



Professional Training Solutions

Supply Chain & Subcontracting Strategy

The academic year 2023-2024

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Education & Skills
Funding Agency

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1. Purpose

The supply chain strategy outlines our supply chain aims, rationale and priorities, as well as operating standards, quality controls and measures. It has been compiled to ensure there is a clear rationale for partnership working and clear working relationships.

Our comprehensive supply chain strategy governs when and how we subcontract elements of our delivery, sets out our fees and describes the support we provide to our supply chain. It is reviewed annually and is available for inspection on our website at www.protrain-solutions.co.uk/subcontractingsolutions.co.uk/subcontracting.

It is also imperative that the role of all stakeholders is understood and is key in managing and mitigating regulatory, financial, and more importantly user risk (learner). Ensuring that when certification, a standard is claimed or training has been completed by a learner, it reliably endorses the appropriate expected industry standards and statutory requirements, whilst supporting the learner’s career aspirations and local needs.

Rules and Regulations:

We conform to and abide by the rules and regulations on Subcontracting as set out by the ESFA and we will keep abreast of the new subcontracting reforms outlined in the government’s statement on 4th March 2021 and the newly published Subcontracting standards, for implementation in 21/22.

[ESFA subcontracting standard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Reforms to subcontracting education for learners over 16 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

History of PTS and Partnership Working:

Established in 2006, Professional Training Solutions (PTS) is an innovative, high-quality independent learning provider, with a head office in Farnham, Surrey. We have extensive experience of both working as a subcontractor, delivering Early Years, Health & Social Care, Business Admin, and other apprenticeships under subcontract from 2009-17; and being the lead partner subcontracting some non-levy apprenticeship delivery to LDN apprenticeships (South London) and Henley College. We provide support and guidance to these providers as well as teaching aspects to learners on programme. Ofsted inspectors in 2018 found ‘Leaders have rapidly established Professional Training Solutions Limited as a good-quality independent learning provider, building on their experience of being a subcontractor.

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2. Scope

The supply chain strategy covers any work not fully supplied by PTS and therefore PTS will contract/partner with a 2nd party. Services supplied may span all PTS's funding streams or commercial revenues as appropriate, no matter the financial revenue PTS will apply the same level of expectations and approach to agreeing the partnership.

This may include any of the following working relationships.

- Sub-contracting
- Collaborative
- Commercial partnership
- Consultancy and specialist services

Geographically Distance

Outside of 16-19yr Study programmes, PTS will assure that any delivery at a distance allows us, the main contractor/lead provider to meet the requirements of all funding rules to oversee and manage the subcontractor. We will work with local networks including Local Authorities to understand the local need and local skills plans to ensure:

- The extent to which the provision being made available is already available via other lead providers in the locality and is accessible to learners in the area where the subcontract operates and why the local provision is not meeting the learners' needs.
- The extent to which the lead provider is involved in the delivery (for example teaching part of the programme or just providing financial and quality assurance)
- The amount of funding retained by the lead provider to cover the costs incurred in the management and administration of the contract.
- The extent to which a gap in the provision of the type to be delivered under the proposed subcontract has been identified or supported by the local authority or an employer.
- The location of delivery and the nature of travel to learn/travel to work patterns.
- The extent of learner contact with the lead provider
- The oversight arrangements in relation to the delivery of supply chain

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Section One – Strategy

3. Supply Chain Business case, Strategic Aim and Rationale

PTS will follow the procurement strategy in making a business case. This will include seeking appropriate approval from the Board and ESFA.

PTS are a responsive provider with an accountable approach. We focus on the effectiveness of performance and the positive impact of our service.

As a nation, we face a range of challenges and changes – including the climate emergency, trading, an aging population, poor productivity, regional inequalities, technological change, and changes in the world of work.

We wish to work with a supply chain that supports people to train, retain and upskill, individuals, communities, and businesses that otherwise risk being left behind.

Our Aim and Rationale

- PTS will in the first instance consider direct delivery or building PTS capacity when looking to grow and meet the needs of local, regional, and national priorities. However, we recognise the added value that effective supply chain partnerships can bring. PTS will not subcontract to fulfil short-term funding objectives.
- PTS will ensure its supply chain has aligned values and business priorities and be subject to government priorities and funding rules. We will be transparent and fair in our approval process, clearly identifying financial health and quality grading judgments.
- PTS will seek to support a better joined-up education and skills ecosystem, nationally and regionally, in line with Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) to enhance opportunity and better geographical access to high-quality learning.
- PTS's supply chain arrangements will not compete with existing provisions unless for strategic or quality enhancement purposes. Employers must be central to our LSIP and we expect our supply chain to work with us to create/support local, regional, and national networks that open access to a lifetime guarantee of learning.
- PTS is dedicated to the goal of increasing social inclusion and social mobility by providing high-quality services that improve the lives of individuals and communities across England. We design and deliver programmes that equip individuals, communities, and businesses with the skills, advice, attitude, and support they need to move their lives or business on.
- We will be clear on what value the partnership brings from the outset, the amount of funding retained by PTS, and what the charges/fees cover or add to the relationship as well as what role PTS will play in the learner journey.
- Ensure we complete the ESFA sub-contracting declaration and seek if required approval to extend our supply chain.

