

The Managed Service Programme (MSP) Toolkit

A Practical Guide to Building a Smarter
Contingent Workforce Strategy



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The workforce landscape today

Across the UK's critical infrastructure sectors, organisations are operating under increasing pressure. Investment cycles are intensifying, regulatory and ESG expectations are rising, and the competition for specialist talent continues to grow.

Contingent workers no longer exist solely to cover peaks in demand. They now play a core role in delivering long-term programmes across energy, utilities, transport and nuclear environments. Yet many organisations still rely on fragmented, decentralised supply models that restrict visibility, limit control, and reduce scalability.

This toolkit is a practical guide designed to help you:



Assess your organisation's readiness for an MSP



Identify the most suitable MSP model



Plan and implement a first- or second-generation MSP



Build a business case and manage change effectively



Measure and realise long-term value are realised in practice

Major investment programmes such as **RIIO-ED2** and **AMP8** are accelerating demand for engineering, technical, and digital skills. Without a unified approach to managing contingent labour, organisations face increasing cost pressure and delivery risk.

Managed Service Programmes (MSPs) provide the structure, governance and agility required to scale effectively while maintaining control and strengthening compliance in an increasingly complex workforce landscape.



What is an MSP?

A Managed Service Programme (MSP) is a fully managed solution for your contingent workforce. It covers everything from sourcing and onboarding to supplier management, compliance and reporting. It centralises accountability and insight.

Rather than working with multiple recruitment agencies independently, an MSP creates a single, joined-up approach.

At its core, an MSP enables organisations to:

- Centralise control of contingent workers
- Standardise processes and compliance
- Improve speed, consistency, and quality
- Gain clear visibility of workforce data and spend
- Support better, data-led planning decisions



Are you ready for an MSP?

Not every organisation is at the same level of workforce maturity. Before deciding whether an MSP is the right next step, it's helpful to understand how your contingent workforce is currently managed and where the key challenges sit. Here are eight simple self-check statements to think about.

Score each statement from 1 (not true) to 5 (very true):

Statement	Your score
We lack clear visibility of our full contingent workforce	
Rates vary significantly for similar roles	
We frequently engage multiple recruitment suppliers	
Time-to-hire regularly impacts project delivery	
Compliance feels reactive rather than structured	
Total contingent spend is difficult to track	
Specialist or hard-to-source roles are increasing	
Hiring managers frequently operate outside of the process	

Your Results:

0-15: You may not yet need an MSP, but improved structure would support future growth.

16-25: Your contingent workforce is becoming increasingly complex. An MSP could provide greater visibility and control.

26-40: There is a strong case for implementing or optimising an MSP due to high complexity, risk, and scale.

If your score is **above 20**, there is a clear opportunity to improve efficiency, control and visibility through a more structured approach.

Do you currently have an MSP provider?

No → You're a prime candidate for your first MSP

Yes → It may be time to review or change your provider

MSP delivery models

The right MSP delivery model can define how quickly you hire, the quality of talent you attract, and the control you maintain. Explore the key differences and what they mean for your organisation below.

Read more about MSP delivery models



Neutral Vendor MSP



Within this model, agencies like Rullion independently manages multiple agencies without directly supplying candidates. The Neutral Vendor MSP prioritises transparency, governance, and fair distribution of roles across suppliers.

Master Vendor MSP



In this model, agencies like Rullion would act as the primary or sole supplier, fulfilling the majority of roles directly while coordinating any supporting agency relationships. The Master Vendor MSP prioritises speed, simplicity and cost efficiency.

Which model is right for you?

- How complex is your current supplier network?
- How strong is current governance and compliance?
- How critical is speed-to-hire?
- How important are direct fulfilment and continuity?

Master Vendor MSP

Speed

Faster fulfilment for repeat skills.

Access To Niche Skills

Relies on primary supplier's expertise for in-scope roles and escalation to approved suppliers.

Supplier Relationship Management

One dedicated MSP contact managing a smaller, focused supplier group.

Cost Control

Strong for repeat hires.

Risk

Over-reliance on one supplier.

Neutral Vendor MSP

Speed

Dependent on supplier responsiveness.

Access To Niche Skills

Immediate access to full approved supplier network.

Supplier Relationship Management

One dedicated MSP contact managing compliance, and consistency across a broader supplier.

Cost Control

Competitive supplier engagement may reduce rates.

Risk

Possible slower time-to-fill if not managed well.

