

**SEFTON COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE
COMMISSIONED AND SUBCONTRACTING
SERVICES**

2025/2026

V1

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2. Aim of this Policy

This policy aims to ensure consistency and transparency in all practices relating to the commissioned services / subcontracting arrangements of the Sefton Community Learning Service (the Service).

3. Rationale for Subcontracting

The rationale for subcontracting is to:

- Engage local residents into local learning opportunities with clear intent
- Progress learners onto further learning within the Service or other appropriate learning provision (funded by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority or the Education and Skills Funding Agency), or employment

In addition, it enables the Service to offer a greater geographical reach across the communities of the Liverpool City Region and Sefton and acts as an engagement function

Subcontracting provision will:

- Address breadth and reach of provision
- Deliver provision required for specific initiatives or projects that the Service is unable to deliver directly
- Respond to specific identified need
- Engage with individuals and/or groups who are excluded from education and training and face barriers in making progress

As part of Sefton Councils Adult Education Service subcontracting supports the delivery of Sefton Economic Strategic Plan and is led by several local and national drivers outlined in the following documents:

- Sefton Councils 2030 Vision
- Sefton Councils Economic Strategy 2022/ 2026
- Liverpool City Region Long Term Skills Action Plan
 - Strategic Investment Fund (SIF)
 - Economic
 - Funding Rules and Guidelines
- Getting Britain Working
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-britain-working-white-paper/get-britain-working-white-paper>

- Migration Board Priorities
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-strengthens-migration-advisory-committee>
- Industrial Strategy
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy>
- Devolution Strategy
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

The Service will only enter into formal arrangements with subcontractors who support its strategic aims and even then, with only those who enrich the current provision offer, widen participation and inform development of our direct delivery. The Service will demand responsiveness and impact through all subcontracting arrangements and in return will support the subcontractor through robust quality assurance practices to achieve excellence in the delivery of provision.

This approach will ensure:

- Successful outcomes and progression for learners
- Excellent teaching, learning, and assessment practices
- Learning support is in place for learners who need it

4. Policy Statement

The Service is committed to providing high quality education and training to meet local, regional and national skills priorities. The Service is seeking to work with appropriately experienced, local training and voluntary and community sector providers to further enhance the mix and balance of its provision and enrich its offer to Sefton residents.

The Service will ensure that all subcontractors are engaged on a formal basis, are aware of its role and responsibilities as a LCRCA prime contract holder and every subcontract issued will clearly define the boundaries of the service to be provided.

The subcontractor will deliver a high-quality service and only employ qualified and experienced staff to deliver the provision. The subcontractor will comply with the Service's policies and procedures, including those relating to health and safety, data protection, equality and diversity and safeguarding. An audit process will be ongoing throughout the period of the contract to ensure the subcontractor's compliance and participation in:

- Safeguarding Learners
- Equality and Diversity

- Quality Assurance
- Observations of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Learner Satisfaction Surveys

5. Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework

The Service holds responsibility for the overarching quality assurance, monitoring, self-assessment and improvement of the overall adult learning programme. The Education Inspection Framework (EIF) July 2023 has been adopted (with some additions) as the framework defining quality and performance criteria for the provision funded through subcontracting.

The Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework sets out how the Service will assure the quality of subcontracted provision using a range of review procedures and reporting requirements. The Service will use a variety of tools and processes throughout the academic year to support quality monitoring and continuous improvement, and these will feature:

- Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) and learning walks
- Scrutiny and 'Deep Dive' activities
- Audit and document review
- Data analysis
- Support and challenge

6. Grant Retained

The Service does not charge a management fee to its subcontractors. However, it does retain a proportion of its LCRCA grant allocation to provide support, guidance and administration for its commissioned activity, as part of its responsibility in ensuring all delivery meets LCRCA requirements. The value of this retained grant can vary and is dependent on the level of support provided to a particular subcontractor.

The Adult Skills Fund (ASF) Tailored Community Learning funded activity delivered through a subcontract will be paid on a unit cost per learner basis. The level of support offered will take account of the risks involved in subcontracting with a particular organisation and the final decision on how much grant will be retained is clearly stated in an order form, which is signed by both parties.

Where a subcontractor is delivering ASF funded activity, the Service will retain up to 20% of the overall grant provided by the LCRCA. This is in order to cover the costs associated with providing the subcontractor with an inclusive package of support, guidance and challenge. This includes, but is not limited to:

- A named point of contact who will respond promptly to any queries and

monitor the performance against contract throughout the year

- Regular contract monitoring meetings where the subcontractor's performance against contract and the quality of delivery against the Quality Framework are discussed and action plans for improvement agreed
- Electronic contract monitoring reports including data sent to subcontractor
- Reports of findings and action, if necessary, from Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) audits completed by the Service
- Termly held meetings where best practice is shared and the subcontractor can raise issues for discussion/clarification
- Monthly updates to ensure the subcontractor is kept informed of developments
- The support of the Service's quality team to ensure high quality delivery and a positive learning experience for all learners.
- Processing of Individualised Learner Record (ILR) returns, data validation, quality assurance and reporting
- Continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for tutors and subcontractor staff, plus bespoke staff development when required
- Business support team processing of paperwork, invoices, regular finance payments and inputting of data
- Arranging accreditation, internal verification where required
- Supporting visits from the external quality assurer (EQA)
- OLTA support and on-going development training where required
- Sharing of good practice

7. Payment Arrangements

Subject to the subcontractor's successful delivery of their contracted ASF funded activity the Service will pay subcontractors the contract value in line with their contract and finance schedule.

