely. Key updates relating to a participant's risk status will be shared with MAPPA panels and the MAPPA Coordinator as they arise, ensuring that risk management plans remain current and responsive to any changes.

Staff Training: our delivery team will be fully trained in safeguarding procedures and confidentiality protocols, enabling a robust and responsive risk management approach that is tailored to individual circumstances. We will ensure frontline staff are trained to recognise MAPPA indicators and know how to escalate appropriately.

Embedding the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

1. Equality Impact Analysis (EIA)

- **Initial Screening:** we will conduct an EIA at the design stage to assess how the programme affects people with protected characteristics
- **Ongoing Review:** we will update the EIA regularly as the programme evolves, using participant data and feedback to identify unintended impacts.

2. Inclusive Service Design

- **Accessible Materials:** Ensure all communications are available in multiple formats and languages.
- **Barrier Reduction:** Design services to remove or reduce disadvantages faced by disabled people, ethnic minorities, and other marginalised groups .
- **Encourage Participation:** Actively promote the programme to underrepresented groups and monitor uptake.

3. Monitoring and Accountability

- **Data Collection:** Track outcomes by protected characteristic (e.g. disability, race, gender) to identify disparities.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve people with lived experience and representative organisations in service design and evaluation
- **Transparent Reporting:** Publish equality outcomes and actions taken to address gaps.

The designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for overseeing all safeguarding processes, maintaining clear and consistent communication with MAPPA and other multi-agency partners to monitor risks and implement appropriate safeguarding measures.

Safeguarding will be a standing agenda item at both contract review and programme meetings. Any identified risks will be escalated immediately in line with accountable body procedures and referred directly to the Safeguarding Lead for appropriate action.

Lisa Elliott is our MAPPA Co-Ordinator.

The Connect to Work programme will operate in accordance with Skills & Learning ACE Safeguarding Policy and Procedures including the staff code of good practice and alerting guide. The safeguarding policy includes arrangements for whistleblowing for staff and learners/participants.

We are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants and learners across our programmes, particularly those who are vulnerable and our safeguarding measures are designed to provide a supportive and secure environment for all. There is a Designated Safeguarding Lead, a team of Designated Safeguarding Officers and an easy online reporting system available to all staff and participants, as well as other ways to report.

Delivery partners will provide details of their own safeguarding arrangements during the initial tender and induction phases – these will be assessed for suitability and robustness and where appropriate, S&LACE policies and procedures may be embedded into delivery partner plans. Clear reporting channels will be published for all and effectiveness will be reviewed at regular contract meetings.

The lone working policy and guidance will be further updated to include some specific guidance for the remote and mobile team of Employment Specialists, Quality Assurance and Business Engagement Officers. Individual activity risk assessments will be undertaken and clear checking in and out procedures, use of calendar booking systems to show location and travel plans and emergency contact numbers will all be made available.

All staff complete mandatory training which includes corporate CPD modules including

- Safeguarding
- data protection
- equality, equity, diversity and inclusion
- health and safety
- British Values
- awareness of the Prevent and Protect duties
- transgender awareness
- awareness of neurodiversity,
- FGM
- modern slavery
- sexual harassment awareness
- cyber security

We regularly monitor and review our safeguarding practices to ensure they remain effective and up to date with current best practice. There are also clear reporting mechanisms in place for any participant to report any incidents or concerns and whistleblowing arrangements for staff to raise concerns. These reports will be investigated promptly to ensure the safety of all participants and others.

We are also committed to embedding the public sector equality duty into the design and operation of our service through the following measures: - We will conduct a thorough equality impact analysis to identify and address potential inequalities in our service delivery. This will involve:

- assessing the impact of our policies and practices on different protected groups
- implementing necessary adjustments to promote equality and eliminate discrimination
- monitoring and reviewing the outcomes to ensure continuous improvement

Our staff will receive comprehensive training on equality, equity, diversity and inclusion to ensure they understand and uphold the principles of the public sector equality duty.

Regular refresher courses to keep staff updated on best practices and legal requirements.

We have a clear and accessible process for raising safeguarding concerns to protect vulnerable individuals. This includes:

- a dedicated trained safeguarding team
- clear guidelines for staff on how to identify and report safeguarding issues
- regular reviews to ensure the safeguarding process is effective and responsive

By implementing these measures, we will create a service that is fair, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all individuals.

Estimated costs and volumes

Please complete all sections of the Grant Cost Register (GCR), which has been supplied separately. The GCR is a service costing tool which we are asking Accountable Bodies to use in planning and costing their Supported Employment provision. Guidance on completing the GCR has been included within the model. DWP Commercial Finance are also available to provide general support on completing it where requested.

DWP recognises that costs may change during the live running of the programme and any changes can be discussed as part of the annual review.

3.8 Please embed the completed Grant Cost Register

Risk

An understanding of your risks involved in delivering Connect to Work and the need for having effective systems in place to manage them, is important to enable the delivery of Connect to Work, from implementation to live running.