Rullion offers both Neutral Vendor and Master Vendor MSP models, tailoring the approach to your organisation's structure, workforce complexity, and strategic goals.

However, we excel in Master Vendor delivery across critical infrastructure, consistently achieving **90%+ direct fulfilment** for clients where continuity, compliance, and delivery are paramount.



Hiring support to strategic insight

Over time, a mature MSP evolves from a centralised recruitment function. Managing day-to-day hiring tasks to delivering strategic workforce intelligence that enables better planning, decision-making and long-term resilience.

Through structured data, supplier performance tracking, and workforce analysis, an MSP helps organisations forecast demand, identify skills gaps, and optimise how talent is sourced, deployed, and managed. As the programme develops, the focus shifts from short-term efficiency gains to long-term strategic value.

How MSPs develop over time



Early Stage MSP

Transactional, reactive hiring with limited visibility. Control is the primary focus here.



Developing MSP

Managed, centralised processes with clear governance. Consistency is the primary focus here.



Advanced MSP

Insight-led data, enabling reporting and trend analysis. Planning is the primary focus here.



Strategic MSP

Forecasting, optimisation, and workforce design. Transformation is the primary focus here.

Where value appears first (and where it grows)

As data quality improves and partnerships mature, the benefit of an MSP compounds. Unlocking new opportunities for efficiency, resilience, and performance.

Early value

Compliance & risk

Better visibility

Cost control

Supplier consolidation

Mid-term value

Workforce intelligence

Supplier optimisation
with stronger governance

Improved
hiring performance

Social value
& ED&I impact

Long-term value

Skills forecasting

Strategic
workforce planning

Innovation
& automation

Elevated CSR, Social
value & ED&I impact

Turning strategy into reality

Whether you're implementing your first MSP or transitioning from an existing provider, successful rollout depends on more than just process. It requires the right preparation, clear communication, and strong alignment across stakeholders.

At Rullion, implementation is structured, collaborative and designed to minimise disruption while building confidence and buy-in from day one.

Before an MSP goes live, it's important to think about a few key areas:

- Outcomes
- Workers, roles, and locations in scope
- Governance and compliance management
- Technology and data integration
- KPIs and success definition
- Change and communications planning

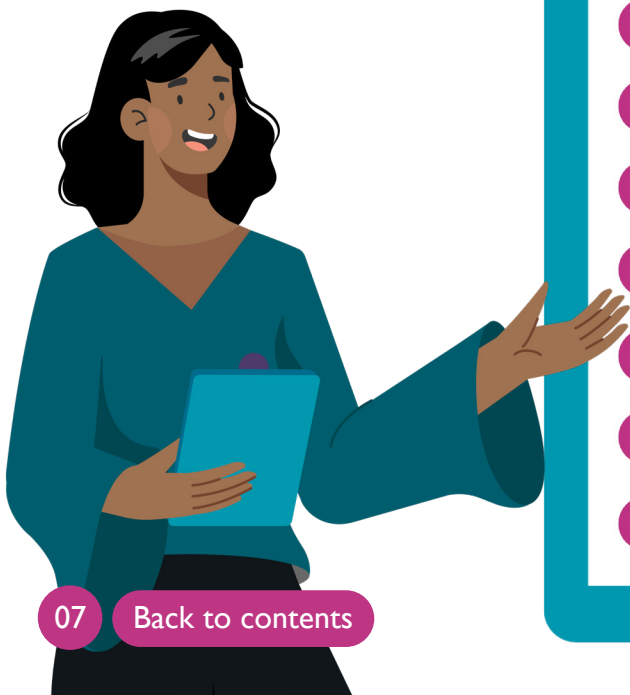
These are the foundations that ensure a successful, sustainable implementation.



Read our full MSP implementation guide

10 essential questions to ask before rolling out an MSP

- 1 What outcomes do we want?**
(e.g., safety, compliance, surge capability, cost efficiency)
- 2 Which worker categories and sites are in scope?**
(e.g., temporary, safety-critical, cleared personnel)
- 3 How is governance structured?**
(e.g., cyber certification, business continuity, regulatory audit readiness)
- 4 What sector-specific safety controls are provided?**
(e.g., Sentinel/PTS, EUSR, BPSS/SC/DV clearance)
- 5 How are risks handled?**
(e.g., IR35, AVR, right-to-work, umbrella companies)
- 6 How does the MSP support ESG goals?**
(e.g., social value, ethical supply chain)
- 7 How will technology and data be integrated?**
(e.g., VMS, integrations, dashboards, reporting, GDPR compliance)
- 8 Which KPIs will be tracked?**
(e.g., time-to-fill, fill rate, compliance rates)
- 9 What is the mobilisation and change plan?**
(e.g., pilot, training, audits)
- 10 What's the exit plan?**
(e.g., data export, knowledge transfer, continuity)



Understanding MSP costs & business value

An MSP is often perceived as an added layer of cost. In reality, with the right partner, it becomes a structured investment that reduces overall contingent workforce spend while minimising risk and improving performance.