- Payments: Within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice, or 10 days for Voluntary and Community Sector providers.

8. Support

The Service is committed to providing both its subcontractor and the learners they recruit with a positive experience. To ensure this, a programme of support will be put in place for the subcontractor and a Contract Manager will be designated to the subcontractor. The Contract Manager will be the main point of contact, promoting good two-way communication at all times and will always be available to provide help and advice outside of the more formalised schedule of support.

9. Reporting and Monitoring

The Service will robustly manage and monitor all subcontracts to ensure the continuing high quality of provision delivery.

All registers relating to the subcontract must be submitted on at least a weekly basis, in line with current Service operating practice and additionally the following quality information is required on a termly basis or as required:

- A schedule for delivery of the provision
- Course and learner data / information
- Course/tutor information to be updated
- Information on Tutors delivering the contracted provision: qualification status, CPD logs, performance management data and DBS registration numbers/ period covered
- Accident reports and reports of near misses
- Safeguarding and prevent training records
- Internal OTLA schedule
- OTLA action plans and lesson reports
- Learner complaints and actions taken

Throughout subcontract arrangements the subcontractor will provide feedback and evidence of the following:

- OTLA report including actions for continuous improvement.
- One summary learner feedback report from each area of learning/tutor delivered under the contract.
- A summary of complaints and actions taken relating to all activity funded through the contract.
- A summary of accidents/near misses and actions taken or report a nil return.
- A summary of safeguarding and Prevent reports
- A summary of whistleblowing incidents
- A graded Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

The subcontractor must present the Service on request with sufficient evidence to allow an assessment of:

- its performance against the Education Inspection Framework 2023
- the evidence it has provided into their self-assessment report; and
- its judgements and grades within the self-assessment report.

Subcontractors may be asked to provide documentation and evidence required by Ofsted for inspection or other external bodies at certain points of the contracted year. In the case of Ofsted, this could be at 2 days' notice. In the event that the Service receives

notification from Ofsted that its provision is to be inspected during the period covered by this contract; the subcontractor will be informed of the impending inspection via email. It is a requirement of the contract that the subcontractor will fully participate in the inspection process at an appropriate level.

Shortly after commencement of the contract the Service will issue the subcontractor with a quality assurance calendar detailing the schedule of monitoring visits, required observations of teaching and learning etc.

In addition to these general reporting requirements, the Service requires its subcontractors to achieve and contribute towards the achievement of a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) and monitors its subcontractors against them.

9.1 Key Performance Indicators for all ASF Funded Activity

9.1.1 Delivery against contract

Criteria:

- A minimum of 90% (qualification courses) of all contractual learner targets to be achieved
- Quality of data returns
- Timeliness of data returns
- Good communication with the Service

9.1.2 Effectiveness of leadership and management

Criteria:

- Effective performance management of staff focused on improving outcomes for learners is in place
- CPD opportunities in place for staff and take up monitored
- Active promotion of equality and diversity throughout organisational culture with specific reference to curriculum content and delivery
- Learning provision that is planned to meet local needs and priorities
- Learners effectively safeguarded. Full and appropriate safeguarding and Prevent measures in place with all staff appropriately trained
- Robust evaluation of provision through on-going (in-year) self-assessment and quality improvement processes

9.1.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Criteria:

Robust OTLA procedures are in place and:

- The OTLA profile is 90% of teaching learning and assessment being good or better
- 50% sample of OTLA lesson reports have been moderated and agreed by the Service
- Provision is regularly observed, and results are communicated to the Service
- The OTLA action plans are monitored regularly with tutors receiving appropriate support and CPD opportunities
- English and maths skills are embedded in all sessions
- Digital skills are embedded in all sessions
- British Values is embedded in sessions

9.1.4 Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

Criteria:

- Provision can demonstrate a positive impact on learners
- Personal, social, education development actively addressed and monitored in all sessions
- Progression routes are clear and communicated and learner progression is monitored
- Overall learner attendance rate is 90% or above
- Information, advice and guidance and career planning actively addressed and monitored in all sessions

9.1.5 Outcomes for Learners

Criteria:

- Overall learner achievement 90% (qualification courses) or above – achievement of all set learning aims for the course
- Overall learner retention rate is 94% or above
- Robust RARPA processes are in place for all non- accredited learning which underpins the credibility of the achievement rate
 - SMART group and personal targets set
 - Robust initial assessment that takes account of individual needs and informs starting point
 - Progress is monitored, discussed and recorded regularly through effective use of the individual learning plan (ILP)
 - Learners regularly reflect on own progress with next steps identified
 - Overall, 75% of learners achieve positive progression outcomes
- Achievement gaps between different groups of learners are monitored and actions taken to narrow.

10. Disclaimer

The Service reserves the right to amend or cancel its subcontracting arrangements in accordance with the provisions set out in the terms and conditions and following discussions with the subcontractor.

11. Communication of this policy

Any amends to this policy will be communicated to the subcontractor in writing. All elements of this policy will be discussed with a potential new subcontractor prior to the commencement of the contract as part of the Invitation to Tender (ITT) process.

Related documents: [Adult skills fund: funding and performance management rules 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

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