

Job Description

Position:	Employment Specialist
Department/Service:	Future Support
Status:	Fixed Term, until 2030, with extension subject to funding
Hours of Work:	37hrs per week (subject to Four Day Week scheme following 6-months in post)
Working Pattern:	Mon-Fri with evenings and weekends as required
Leave:	23 days pa plus Bank Holidays
Location:	Norwich
Salary:	£29,970
Application Deadline:	Monday 2 nd March 2026
Interview Date:	Tuesday 10 th March 2026

Vision statement:

Our vision is of vibrant and strong communities where everybody can live independent, safe and happy lives.

Purpose: The role will work with Norfolk residents in the Connect to Work project, managing a caseload of project participants who have barriers to finding work, supporting them to secure sustainable paid employment.

You will deliver the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach (for which training will be given); providing person centred advice and guidance to clients, whilst building positive relationships with local employers to enable clients to move into suitable employment.

The role will include managing a wide range of partner relationships, supporting referrals and resident pathways from a breadth of health, community and voluntary sector settings.

Context: The Connect to Work project (CtW) is managed by Norfolk County Council Employment & Skills department. Connect to Work is a voluntary programme to help tackle economic inactivity by providing a specific form of support targeted at the right people at the right time, based on their individual circumstances. Participants must be both eligible and suitable for the provision. Connect to Work will deliver the evidence-based Supported Employment model, '*place, train, and maintain*', building on the existing DWP funded Supported Employment programmes; Local Supported Employment (LSE) and Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care (IPSPC) and delivering over a 5-year period 2025-2030.

Good quality work provides people with income, social interaction, and a sense of fulfilment and purpose among many other benefits. It's known that work has a positive effect on people's physical and mental health, and their wellbeing, while unemployment often has a harmful impact.

Connect to Work will take a collaborative, locally led approach to tackling 'Hidden Unemployment' across Norfolk. The aim for the project is to transform lives and make a difference for disabled people, people with health conditions and other complex barriers to employment, helping them to get into and on in work.

Key Deliverables include:

Key Deliverable 1) participant engagement & IPS journey to paid, competitive work

Key Deliverable 2) employer engagement, job development & inclusive practice

Key Deliverable 3) in-work support, retention & progression

key deliverable 4) partnership integration, referrals & community presence

key deliverable 5) performance, data quality, safeguarding & governance

Person Specification: You will be a tenacious and resilient practitioner with strong emotional intelligence and the ability to build relationships of trust at pace. You will be able to operate independently, and will have a good understanding of the needs and strengths of people experiencing physical and/or mental health issues and disabilities. You will have experience delivering employment support programmes.

Other Essential criteria includes:

- Strong emotional intelligence, with the ability to engage and build trusting relationships at pace.
- Understanding of trauma-informed practice and its application within employment support.
- Knowledge of the needs, barriers, and strengths of people with health conditions and/or disabilities.
- Experience delivering IPS or supported employment approaches, with a track record of achieving outcomes.
- Proven experience providing employment support, including employer engagement and job brokering.
- Ability to build and sustain strong relationships with employers, health professionals, and community partners.
- Well-developed local networks and understanding of Norfolk's communities, employers, and services.
- Experience of working within or alongside VCSE, health and primary care settings.
- Demonstrable resilience, persistence, and tenacity in overcoming barriers to employment.
- Ability to work independently, manage a caseload proactively, and use initiative to achieve outcomes.
- Understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications for employment and workplace adjustments.
- Ability to use ICT tool such as Excel, CRM systems etc.

Strong applications will evidence the following:

- Knowledge of welfare benefits and their interaction with employment.
- Ability to influence employers to develop or adapt job opportunities specifically for participants with health needs

About Future Projects: Future Projects is a charity which was founded in 2000 by two volunteers who had become increasingly frustrated at the social exclusion, poverty, and lack of support available in their local community. They recognised that the issues people faced on their local housing estate in Norwich – one of the most deprived in the U.K. – could not be resolved by simply addressing one problem at a time in isolation. So they set about working with the local community to understand their needs and ambitions, and developed projects in youth work, education, media and advice along the way.

Today, we aim to help people in difficult situations build in their strengths and capabilities, and to develop the skills confidence and resilience to take control and transform their lives. We do this by providing high quality services in the community which promote education, health & wellbeing, skills, employment and improved life chances.

Our current projects and services are organised in three distinct departments as set out below.



Detailed duties and responsibilities:

Key Deliverable 1) Participant engagement & IPS journey to paid, competitive work

purpose: take ownership of a caseload and deliver the full IPS/supported employment journey so that participants move rapidly into suitable, competitive employment.

- manage an active caseload of participants, prioritising rapid activation and progress towards work
- deliver the 5-stage IPS model: engagement; vocational profiling; employer engagement; job matching; in-work support
- complete vocational profiles and co-produce action plans focused on goals, strengths and support needs
- provide practical job-search support (CVs, applications, interview preparation) and careers guidance
- identify support needs (e.g. welfare benefits, health/disclosure) and coordinate solutions

Key Deliverable 2) employer engagement, job development & inclusive practice

purpose: build and maintain an employer network, generating suitable vacancies (including hidden opportunities) and enabling inclusive hiring.

