

Subcontracting Policy

**Apprenticeships and Adult Education
Budget**

2021-2022

Owner:	Director of Apprenticeships and Business Solutions
CE Sponsor:	Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality
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Subcontracting Policy 2021-2022

1. Overview of Policy

This policy, which is renewed annually, details Colchester Institute's Subcontractor strategy and management.

2. Subcontracting Strategy

The College Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024 details ten Strategic Goals:

Goal 1: Provide an outstanding experience which enables students to succeed in their qualification goals, progress to the highest levels of learning and move on to destinations that fully reflect their achievements at Colchester Institute.

Goal 2: Create a teaching and learning environment that encourages reflection on learners and learning, methods and approaches, and allows us to challenge and change the way we do things whether in a classroom, workshop or virtual environment.

Goal 3: Offer a curriculum that not only provides the skills needed for successful careers, but also supports and develops the whole person towards being an active, effective and valued member of their community.

Goal 4: Seek new ways to promote equality, diversity and inclusivity in all our operations, ensuring they are fully embedded into the curriculum for all students, and aspiring to parity of recruitment, achievement and opportunity for both students and staff.

Goal 5: Become a provider of choice for more employers to meet not only their training and workforce requirements, but other business-development needs.

Goal 6: Fulfil our social and environmental responsibility through our actions as an organisation and through our privileged position as an influencer of young people and adults, including contributing to the drive towards net zero carbon.

Goal 7: Become an employer of choice, which recognises, trusts, empowers and develops its workforce; and takes positive steps to ensure that the workforce is truly representative of the communities we serve.

Goal 8: Maximise the recent re-development of the Braintree Campus, through increased stakeholder engagement and a curriculum, across all provision types, that fully reflects the District's needs.

Goal 9: Further develop the digital and physical resources that support the ambitions of this plan; delivering sector-leading advances through ongoing strategic digital transformation and ensuring that physical resources reflect modern and future work environments.

Goal 10: Secure the future of our organisation through strategic investment; sound financial planning and control; careful risk management and appropriate commercial decision-making.

In line with the College's Strategic goals, the College will consider a subcontractor arrangement where another organisation can provide:

- Training linked to specific employer demand – primarily throughout the Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk regions
- A niche service, emerging market or expertise working with a specific learner group
- The ability to support larger volumes of learners than the College is able to reach in skills shortage areas, such as Health and Care to meet increased demand after the pandemic
- Specialist resources or expertise, not available at the college
- Opportunities to expand the College's offer into new markets
- A flexible learning model for those who are unable or unwilling to attend College campuses – of particular value in the current climate where working and studying remotely is now far more commonplace

3. Subcontracting priorities for 2021-2022

Colchester Institute engages with subcontractors in order to expand provision to meet customer needs, this enables us to provide a wider portfolio of options available to our customers based on combined delivery services whilst expanding direct capacity.

The College intends to work with:

- Subcontractors who can deliver specialist training to underpin Colchester Institute's delivery
- Subcontractors who can provide strategic opportunities to support the development of Apprenticeship and online Adult Learning programmes
- Subcontractors who provide added value to the College's academic and commercial success
- Subcontractors who can support and underpin the skills needed for economic recovery in response to the impact of Covid 19, as identified by local and national recovery plans

By working with subcontractors, we are able to enhance the opportunities available for our learners and can provide niche and expert provision with access to higher level skills, online and flexible learning solutions and a wider choice of training facilities. In our adult funding provision, we work with Learning Curve Group and we recognise and value the contribution made by LCG in providing a diverse range of learning opportunities, which may otherwise not be available to Colchester Institute learners, this includes:

- Working with LCG to explore and learn about new frameworks or sectors prior to investment in resources.
- To continuously improve the standard of delivery to customers by sharing best practice to improve quality.
- To provide niche delivery where the cost of developing direct delivery would be inappropriate.
- To support employers with a local geographic requirement.
- To support delivery of ESFA funded provision when a partnership delivery model is a specific requirement.
- To provide employer choice and meet diverse needs of employers.