Without an MSP

- Fragmented suppliers
- Inconsistent rates
- Limited visibility
- Reactive hiring
- Higher compliance risk

With an MSP

- Centralised control
- Standardised pricing
- Real-time visibility
- Strategic hiring
- Embedded compliance

Where the value is created

-  Reduced agency margins
-  Higher direct fulfilment
-  Faster time-to-hire
-  Lower attrition
-  Clear, measurable cost savings



Organisations typically see 5–20% improvement in overall contingent workforce efficiency when moving to an MSP.

Example scenario (based on typical conditions)

Organisation with 200 contractors at ~£375/day and an estimated annual contingent spend of £19.5m.

A 10% efficiency improvement via an MSP = ~£1.95m potential saving per year.

Rullion MSP real-world impact in action

Across energy, utilities, transport and other safety-critical environments, Rullion's MSP model is helping organisations transform the way they manage and deliver their contingent workforce.

Energy Sector



Challenge

Large-scale workforce expansion during peak operational demand.

Solution

Introduced Rullion MSP with embedded on-site team and consolidated supplier base.

Outcome

30% reduction in time-to-hire; supplier satisfaction improved by 25%.

Utilities Sector



Challenge

Transitioning 700+ contractors during the holiday period.

Solution

Rapid mobilisation and direct stakeholder engagement.

Outcome

100% contractor retention, seamless continuity, and improved compliance oversight.

Transport Infrastructure Sector



Challenge

Meeting high-volume project recruitment with consistent quality.

Solution

Dedicated MSP partnership focused on skills forecasting and long-term fulfilment.

Outcome

90%+ direct fulfilment and sustained project delivery performance.

Building your business case for an MSP

An MSP business case helps you understand how to improve control, lower risk, and get more from your contingent workforce. These 6 pillars walk you through the key considerations for your first MSPs or if you're looking to switch providers.

01 Financial Impact

- Reduced agency margin and duplicated costs
- Increased rate consistency and control
- Improved visibility of contingent workforce spend
- Lower time-to-hire and backfill costs

02 Risk & Compliance

- Centralised governance and audit trail
- Reduced regulatory, IR35 and classification risk
- Clearer accountability and documentation
- Standardised onboarding and vetting processes

03 Operational Performance

- Faster access to critical skills
- Reduced hiring delays and bottlenecks
- Improved process consistency
- Stronger stakeholder experience

04 Strategic Alignment

- Supports major investment programmes (e.g. RII0-ED2, AMP8)
- Enables long-term workforce planning and forecasting
- Improves leadership visibility and confidence
- Aligns talent to business priorities

05 Supply Chain Control

- Structured, managed supplier ecosystem
- Reduced complexity and duplication
- Improved supplier performance and accountability
- Clearer communication and reporting lines

06 Social Value & ESG Impact

- Greater diversity and inclusion across the workforce
- Increased access for underrepresented and early-career talent
- Ethical and responsible supply chains
- Supports sustainability and net-zero commitments

Use the table below to understand how your business case priorities may shift based on your starting point. Be that implementing a first- or second-generation MSP.

Priorities for First Generation (Introducing an MSP)	Priorities for Second Generation (Changing providers)
Establish control and visibility	Increase performance and ROI
Introduce governance & process	Resolve inefficiencies and gaps
Create reliable data foundations	Enhance insight and optimisation
Reduce risk and inconsistency	Strengthen confidence and results
Build future-ready capability	Maximise value from existing model

Access our Business Case Builder and other helpful MSP insights



Your 90-day MSP journey

This 90-day journey shows how to use the tools and frameworks in this toolkit to move from decision to delivery.