- proactively develop employer relationships across sectors and keep an employer engagement log/CRM up to date

- meet IPS fidelity expectations for employer contact frequency, tracking quality and outcomes
- advocate for participants; negotiate reasonable adjustments and return-to-work plans; use job carving where appropriate and explore hidden employment opportunities
- promote CtW to employers and troubleshoot workplace barriers to recruitment and retention
- broaden job types and routes (including self-employment where relevant) to align with participant preferences

Key Deliverable 3) in-work support, retention & progression

purpose: sustain outcomes through high-quality follow-along support that embeds retention, wellbeing and progression for those in-work.

- provide ongoing in-work coaching/support to participants and employers, including workplace visits/check-ins
- agree retention plans, review progress and intervene early to prevent job loss
- support progression (hours, pay, responsibilities, training) aligned to participant goals
- support employers to adapt and improve their practice to support employee retention
- record sustainment evidence in line with programme rules and IPS fidelity

key deliverable 4) partnership integration, referrals & community presence

purpose: take a proactive role in developing partnership arrangements across health, VCSE and other services to generate referrals, collaborate and improve participant outcomes.

- embed with clinical/primary care and community teams; attend regular MDT/clinical meetings as an employment specialist
- coordinate warm referrals and joint plans with VCSE partners, JCP/DEAs, adult learning/colleges, housing and community services
- work peripatetically across community venues, primary care/health settings, partner premises and future projects offices
- contribute to local outreach and service promotion to reach under-served cohorts
- Identify potential interventions from VCSE partners under the Specialist Support Framework to improve participant outcomes

key deliverable 5) performance, data quality, safeguarding & governance

purpose: meet contracted targets and maintain high standards of quality, compliance, safety and risk management.

- meet/exceed targets for referrals, programme starts, employer engagement, job starts and sustainments
- keep accurate, timely records; comply with data capture/reporting protocols and case management systems (including the programme's CRM and any agreed tools)
- follow safeguarding procedures and place participant safety, dignity and wellbeing first; recognise concerns, act promptly with timely referrals/escalations, and maintain professional boundaries and informed consent
- embed equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) in all practice; challenge discrimination, remove barriers (including reasonable adjustments) and use accessible, person-centred communication
- follow lone-working, health & safety and information governance (GDPR) policies; complete risk assessments, use check-in/out, report incidents and handle data lawfully and securely
- participate in supervision, fidelity reviews, audits and continuous improvement, and provide reports and presentations, talks etc. to relevant parties as requested

Other

- undertake any other duties reasonably required and commensurate with the role to meet participant, employer and programme needs, including supporting service improvement, training and cover as needed

This Job Description is intended to provide a broad outline of the main duties and responsibilities only. It is not exhaustive, and is subject to review in conjunction with the post holder and according to future changes/developments in the service.

Job environment: This is a highly mobile role requiring delivery in community venues, primary care and health settings, partner organisations' premises, and Future Projects offices, with flexibility to work evenings and weekends where needed to meet the needs of participants and the service. The role is part of a larger team delivering the Connect to Work programme in North Norfolk and Norwich.

Supervision: The post holder will report to the Connect to Work Project Manager and will be subject to regular performance reviews and support sessions.

Line Management Responsibility: The post has no line management responsibility.

Health and Safety/Safeguarding: The post holder must comply with policies and procedures relating to health and safety, security, confidentiality, data protection, and safeguarding adults and children.

Future Projects is committed to safeguarding children and at-risk adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share that commitment. Our primary concern is always the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.

- The Charity's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children is: Jane MacLennan – Deputy Head Teacher at Future Education: j.maclennan@futureeducation.org.uk 01603 251 310
- The Charity's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Vulnerable Adults is: Grace Richardson – Support Services Manager: g.richardson@futureprojects.org.uk 01603 250 505

Future Projects will provide a programme of induction and training to include Health & Safety and Safeguarding, and will make external training available as required. It is a requirement that all employees complete this training and refreshers as directed to ensure compliance with our procedures.

Equalities: The post holder must be aware of, support and promote equality and diversity in all its forms, and ensure that clients have equality of access to the services on offer. In the context of this role, this includes being mindful of participants' access requirements to information, facilities and services and making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Future Projects is an equal opportunities employer, a Living Wage employer, and a Disability Confident employer; more information is available on request.

Pre-employment checks: Appointment is subject to satisfactory checks completed before start, including proof of identity and right to work in the UK, an enhanced DBS (adult workforce; adults' barred list if the role meets 'regulated activity'), and two references (including your current/most recent manager). We will verify stated qualifications/experience and discuss any employment gaps at interview. Having a criminal record does not automatically bar you; decisions are made case by case in line with legislation.

Applicant instructions:

- Complete the application form in full. Explain any gaps in employment; incomplete applications may not be shortlisted.
- Tailor your answers. Use the person specification and key deliverables to structure your application with clear, outcome-focused examples where appropriate.
- References. Provide two referees (one must be your current/most recent line manager). We will not contact referees without your consent and not before interview/outcome.
- Reasonable adjustments. Tell us if you need any adjustments for the application or interview - we are happy to help.
- Interview format. Shortlisted candidates will complete one panel interview (we will send discussion topics in advance) and one service-user interview/exercise. Dates are published with the advert; please let us know if you are not available on these days.
- Submission. Follow the advert instructions (deadline, where to send, file format). CVs are not accepted without a completed application form.
- Data. We will handle your information in line with our recruitment privacy notice and GDPR.