Recent sector announcements have reiterated the importance of providers (colleges in particular) reacting to three key initiatives around NSF, levy and localisation. These all focus on

delivering greater numbers of apprenticeships and higher level learning to ensure they are aligned with the increased future funding scheduled through the employer levy and loan allocations as well as preparing for the likelihood of a devolved funding mechanism. Having strategic arrangements in place with carefully chosen partners can help develop the commercial focus of a college and adapt to sector changes while managing risk vs reward.

Localisation

A recent SFA report outlined the distribution of non-apprenticeship (AEB) delivery within the locality of the prime provider. Given adult budget allocations are likely to continue to be administered at a local level in future and therefore be linked to local delivery and the skills priorities in your area it is important for the College to develop strategies to ensure a localised adult skills approach.

Levy

The implementation of the levy requires productive relationships with key employers and creates the need for a support mechanism that can utilise their payment in a way that best benefits the organisation in question. This will generate new income for providers but only if they are appropriately positioned to maximise the opportunity.

National Skills Fund (NSF)

With the introduction of the NSF the College wants to be able to access a range of learning content to allow the efficient delivery of recognised qualifications in which people are willing to access NCF.

Learning Curve Group (LCG)

Learning Curve Group (LCG) has over 17 years' experience of delivering flexible, impactful, high-quality AEB provision. They have direct contracts with the ESFA and hold Ofsted Grades at both Good and Outstanding over their contracts. They are the national leader in providing flexible learning solutions, their course provision is market-leading, and they work with a network of over 250 Further Education colleges and training providers, delivering low risk, high quality products and services.

Colchester Institute has worked with LCG for many years and has now formalised this relationship into a 5 year strategic plan to ensure that we are maximising the opportunities in this area and can continue to engage learners who want to develop and progress.

Key outcomes of the 5 year strategic plan with Learning Curve include

- Reduced subcontracting reliance
- Increase learner engagement
- Focus on localised delivery
- Develop and grow direct delivery
- Increase local employer engagement

4. Subcontractor Policy

This policy applies to all subcontracted provision supported with the funds supplied by the ESFA. The Subcontracting Policy is a mandatory requirement for subcontracting activity. The policy's content has been developed to comply with the *ESFA Apprenticeship Funding and Performance Management Rules* and the *ESFA Funded Adult Education Budget (AEB) Funding and Performance Rules* for Training Providers; 1st August 2021 to 31st July 2022 and to comply with any future updates to the funding rules to cover the period of this policy.

The College has robust partnership management processes in place that are subject to internal and external audit, with an annual Certificate of Assurance for Subcontracting gained in June 2021.

Colchester Institute works with a minimal number of subcontractors to deliver high quality training and education against its key priorities. The following outlines the process followed:

- All subcontractors delivering apprenticeship provision must be on ROATP as a main or supporting provider to access apprenticeship funding.
- All subcontractors will be subject to due diligence before being issued with a contract and, where relevant, are subject to the financial health checks as laid out in the ESFA subcontractor guidance.
- All subcontractors must meet high quality standards
- All subcontractors must provide evidence of financial viability

The College has robust subcontractor management processes in place that have been subject to external and internal audit. All AEB enrolments are subject to rigorous eligibility checks including: checking ID, residency and right of abode and prior attainment via the Personal Learning Record (PLR). For adult funded programmes, on a monthly basis, the College shares (ILR) data with the subcontractor for double funding checks and regularly checks the Funding Rules Monitoring Reports (FRM02) where the ESFA reports on duplicate learning aims being funded at more than one provider.

Through the supply chain, the College is able to develop understanding and knowledge of different sectors and communities; learning through shared good practice. Currently, Colchester Institute works with four subcontractors as part of the apprenticeship and adult funded programmes. For the apprenticeship provision these are niche areas that Colchester Institute does not currently have the specialist delivery knowledge to run and requires the expertise of subcontractors

The list of Subcontractors for 21-22 are shown below:

Sub-contractor	Funding Type and Contract Value	Delivering
Learning Curve Group Ltd	AEB £200,000 2021-22	A range of on-line short programmes delivered to adults in the local area, mainly in the Health Sector
ABA Procurement Ltd	Apprenticeships - £93,598 New Starts and Carry-in 2021-22	CIPS procurement qualifications mandatory to the L3 & L4 Procurement Standards

