

SUBCONTRACTING FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

2025-26

Date of Issue:	September 2025
Approved by:	Corporation Board on 21 October 2025
Review Date:	July 2026
SLT Lead:	Deputy Principal Finance and Resources
Available on:	Website

SUB-CONTRACTING (FEES & CHARGES) POLICY

1. SCOPE

The policy applies to all third Party sub-contracted supply chain activity supported with funds supplied by the Department for Education (DfE), Greater London Authority (GLA) or any successor organisations.

2. CONTEXT

The policy is a mandatory requirement that must be in place prior to participating in any sub-contracting activity. The policy has been written in accordance with the DfE and GLA requirements as set out in the Adult Funding Rules 2025 to 2026 and 16 to 19 education: funding guidance 2025-26 (sub-contracting control regulations)..

3. DISCLAIMER

Waltham Forest College reserves the right to amend its sub-contracting arrangements at any time in accordance with the requirements of the Funding Bodies and the terms and conditions contained in its standard contract or sub-contracted provision.

4. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE

The College will use its supply chains to optimise the impact and effectiveness of service delivery to learners. The College will, therefore, ensure that.

- Supply chain management activities comply with the principles of best practice in the skills sector.
- The College will at all times undertake fair and transparent procurement activities, conducting robust due diligence procedures on potential subcontractors in the spirit of the Common Accord to ensure the highest quality of learning delivery is made available, demonstrating value for money and a positive impact on the lives of learners.
- The funding that is retained by the College will be related to the costs of the services provided. These services, and the levels of funding being retained for them, will be clearly documented and agreed by all parties. The rates of such retained funding will be commercially viable for both sides and will be negotiated and agreed in a fair and transparent manner. They will be proportionate to the actual services being provided. Funding retained for each subcontractor will be determined through a risk assessment outlining the level of quality monitoring activities required, management time and any other specific support costs required to be taken into consideration to ensure a high-quality learning experience. Each cost will be reviewed to ensure it is reasonable and proportionate to delivery of high-quality teaching and learning. The sub-contractors track record and financial and staffing capacity will also be considered when undertaking a management fee analysis.
- Contract documents will require both parties to agree that the achievements of the sub-contracting are attained through adherence to both the letter and spirit of contracts or partnerships. Signatories therefore commit that all discussions, communications, negotiations and actions undertaken to build, maintain and develop supply chains will be conducted in good faith in accordance with the Overarching Principle.

5. RATIONALE FOR SUB-CONTRACTING

The College engages with sub-contractors:

- To undertake provision which fits with its strategic objectives aligned to its Curriculum Strategy.
- To undertake provision that enhances opportunities available to learners.
- To provide training opportunities for a range of learners who may not be able to study at the main College.
- To widen the range of progression opportunities for learners, both from sub-contractors' provision to the College's and vice-versa.
- To offer flexibility by delivering provision at times and venues convenient to learners and employers.
- To temporarily expand provision to meet a short term need.
- To provide immediate provision whilst expanding direct capacity. This might include working with sub-contractors to explore and learn about new sectors identified in the Learning Skills Improvement Plan & GLA Skills Plan prior to investing in resources.
- Providing access to, or engagement with, a new range of customers/sectors.
- To meet demand from referrals from key stakeholders such as local employers or Job Centre Plus
- To enable the College to respond quickly to employer and learner demand, providing greater choice for learners.
- To provide good development opportunities for both Waltham Forest College and its sub-contractors to share good practice and explore different ways of working.
- To fill gaps in niche and expert provision where the cost of developing direct delivery would be prohibitive.
- To support better geographical access to learners
- To support and entry point for disadvantaged groups
- To support individuals who share protected characteristics, where there might otherwise be gaps.
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- The College's main priorities for sub-contracting are to support:
 - Work with disengaged young people
 - Meeting the demand of employers
 - Workforce up-skilling
 - Provision requested by Job Centre Plus (JCP)
 - Expansion into niche and growth areas where set-up costs would otherwise be prohibitive.
 - Provision that meets one or more of the following criteria will be prioritised:
 - It meets the needs of residents and employers of Waltham Forest and neighbouring boroughs.
 - It supplements and does not duplicate the College's curriculum offer.

- It offers progression opportunities for learners into the College or into employment or upskilling.

6. ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR SUB-CONTRACTING

Sub-contracted activity is a fundamental part of the College's provision. The quality of the provision will be monitored and managed through the existing College Quality Assurance processes and procedures, as amended in order to fully encompass all sub-contracted activity.

This Policy positions sub-contracted provision as a core part of College activity to enable continuous improvements in the quality of teaching and learning for both the College and its sub-contractors. This will be achieved through the sharing of effective practice across the supply chain.

Sub-contracted provision will only be supported with organisations which can demonstrate the actual achievement of, or the potential to rapidly achieve, good quality teaching and learning and success rates which achieve national averages.

Waltham Forest College ensures that its sub-contractors are included in the College's quality cycle and are audited and supported by the College to follow this process.

The College supports sub-contractors to complete the course review and self-assessment process, including quality improvement plans. It also offers support as required to share good practice through regular quality reviews, observation of teaching, learning and assessment and learner and employer feedback.

Sub-contractors are expected to hold course centre approvals where appropriate and liaise with awarding organisations. Sub-contractors must notify the College immediately if any awarding organisation imposes a sanction on the sub-contractor. The College regularly reviews external moderator reports submitted by sub-contractors and monitors sub-contractor's follow-up actions as required.

Sub-contractors will collect, retain and submit to the College on request all relevant documents and evidence of student activity.

Where one of the main objectives of the sub-contracted services is to deliver information and advice, the sub-contractor will have to have attained the Matrix Standard Accreditation within six months of the contract being awarded. If the information and advice is embedded as part of the delivery of the services, the sub-contractor should work towards achieving the Matrix Standard Accreditation within twelve months of the start of the contract.

7. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION RELATING TO SUB-CONTRACTING

In compliance with DfE and GLA funding rules, the College will publish its sub-contracting fees and charges policy and actual end-of-year sub-contracting fees and charges before the start of each academic year (and in the case of actual end of year data, as required by DfE and GLA). This will only relate to 'provision subcontracting' i.e., subcontracted delivery of full programmes or frameworks. It will not include the delivery of a service as part of the delivery of a programme (for example, buying the delivery of part of an Apprenticeship framework or outreach support). Provision subcontracting lists will be agreed with local DfE and GLA Officials prior to publication.

The College will ensure all actual and potential subcontractors have access to this policy and any other relevant documents.

The College will charge a management fee of between 15% to 20% unless agreed otherwise, of funding drawn down from the DfE and GLA dependent on the level of support and services given to the respective sub-contractor which includes:

- Provision of suitably qualified/experienced College Liaison Officers
- Advice and guidance at pre-contract stage and due diligence assessment
- Enrolment processing & support (e.g., provision of paperwork, advice and guidance on student eligibility)
- Data and financial management – timely and accurate processing and submission of data to enable drawdown of funds from the Funding Bodies and analysis to ascertain funding earned by sub-contractor and calculation of success rates.
- Provision of regular class lists
- Mandatory training and teacher CPD and annual subcontractor conference
- Regular review meetings and performance reports
- Compliance and quality assurance visits and on-going support to address any areas for improvement including announced and unannounced site visits, lesson observations, tutor support and quality assurance and administrative support.

All invoices submitted by a sub-contractor must be supported by documentation as required in the contract. Where there are no issues relating to a sub-contractor's submitted invoice, the College will endeavour to ensure that the payment of the invoice is made within 30 days of receipt. The College may undertake a clawback of funding for under delivery or other reasons.

8. MONITORING, REVIEW AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Any prospective sub-contractor will be required to complete the College's ***Due Diligence Questionnaire*** to assess the level of risk should the College decide to enter a contractual agreement with that organisation.

Sub-contractors are required to have a UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) (<http://www.ukrlp.co.uk>) reference number (UKPRN) and must appear on the Apprenticeship Providers and Assessment Register (APAR). If the sub-contractor holds aggregate Agency funding contracts in excess of £100,000 then they must also meet the DfE Subcontracting Standard. Subcontractors would usually hold a good or better grading from Ofsted.

Provision funded by the DfE and GLA must comply respectively with the GLA /DfE Adult Funding Rules 2025 to 2026, Apprenticeship Funding and Performance Rules 2025 to 2026 and 16 to 19 education: funding guidance 2025-26 (sub-contracting control regulations), and any updates published by the ESFA during the year.