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We will consider seeking supply chain partnerships in the following circumstances:

- Where our existing learners or stakeholders require additional or specialist provision which is beyond our existing scope or capacity at the time.
- Where subcontracting will allow us to build capacity in new areas, both geographical and within new sectors or skills areas.
- Enable us to build strong local partnerships with like-minded organisations to broaden our offer in a single geographical area.
- Fill in gaps in niche or expert provision or to provide better access to training facilities, which PTS would not be able to adequately resource.
- Enhance the offer to our learners and businesses, creating a wider network of opportunities and offer an entry point for disadvantaged learners or new or growing businesses.
- Where subcontracting would create an enhanced and innovative enterprise offer.
- To share good practice, business models and grow excellence in teaching.

Long term Vision

PTS recognises that the ESFA has set out 10 proposals for reforming the future arrangements for subcontracting of ESFA funded post-16 education and training. With the proposals seeking to reduce the overall volume of subcontracted delivery across the post-16 training sector.

In response PTS has a clear and defensible educational rationale; PTS will create a shared charter with each of our supply chain partners to communicate the educational rationale and define the shared values, ensuring visibility and transparency to all stakeholders including within institutes. PTS will not enter into an agreement or continue a partnership if the provision is poorly managed and delivered by the supply chain.

This will ensure there is a robust oversight of the use of public funds, ensuring these are spent appropriately, and providing value for money our strategy seeks to build capacity within our own institute and that of our supply chain over a three-year period. Learning, growing, and sharing expertise to address local and regional priorities.

From 2022, PTS will demonstrate a year-on-year reduction in its subcontracting.

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4. PTS Intent, Implementation, and Impact statement

The following statement serves as a statement of service objectives and approaches, in seeking approval of our supply chain we will review service alignment and business priorities against our sub-contracting strategic aims and our service Intent, Implementation, and Impacts statements.

Intent

PTS has an ambitious and broad curriculum that is designed and developed to meet the needs of its learners and employers. With our support, we aim to provide training and qualifications which will offer top-performing, motivated, and enthusiastic staff who are an asset to any business, which will give improved efficiencies, and better customer service as well as increase retention and reduce staff turnover. In turn, this will result in greater business success which ultimately improves business turnover and margins.

Our motto is "Inspiring tomorrow's workforce".

Values - 'ACHIEVE'

- Aspire to inspirational learning.
- Celebrate and reward success.
- Help staff and learners to achieve their full potential.
- Involve employers, learners and staff Ensuring professional delivery and support.
- Value and appreciate staff and learners Equality of opportunity for all.

Implementation

The curriculum supports learners with acquiring new knowledge, skills, and behaviours, building upon what they already know and what they need to learn. The Tutor/Assessors effectively engage the learners in classroom, online and one to one support sessions. Prior to March 2020 this was typically in a face-to-face setting, however because of the coronavirus crisis and subsequent national lockdowns, PTS moved the delivery of the curriculum online, using MS Teams as the main vehicle for delivery and the plan is to utilise this experience to strengthen the PTS blended delivery model.

Impact

We judge our success of our programmes by the outcome (achievement) and impact to lives. Enabling personal growth that impacts social mobility, social payback and job success, retention, and business improvement including positively impacting the local economy and levelling up.

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5. Supply Chain Partnerships

A sub-contract is an agreement between a main contractor / prime provider of government funding with a sub-contractor to deliver on behalf of the lead/prime.

- A prime provider is a college, training organisation, or employer that has a direct contractual relationship with the ESFA or devolved authority.
- A subcontractor is an organisation that is engaged in a contractual and legally binding arrangement with one or more lead providers, to deliver education and training provisions.

PTS will work to the ESFA/devolved authority required permissions for subcontracting work and will seek to obtain written permission before doing so.