3.9 Please describe the key risks and mitigations, including operational, commercial and financial, that could affect Connect to Work delivery.

Once the service delivery model has been finalised and agreed, a risk register will be developed to take account of the following factors:

Recruitment: the volumes are stretching and require a significant increase in resourcing. Risks around recruitment, particularly those with IPS experience, is a challenge for all. A coordinated approach across all local support services and partners may be a consideration to mitigate competitiveness in the labour market.

Commissioning: there is a long lead in time required by local authority procurement teams, and this will delay partner delivery until January 2026 putting participant recruitment volumes at risk. Where it's possible to award some direct contracts, this may mitigate the risk.

Conversion: Converting 50% of all participant starts into employment outcomes is higher than any current IPS / SEQF delivery and so presents as a risk. The delivery model takes this into account through its phased approach to participant start volumes and therefore job outcomes. However, there is an inherent risk in not being able to build to this level of performance.

Adopting the fidelity model: Though we plan to have achieved BASE accreditation for the SEQF model by year 2, IPS delivery will likely represent 75-80% of our provision and is a new concept for local authority teams in Dorset. Ensuring staff receive the appropriate level of training is crucial and a sizeable training budget has been allocated for this reason.

Employer engagement: This is the biggest risk. Employment levels are good across Dorset and with 90% of businesses being SME or micro businesses, there will be big challenge to find enough suitable good quality work for participants and enough supportive employers to engage with the service.

Good economic development employer relationships across a range of sectors with an active manufacturing and engineering employer network

Well established college relationships with employers. However, the scaling up of our employer engagement to create the scale of accessible opportunities needed to meet the breadth of participants needs requires a careful considered and well-coordinated approach to business engagement.

3.10 Please detail your approach to fraud risks that could affect your delivery and how you might mitigate these.

Anti fraud and corruption policy and strategy

Fraud awareness training for staff

Declarations of interest

Section 4 – Governance

Outline of governance approach & experience

Within this section, please provide details of the governance arrangements for Connect to Work across your Delivery Area.

4.0 Please summarise the governance structure you will have in place across your Delivery Area, including how any advisory panels or associated partnership groups are made up. Please specify whether these are pre-existing structures, new structures, or whether contingency arrangements are temporarily being put in place. Please explain how these arrangements will be sustained through the life of the programme. Please also include details of any challenges you foresee in relation to the governance of Connect to Work and any support you may need to develop your governance structures.

4.1 If the proposed governance structures are not yet in place, please indicate when these are likely to commence.

Not yet finalised. These will be in place by September 2025

4.2 What controls and assurance mechanisms will you put in place to ensure that all spend incurred in delivering Connect to Work is accurate, valid, and reasonable?
4.3 What controls and assurance mechanisms will you put in place to ensure that the quality of delivery of Connect to Work, is of the required standard and how frequently will this be reviewed?
Quality Assurance Officer Contract / relationship manager Internal audit
4.4 How you will demonstrate continuous improvement to the quality of your services, safeguard high standards of care and create an environment in which excellence will flourish?

Section 5 – Performance and Management Information (MI) reporting requirements

The agreed set of MI will be essential to the effective running of Connect to Work. This will include shared MI which will be used to monitor and manage the Grant, including the agreed performance measures. MI/data gathered will also be used to provide a source of evidence for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, and additionally to enable wider evaluation activities such as sampling for research and impact analysis. Please note that in this section we are referring to the collection of data/Management Information and ensuring quality across your Delivery Area.
5.0 How will you manage performance within the Accountable Body, to achieve the levels set out in your Delivery Plan, including the agreed performance measures?
5.1 How will you manage the accurate and timely collection of Management Information, including the timelines agreed in the Grant Guidance (and the Technical Note: General).

--

Section 6 - Developing an integrated support offer with strategic fit to local priorities

As set out in the Grant Guidance, a key element of the Supported Employment models is that services are well embedded with other local support for the target groups and local labour market systems. The funding will be the first contribution to enabling you to stand up (over time) a wider offer to tackle inactivity, by connecting broader work, health and skills support and, in turn, supporting the Government's Get Britain Working strategy, bringing fundamental reform and transforming our relationship with local areas. Please set out your intended approach to building partnerships and integration across all appropriate local services and stakeholders

6.0 Please set out details of your current understanding of how integration with local services, including health services, is being delivered to ensure holistic support for individuals. What do you plan to do in the future, including steps to drive greater local join up between employment, health, and wider community place-based services for the target groups and in turn how do you anticipate this will improve the effectiveness of your supported employment delivery.

6.1 Please provide details of your current relationships with key partners and how you will build and develop relationships with these partners during the delivery of Supported Employment funded by this Grant, with consideration of partners for future integrated support offers. This may include health partners, the JCP, voluntary sector, and other relevant local services.

