

## **Nottingham College Subcontracting Strategy**

### **1. Introduction**

Nottingham College is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all learners and our communities within the D2N2 locally and regionally.

Through the curriculum planning process, the college considers opportunities to widen participation and to meet the needs of specific priority target groups within its communities. This includes reaching groups through partnership arrangements and subcontracting.

The college Subcontracting Strategy sets out the intent and rationale for subcontracting provision for learners 16-19 on study programmes and 19+ adults funded through EFA and Adult Skills Budget. This includes the stages applied to ensure effective and compliant processes and procedures to ensure the college is aligned to the requirements as set out within the Subcontracting Standard for Post - 16 providers which came into effect 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

- 1.1 This strategy is aligned to the Nottingham College key business objectives and applies to all supply chain activity supported with funds provided by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or any successor organisation.
- 1.5 The aim of subcontracted provision is to allow the college to provide an extensive range of learning programmes designed to meet local skills needs, widen participation, and create opportunities to meet the specific needs of priority target groups. Addressing the market and workforce priorities identified by the D2N2 local and regional Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

### **2. Context**

- 2.1 Nottingham College is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all learners and our communities within the D2N2 locally and regionally, having a clear mission to deliver 'Excellence in Education and Employment.
- 2.2 Serving the eighth most deprived city in England, Nottingham College continually strives to ensure that underrepresented groups have equality of opportunity, to support and widen participation for learners returning to learning, receiving sufficient access and support to achieve their goals, whatever they be.
- 2.3 Through subcontracted provision the college ensures learner receive the extension of a range of provision within specific community locations which positively contribute to the community's increasing accessibility, flexibility in delivery during the day,

evenings and weekends with subcontractors whose provision is of the highest quality.

- 2.4 Nottingham College has a strong collaborative working relationship with subcontractors and the strategy remains primarily focussed on complementing the college strategic plan that addresses the local economic and social needs of individuals within the D2N2 area.
- 2.5 The curriculum mapping process carried out by the college ensures all subcontracted provision and its appropriateness is aligned to the Nottingham College offer, maximising the college resources and funding. The provision is responsive to known skills shortages and employment opportunities, equipping individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds with the right skills, at the right levels to enter and sustain employment or further learning to reach their full potential.
- 2.6 Nottingham College work with subcontractors that are highly experienced and unique in their support to specific individuals. For example, a specialist BAME provider with a team speaking twelve different languages; a specialist subcontractor working with individuals with low prior attainment and poor experiences of education who consequently face barriers to participation delivering bespoke and tailored provision to precisely fit locality and employment needs within communities and a subcontractor experienced in supporting refugees fleeing their homeland.
- 2.7 The extension of the range of our subcontracted provision and delivery locations positively allows the college to widen the participation of individuals; contributing to the communities with highest skills shortages; basic skills need and increase accessibility to provision that is highest performing and operating well within the D2N2 local and regional areas.
- 2.8 Following the recent Ofsted Inspection in November 2022, Nottingham Colleges provision was graded GOOD in November 2022 with recognition given to relationships that support local economic recovery.

*‘Leaders and managers work effectively with the local council, local enterprise partnership and private training providers to create learning and skills opportunities that support the local economic recovery plan’.*

### **3. Pre-Contract Procurement and Selection Process**

- 3.1 Nottingham College operates a fair, open, and transparent procurement and selection process of subcontractors in accordance with the public procurement regulations and the College’s Financial Regulations.
- 3.2 The college designed the Nottingham College Framework process in line with procurement regulations and is therefore compliant with public procurement regulations relating to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). The process assures the quality of subcontractors are assessed thoroughly across a broad range of business areas.
- 3.3 The financial risk and credit checks of subcontractors are assessed by the Director of Finance at stage 1 of the procurement process