- We will not allow second-level sub-contracting.
- Provide a clear description, before each subcontracting relationship is agreed.
- The reason for subcontracting and all services they will provide and the associated costs when doing so. This will include a list of specific costs for managing the subcontractor, quality monitoring activities, and any other support activities offered by the main provider to the subcontractor.
- Ensure all costs are individually itemised and describe how each cost contributes to delivering high-quality learning. We will also explain how such costs are reasonable and proportionate to the delivery of the learning or apprenticeship training.
- Include a breakdown of all services and costs in each subcontract.

The ESFA funding agreements contain a clause about an annual subcontracting assurance requirement. The clause requires the lead provider (PTS), will subcontract more than a defined level of provision to obtain a report from an external auditor that provides assurance on the arrangements in place to manage and control their subcontractors. The clause requires lead providers in scope to supply the ESFA with a certificate confirming that the report provides satisfactory assurance. PTS engage in this process and expects subcontractors to support the process.

The list of declared subcontractors provides information about subcontractors that hold multiple contracts with one or more ESFA-funded providers of adult education and training services, including apprenticeships and traineeships. This will be checked annually and there will be an expectation that subcontractors tell PTS of any changes. PTS will fulfil its requirement to annually declare, its work with subcontractors.

PTS will apply the ESFA subcontracting standards and expect subcontractors to be aware of these standards, they will form part of PTS's due diligence and inform PTS of partnership working. [ESFA subcontracting standard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-subcontracting-standard)

Apprenticeship subcontracts must be on RoATP and if new to the register will only be funded up to £100k in their first year and only up to £500k thereafter.

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Delivery Partners

Generally, deliver the end-to-end service in their own area, thus maximising flexibility. End to-end delivery partners manage their own delivery of their share of the contract, under the overall leadership and oversight of PTS’ Supply Chain Manager.

Collaborative and specialist

This is still a contractual agreement with the same expectations, rationale and ESFA oversight but in most partnerships the lead/prime will retain the overall ownership of the learner.

Collaborative and specialist agreements seek to utilise expertise across institutes for a niche part of a programme where capacity or capability needs to be built or a collective approach that provides an enhanced entry point, wider access, or an innovative experience.

An example of collaboration – PTS seeks to work with a cyber expert to build their own capability in this area and offer learners enhanced digital skills. An agreed fee for the value and proportion of the work is agreed.

ESF supply chain addition sub-contractors must comply with the European Social Fund.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-programme-guidance>

We will publicise our partners & partnership work annually on our website, by the 31st October.

6. Cost-benefit analysis, pay, incentives and fees and charges

PTS will always declare and be transparent in its supply chain fees. PTS will follow the procurement strategy and produce a cost-benefit analysis, be clear on how performance and cost benefits link to incentives and what we charge.

We will:

- Link benefit realisation, cost, and success indicators to evaluate performance and incentives such as allocation.
- Ensure all costs are individually itemised and describe how each cost contributes to delivering high-quality learning. We will also explain how such costs are reasonable and proportionate to delivery of the learning or apprenticeship training.
- We will include a breakdown of all services and costs in each contract. A template can be located in appendices.

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- We will be clear on additional charges or reduction of management fee.

For subcontracting we will not typically exceed the 20% funding retained however in entering a supply chain contract we will negotiate the support needs and the appropriate breakdown of cost required to ensure there is robust oversight of the use of public funds, provide value for money and a high-quality service.

Collaborative and specialist agreements will differ slightly and therefore be negotiated depending on the agreement but again will not typically exceed the 20% funding retained unless commercial services.

There may be circumstance where we negotiate additional charges and fees, this could include:

- Use of PTS learner software, e-portfolio, or licenced material.
- As a result of concerns relating to compliance and additional checks or when additional support is given for example as a critical friend inspection are arranged.

Additional fees and charges will be identified in the contract.

Payment process is structured with published partner dates and process flow can be found in the SOPP.

Roles and accountability can also be found in the SOPP, but the following will be applied.

- Not starts or committed funds, until contract signature.
- Financial and company health is assessment of our partners through the application stage, deep dive and quarterly reviews. Any changes are reported to the ESFA/devolved authority.
- ILR evidence and compliance will trigger payment. This includes satisfactory start of learning, midpoint reviews and closure.
- PFR are compiled by MIS, reconciled by Supply Chain Manger, approved by the Financial director before releasing to the sub-contractor.
- Contract details term and condition of noncompliance, untimely compliance, performance concerns, clawback, and breaches of contract. PTS may suspend a contract and pay pending investigation or pending a performance action plan.

*Also see retention, payment & incentive policy

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Section Two – Standard Operating procedures

This section will define PTS's standard operating standards, Our Supply Chain Standard Operating Procedure flow charts can be located in appendix two.

7. Supply Chain Management & Monitoring

a) Supply Chain Procurement & Contract Management

PTS apply its procurement strategy, which is in the appendices.