6.2 Please provide details of how you will maintain relationships with key partners, across both the geography and full spectrum of services, to ensure regular and frequent contact throughout delivery of the programme.

6.3 Please provide details of how this Supported Employment provision will fit strategically within your local priorities and overall plans to tackle inactivity – building towards your work, health and skills planning. Please provide information about how the Supported Employment funded by this Grant will join up with and provide additionality to local provision in your area, including pre-existing Supported Employment or other support funded from UKSPF, WorkWell, and the Adult Education Budget.

6.4 Tell us about any challenges you may face in developing partnerships and an integrated approach to mobilising this Supported Employment and your approach to managing those challenges. Describe what, if any, support you may require from DWP in this process.

Section 7 - Protecting Participant data

It is important for personal data to be collected, stored, and always used appropriately and securely in line with legal and statutory requirements. The Accountable Body and their Delivery Partners are required to meet established standards for data security, including UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and other applicable data protection legislation.

7.0 Briefly describe how you are embedding data protection by design into the design and delivery of Connect to Work.

BCP Council is committed to complying with all relevant legislation and best practices surrounding the collection, sharing, storage, and monitoring of information which is outlined within BCPs Privacy Policy- [Privacy | BCP](#)

This includes ensuring that personal and business data is handled lawfully, securely, and transparently. Oversight of these responsibilities is shared across designated roles, including the Chief Executive, Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), Caldicott Guardian, and Information Asset Owners, all of whom work together to uphold the Council's standards and ensure accountability in managing information.

All direct delivery staff and the team responsible for managing the delivery and contract management of the CtW service will be employed by BCP Council so BCP Council policies and procedures will be applied but with consideration of Dorset Council policies and procedures.

We aim to adopt the UK Government's Data Sharing Governance Framework 5 x principles to improve cross agency data sharing and enhance strategic alignment and reduce friction in data sharing across Connect to Work partners.

A unified framework for the secure, lawful, and ethical management of participant data across the Connect to Work Supported Employment Service, in line with BCP Council's governance and digital transformation strategies will be developed to ensure alignment with local authority standards and legal obligations. See section 7.3 for more detail.

This will apply to:

- Dorset Council and BCP Council staff
- Commissioned delivery partners
- Strategic partners (e.g., Youth Justice, NHS, DWP)
- Any third-party systems used in service delivery

BCP Council and Dorset Council are required to comply with Data Protection regulations, which include maintaining a formal Data Sharing Policy. For routine information sharing, written Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) are established to ensure data is shared securely and in accordance with legal requirements.

BCP Council and Dorset Council are subject to UK Data Protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, which require clear frameworks for the lawful, secure, and transparent handling of personal data.

As part of their compliance obligations, both councils maintain a Data Sharing Policy that governs how personal data is shared internally and with external partners. For routine information sharing, formal Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) are established.

Throughout every stage of delivery and participant engagement, we will consistently and without exception uphold a transparent approach to the collection, storage, and use of personal information—clearly communicating participants' rights in full compliance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, Digital Economy Act 2017, and other relevant legislation. This commitment is embedded as a core principle of our way of working, by design and by default throughout the project lifecycle.

This commitment to transparency will be operationalised at key touchpoints throughout the participant journey. Clear information about the personal data we collect, how it will be stored and used, and participants' rights will be prominently communicated via;

- Our project webpage
- The Expression of Interest (EOI)
- Initial engagement conversations and triage discussions

To further support informed consent, we will provide participants with Participant Information Sheets and Participant Agreements. These documents will clearly explain how their data will be used and stored. Participants will review and sign these agreements before full enrolment in the project.

These communications will be written in accessible language and designed to support informed consent, ensuring participants understand their rights and how their data will be handled at every stage.

We will ensure that all communication, including that related to data collection, usage, and participant rights are accessible and inclusive, taking into account a wide range of communication needs. This includes providing translated materials for individuals whose first language is not English, using language suitable for all literacy levels, and offering alternative formats such as large print, braille, audio, and British Sign Language (BSL) where required. We will also make reasonable adjustments to support participants with visual, hearing, cognitive, or other additional needs, ensuring that everyone can engage fully and confidently with the programme. Our experienced marketing team will play a key role in ensuring these considerations are embedded into all marketing and communication materials from the outset.

We will ensure participants understand how their personal information (data) will be used by DWP, to include details of Public Task which we understand will be used by DWP to process Connect to Work data, - this will be communicated to participants by sharing the DWP Personal Information Charter link [Personal information charter - Department for Work and Pensions - GOV.UK](#) ensuring participants understand that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) securely stores personal and operational data in accordance with legal and policy frameworks, using it to deliver services, inform policy, and conduct research and analysis, and measures taken to ensure data used for research is anonymised and handled in line with data protection laws and ethical standards.