Blue Sky	Apprenticeships £66,028 New Starts and carry-in 2021-22	CIPD mandatory qualification at level 5 and delivery of knowledge at L3
Essex County Fire and Rescue	Apprenticeships - £34,052 New Starts funding 2021-22	Delivery of 15 week basic skills training

The College will also continue to work with one subcontractor in relation to its Higher Education provision

5. Fees and Payments

For the provision of apprenticeships, Colchester Institute agrees to pay the subcontractor an agreed fee per apprentice. This charge is recorded in the contract and is set for the duration of the contract. Charges are reviewed annually and updated in line with any changes to the apprenticeship standard.

Subcontracted adult funding is capped at 20% of the maximum contract value and 80% of the subcontracted funding is passed to the subcontractor for the delivery of AEB funded courses. The 20% fee retained by Colchester Institute covers the provision of:

- administration
- quality assurance and compliance
- MIS function relating to the submission of funding claims to the ESFA
- provision of management meetings
- provision of a dedicated account manager

Colchester Institutes overall aim is that learners engaged with the subcontractor achieve the maximum benefit from the provision. The subcontractor will be responsible for meeting the costs associated with the registration of candidates with awarding bodies and examination fees. Non-standard charges may be applied to other subcontracting agreements in the future where costs savings can be mutually identified and agreed between the subcontractor and Colchester Institute.

6. Payment Arrangements

Payments will be made monthly or as agreed with the subcontractor and will be reviewed quarterly.

- Following the validation of evidence in the ILR return the College will make the appropriate payment to the subcontractor and any adjustments for reconciliation.
- Specific payment profiles will be attached to each contract.

7. College Support for Subcontractors

The exact mix and level of support for each subcontractor will be assessed initially as part of the due diligence process, prior to contracting, and thereafter on an annual basis.

For new subcontractors, monthly reviews will be conducted by the Director of Apprenticeships and the subcontractor to identify any day to day operation and administrative issues. All subcontractors will be subject to regular review.

In addition to working within the College's own quality assurance processes, subcontractors will be subject to additional quality checks and support from the College's Quality and Innovation Team. Other areas of College support include input and guidance on the following:

- Support with due diligence
- Establishing and maintaining quality management systems
- Certification and registration with awarding bodies
- Audit of management systems
- Support & audit of learner paperwork
- Curriculum, Observation of Teaching and Learning and Quality support
- Training and development

8. Teaching, Learning & Assessment

The College is committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning within our supply chain and along with the partnership quarterly review meeting, the additional quality checks include:

- Initial Quality and Curriculum Visit: before a contract is given, a quality and curriculum representative will visit a partner provider and complete the initial quality assessment report.
- Partner Training Events on developing and embedding good consistent practice, safeguarding, reviews and PREVENT.
- Any actions will be highlighted in the quarterly partner review meetings. If the partner is classed as high risk, a member of the quality team will also attend until the risk is reduced.
- Annual unannounced visit: a quality/curriculum representative will undertake an unannounced visit.
- Self-Assessment: support with the completion of the annual SAR cycle.
- Review of tracking and predicted achievement rates

9. Policy review and communication

Colchester Institute will review this policy annually. Any changes to the policy will be communicated to existing subcontractors at the contract management meetings. The policy will be discussed with new subcontractors prior to their engagement. An up-to-date copy of this policy will be posted on Colchester Institutes website and paper copies will be made available upon request.

10. Duties within Colchester Institute

Nominated members of staff with strategic lead responsibility for subcontracting:

- Principal and Chief Executive
- Executive Vice Principal: Planning and Quality

Nominated member of staff with responsibility for performance management of subcontractors:

- Director of Apprenticeships and Business Solutions

11. Publication of Policy

This policy is published on the College's Website and issued to all partner organisations.

12. Subcontracting Contingency Plan 2021-2022

In the event that the College needs to withdraw from a subcontract arrangement, a subcontractor withdraws from the arrangement or a subcontractor goes into liquidation or administration, the College will take steps to ensure that provision is made to preserve the continuity of the provision and learners involved are able to complete their qualifications. A contingency plan for all College subcontracting provision is produced annually.