Contract Management procedure and process can be found in the SOPP. Contract guidance is sought from an external body, along with standard contract templates which will be sent with tender application.

Full contract is managed via DocuSign ensuring there is an e-imprint and stamp of all required contract evidence and issuing.

b) Supply Chain People and Management Structure

As the lead/ prime partner and contract holder, PTS retains contractual accountability for delivery of the contract, including quality assurance, monitoring performance, and guaranteeing financial accountability.

To ensure effective oversight PTS have a dedicated role for the **Managing Responsible Owner** (MRO) for management, operational and risk oversight for the Supply Chain, reporting into the **Senior Responsible Owner** for the Supply Chain strategy and finance controls.

MRO Operational & Risk Control defined accountability:

- Supply Chain Day to day operations and decisions.
- Proposed Supply Chain Strategy, business case.
- Facilitate the external audit of subcontracting and recommendation of controls, processes.
- Facilitate, assess & offer collective recommendation of the procurement & tendering process.
- Overall risk control and risk register, with sight of Supply Chain company position, relationship, contract, data and quality.
- Facilitate the monthly payment process and budget controls.
- Manage the agreed budget and report to SRO for Strategy and Financial Control and management for the P & L sheet.
- Report back into the board via the SRO for Strategy and Financial Control or by invite.

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SRO Strategy and Financial Control, Defined accountability:

- Overall decision making responsible for Supply Chain
- Approve Supply Chain Strategy, business case and report to Board for oversight and scrutiny.
- Oversee the external audit of Subcontracting and agree recommendation of controls, processes and report to Board for oversight and scrutiny.
- Report to board for approval the outcome & recommendation of the procurement & tendering process.
- Monitor and report to board the risk register for oversight and scrutiny.
- Have oversight of the monthly payment process and budget controls.
- Manage, alongside the financial advisor and report to board the Supply Chain P & L sheet.

In addition, there are dedicated team members within PTS that the support the role and function of compliance and data, quality monitoring, administration, and safeguarding. They have operational responsibility to undertake define job activity, report, and recommend. To ensure communication is timely, there is normally a dedicated correspondence email address for these functions.

There is a director that has oversight of this area of the business and direct line management of the Supply Chain Manager– Jackie Denyer.

The board will have a role in Governance and oversight and will receive details on partner outcomes for each board meeting, this will be presented via a dashboard and executive report.

In additional they are required to approve recommendations on the PTS Supply Chain, the risk register and inclusive of the Supply Chain document and policy tracker.

Our Supply Chain Standard Operating Procedure, flow charts have further details on accountability. This can be found in the appendices.

c) Budget Control

Financial oversight is via a financial advisor and designated director – Neil Hardie, however. under the matrix management of the Supply Chain the SRO is Jackie Denyer.

A cost benefit is completed and forms part of the service framework, which is agreed by the board. A supply Chain P & L sheet is held by the designated Director, Jackie Denyer for reporting to the board monthly. However, day to day budget control is managed by the Supply Chain Manager via the Executive tracker, which views all operational controls e.g. compliance, risks, performance and committed spend, quality and contract obligations. This is reviewed monthly with the data and compliance team, then shared with the sub-contractor before forming part of the monthly manager report.

Monthly accounts and payment are via our accounting team.

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d) Partnership Stakeholder engagement, and monitoring visits

Partnership Reviews & Monitoring

An initial on boarding will be conducted each year to close off the annual due diligence process, this will ensure expectations are clear, contract arrangements as well as any support needs or actions. The template can be found in the apprentices.

Subsequently there will be a set monthly monitoring review, aligned to the release of the payment summary each month. The monthly review will primarily have a focus on profile and ensure data is correct, reflective of what's happening and is compliant. Quality and feedback will also form part of these monthly meetings to ensure a holistic approach to risk and target setting is achieved.

Formal reviews of delivery partners' performance against KPIs takes place every half term, using a detailed quality monitoring checklist. Our Business Support Team use PICS to carry out detailed analysis of KPIs against contract targets. This data is reviewed weekly and combined with qualitative data (e.g., Observations of teaching & learning, learner & employer feedback, SAR/QIP) to produce monthly Management Reports showing performance vs KPIs; identifying successes/issues using a red-amber-green metric; and proposing solutions. 5-10% underperformance results in an amber rating, while >10% underperformance triggers a red warning. Amber and Red ratings trigger (i) detailed analysis to identify the underlying issue(s); (ii) where necessary development of a SMART Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) specifying corrective actions; timescales and targets for improvement; and naming a responsible staff member or delivery partner. The template can be found in the appendices.