In line with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council's data protection policies and procedures, we will implement robust measures to ensure the lawful and ethical handling of personal data throughout the project lifecycle. This includes the use of Data Sharing Agreements to govern the exchange of information between partners, Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) to identify and mitigate privacy risks, retention schedules to manage how long data is held, and clear Privacy Notices to inform individuals

about how their data will be used. These tools and processes will be applied consistently and reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing compliance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and BCP Council's Information Governance standards.

For all commissioned services, we will ensure that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council's data protection policies and procedures are fully adopted by our delivery partners. This includes the implementation of appropriate safeguards such as data sharing agreements, DPIAs, retention schedules, and privacy notices. These requirements are embedded into the procurement process, with the BCP Procurement team conducting rigorous compliance checks during tendering to ensure alignment with GDPR and broader information governance standards. Further details of these measures are outlined in the table below



A unified framework for the secure, lawful, and ethical management of participant data across the Connect to Work Supported Employment Service, in line with BCP Council's governance and digital transformation strategies will be developed to ensure alignment with local authority standards and legal obligations. See section 7.3 for more detail.

This will apply to:

- Dorset Council and BCP Council staff
- Commissioned delivery partners
- Strategic partners (e.g., Youth Justice, NHS, DWP)
- Any third-party systems used in service delivery

BCP Council and Dorset Council are required to comply with Data Protection regulations, which include maintaining a formal Data Sharing Policy. For routine information sharing, written Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) are established to ensure data is shared securely and in accordance with legal requirements.

BCP Council and Dorset Council are subject to UK Data Protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, which require clear frameworks for the lawful, secure, and transparent handling of personal data.

As part of their compliance obligations, both councils maintain a Data Sharing Policy that governs how personal data is shared internally and with external partners. For routine information sharing, formal Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) are established.

Throughout every stage of delivery and participant engagement, we will consistently and without exception uphold a transparent approach to the collection, storage, and use of personal information—clearly communicating participants' rights in full compliance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, Digital Economy Act 2017, and other relevant legislation. This commitment is embedded as a core principle of our way of working, by design and by default throughout the project lifecycle.

This commitment to transparency will be operationalised at key touchpoints throughout the participant journey. Clear information about the personal data we collect, how it will be stored and used, and participants' rights will be prominently communicated via;

- Our project webpage
- The Expression of Interest (EOI)
- Initial engagement conversations and triage discussions

To further support informed consent, we will provide participants with Participant Information Sheets and Participant Agreements. These documents will clearly explain how their data will be used and stored. Participants will review and sign these agreements before full enrolment in the project.

These communications will be written in accessible language and designed to support informed consent, ensuring participants understand their rights and how their data will be handled at every stage.

We will ensure that all communication, including that related to data collection, usage, and participant rights are accessible and inclusive, taking into account a wide range of communication needs. This includes providing translated materials for individuals whose first language is not English, using language suitable for all literacy levels, and offering alternative formats such as large print, braille, audio, and British Sign Language (BSL) where required. We will also make reasonable adjustments to support participants with visual, hearing, cognitive, or other additional needs, ensuring that everyone can engage fully and confidently with the programme. Our experienced marketing team will play a key role in ensuring these considerations are embedded into all marketing and communication materials from the outset.

We will ensure participants understand how their personal information (data) will be used by DWP, to include details of Public Task which we understand will be used by DWP to process Connect to Work data, - this will be communicated to participants by sharing the DWP Personal Information Charter link [Personal information charter - Department for Work and Pensions - GOV.UK](#) ensuring participants understand that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) securely stores personal and operational data in accordance with legal and policy frameworks, using it to deliver services, inform policy, and conduct research and analysis, and measures taken to ensure data used for research is anonymised and handled in line with data protection laws and ethical standards.

In line with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council's data protection policies and procedures, we will implement robust measures to ensure the lawful and ethical handling of personal data throughout the project lifecycle. This includes the use of Data Sharing Agreements to govern the exchange of information between partners, Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) to identify and mitigate privacy risks, retention schedules to manage how long data is held, and clear Privacy Notices to inform individuals about how their data will be used. These tools and processes will be applied consistently and reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing compliance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and BCP Council's Information Governance standards.

For all commissioned services, we will ensure that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council's data protection policies and procedures are fully adopted by our delivery partners. This includes the implementation of appropriate safeguards such as data sharing agreements, DPIAs, retention schedules, and privacy notices. These requirements are embedded into the procurement process, with the BCP Procurement team conducting rigorous compliance checks during tendering to ensure alignment with GDPR and broader information governance standards. Further details of these measures are outlined in the table below;

Evaluation Criteria for Q16

The bidder provides clear and sufficient evidence that they meet the legal requirements, including a detailed explanation of their **data protection** measures, technical facilities, and compliance processes. Their response demonstrates that they can maintain data security, uphold data subject rights, and comply with relevant legal obligations.

PASS

The bidder fails to confirm compliance, does not provide sufficient details on their **data protection** measures, or submits incomplete, inaccurate, or unverifiable information. A **fail** will also be issued if the bidder cannot demonstrate how they will meet UK GDPR requirements by contract award.