- 3.4 A series of detailed checks are undertaken for all potential subcontractors to assess infrastructure, financial stability, resources including staffing, the safety of students, curriculum offer, delivery approval and the performance history of delivery; that satisfactory monitoring systems are in place to enable the College to meet its policy standards and limit its risk.
- 3.5 An independent tender panel manages, oversees, and evaluates the scoring process ensuring compliance with the procurement regulations.
- 3.6 The subcontractors whose provision is aligned and compliments the aims of the College Strategic Plan is approved by the Governing Body and Executive Leadership Team, prior to contract allocation in order to deliver high quality provision on behalf of Nottingham College. Following confirmation of approval, the Terms of Contract are issued to the successful subcontractors and no delivery of provision can take place before the signing of the Terms of Contract.
- 3.7 This strategy applies to all supply chain activity supported with funds provided by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or any successor organisation

#### **4. Contract Performance Management**

- 4.1 The Head of Skills Commissioning is responsible for contract management and quality improvement process with all subcontractors ensuring overall high-quality performance and outcomes in line with the college subcontracting strategy, current inspectorate and awarding body requirements.
- 4.2 The subcontracted partner is then required to comply with any, and all policies and procedures of the College aligned to delivery, quality and complaints. Any updates or amendments are subsequently notified to the subcontractor by the College, as appropriate upon update following review.
- 4.3 Subcontracted provision receives scrutiny through scheduled monthly meetings with the Head of Skills Commissioning and a detailed assessment of contract performance is undertaken. This assists in mitigating risks of underperformance or poor delivery of provision, to Nottingham college learners. The attendance at the monthly contract performance meetings is compulsory for the subcontractor and to be appropriately represented by senior management and operational staff where appropriate.
- 4.4 Monitoring meetings cover performance against contract, quality of teaching and learning, enrolments, attendance, retention, predicted and actual achievement and pass rates, student satisfaction, including reviewing outcomes of sampling visits and progress against actions arising to improve the learner experience. Where underperformance is identified, action planning and timescales for improvements are discussed and agreed.
- 4.5 Due Diligence reviews of policies including feedback on any changes and updates on staff, programme status, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, GDPR and EDI at the meetings.
- 4.6 Where support and remedial actions are necessary to accelerate performance, these will be agreed, decisions made, and responsibilities allocated to action matters which will accelerate improvements in the subcontractor performance.

## **5. Quality Assurance, Monitoring, and Improvement**

- 5.1 Nottingham College maintain improvement by a fastidious, comprehensive, and thorough approach to quality assurance and quality improvement. This includes close monitoring of learner progress both through their programme of learning and their wider skills development of learners in line with the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). Unannounced visits to the delivery sites which could include reviewing learner attendance and eligibility, direct discussion with learners, reviewing facilities and processes.
- 5.2 The health, safety and wellbeing of learners is paramount and monitored through reviews and visits to premises and/or delivery location(s) to ensure compliant with the policies and procedures.
- 5.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Reviews (TLA) are planned with each subcontractor to jointly review the provision in line with the college quality calendar and any quality improvement plans to improve the student experience.
- 5.4 All subcontractors are risk rated (high, medium, or low) dependent on whether a new subcontractor working with the college, their experience in delivering high quality provision and high success rates above benchmark.
- 5.5 The percentage sample of programmes is carried out through unannounced and announced visits, joint sampling and quality reviews based on the risk rating of the subcontractor.
- 5.6 Subcontractors can access appropriate support and CPD activities from Nottingham College which is beneficial to the outcomes of learners.

## **6. Management Fees**

- 6.1 The standard fees and charges set by Nottingham College for ESFA funded delivery is 20% and indicative details of the service provided by the college to the subcontractors within the Terms of Contract issued.

## **7. Publication of Information**

- 7.1 In compliance with the ESFA Funding Rules and Performance Nottingham College will publish its subcontracting strategy, supply chain fees policy, list of subcontractors and management fees on its website in line with the requirements of the ESFA.
- 7.2 The Subcontractor Declaration will be completed in accordance with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements and published on the college website.
- 7.3 This strategy will be updated annually.

## **8. Communication**

8.1 This strategy will be reviewed annually and updated as required and published on the college website