Quality/MIS and Data meet weekly to analyse this performance data and take performance improvement decisions. Examples of remedial actions include better use of ONAs; targeted marketing/support; staff training to support more effective caseload management; changes to time/method of delivery; staff CPD; additional support given to trainees. The Supply Chain Manager monitors progress against the PIP weekly until improvement is achieved. If necessary, the Supply Chain Manager will impose penalties (e.g., reduced allocations) on the underperforming partner. The ultimate sanction available for both staff and delivery partners is removal from the programme, with PTS taking over the delivery of outstanding training and support for all the learners with the minimal of disruption.

Board monitoring

The board will review the subcontracting dashboard and executive report each meeting and feedback any concerns or compliments. It also may include any recognition of conflicts of interest. In addition, the board will monitor the management of medium and high-risk and approval recommendation and resources needed to effectively management the contract and protect the business. The template can be found in the appendices.

Communication

Correspondence maybe via email, verbal, in person or remote, we ask the subcontractor to identify key members of their organisation to support correspondence across – Partnership

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& performance, quality & staff, data and evidence packs as well as finance. Formal correspondence will also be saved to the partners SharePoint.

PTS have allocated a main contact, which is the Supply Chain Manager, although communication might also involve the wider team such as MIS and quality.

Partners will receive termly bulletins, covering specific themes, funding rules, good practice, and success. It will contain links and should be shared with the wider team. If there has been significant change or specific communication PTS may send out ad-hoc bulletins.

All subcontractors will be issued with a SharePoint, with two levels of access:

- Management - All contracts and profile. This is also the location of your PFR
- Contracts – For delivery and learning journey

Remote Oversight

We will continue to use remote communication and methods to support the management of contracts, this must proportionate and appropriate in ensuring proper oversight and management of contract. However, we know that remote methods can enable accessibility and participation and remains an important tool in subcontracting relationship management.

Development

Partners will have a development plan set from the tendering outcome and score. This will include own development action and shared development. Our partner dates will include general supply chain development activities and triggers. This is governed by the Supply Chain Manager (Managing responsible person) if the development need is medium to high risk this will be monitored through the risk reporting and risk register.

Yearend & lesson learnt.

PTS will seek a review of the contractual year, its own performance as well as how each partner has contributed to PTSs success indicators and objectives. This will then be used to inform the next business case.

8. Data and Compliance Monitoring

a) Data Management

All contract activity is recorded and held securely electronically using ILR-compatible management information software (PICS).

As the prime contractor we will manage, and complete data entry using the above-mentioned software and submit this data monthly to the ESFA. As a subcontractor you are responsible for:

- Completing required evidence and evidence pack e.g., application, completions, WD and submitting this within 4 weeks of learner start date (and no later than 8 weeks), as per the SOPP.
- Ensuring your own compliance checks have been completed to mitigate errors
- Upload evidence by set deadlines (key partnership dates)

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- Respond timely to queries or request for clarification, additional evidence.
- Notify us of any changes to learning, as soon as they happen e.g., staff, dates or location.
- Notify us of any changes to learner circumstances, as soon as they happened e.g., change of address, employment status, safeguarding or disciplinary.
- Submit learner exit information within 4 weeks of end date, with full closure and completion (including certificates) within 8 weeks of end date, as per the SOPP.
- Subcontractors are expected to hold knowledge of funding regulation and some knowledge of data entry, although support will be given.

In return we will process data by completing our own compliance checks and follow the standard operating procedures for notifying you of any errors and queries in order to ensure data is processed in a timely manner.

In exceptional cases, with prior agreement, we may accept a monthly ILR file created by the subcontractor, along with all applicable evidence to support the ILR file. This will be audit checked in the same way.

b) Data Control

As the prime contractor, PTS will carry out regular data control by completing audits at specific points of the learner journey. These audits and activities will ensure data and evidence given is authenticated and true to the information entered.

Data control audits may include.

- Calls to learners to confirm participation on programme, work placement or positive outcome/achievement.
- Calls to employers to confirm placement or apprenticeship.
- Review of evidence packs
- Regular surveys to ask specific questions regarding the delivery of the qualification.

c) Data process

As per the standard operating procedures and key partnership dates, PTS will either query, or process, all data submitted by 15th working day of each month by the next ESFA reporting period. Queries that are resolved by 20th working day of the month will also be processed within that same reporting period. ILR submissions will always be made timely as per the ESFA deadlines.

Once the submission has been made, and the ESFA reports have been released, PTS' Data and Compliance Team will reconcile the payment and create an individualised occupancy and payment report. This will be released to subcontractors before the last working Thursday of the month. Invoicing and payment terms can be located in your contract, the key partnership dates and the SOP.

