



## SUBCONTRACTING STATEMENT

### BACKGROUND

Avant Partnership Limited (trading as Avant Skills Academy, hereinafter referred to as 'Avant') was not set up to become a government funded training provider, it was created out of the needs of small local work based learning providers, who could not individually meet the size of contract requirements of the funding body for the delivery of the Train to Gain programme.

This was compounded by the introduction of Minimum Contract levels (MCL), which affected a number of our delivery partners who had to relinquish their direct contracts with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

Since that time, we grew our partnership and the provision offered in pursuit of our vision:

**"To provide a dynamic approach to the delivery of high-quality learner and employer-centred learning and development"**

Whilst we were officially a 'lead provider', we always considered our approach to be that of a delivery partnership, with organisations to which we sub-contracted recognised as delivery partners.

Since 2008 we have been inspected by Ofsted on three occasions, with each inspection resulting in us being awarded Grade 2 – GOOD.

Our partnership approach was identified as strong through all inspections, with our due diligence, contracting and quality improvement arrangements specifically recognised. Inspections verified that we had developed a highly effective, productive, responsive and vibrant partnership.

Following the review of apprenticeships and the introduction of the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), enabling organisations to become a main provider in their own right, our Delivery Partnership has changed significantly. We now work with a single delivery partner, 'Orchard Training and Education Limited' (Orchard), who continue as a supporting provider on RoATP and maintain a mutually beneficial working arrangement with Avant through a sub-contracting arrangement.

A constant aim throughout the lifetime of the organisation, has been for our provision to be never less than Good, continually improving and striving to be Outstanding. Orchard embrace this aim, which has been evidenced through our rigorous contracting and quality assurance arrangements and further verified through the inspection of their delivery in each of our three Ofsted inspections.

It is beneficial to employers and learners in our locality that this effective partnership arrangement continues. We work together to mutually enhance the opportunities to learners and provide improved access to training for employers

## **WHY DO WE SUBCONTRACT?**

### **Apprenticeships**

Avant are committed to delivering high quality apprenticeships that meet the needs of apprentices, employers and the wider labour market. In most cases all delivery of the apprenticeship is carried out by Avant, however we work with our single delivery partner, Orchard who provide the delivery of apprenticeship training in the construction industry. The long-standing effective partnership with Orchard, ensures their delivery meets our high expectations and enhances the apprentice experience. It is agreed with each employer that the service meets or exceeds the academic standard required within the apprenticeship. At all times Avant lead the employer relationship.

### **Traineeships**

Our traineeship programme is designed to be a pre-apprenticeship into our occupational areas. We offer a generic traineeship programme that is not sector specific, with occupational traineeships in business administration, construction, customer service and hairdressing. Construction training is delivered by Orchard through a subcontract arrangement, supported by Avant to maintain the quality of our provision. Our traineeship programme provides direct progression to our apprenticeship provision.

As previously stated, we have agreed that sub-contracting is not a practice we will increase. Our established relationship with our single delivery partner complements our provision and we are not looking to change our effective delivery model.

## **HOW DO WE APPROVE A SUB-CONTRACTOR?**

We have operated an effective, efficient and rigorous contracting and quality assurance process since the creation of the organisation in 2007. Historically, all delivery partners were required to complete and pass a robust due diligence process, which included but was not limited to: appraisal of Ofsted or applicable assurance reports for validation of quality, appraisal of financial health, appraisal of delivery staff qualifications, health and safety and for apprenticeships the requirement to be on the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.

These arrangements remain in place for the annual renewal of the contracts with our single delivery partner, Orchard.

## **HOW DO WE MANAGE SUBCONTRACTORS?**

Subcontracting will be agreed with employer prior to the commencement of the apprenticeship delivery and is clearly detailed in the Employer Contract and Apprenticeship Commitment Statement.

In all instances Avant retains clear and transparent accountability for the quality of training provision, maintains proper and appropriate controls to manage the apprentice experience; and seeks to ensure that value for money is achieved by efficient subcontractor management.

Our robust quality assurance process includes visits at short notice and interviews with staff and apprentices to ensure apprentices exist and are eligible; audit and direct observation of initial guidance, assessment and delivery of training and/or on-programme assessment.

Our controls are validated by an annual subcontractor controls evaluation carried out by an independent assurance specialist.

## **DO WE CHARGE A MANAGEMENT FEE?**

Avant will retain a management fee for the management of subcontracted activity, which is detailed in our Management Fee Policy, a copy of which is provided to our delivery partners and available on our website.

The management fee covers the cost of:

- Contract Administration and Management
- Quality Assurance and Improvement
- MIS function relating to the submission of funding claims to the ESFA
- Meetings
- Observation of Teaching and Compliance Audits