

Sub-Contracting & Supply Chain Fees Policy 2025/2026

PURPOSE	To inform staff and subcontractors of our supply chain fees policy for 2025/2026
SCOPE	Subcontracted provision
RESPONSIBILITY	The Principal of Strategic Growth and partnerships, Assistant Principal of Strategic Growth and Partnerships, Head of Partner Relations.

Sub-contracting Policy

This policy is renewed annually and approved by the corporation. The policy details how West Suffolk College applies sub-contracting activity through funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Overview of Sub-contracting Strategy

West Suffolk College works with subcontractors to broaden existing provision and to meet the needs of local governmental, LEP and WSC strategic priorities.

West Suffolk College works closely with our subcontractors to enhance the quality of opportunities for learners and their employers. Our subcontractors enable West Suffolk College to fill gaps in niche or expert provision which would include providing better access to training facilities. Our Subcontractors have excellent training facilities and resources, proving the very best in quality and education for our learners, developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours which in return will enhance their employer's business. Using sub-contractors who have the expertise, knowledge and skills within specific industries with enhance our offer and support better geographical access for learners and an entry point for disadvantaged groups and give consideration of the impact on individuals with shared protected characteristics

The College Strategic Goals are:

- **World-class skills for business** – operating as “the college for business”, with a focus on current need and industry innovations and supporting the post-pandemic recovery and economic growth across the city region.

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- **Delivering an outstanding student experience** – tailoring our approach to the needs of our learners. Local and wider communities as part of a dynamic partnership with all three.
- Developing talent for sustainable employment – upskilling, reskilling, and generating the talent of the future through a focus on careers, not courses.
- Our work with subcontractors underpins these goals. The College seeks to work with a range of providers who offer:
 - Training which recognises the role of the employer and is informed by industry insight and practical needs – employer-led design linked to employer demand throughout the local and wider communities to meet local skills needs.
 - Support to employers for recruitment of diverse workforces which reflect the local and wider communities, helping businesses to access a wider pool of talent in their fields and thrive through targeted and tailored recruitment.
 - Opportunity to develop the College offer in new markets extending the breadth of our routes into employment markets.
 - Access to new cohorts of learners.
 - Opportunity to increase College's reach including those who are unable/unwilling to attend College campuses.
 - Access to key target learner groups throughout the local and wider community.
 - Progression into employment or education, particularly onto College programmes.

Through strategic subcontracting, the College aims to contribute towards the success of the following College KPIs.

- Income and volume
- Quality of provision

Subcontracting priorities for 2025/26

Partners who can support and underpin the goals set out within the College's Strategic Plan

- Partners who can deliver a wide of range training to underpin West Suffolk Colleges objectives.
- Partners who deliver high quality employability provision leading to job outcomes and apprenticeship progression opportunities.
- Partners who provide added value to College business relationships
- Partners who can support and underpin the skills needed for economic recovery.
- Deliver an outstanding learning and student experience using enthusiastic and engaging industry experts, who engage and respect our students as individuals with high standards and expectations

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- Quality of Education and Training to be consistent with West Suffolk College own expectations
- Develop the next workforce of the future and contributing to economic growth.
- Partners that provide an added value to college business relationships

Assessing sub-contracting opportunities

By outlining the risk management and due diligence process, the College ensures that each Subcontractor is in good financial health and has the staff expertise to ensure that teaching and learning is of a very high standard.

- All partners will be subject to due diligence and/or pre contracting before being issued with a contract.
- All partners must have a credit rating of 3 or above and submit at least three years audited accounts. For organisations trading less than this, we will require to see accounts and/or financial plan and business contingency plan.
- All partners delivering apprenticeships who have a cumulative contract must be on APAR as a main or supporting provider.
- Partners will be assessed on a contracting matrix against priorities outlined in 1 and 2
- Value and the type of contract
- Industry types and vocational areas
- Health and safety/equality and diversity/safeguarding/PREVENT
- Self-Assessment Reviews
- Supplier staff competence, skills and CPD
- Track record of the supplier and success rates

Fees and Payments

Apprenticeships

For our subcontracted Apprenticeship provision, West Suffolk Colleges work in collaboration with our subcontractors to provide joint delivery for our learners. The funding is divided between both West Suffolk college and our delivery partner based on the percentage of learning that they each deliver.

The College will retain an agreed amount of funding generated from subcontracted provision based on the level of risk, support and administration requirements associated with each partner as follows: –

- 15% of funding generated for experienced partners with a good track record of quality delivery to students and contract performance.
- Up to a further 5% of funding generated will be retained for new partners for the first contract year to reflect the increased risk and provision of additional support for quality of teaching and learning and contract management.

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The College retains an element of funding to meet provider obligations in respect of; the ILR, compliance and audit, quality and curriculum assurance and training. The portion of the fee retained for each of these activities is as follows:

- 10 % ILR Compliance and Audit.
- 15% Exam Processes.
- 60 % Quality and Curriculum Assurance including Safeguarding.
- 15% Management & Administration.

The College is committed to high quality teaching, learning and assessment, and the proportion of the fees retained by the College reflect this and are reasonable and reflect the College's own costs to deliver the services provided.

Payment Arrangements

- Payments will be made monthly or as agreed with partner and will be reviewed quarterly.
- Following the validation of evidence in the ILR return the College will make the appropriate payment to the subcontractor based on the level of income calculated less the agreed management fee and any adjustments for reconciliation.

College Support for our partners

The Subcontractor will receive ongoing support and guidance in return for the partnership; typical examples of support include relevant staff CPD training, standardisation of learning and assessment, regular contract and performance review meetings, collaboration at events such as Open Days, NAS Apprenticeship week, Apprenticeship awards evenings plus ongoing support and guidance on funding rules and changes to Government policy. Regular support and 1-1 progress meetings/ visits from the Partnerships Manager

The College is committed to improving teaching and learning across all subcontracted provision. The subcontractor will be in scope of Ofsted and therefore will be included in the West Suffolk College quality cycle. This involves observations of teaching, learning and assessment, CPD training and an annual self-assessment meeting involving the subcontractor. Following an observation of teaching, learning and assessment, the subcontractor will receive a written report with follow up support and mentoring by the college quality team, as appropriate, according to the outcome. The sub-contractor must provide WSC with feedback and reports from their own Ofsted inspections and any changes on the Apprenticeship provider and assessment register.

Subcontractor contingency plan 2025/26

If a subcontractor was no longer able to continue with their sub-contract arrangements, this would be discussed with the partners manager and the Vice Principal of Strategic Growth and Partnerships.

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The sub-contractor would be invited for a meeting with the Partner Manager and Vice Principal so that the issue could be discussed and ideally any necessary actions that would need to put in place to support the sub-contractor and our learners.

Vice Principal would contact the ESFA if the situation needed advice or clarification.

If the sub-contractor was unable to continue with their contractual obligations, due to liquidation/administration or any other reason, West Suffolk College would contact all learners and their employers to ensure that they were aware of the situation. We would support the learners to continue with their Apprenticeship or learning programme. This would involve sourcing further resources so that we did not disadvantage any learners.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed in June 2026, or as necessary during the academic year in line with ESFA updated Funding Rules. A revised policy will be issued in 2025/2026 in relation to the updated funding rules for 2026/2027.

Publication of this policy

This policy will be published on West Suffolk College website and issued to all partners.

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