The payment summary will be discussed during your monthly partner meeting, subcontractors should ensure that they have reviewed this prior to the meeting, and it is correct and reflective of current learning and learners. Any errors or changes should be

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discussed at your monthly meeting, to ensure any changes are made prior to the next reporting period.

Payments made are less the contracted management fee and payments will only be made on actual delivery evidenced through the ILR. We reserve the right to restrict payments to the contract's maximum funding value, and no payments will be made until the ESFA has approved the claim and PTS is in receipt of the funds.

Deep Dives

Scope

An in-depth strategy and analysis or investigation for quality assurance and risk mitigation, of part or whole process and/or a service or department.

It is a whole team approach that collectively carries out the deep dive, allowing a team to work together to test, standardise or work through problems or poor performance. Creating a quality and learning culture.

Why apply this approach - triggers

This is a holistic approach to validate and risk mitigate against poor or failing services or fraud.

It can form part of the annual quality cycle and help the organisation develop and provide a high-quality service that has been tested.

It can also be applied as part of an investigation into poor performance, service failure, or a whistleblowing allegation.

Approach

Predominantly this is a desk-based exercise, that is a team task and is a comprehensive approach covering the 3 I's – Intent, implementations, and impact and incorporates the *7 elements of quality assurance.

With a whole team approach directed by a designated lead, which may include staff from varying levels and normally the following departments: MIS, Quality Assurance, service deliveries, or Partner Managers.

A deep dive will be a scheduled event that may be scheduled over a day or a week and include action days, working together, and also designated activities. There will be a final conclusion and feedback meeting and the lead will conclude the report.

In summary a deep dive will carry-out three things:

- Analysis
- 3 C's – capacity, capability & competence
- Assurance

Defined desirable outputs of a deep dive

- Identify errors, including human or system error.
- Test process – standardisation, efficiency, and compliance
- Test service user – compliance, authenticity, and experience
- Design and service output meet standards
- Confidence and/or prevention of failure, fraud, or error (Risk mitigation)
- Good practice & learning (development)

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**7 elements of quality assurance*

1. *Define the approach and know the areas of analysis or underperformance*
2. *Keep track of process and progress*
3. *Achieve consistency and accuracy in output & findings*
4. *Dedicate team with scope*
5. *Organisation approach – quality culture*
6. *Enhance and improve service outputs*
7. *Lesson learnt & development*

e) Quality control and assurance

Quality Management Strategy Statement

PTS quality management strategy statement serves as a framework for a systematic integration and alignment of the organisation culture and approach to quality management and an expectation of our supply chain. Quality is important to us because we value our customers, and the impact education and training has on people's lives and businesses. We are committed to continuous improvement and have set out our, values, principles, policies and approach in the management of our quality of services.

PTS maintains a set of core quality objectives and principles that are based on our values and whilst our supply chain may have their own values, we will believe working practices should align and will consider this as part of our supply chain procurement and due diligence.

Quality Objectives

- Achieving excellent, with a focus on raising standards and continuous improvements.
- Valuing people, their differences, and their wellbeing.
- Meeting or exceeding the needs of our learners and customers.
- Creating a ladder of opportunity - inspiring tomorrow's workforce.
- To ensure our own workforce leads by example, are supported, and have development opportunities.
- Create a joined-up approach to addressing local skills plans.

Quality principles are based on:

- Learner centred and customer focused.
- Leadership – clear vision and mission.
- Engagement & relationship management.
- Continuous improvement and lessons learnt.
- Both process and people approach.
- Evidence based decision making.

We measure the quality of services through several mechanisms, reporting and Kitemarks. These include:

- OFSTED and the Education Inspection Framework (EIF).
- Self-assessment report (SAR)

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- Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)
- Audits
- Performance data.
- Observation of Teaching, Learning & Assessment (OTLA)
- Stakeholder surveys.
- Matrix accreditation.
- Cyber Essentials.

We monitor the areas to be improved through a supply chain Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) building on issues identified in the SAR and inform the overall planning and continue supply chain agreement and risk.

We expect our supply chain to:

- Align with our sub-contracting strategy and service intent, Implementation, and Impact statements. Ensuring that we add value to the supply chain and work together.
- PTS due-diligence and annual checks including financial health and going concern.
- Hold a valid UK Provider Registration Number (UKPRN) and meet standards as required for services offered.
- Hold or be working towards a Matrix standard.
- Meet our quality strategy management statement.
- Hold the appropriate policies, insurance, and mandatory staff training.
- Declare any changes, concerns, complaints or investigations.
 - Going concern, financial health
 - Health & safety
 - Safeguarding
- Contract values or signing additional contracts with other providers.
- Sign an annual contract.
- Clear and transparent communicate.

