

Role title	Head of Contracts and Commissioning	Grade	TBC
Reports to	Commercial & Growth Director	Location	Darlington
Job family	Commercial	Job Code	TBC
Role Purpose			
Lead the Group's contracts and commissioning function across England, Scotland and Wales, owning the full portfolio of contracts with local authorities, ICBs, NHS bodies and other statutory funders. The role ensures every contract is actively managed, commercially sustainable and compliant, leads fee negotiations, tenders and framework activity, and builds strong strategic relationships with commissioners, positioning the Group as a trusted, quality-focused provider of choice.			
Main Activities			
• Own the Group's entire contracts portfolio, ensuring every contract with a local authority, ICB, NHS body or other statutory funder is accurately recorded, up to date and actively managed through its lifecycle. • Lead the development and maintenance of a comprehensive contracts register, tracking key contract terms, fee rates, review dates, notice periods and compliance requirements across the portfolio. • Ensure all contracts are reviewed ahead of renewal or renegotiation, with sufficient lead time to prepare a well-evidenced and commercially sound position, and that no contracts lapse or expire without active management. • Identify and escalate contracts where performance concerns, compliance issues or commercial risks are arising, working with the Commercial & Growth Director, Quality & Governance Director and relevant Regional Directors to agree a response. • Lead fee negotiations with local authorities and ICBs across the Group's portfolio, ensuring fee rates are fair, commercially sustainable and reflective of the quality and cost of care delivered. • Build and maintain strong, strategic relationships with local authority commissioners, ICBs, NHS commissioners and other statutory funders, positioning the Group as a trusted, quality-focused provider of choice. • Represent the Group at senior commissioner meetings, contract review meetings, provider forums and local authority engagement events. • Lead the identification, assessment and response to commissioning tenders, dynamic purchasing system (DPS) applications and framework agreements, ensuring submissions are high-quality, well-evidenced and differentiated. • Monitor and interpret commissioning policy, funding reforms and market developments across England, Scotland and Wales, briefing the Commercial & Growth Director on material developments and implications. • Ensure the Group meets all contractual performance obligations, working with the Quality & Governance Director and Regional Directors to monitor compliance with contract KPIs and reporting requirements. • Act as the Group's most senior expert on social care funding frameworks across England, Scotland and Wales, providing advice and guidance on funding eligibility, means-testing rules, FNC, CHC and other relevant funding streams. • Provide leadership, direction and development to the Commissioning Manager and Contracts Assistant, setting clear objectives and ensuring high standards of delivery across the function. • Conduct regular one-to-ones and appraisals for the team, providing constructive feedback and development support to build capability within the function. • Provide regular reports to the Commercial & Growth Director, Executive Leadership Team and Board on the contracts portfolio, commissioning pipeline, fee negotiation progress, tender activity and any material risks or opportunities.			

• Work collaboratively across the Commercial & Growth Directorate and with the Finance & IT, Quality & Governance and People Directorates to ensure contracts and commissioning activity is fully integrated with the Group's wider operational and strategic agenda. • Lead the resolution of contract disputes, performance concerns or compliance issues raised by commissioners, working with the Commercial & Growth Director and relevant colleagues to develop and deliver a credible response. • Undertake any other duties commensurate with the seniority of the role, as required by the Commercial & Growth Director.		
Qualifications and Skills Required		
	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and knowledge	Thorough understanding of the social care commissioning and contracting landscape across England, including local authority means-testing, FNC, CHC and NHS commissioning frameworks. Familiarity with equivalent commissioning and contracting frameworks in Scotland and/or Wales. Relevant degree or professional qualification in business, law, health or social care commissioning, or a related discipline, or equivalent practical experience at a senior contracts and commissioning level.	Professional qualification or accreditation relevant to contract management, procurement or health and social care commissioning.
Skills	Strong leadership and people management skills; excellent negotiation, analytical and stakeholder management skills; strong contract management discipline; strong bid-writing skills; confident presenting to senior and Executive-level audiences.	Experience presenting to Board or Executive Leadership Team level.
Experience	Significant senior experience in a contracts management, commissioning or commercial development role within adult social care, health, or a comparable regulated public sector environment, with a demonstrable track record of managing complex contracts portfolios and commissioner relationships across multiple local authorities or ICBs. Proven experience of leading fee negotiations, tenders and framework applications, and of managing and developing a team.	Experience of the commissioning and contracting landscape in more than one UK jurisdiction (England, Scotland or Wales).
Personal attributes	Credible, confident and resilient senior leader, with strong relationship-building and negotiation skills; highly analytical and commercially minded; strategic thinker who is also comfortable in the operational detail; strong people leadership skills.	Genuine interest in, and empathy for, the social care sector.
Special features		
You will be required to complete an Enhanced DBS disclosure. You will be required to comply with a DVLA licence check for compliance with insurance policies; this is a remote role, with regular travel to commissioner meetings, provider forums and homes across the Group's portfolio.		
Dimensions:		
Leads the Group's contracts and commissioning function across the full home portfolio in England, Scotland and Wales, managing a Commissioning Manager and Contracts		



Assistant, and working closely with the Commercial & Growth Director, Commercial Finance Managers, Regional Directors, Area Directors and Home Managers.