Day 0-30
Readiness + Business Case

Day 31 – 60
Design + Planning

Days 61 - 90
Implementation + Go-Live

Day 0-30 – Discovery & Business Case

Key activities:

- Confirm senior sponsor and internal project owner
- Identify key stakeholders (HR, Procurement, Finance Operations, IT)
- Complete the **MSP readiness assessment**
- Review and discuss MSP delivery models based on your needs (Master/Neutral/Hybrid)
- Complete the **Business Case Builder across the 6 pillars**
- Agree success measures (cost, compliance, performance, ESG)

Outcomes:

- ✓ Clear alignment
- ✓ Completed internal business case
- ✓ Defined problem statement
- ✓ Direction agreed (model and programme structure)

Day 31-60 – Design & Implementation Planning

Key activities:

- Finalise MSP model (Master / Neutral / Hybrid)
- Define programme scope: Roles | Locations | Volume | Spend
- Agree governance model, KPIs and reporting structure
- Use the MSP Implementation Checklist to test readiness
- Create internal and external communication plan
- Map transition approach (if changing provider)
- Build internal confidence through stakeholder sessions

Outcomes:

- ✓ Fully defined MSP blueprint
- ✓ Transition plan created
- ✓ Stakeholders aligned and prepared
- ✓ Risks and gaps identified early

Day 61-90 – Implementation & Go-live

Key activities:

- Supplier onboarding or consolidation
- Contractor communication and reassurance
- Hiring manager training and enablement
- System, process and reporting setup
- Data and compliance validation
- Final readiness review
- Go-live with the new MSP model

Outcomes:

- ✓ Stable, structured, operational MSP
- ✓ Visibility over workforce and spend
- ✓ Embedded governance and reporting
- ✓ Foundation for long-term value and optimisation

The future of MSPs

The workforce challenges and opportunities outlined throughout this toolkit - from complex supply chains to the need for data-driven insight - have shown how MSPs are evolving to meet the demands of modern organisations. As transformation accelerates across critical infrastructure, the MSP model will continue to mature, expanding its scope beyond cost management to become a strategic enabler of workforce resilience and sustainability.

The Evolution of MSPs

The next generation of MSPs will integrate people, process, and technology to create intelligent workforce ecosystems. Predictive analytics will support capacity planning, AI will enhance candidate matching, and sustainability-linked metrics will shape supplier partnerships. However, technology alone will not define success. The most effective MSPs will balance automation with human understanding, ensuring that workforce decisions remain empathetic, ethical, and inclusive.

Rullion's Vision For The Future

At Rullion, we believe the future of MSPs is about partnership and progress. Our approach combines innovation with accountability, supporting clients to navigate skills shortages, embrace emerging technologies, and deliver measurable social value. We see MSPs as catalysts for transformation that bridge strategy and execution, uniting business ambition with human potential.

The future belongs to organisations that can adapt with agility, harness insight responsibly, and build inclusive, skilled workforces that thrive through change. MSPs will remain at the heart of workforce transformation, and Rullion will keep helping organisations achieve lasting impact through trusted partnership.



About Rullion

Rullion is a family-owned workforce solutions provider supporting critical infrastructure organisations included those operating across Energy, Fusion, IT and Data Services, Nuclear, Rail, Transport, Utilities and Water. Established in 1978, Rullion supports infrastructure projects across the UK and Europe through services spanning the full workforce lifecycle.

As a remote-first business, Rullion is agile, flexible, and committed to inclusive employment. We're a Real Living Wage employer, Disability Confident Level 2 accredited, and proud members of APSCo and Staffing Industry Analysts. We actively engage with industry through networks such as the Fusion Skills Council, the Rail Forum and the World Nuclear Association as well as Energy & Utility Skills. Rullion helps organisations get work done by unlocking the potential in people and businesses.

Helping you get work done

Find	Develop	Deliver	Manage
Temporary Recruitment	Train to Deploy	Statement of Work	MSP
Permanent Recruitment	Early Careers	Services Procurement	RPO
Executive Search			Background Screening
Embedded Resource			

“Rullion took a true partnership approach, supported us throughout, and went above and beyond to ensure a successful launch. As a result, a great outcome was achieved for the business.”

Vendor Manager at NWG

Let's get work done together

Rullion helps organisations in critical infrastructure find, develop, deliver, and manage the workforces keeping programmes on track.

With long-term partnerships across some of the UK's most demanding rail programmes, we understand the pressure you're under. From a single hard-to-fill role to a long-term managed partnership across multiple sites, get in touch to start the conversation.

Get in touch

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Visit our website
to find out more

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