FAIL

[Records of processing and lawful basis | ICO](#) (note: does this need including and if so where?)

7.1 Explain the data sharing and data governance mechanisms within your Delivery Area, to support the delivery and evaluation of Connect to Work. This work can be ongoing, but please elaborate as far as you are currently able on work undertaken so far.

As part of our commitment to robust information governance across the region, we will be seeking for all commissioned services to sign up to the Dorset Pledge. This requirement ensures that all providers adhere to the agreed policies and procedures relating to the handling, sharing, and protection of personal data. By aligning with the Dorset Pledge, commissioned services demonstrate their compliance with statutory data protection obligations and contribute to a consistent, secure, and transparent approach to information governance across Dorset and BCP. [Dorset Pledge - Our Dorset](#)

The Dorset Pledge is a commitment by organisations across Dorset and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) to uphold high standards of data protection and information governance. It replaces the former Dorset Information Sharing Charter and is managed by the NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board (ICB) with oversight from the Pan Dorset Information Governance Group.

By signing the pledge, organisations commit to:

- Fair and lawful processing and sharing of personal information.
- Compliance with UK data protection legislation.
- Implementing best practices to safeguard data.
- Building public trust in the accuracy, consistency, and security of personal data.

The pledge is designed to ensure that residents of Dorset can have confidence in how their personal information is handled by local organisations.

All organisations operating within Dorset and the BCP area are invited to sign up to the Dorset Pledge. By doing so, they demonstrate a shared commitment to protecting personal information and maintaining public trust. Signing the pledge means organisations agree to follow the principles and processes that support lawful and secure data sharing, helping meet statutory obligations and ensuring compliance with UK data protection laws.

This collective effort strengthens the integrity of data handling across the region and promotes a culture of transparency and accountability.

The Pledge provides a Data Protection Flow Map which is designed to provide organisations with guidance around what they need to have in place to start sharing data with other organisations. [Data-protection-flow-map.pdf](#)



Commissioned services will be expected to clearly outline their data policies and procedures during the Procurement process, to ensure alignment with BCP Council's standards. This includes demonstrating compliance with relevant data protection regulations and ensuring that their practices reflect BCP's commitment to safeguarding personal information. Services must either sign up to the Dorset Pledge, which outlines shared principles for data handling and protection, or adopt and adhere to BCP's GDPR policies and procedures. This requirement ensures consistency, accountability, and trust across all commissioned partnerships which will be reviewed as part of the tender process. BCP's Information Governance Policy can be found online [Information-Governance-Policy-v2.0](#), which is summarised below.

The BCP Information Governance policy ensures BCP Council handles personal and business information lawfully, securely, and transparently, in compliance with legislation. We will be looking to apply these principles with the Connect to Work Programme, which will be regularly reviewed during the development, implementation, and throughout the programmes longevity, applying a 'lessons; learnt' approach, recognising we may need to make amendments, following a structured process for reviewing and updating policies and procedures.

BCP Council recognises the need to fully comply with the requirements and obligations of the:

- Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA)
- Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)
- Common law duty of confidentiality
- Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR)
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (POFA)
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (GDPR)

Governance Principles

Aligned with BCP Council's Information Governance Policy and Privacy Notice:

- Lawfulness, Fairness, Transparency
- Purpose Limitation
- Data Minimisation

- Accuracy
- Storage Limitation
- Integrity and Confidentiality
- Accountability

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Data Controller:** BCP Council
- **Data Processors:** Commissioned delivery partners and third-party platforms
- **Information Asset Owners:** Assigned per system or dataset
- **Data Protection Officer:** Project / Programme Manager, Contracts, Commercial and Information Governance (BCP Council)
- **Strategic Information Governance Board:** to oversee policy and compliance

Data Sharing Mechanisms

- **Partnership Personal Information Sharing Agreement (PISA):** used across BCP safeguarding and community safety partnerships
- **Dorset Information Sharing Charter (DISC):** Framework for lawful multi-agency data sharing
- **Secure Transfer Protocols:** Encrypted email, secure portals / approved platforms
- **Consent Management:** Informed consent recorded and stored securely

Data Security Measures

- Role-based access controls
- Multi-factor authentication
- Encryption of data at rest and in transit
- Secure cloud storage (UK/EU-hosted)
- Regular audits and reviews

Evaluation and Reporting

- Use anonymised or pseudonymised data for service evaluation
- Enable shared dashboards and reporting tools
- Align with BCP's Digital Strategy to leverage data for decision-making and continuous improvement

Training and Capacity Building

- Mandatory GDPR and data protection training for all staff and partners
- Regular updates and refreshers
- Joint workshops on ethical data use and safeguarding

Breach Management

- Immediate reporting to the DPO
- Activation of incident response plan
- Notification to affected individuals and the ICO if required

Review and Continuous Improvement

- Annual review of the framework
- Updates in response to legislation, audit findings, or service changes
- Feedback from staff, partners, and participants

Evaluation and Insight Sharing

- We will use shared data platforms to track participant progress, outcomes, and service impact.
- We aim to enable real-time dashboards and reporting tools for the Relationship Manager and delivery partners.
- We aim to promote data literacy among staff to interpret and act on data insights.

