



**Somerset
Council**

**Adult Community Education
Sub-Contracting Policy 2023/24**

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Adult Community Education Sub-Contracting Policy 2023/24
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Owner	Melanie Roberts
Protective Marking	
Primary Legislation	Adult education budget: funding and performance management rules 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Somerset Council's Economy, Employment and Planning Service (the Council), from 1 August 2023, will receive Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to provide non-accredited learning opportunities for adults* living in Somerset *An adult is an individual aged 19 and over on 1st August of the given academic year.

The ESFA Funding Rules 2023-2024 define how the funding can be used [Adult education budget: funding and performance management rules 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/adult-education-budget-funding-and-performance-management-rules-2023-to-2024)

The overarching ambition of the Council, through an Adult Community Education Programme, is to maximise adult participation that will:

- Enrich the stability, prosperity, and social cohesion of our communities.
- Empower the personal responsibility of individuals to become independent, healthy and maintain their own social well-being.
- Increase social mobility and aspirations based on an ethos of lifelong learning
- Support an inclusive, flourishing, and resilient economy.
- Maximise social value by generating benefits to society, the economy and positive impacts to the environment and local communities.

This will be achieved by offering flexible and responsive learning opportunities that are both accessible and inclusive; which empowers people to make intelligent choices; and helps them to succeed in personal, social, and economic aspirational goals contributing to the resilience, ambitions, wellbeing and growth of Somerset reducing reliance on the state and public service by:

- Working with a range of organisations and strategic partners to identify clear Adult Community Education delivery objectives with measurable outcomes.

- Engaging with a wide range of groups and individuals through learning activities relevant to their personal circumstances and local priorities whilst meeting Somerset Council and the ESFA's priorities.
- Delivering a variety of learning activities based on the identified needs of local communities.
- Commissioning the delivery of learning activities where partners are better placed to identify and engage those who would benefit most from Community Learning.

Somerset Council does not deliver ESFA Adult Community Education funded learning directly, instead it operates a commissioning model to secure the provision of high-quality learning to meet the needs of our communities.

Rationale for sub-contracting

- Widen participation through partnerships with locally based organisations to respond to local needs for the benefit of our communities.
- Fills gaps in niche or expert provision and provides better access to facilities.
- Supports targeted and tailored provision to meet the needs of our priority groups.
- Supports established and trusted organisations already established in communities to reach out and engage learners more quickly.
- Supports smaller voluntary and community organisations to access resources to deliver learning to their client users.
- Increases accessibility for learners who are living in more rural areas or marginalised communities in Somerset.
- Provides a first stage entry point for disadvantaged groups.
- Supports individuals who share protected characteristics, where there might otherwise be gaps in provision.

Somerset Council has not led on the delivery of adult community education since 2015 when the adult learning function was transferred out of the Council into a community interest company, Somerset Skills and Learning (SS&L).

In the 2023-2024 academic year, the Community Learning Grant will move from a Nationally led competitive procurement process back to a direct grant to Somerset Council bringing the Council in line with other local authorities as Somerset is the only area where community learning provision is directly procured by the DfE.

Somerset Council plans to put in place a transition year, subcontracting arrangement, with the current provider (Somerset Skills & Learning, SS&L) to continue delivery of the programme during 2023/24 academic year. The Council will also work with a range of local delivery partners through Community Learning Partnership arrangements.

Localised delivery is especially important in some of our more rural areas and among the harder to reach population to ensure a wider participation for our communities.

Approval of subcontractors (including delivery partners)

Subcontractors will be contracted only when the best interests of the community and the individuals are served through the use of partners. The Council will only use subcontractors when it believes they have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and experience within the organisation to successfully procure, contract with and manage these sub-contractors.

The Council has well developed and established procedures relating to the safeguarding of learners, which include ensuring that subcontracting/grant funding does not lead to the inadvertent funding of extremist organisations.

All potential subcontractors will undergo Council due diligence checks before being appointed and we will continue to undertake and review these checks on an annual basis with each of our delivery sub-contractors.

The Council will ensure any subcontractor has the financial ability to deliver the requirements of the subcontract.