Where contract value is above £3m

ESFA, will monitor the volume/value of aggregate provision held by a single subcontractor and where that is above £3 million, we will refer to Ofsted for inspection. ESFA will reserve the right to take steps to reduce the value/volume where we consider the level of exposure to be too high.

Subcontractor with a contracting value will be directly inspected. Contract value is aggregated across all contracts held.

ESFA will review this at key points in the funding year, which may result in:

- A referral to Ofsted for a direct inspection.
- Direct action, such as requiring leads to reduce volumes with them.
- In acting we will consider the oversight of the leads and the quality of subcontracted learner outcomes.

g) Quality Control Expectations

Staff minimum levels of experience and training

Mandatory qualifications

- Child protection / Safeguarding / Prevent.
- Equality and Diversity

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- UK GDPR
- Managers – safer recruitment

A minimum of 5 years vocational experience in the required specialist subject area Or Relevant subject qualification / Degree. Unless specified differently by your sector skills board.

All teaching, pastoral and assessing staff of technical and vocational should be working towards or qualified in the most appropriate qualification for their job role, this may include one or more of the following:

- Teaching qualification
- Assessor qualification
- Internal Verifier qualification or EPA examiner
- Coaching and Mentoring
- IAG qualification
- Functional Skills Level 2 - 5

Continuous Professional Development

All staff should also hold a Continuous Professional Development log, which clearly demonstrates competency and up to date skills levels for their subject specialism, teaching techniques and legislation or education reforms. This should include development of knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Details can be logged in the staff's annual performance review

There are no minimum expected hours however a training plan should be created and linked to annual performance review and outcomes and/or the outcomes and feedback from learners, employers, audits, and lesson observations.

We would also encourage a peer mentoring scheme OR 'critical friend' shadowing as well as hours to support voluntary community work and/or industry placement.

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

We expect all supply chain services to plan and prepare adequacy for T, L & A and hold the relevant documentation. PTS have a quality management strategy that can be used to support and guide our supply chain further.

Supply chain Quality Assurance Process (IQA)

We expect all approved supply chain organisations to have their own robust internal quality assurance processes, this refers to several quality processes that ensure consistent, fair, and reliable teaching, learning and assessment approaches and that we aspire to be outstanding in the service we deliver. PTS have a quality management strategy that can be used to support and guide our supply chain further.

We will undertake a risk-based approach to sampling and will request documents for auditing, our QA process will mirror that expected in the supply chain IQA process and will review its rigour as well as sampling documentation to test judgements.

The frequency will depend on programme, value of contract, or risk the supply chain has been assessed at. Frequency will be agreed at monitoring visits.

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Quality Compliance - Paperwork audits

Learner journey sampling will be requested and is likely to be conducted remotely. A List of learners and required paperwork notification via email. Return deadline given, normally 14 days • Uploaded to SharePoint • Audit carried out within 14 days, with verbal feedback and agreed notes. Written report then to follow. The paperwork audit will also investigate the actual learners and triangulate information submitted on ILR evidence packs, to ensure it is reflective of funding claimed.

Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA)

To ensure teaching, learning, and assessment meet minimum expected service levels and support continuous improvement, all staff delivering any element of a programme will be subject to a lesson observation. The supply chain provider may undertake a proportion of these annually if they hold the capability and experience to do so. The required level of support need will be detailed in our fees and charges. If the supply chain has capability to undertake proportion of OTLA then PTS still will conduct at least 25% of teachers across the contracted provision. If the supply chain does not hold capability or capacity this will be conducted by the PTS Supply Chain Manager and include the following mechanisms.

PTS have determined that to fully understand the staff's capability, provide clear thresholds for development and manage the risk of underperforming, we will not grade lessons however language will be in line with observation grading and Education Inspection Framework:

- 1; Outstanding
- 2; Good
- 3; Requires improvement.
- 4; Inadequate

OTLA' s will be completed regularly and consistently. These will be conducted both informally and formally and an annual scheduled will be produced giving key weeks where observation activity will happen and staff should expect to have one of the below observations, associated with the following themes:

Drop-In: Typically, short and have a far greater focus on attendance, timely starts and attitude to learning. Drops-ins can also be a good way to show visibility of management and/or quality team. Evidence is recorded on a short form, with verbal feedback. If used to support performance, trends will be recorded over a period.

