



Background

NCG is one of the UK's leading providers of education and training, consisting of seven colleges, with over 2,000 staff nationally, which makes us one of the largest not for profit training groups in the UK.

Our vision is to be the UK's leading college group recognised for our local impact, national influence and reach. Our mission is to enable social mobility and economic prosperity through education. We will do this through six our six strategic objectives:

- Quality: Exceptional teaching, learner experience and outcomes
- Curriculum: Innovative, relevant courses and qualifications
- People: Ambitious and responsible educators, and leaders
- Facilities: Outstanding digital and physical learning environments
- Finance: Financial sustainability powering reinvestment
- Reach: Impactful external engagement and civic commitment.

We have also determined the set of core values that we will expect our colleagues and key partners to adhere to.

We will value and empower our people by:

- Being both inclusive and diverse
- Trusting and respecting our communities
- Taking ownership whilst working collaboratively
- Inspiring excellence and curiosity.

Our approach to partnerships and subcontracting

We believe that working and collaborating with a range of value-added local and national partners is fundamental to how we operate. We will engage with partners to share a range of different activities, for example;

- Furthering specific local or national projects
- Enabling students to progress – i.e. to increase their social mobility or economic prosperity
- To share or enable a range of improvement activities
- Through shared high-quality delivery of our educational contracts

This strategy specifically relates to the latter point where the activity is deemed as subcontracting.

We expect the partners that form part of our delivery 'supply chain' to assist in the delivery of our vital work and deliver high quality standards.

We believe that by working together with like-minded Supply Chain Partners, we can impact positively in our communities by ensuring no lives are forgotten, the environment and in assisting economic recovery post Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring that our students, our staff and all of our stakeholders' study and work in environments that embed the principles and practices of equality, diversity and inclusion. We do not tolerate racism or discrimination in any form.

We are dedicated to our mission in pursuit of social mobility, in an inclusive and diverse learning community, and we know that great organisations really listen to stakeholders without defensiveness, or being distracted, or making excuses. We expect our subcontractors to share the same ethos as we do to tackle racism and other forms of discrimination and prejudice.

Our Subcontracting Strategy

We will procure and work with Supply Chain Partners to deliver high quality provision on our behalf where there is clear curriculum intent and one of the following justifications is met:

- a. The activity enhances the opportunities available to the young people and adults in our college geographies, particularly where this also supports the development of our own direct delivery.
- b. The activity fills gaps in niche or expert provision, or provide better access to training facilities where we cannot do this ourselves.
- c. Where we need to enable better access to learners in a wider geography than our colleges are able to support.
- d. The activity offers an entry point to education for disadvantaged groups, particularly those who may not wish to study on a college campus.
- e. The activity supports individuals who share protected characteristics, where there might otherwise be gaps, or it addresses an equality, diversity issue in line with NCG Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) policy.

We work with Supply Chain Partners who can complement our existing provision and offer quality driven industry-recognised qualifications and services to support Learners, Participants and Employers. We will prioritise any partnership that helps widen participation, or tackles under-representation.

We do not believe that it is in the best interest of our Learners to procure the services of a broker to source Supply Chain Partners or undertake geographically distant

subcontracting of any funding stream, other than where we have existing long-term relationships in place.

Specific ESFA Subcontracting protocols

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is currently our main funding body, although we also hold contracts with many smaller agencies, for example the Mayoral Combined Authorities. ESFA set specific subcontracting regulations for delivery to young people and adults with which we need to comply.

These include specific restrictions and permissions required for delivery of 16 to 19 courses with distant partners or professional football clubs, where prior approval is required. We will work with niche partners, such as the professional football clubs, to ensure that all learners, irrespective of their ability, have access to their facilities and professional coaches. We will also comply with NCG's Financial Regulations and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 when procuring Supply Chain Partners.

As part of the subcontracting reforms published by the ESFA, there was a clear desire for the volume of subcontracting to reduce across the sector compared to the 2019/2020 levels, and that no lead provider should subcontract more than 25% of the total volume by funding stream (except ESIF) unless express permission has been granted by the ESFA. Our strategy is to steadily decrease our overall levels of subcontracting by funding stream over the next 1-2 years, to enable our Supply Chain Partners to source alternative funding opportunities and ensure the withdrawal of funding by NCG, does not result in the Supply Chain Partner's turnover reducing by more than 10% in year.