We are liaising with our IT colleagues within BCP Council to explore IT systems and will ensure the system is compliant with our Information Governance Policies.

There will be information sharing agreements in place between BCP, DWP and commissioned services, which are clear and transparent.

All Delivery Partners are required to complete annual training in Information Governance and Cyber Security Awareness. This training provides essential guidance on the handling of personal data and ensures compliance with relevant data protection legislation.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be undertaken in line with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (s64) which will identify, record, evaluate and measures taken to minimise/mitigate data protection risks.

Data will be shared with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) via Skills & Learning, who will act as the designated intermediary between BCP Council and DWP, ensuring that all data transfers are conducted securely and in line with agreed protocols and data protection legislation.

In developing our approach to participant engagement and data governance for the Connect to Work programme, we have carefully considered existing arrangements between Skills & Learning and the Department for Education. We will adopt a similarly robust and compliant framework, ensuring that all data protection measures—including privacy notices, consent processes, and information sheets—are aligned with best practice and statutory requirements. This includes clearly communicating how personal data will be collected, stored, and used, and ensuring participants are fully informed of their rights. Our processes will reflect the standards already embedded within established education and employment programmes, supporting consistency and trust across delivery partners.

7.2 As the Accountable Body for your Delivery Area, it will be your role to ensure that the required Data Sharing Agreements (Agreements) are in place with (and where necessary, between) Delivery Partners, so that data can be shared for delivery and evaluation purposes, including sharing data with DWP. Please advise where Agreements are already in place or, where these are not yet agreed, outline what plans are in motion to put these in place.

For all commissioned services, we will ensure that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council's data protection policies and procedures are fully adopted by our delivery partners. This includes the implementation of appropriate safeguards such as data sharing agreements, DPIAs, retention schedules, and privacy notices. These requirements are embedded into the procurement process, with the BCP Procurement team conducting rigorous compliance checks during tendering to ensure alignment with GDPR and broader information governance standards. Further details of these measures are outlined in the table below

Evaluation Criteria for Q16

The bidder provides clear and sufficient evidence that they meet the legal requirements, including a detailed explanation of their **data protection** measures, technical facilities, and compliance processes. Their response demonstrates that they can maintain data security, uphold data subject rights, and comply with relevant legal obligations.

PASS

The bidder fails to confirm compliance, does not provide sufficient details on their **data protection** measures, or submits incomplete, inaccurate, or unverifiable information. A **fail** will also be issued if the bidder cannot demonstrate how they will meet UK GDPR requirements by contract award.

FAIL

Please refer to section 7.1 relating to Dorset Pledge which aims to provide Dorset partner agencies with a robust foundation for the lawful, secure and confidential sharing of personal information between themselves and other public, private or voluntary sector organisations that they work, or wish to work, in partnership with.

Where agreements are not already in place, we will establish formal agreements with partner agencies (e.g., Youth Justice, NHS) to govern data exchange.

Agreement Name	Purpose	Key Features	Partners Involved
Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs)	Routine data sharing across services	Formal written agreements; signed by Information Asset Owners; recorded in Information Asset Register	BCP Council, Dorset Council
Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership ISA	Safeguarding children and vulnerable individuals	Guided by the Dorset Pledge; enables sharing without consent if justified; supports multi-agency collaboration	BCP Council, Dorset Council, NHS, Police, Education
Dorset Care Record (DSR) Partner Agreement	Integrated health and social care data sharing	Defines legal gateways; ensures compliance with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018	BCP Council, Dorset Council, NHS Trusts, GPs
Dorset Pledge	Framework for lawful and secure data sharing across Dorset	Establishes principles for sharing personal data; supports development of Personal Information Sharing Agreements (PISAs); promotes integrated service delivery	Dorset Council, BCP Council, public & private sector partners

7.3 Provide details of the procedures and systems that you plan to deploy, to ensure that Participant information is being stored securely at all times.

All direct delivery staff and the team responsible for managing the delivery and contract management of the CtW service will be employed by BCP Council so BCP Council policies and procedures will be applied.

BCP Council has an Information Governance accountability framework which ensures we comply with information rights law, keep information secure and effectively manage and control our information. The framework includes an IG Board, the IG Team and senior managers and officers, who have specific roles and responsibilities assigned to them.

All employees and users of the Council's information and systems are responsible for good information governance.