Learning Walks: These are a series of organised and highly structured enquiry 'walks' through the learning environments of the training centre or workplace where appropriate, typically short and focused. There is a dedicated form, allowing for focused feedback. If used to support performance, trends will be recorded over a period.

Formal lesson observations: This type of observation is typically an hour and may occur at the start, middle or end of a sessions and will cover all areas of the Education Inspection Framework.

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Peer observation: Informal peer or critical friend observation of each other. It offers first-hand experience and direct evidence about what happens in other classrooms. It is a practical and powerful way to support teaching and assessor practice. A useful exercise for delivery of new subject material. Peer observation works best when colleagues choose to work together on a voluntary basis, identifying and focusing on the issues they have agreed to address. It is a professional development activity. It is expected that all FT members of staff participate in one peer observation a year.

Observers may request to see SOLA, session plan, assessment resources and any delivery resources used in that session. They are likely to ask to speak to the learners, to gain learner feedback about the provision and will also investigate the actual learners and triangulate information submitted on ILR evidence packs, to ensure it is reflective of funding claimed. Templates can be in appendices.

ALL observations will record Child protection, safeguarding and prevent practices, missed opportunities or concerns. Wider consideration will also focus on digital essentials & safety as well as equality, diversity, and inclusion.

A time for one-to-one feedback will be agreed between the staff member and the observer and will be planned within seven working days and then followed by the completed report.

Staff may wish to refer to the Ofsted framework or the full Ofsted handbook
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>

Self-Assessment (SAR)

As part of the quality review process, self-assessment will be completed annually on all the educational services undertaken within that academic year for all our supply chain.

Depending on contract value, self-assessment may be conducted at two levels.

1. Organisation - This process will be undertaken by appropriate supply chain nominee and signed off by the director.
2. Programme - This will be undertaken by the appropriate manager or team member, reflect the specific data, services, and approaches for that programme.

The self-assessment report will review several key outcomes, matching those set out in the EIF. Data will be used to aid judgements but should be used with long side wider evidence of intent, implementation, and impact of services.

The report will document an overall grade for the provision:

- 1 – Outstanding
- 2 – Good
- 3 – Requires improvement
- 4 – Inadequate

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Sub-contractors may use their own template at the approval of PTS Supply Chain Manager. A PTS template can be found in the appendices.

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The aim of a quality improvement plan is a live document to help providers self-assess their performance in delivering quality education, duty of care and plan for continuous improvements. PTS will provide a template of good practice however you may have and can use your own organisations template if it meets minimum standards and expectations.

PTS expect a QIP to cover differing levels, this will be dependable on contract value and supply chain services.

Examples - organisations, programmes or funding stream.

The supply chain nominee will manage the outcomes of the SAR and annual quality improvement actions, the appropriate Programme Manager should own the QIP and it is expected that all actions are communicated to staff.

This document must be available at request and remain as live documents throughout the year, it will also be used as part of our sub-contractor monitoring visits.

Sample form

	Improve ment Focus (EIF reference)	Intent - KPI's / Objectives	Implementation - Action	Lead	Review	Impact - Progress	BRAG
1		Quantitative: Qualitative:	•		Quarter 1		
					Quarter 2		
					Quarter 3		
					Quarter 4		

Sub-contractors may use their own template at the approval of PTS Supply Chain Manager. A PTS template can be found in appendices.

8. Support and guidance

PTS are a critical friend, and we wish to work with our supply chain to ensure:

- Delivery of shared objectives and values
- High quality services that deliver on local skills plans and needs.

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- Sharing of good practice and expertise
- Enhancing teaching and learning practices and the learner experience
- Celebrating success
- Building capabilities and capacity across the sector

All our policies can be located on our website or requested.

We sever to offer support and wish to work with companies to be and do the best we can.

09. Complaints and Feedback

PTS is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect.

One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of the learner, employers and sub-contractors, and by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right or listening to compliments, continuing to ensure the shared value in our all our work.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- Raising a concern or making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- There are opportunities to give feedback or compliments.
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.
- We deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidential and respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- We learn from all feedback - complaint or compliment and use feedback to continually improve, review or value our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

PTS have a complaints, concerns and appeal policy that is published and accessible on our main website. If you wish to give feedback you can do so in the supply chain monitoring meeting, direct to the Supply Chain Manager or the Director of Sales and Marketing. Alternatively, PTS also have a Supply Chain whistleblowing policy.

10. Dispute Resolutions

A subcontractor may dispute data, performance, or payment. This disagreement will be delt with through a flow of escalation in the hope to resolve at the earliest point. However, we recognised that it may not always be possible to resolve at the earliest point and therefore there is a hierarchy of escalation and investigation.

For process flow, please refer to the SOPP

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