

## **1. Subcontracting Strategy for South Thames Colleges Group 2021-2022**

STCG will move forward with its new Group Strategic Plan for 2021-24. The key emphasis in the new vision is to be an exceptional Further Education provider, leading our sector in London and beyond. A goal of the Group's Strategic Plan is to sustain effective partnerships that attracts new students and develops new pathways to success. Sub-contracting is currently part of the Groups delivery option to achieve this goal working with organisations strategically to deliver to learners we would not normally attract.

## **2. Overview of Subcontracting and partnership activity**

The Group's subcontracting provision is a route to engage with learners who we would not traditionally attract, through strategic partnerships using its Adult Education Budget and ESFA Apprenticeships funding.

In line with the Governments educational requirements, the Corporation will review the strategy on a yearly basis for approval. The Subcontracting Strategy for 2021/22 has been mapped to the current educational policy received from the GLA, funding allocations and rules, and includes the following three areas:

- AEB yearly funding allocations (inner London and outer London) and the percentage below 25% that is approved by the ESFA Corporation
- The requirement to comply with current regulations governing public procurement and the College's financial regulations
- The requirement from the Government for all colleges to review their current subcontracting activities to ensure that they purposeful, appropriate and provide added value to learners.

This strategy recognises there may be community-based or other organisations with specialist local/regional/national knowledge that the Group may wish to partner with to reach specific cohorts of students who may not otherwise access learning and with whom the Group may seek to develop its provision to meet a local/regional/national or specialist curriculum demand.

The Group's subcontracting activity has been reviewed and the following parameters agreed that are in line with subcontracting reforms and the Groups standards and expectations:

- Ensure that subcontracted provision is yearly below 25% in any given income stream with circa £1million pounds delivered on AEB (GLA the majority) and circa £200k ESFA Apprenticeship funds in 2021/22.
- Continue to be fully re-procured on a yearly basis during which it is tested against the Group's strategic expectations in terms of quality, financial viability, student safeguarding, curriculum relevance and demand.
- In London, AEB subcontracted provision will be focused on priorities, based around the Mayor's sectoral and social priorities, as set out in the 'Skills for Londoners' strategy and the new Mayor's Adult Recovery Plan.
- Our AEB partners help us respond to increased unemployment rates within our region by delivering to hard-to-reach groups, expanding our reach with Jobcentre Plus and similar organisations and thus supporting the regional economy.

- Our AEB partners also provide further opportunities to retrain and up-skill employees to meet the needs of local businesses, focussing on the Care, Hospitality and Retail industries.
- Out of London AEB subcontracted provision will focus only in local Southeast of England home counties, in key skill shortage areas, such as Health and Care, Construction and Employability.
- For Apprenticeship provision, the Group will support the completion of existing Apprenticeship programmes and not recruit any more Apprentices via sub-contractors. It will continue with its St George's NHS Trusts Apprenticeship subcontracting delivery, which supports a national skills and jobs shortage around trained Mammographers'.
- All new providers will be subject to joining the STCG Subcontracting framework, when it next opens, if they need to comply with Public Procurement Regulations.
- The Group will work with sub-contractors that can bring enhanced or specialist employer engagement, expertise, facilities or resources the Group does not have but that will support the Group to engage with employers and meet their training needs.
- The Subcontracting Strategy will be signed off by Governors yearly and published alongside its Supply Chain Fees and Charging Policy on the college website.
- The engagement of all subcontracted provisions will comply with Government guidelines as they are published, such as the:

*'Reforms to Subcontracting education for learners over 16'. Published 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021.*  
*'Subcontracting funding rules for ESFA funded post-16 funding (excluding apprenticeships). Published June 2021.*

### **3. STCG's model of delivery**

The group's model for delivery will demonstrate in all cases:

- the strategic value of the partnership with the subcontractor(s) and employer(s)
- the delivery of high quality provision
- that the provision safeguards students or Apprentices effectively
- that the programme is value for money
- that the partnership realises the skills and training requirements for the employer whether on a local or when appropriate a national level.

### **4. Subcontracting geographical delivery arrangements**

#### **5.1 Greater London Authority Area (GLA)**

Subcontracting will be focused inside the GLA geographical area where appropriate, depending on strategic fit, employer demand and funding availability. It will be consistent with the aims of the Mayor of London's 'Skills for Londoners' strategy and Adult Skills Recovery Plan.

## **5.2 National Focus**

National subcontracting will only be considered currently if it falls into the two following areas:

### **5.2.1 Regional proximity to College-based provision**

Learners who live on the outskirts of London and who may travel into the GLA area for employment should be able to access high quality education and training to support their employment and potential contribution to the economy of south-west London. STCG will seek to fund provision on the fringes of south-west London, particularly in Surrey and other neighbouring home counties where relevant. In these cases, part of our purpose will be to enhance progression and employment opportunities and we will work with our sub-contracted delivery partners to add to the students' opportunities through additional guidance inputs.

### **5.2.2 Provision that is part of a local provider that has **national centres****

STCG will consider subcontracting at a national level with a large employer who operates within the Group's sub-region but also has centres across the country (or partner organisations e.g. NHS), but not in devolved areas. This will be in order to meet the specific requirements of a national employer both regionally and nationally where appropriate.

## **5. The procurement of subcontracting partners**

The Group has a sub-contractor Framework in compliance with the Public Procurement regulation 2016 Appendix C. It will also comply with STCG Financial Regulations.

The types of provision that STCG will subcontract will depend on ESFA and GLA rules and guidance and on the local/regional/national requirements to ensure public funds are properly and effectively spent, maximising the benefit for learners

Sub-contractors for AEB provision are invited yearly to bid in a Mini Tender process, which involves a rigorous due diligence process.

All sub-contractors both new and existing are required to implement the Subcontractors Quality Assurance & Improvement Handbook documents prior to contract commencement.

The funding streams that could be subcontracted out would be through the following:

- **Adult Education Budget (AEB)** – through the GLA or ESFA
- **Apprenticeship Funding** – levy or non-levy through the ESFA
- **ESF projects**
- **Other bids or opportunities** - requiring a partnership model