We will deploy a combination of technical systems, procedural safeguards, and staff and delivery partner training to ensure participant data is being stored securely at all times

1. Data Governance and Compliance

- **Adhere to UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018:** policies and procedures already exist to ensure all data handling complies with legal requirements.
- **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA):** Conduct a DPIA before launching or modifying any system that processes personal data.
- **Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs):** BCP Council is signed up to the Dorset Information Sharing Charter (DiSC). Where agreements are not already in place, we will establish formal agreements with partner agencies (e.g., Youth Justice, NHS) to govern data exchange.

2. Secure Digital Systems

- **Use a secure case management system:** this is still in development - may be based on Mosaic which is currently used by BCP Council
- **Role-based access controls:** Limit access to participant data based on staff roles. Access to systems must be formally requested by a manager and only the appropriate minimum levels of access needed by users to do their jobs will be granted
- **Multi-factor authentication (MFA):** BCP Council already require MFA for all staff accessing any corporate devices or systems.
- **Audit trails:** Enable logging of all data access and changes for accountability.
- **Staff cybersecurity responsibilities:** including requirement to lock devices when leaving them unattended

3. Data Storage and Encryption

- **Encrypt data at rest and in transit:** Use AES-256 encryption for stored files and TLS for data transmission. Check what the local arrangements are
- **Secure cloud storage:** BCP Council use Microsoft 365 cloud services that are hosted in the UK/EU and compliant with public sector standards.
- **Avoid local storage:** Prohibit saving participant data on personal devices or unencrypted USBs. This will be covered in staff training and in ICT security statements that staff agree to whenever signing in to a device or system
- **Filtering software:** used to block access to websites deemed by the council to be inappropriate or high risk. Email and attachments are electronically scanned for inappropriate content, viruses & malicious code. Emails trapped and quarantined are checked by IT or the Information Governance Team

4. Policies and Procedures

- **Data handling protocols:** clear procedures are already in place for collecting, storing, accessing, and deleting resident data and these procedures will be applied to CtW participant data.

- **Information Security Policy:** sets out the rules which help protect the council's information and the information it holds about its customers, the public and staff. This Policy is based on industry guidance and on aspects of ISO 27001:2013; "Information Security Management Systems – Requirements" and related guidance. BCP Council also adheres to Government's Public Services Network (PSN) security standards and the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard in order to provide services and process payments
- **Use and exchange of information protocols:** covered by the Information Security Policy
- **Access control:**
- **Retention schedules:** these are already in place for other BCP Council collected data including data collected for DfE contracts, with clear guidelines on how long data is kept and when it is securely deleted.
- **Incident response plan:** contingency plans are in place for any data breaches with a documented response and reporting process via line managers and the Information Asset Advisor

5. Staff Training and Culture

- **Mandatory data protection training:** all BCP Council employed staff complete regular training on GDPR, safeguarding, and secure data handling through an online training portal SkillGate. A further suite of cybersecurity modules through My Compliance are also mandated
- **Values-based culture:** Reinforce the importance of confidentiality and respect for participant privacy.
- **Regular refreshers and updates:** Staff newsletters, the intranet and Teams channel updates are available to all employed staff to stay informed of changes in policy or technology.
- **Disciplinary and performance management procedures:** established guidance and procedures for managers are available

6. Regular Reviews and Audits

- **Internal audits:** Periodically review data security practices and system access logs.
- **External assessments:** what does BCP use to test and validate our systems? Cyber Essentials accreditation is in place for Skills & Learning systems and procedures
- **Feedback loops:** staff are encouraged to report concerns or suggest improvements. An annual staff engagement survey is in operation and during the initial months of CtW, staff will have other reporting channels available to help inform future developments via a Teams Form

Delivery partner expectations

A 'secure data handling checklist' will be developed for delivery partners to support them to comply with an agreed Data Processing Agreement. Compliance requirements will be included in the delivery contract and will be monitored and checked by the Relationship Manager during regular partner reviews. Please refer to Section 1 which provides an example of where our Procurement Team undertakes compliance checks which includes a section around Data Protection which ensures they will meet legal requirements, demonstrating they meet UK GDPR requirements.

1. Formal Agreements and Contracts

- **Data Processing Agreements (DPAs):** will include clear clauses outlining how participant data must be handled, stored, shared, and protected.
- **Service Level Agreements (SLAs):** will define expectations around data security, breach reporting, and compliance monitoring.
- **Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs):** will be agreed and reviewed regularly.

2. Due Diligence and Vetting

- **Pre-commissioning checks:** the partner's data protection policies, IT infrastructure, and history of compliance will be assessed during the PQQ
- **Cyber Essentials certification:** will be an expectation for partners to hold or work towards UK government-backed cybersecurity accreditation.
- **Staff vetting:** we will seek assurance that partner staff handling data will DBS-checked and trained in GDPR.