Sub-contractor performance will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Feedback on performance will be provided in writing, at face to face meetings, by telephone or e-mail. The methods used will be dependent upon the circumstances at any point in time. Feedback will also be provided at periodic contract performance review meetings.

Contributory risk factors that are used to identify the initial level of risk associated with a prospective sub-contractor will include:

- Previous track record/performance
- Staff qualifications and experience relevant to delivery of agreed programmes

- Awarding body qualification approval
- Results of EQA reports
- Financial standing of the sub-contractor
- Length of sub-contractor's experience
- Contract size with regard to both funding and learner numbers
- Standards of internal quality assurance by sub-contractor
- Any previous OFSTED judgement/s
- Profile of learners
- Delivery content and associations with extremist doctrine
- Experience of working with DfE and GLA funding methodology and requirements
- Geographic location, particularly for DfE funded provision, to ensure provision is not outside of the College's normal recruitment areas.
- Prior to contracting further quality checks include:
 - Health & Safety of premises and GDPR and online cyber security
 - Review of delivery staff CVs, qualifications and annual professional updating
 - Copies of CIAG policies and processes
 - Schemes of work and assessment plans
 - Qualification specific EQA reports
 - Checks on safeguarding
- During the period of contractual agreement, the College will, on an on-going basis, also monitor the level of risk through:-
 - Observations of teaching, learning and assessment
 - Success levels
 - Actual income against contract target funding income.
 - Standards of internal quality assurance (both curriculum and administration)
 - Learner feedback (at workplace or by telephone or online learner surveys)
 - Employer feedback (where appropriate)
 - Learner destination progression

The Risk Factors associated with each sub-contractor will be discussed and recorded at review meetings and, where necessary, actions identified for the sub-contractor to undertake in order to reduce the level of risk.

Where a subcontractor is found to be providing a supply of services that does meet agreed targets and expectations of quality, the College can terminate any agreements.

The College reserves the right to terminate any agreement and may seek recovery of funds particularly where the funding agencies' conditions of funding have not been met or there is any other irregularity or concern.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

The Assistant Principal for Higher Education and Academic Standards, along with the Head of Quality Assurance are responsible for ensuring the high quality provision is delivered and are responsibility for overseeing the quality of the provision.

The College quality assurance procedures and processes apply to all subcontracting partners in line with the college operational calendar, improvement process and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework.

9. SUB-CONTRACTORS ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT:

- The College is provided with Individual Learner Record (ILR) data to accurately reflect the agreed sub-contracted delivery.
- The College and funding agencies (or other bodies nominated by the College or agencies) have access to the sub-contractor's premises and all documents relevant to tracking learner's progress, funding claims and any other purpose relating to the agreed sub-contracted delivery.
- The College has access to the sub-contractor's premises to monitor and quality assure the delivery of learning, including interviewing staff and students and directly observing the initial guidance and assessment (IAG) process.
- All learners sign a learning agreement at the time of enrolment reflecting the outcome of initial guidance and assessment (IAG) in setting out their learning programme taking any prior learning into account.
- The agreed sub-contracted delivery is not further sub-contracted.
- Funding for the agreed sub-contracted delivery is not "double-funded", i.e., learners are not funded by the DfE and GLA at any other institution.

10. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR SUB-CONTRACTORS

- The additional support given to each subcontractor will be negotiated with that sub-contractor, but will be based on a risk approach and may include:
- Additional site visits
- Additional joint lesson observations and announced or unannounced learning walks
- Additional CPD support
- Review and support for verification processes
- Additional training
- Additional improvement activities related to wider government initiatives, such as, sustainability.

11. ADDITIONAL CHARGES PER LEARNER

The College may also retain funding to cover the cost of any funded activity that it might undertake on behalf of the sub-contractor such as:

- Awarding Organisation fees and charges
- Hiring of facilities/equipment within/from the College
- Additional Internal Verification and/or External Verification visits

- Additional staff costs for cover and intervention to reduce risk and support learner success

12. COMMUNICATION

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required. It will be published on the College web site at the start of the academic year in which it will be applied. Potential sub-contractors will be directed to it as the starting point in any relationship.

13. EXTERNAL ASSURANCE

The College will undertake external assurance through an independent auditor to review sub-contracted delivery controls over all DfE and GLA funded provision in line with DfE and GLA guidelines for 2025/26.