We will select our subcontractors fairly, transparently and without discrimination in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Standing Orders. We will ensure that potential subcontractors have sufficient capacity, quality and business standing to deliver the provision that is being subcontracted.

The Council will only subcontract and award grant allocations to organisations that have a UKPRN number and are classed as a 'legal entity' in their own right. This will be evaluated in terms of risk and status, as part of the due diligence process. Should the Council have concerns about either aspect it will not allocate funds to a potential subcontractor or partner.

Support for delivery partners

A range of tailored measures and support will be in place for delivery partners and will be delivered by SS&L on behalf of SC. These include:

Contract management

- All partners are assigned a named Community Partner Co-ordinator (CPC) to offer advice, guidance & support. CPCs will ensure all queries and concerns are managed effectively and efficiently, without the need for partners to contact multiple departments.
- SS&L will carry out a thorough induction with individual partners to ensure complete understanding of contract requirements, in line with ESFA funding rules.
- An induction follow-up carried out to further support and confirm understanding of contract requirements.
- Termly face-to-face performance and quality reviews carried out as a minimum (frequency based on level of performance and quality of delivery)
- Monthly telephone review meetings carried out as a minimum (frequency based on level of performance and quality of delivery)
- Managing communication between the various SS&L functions (finance, MIS, Admin and Quality) and the partner, while offering continued advice, guidance, and support on any feedback.

Quality

- The facilitation of observations of Teaching, Learning & Assessment (TLA) through the assigned CPC
- The facilitation of Learning Walks/Listening to Learner sessions through the assigned CPC manager
- The collation and analysis of observation records and learner feedback to inform and support partners to achieve a higher quality of delivery and the overall learner experience.

MIS and administration

- Collecting, compliance checking and inputting all project associated paperwork i.e. Course Information Sheets; Enrolment Forms; Registers; Individual Learning Plans and Learner Surveys
- Confirming learner eligibility
- ILR submissions
- Producing reports to inform Finance and the performance management process.

The SS&L Community Learning team brings a wealth of experience to the management of delivery partners and their projects. Delivery partners are not managed in isolation, with the named contract manager sharing best practice between projects, while encouraging collaborative working to ensure learners and delivery partners have the best possible chance. Delivery partners will also be invited to events where best practice can be shared across the partner network.

Retained funding

The Council sets the direction of travel and delivery priorities for the ACE Programme and is responsible for the overall quality and performance of all provision delivered but does not retain any funding as a contribution to the overall costs it incurs. Instead, during the transitional year (2023-2024), 5.2% (£130k) of the ESFA funding is being allocated to SS&L to cover the costs for managing the sub-contracting provision, via delivery partners, on behalf of SC as follows:

- Contract management
- Quality Assurance oversight and improvement
- Administrative functions including collation of Individualised Learning Records (ILR) and associated inputting of data including Management Information System (MIS).
- Community engagement
- Professional development (providers and tutors)
- Curriculum development.

These services are provided for all delivery partners and are tailored to meet their requirements. The specific costs for managing each sub-contractor are derived for SS&Ls overall costs and the size of their contract. Consideration of the nature of the delivery also has a bearing on the proportionality of costs. These are provided to each sub-contractor in their contract.

Payment timelines

Following a successful application, a contract is awarded. The contract value will be spread across the contract year and will be paid monthly upon the successful submission, validation and approval of the required paperwork. The final payment is made at the end of the project, pending verification of essential learner paperwork and confirmation that the learners are eligible under the ESFA's eligibility requirements and have achieved their key objectives. Final learner numbers for the

project are confirmed and a final payment is made in line with the financial annex of the contract.

Somerset Council aims to make payment within 30 days of approval of a valid claim.)

The policy is shared with all existing and potential sub-contractors as part of the procurement process and is published on our website.

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually prior to each procurement process and published by 31 October each year.

[PO-terms-and-conditions.docx](#)

Publication of Information relating to Subcontracting

In compliance with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and other agency funding rules that apply, the Council will publish the associated subcontracting/fees and charges policy on its website.

Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
21 July 2023	Rebecca Brown	1	New Policy

Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Member Key Decision: Adult Community Education Programme		3 August 2023