3. Secure Systems and Technology

- **Approved platforms only:** we will require partners to use agreed secure, encrypted systems for storing and transmitting data.
- **Access controls:** we will require partners to ensure role-based access and multi-factor authentication are in place.
- **Data minimisation:** we will support partners to only collect and retain data necessary for their agreed service delivery.
-

4. Training and Capacity Building

- **Mandatory data protection training:** we will provide access to a training portal to ensure all partner staff complete GDPR and safeguarding training if they don't already have a suitable CPD system.
- **Joint workshops:** we aim to run collaborative sessions on secure data handling, values-based practice, and ethical service delivery.
- **Ongoing support:** we will provide guidance and updates on local authority policies and best practices and provide opportunities for partners to network and share best practice

5. Monitoring and Compliance

- **Regular audits:** we will conduct scheduled and spot-check audits of partner data handling practices.
- **Compliance reporting:** we will require partners to submit reports on data security and breaches.
- **Incident response protocols:** we will ensure partners have clear procedures for reporting and managing data breaches and will support them to develop these where they do not already exist.

6. Culture and Communication

- **Shared values:** we will embed respect, integrity, and accountability into partnership agreements and induction materials.

- **Open dialogue:** we will maintain regular communication to address concerns, share updates, and reinforce expectations through regular contract review meetings.
- **Feedback loops:** we will support partners to encourage staff and participants to report any data handling concerns.

BCP Council addresses data security incidents through its Information Governance and Information Security frameworks, which are outlined in its published policies and privacy notices.

This workflow outlines the process followed by BCP Council in the event of a data security incident. It ensures timely reporting, assessment, and resolution in compliance with data protection regulations.



Appended Policies;

[Privacy | BCP](#)

[Information governance policy | BCP](#)

[Information security policy | BCP](#)

[Procurement and contract management strategy | BCP](#)

[Personal information charter - Department for Work and Pensions - GOV.UK](#)

[Dorset Pledge - Our Dorset](#)

The following questions relate to subsidy control. Connect to Work is not intended to be a subsidy (as defined in the Subsidy Control Act 2022) and therefore DWP needs assurances from the Accountable Body and its Additional Delivery Area Members that the Grant will not constitute “financial assistance that confers an economic advantage on one or more enterprises”.

Please detail and provide DWP with responses to the questions set out below together with sufficient evidence (if appropriate) to substantiate the responses given, to provide assurance to DWP that either a) no or only minimal economic activities are undertaken by the Accountable Body and each Additional Delivery Area Member); or b) any funds that may be granted under Connect to Work will be adequately ringfenced from any economic activities the Accountable Body and each Additional Delivery Area Member carries out.

An “economic activity” for these purposes means the offering of goods or services on a market.

Further detail on subsidy control, economic activities and ringfencing can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/658025b295bf65000d719140/uk_subsidy_control_regime_statutory_guidance.pdf

Please provide responses in respect of the Accountable Body, and each Additional Delivery Area Member.

DWP reserves the right to raise further questions if needed to establish whether or not any funding may constitute a subsidy, and ultimately decide not to award the Accountable Body the Connect to Work Grant.

8.0	Is the Accountable Body or any Additional Delivery Area Member involved in any economic activities? NB. for the avoidance of doubt we do not consider ‘in-house’ delivery (i.e. for themselves and not commercial in purpose) by Accountable Bodies or Additional Delivery Area Members to be ‘economic activities’ as these services are not being offered on a market (as per the definition above) and they are not acting for a commercial purpose.	No
8.1	If the Accountable Body or any Additional Delivery Area Member is involved in any economic activity, what proportion of the Accountable Body's or Additional Delivery Area Member's capacity do the economic activities constitute? [Insert response here]	

8.2	Please provide a description of the Accountable Body's or the Additional Delivery Area Member's economic activities and how they relate to activities proposed to be funded under the Connect to Work Grant (including any areas of overlap). <i>[Insert response here]</i>
8.3	What measures, if any, will the Accountable Body's or the Additional Delivery Area Member implement in order to ring-fence the Connect to Work Grant funding from the Accountable Body's or the Additional Delivery Area Member's economic activities? <i>[Insert response here]</i>

Section 9 – Accountable Body declaration

By submitting this Delivery Plan signed by an authorised representative, the Accountable Body confirms that:

- The information set out in the Delivery Plan is accurate and true.
 - The Accountable Body is the lead local authority applying for the Connect to Work Grant on behalf of the Delivery Area. As such, the Accountable Body confirms that it is appropriately empowered by legally authorised Additional Delivery Area Members to deliver the Connect to Work service proposed in the Delivery Plan. This includes due consideration of the mechanisms available to them to deliver the Connect to Work service.
 - It will put in place its own arrangements across the Delivery Area.
 - It is committed to completing and collecting MI as part of delivering a Connect to Work service (see section 'Management Information (MI) and Reporting Requirements' of the Grant Guidance for further details).
 - It is committed to participating in a regional/national network to share good practice between other Accountable Bodies' delivering Connect to Work.
 - It is committed to delivering Connect to Work in accordance with the final Grant Funding Agreement between the DWP and the Accountable Body.
-

Signature:
