

1 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 this time, we have grown our partnership and the provision offered in pursuit of our vision:

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

Whilst we are officially a 'lead provider' we consider our approach to be that of a delivery partnership, with organisations to which we sub-contract recognised as delivery partners.

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 maintain a mutually beneficial working arrangement with Avant through a sub-contracting arrangement, for the delivery of both pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeships.

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 is evidenced through our rigorous contracting and quality assurance arrangements.

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

WE ARE CURRENTLY NOT SEEKING ADDITIONAL SUBCONTRACTORS

2 SUB-CONTRACTOR APPROVAL

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 DfE Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.

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

3 SUBCONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT

Subcontracting was be agreed with the employer prior to the commencement of the apprenticeship delivery and is clearly detailed in the Employer Contract and Apprenticeship Training Plan.

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.

4 SUBCONTRACTOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

Avant is responsible for the quality assurance, ensuring that the training meets the required standards and contributes to the apprentices and learners overall development.

As a result of our long standing working relationship, robust due diligence arrangements and the experience of our delivery partner, we are able to place a degree of trust in their delivery and adherence to the requirements of the funding body, awarding bodies and inspectorate. This is formally supported by their Contract for Services. Notwithstanding, their provision will be continually tested to ensure that the quality of delivery is appropriate and effective.

Our quality improvement arrangements include an audit of direct delivery and that of our delivery Partner, which focusses on both compliance with funding rules and contractual requirements and quality of provision in line with our quality expectations and Ofsted's Inspection Framework.

Our quality improvement arrangements include observations of teaching, learning and assessment (OTLA), which are undertaken, submitted and moderated across our directly delivered provision and that of our delivery partner. These arrangements aim to ensure that the results of OTLA continue to be at least good, aiming to be outstanding. These specific arrangements are outlined in the Observation Procedure.

We have incorporated a structured observation and review process, in which all team members involved in the delivery of teaching and training to apprentices and learners, evaluate their practice with others and assess its impact on learning.

Full details of our quality assurance and improvement arrangements are outlined in our *Quality Policy*.

5 MANAGEMENT FEE

Avant is committed to ensuring that the maximum amount of funding is passed on to our sub-contracted delivery partners, to enable the learner to receive the best possible learning experience. The percentage of funding we retain will be sufficient to cover the costs of managing and quality assuring the delivery of high quality learning experiences.

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

The management fee covers the cost of:

- Audit
- Contract Administration and Management
- MIS function relating to the submission of funding claims to the Funding Body
- Meetings
- Observation of Teaching and Compliance Audits
- Quality Assurance and Improvement
- Training and development

Further details of our management fee arrangements are set out in our Management Fee Statement

6 SUBCONTRACTING 16-19 EDUCATION (PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS)

Our 16-19 Education programme is designed to be a pre-apprenticeship into our occupational areas. We offer a generic programme that is not sector specific, with occupational programmes 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 16-19 Education programme provides direct progression to our apprenticeship provision, with construction to Orchard as part of their direct contract..

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.

7 SUBCONTRACTING 16-19 EDUCATION (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 until December 2028 we will continue to work with our single delivery partner, Orchard who provide the delivery of apprenticeship training to a cohort of Apprentices in the construction industry, which fills a gap in local provision, meets the skills needs of the area and provides accessibility for local people.

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.

From 2026, Orchard, successfully gained a direct contract with the Department for Education (DfE) for the delivery of Apprenticeships in Construction.

7.1 OTE Construction Apprenticeship Delivery

Our relationship with OTE was unique to that of other delivery partners, as we had a greater level of involvement in their provision, which met the new apprenticeship sub-contracting requirements. It was beneficial to employers and their apprentices in our locality that this effective partnership arrangement remained. We continue to work together to mutually enhance the opportunities to apprentices and provide improved access to training for employers.

Avant acknowledges the importance of partnership working with OTE, employers, and apprentices, which ensures the development of apprentices not just to complete the apprenticeship, but to secure long-term employment and continual career progression. This partnership approach is pivotal in creating a well-rounded, competent workforce ready for the challenges of the construction industry.

This partnership leverages OTE's specialised knowledge and skills in the construction industry, whilst ensuring Avant's overarching quality and co-ordination. Avant provides substantial delivery of the on-programme assessment to every construction apprentice, with OTE delivering the specialist construction training.

This ensures that Avant actively contributes to the apprentice's learning journey. The programme's structure ensures that the delivery by both Avant and OTE is coherent and complementary.

The apprenticeship programme is designed to be flexible, allowing employers to choose how they want to engage, thus meeting diverse employer needs and ensures that apprentices receive comprehensive, high-quality training that equips them for successful careers in the construction industry while maintaining compliance with government regulations.

OTE have a long-established professional relationship with employers in the construction industry, across the Humber area. These relationships and reputation are crucial to the development of the partnership approach between each apprenticeship employer, Avant and OTE.

OTE deliver the specialist construction training to each apprentice, to meet employer requirements in line with the following apprenticeship standards:

- Bricklaying
- Carpentry and Joinery
- Construction Support Technician
- Groundworker
- Plasterer

This specialist training is designed in the following three stages:

- Stage 1, known as Foundations for Success, focuses on learning the basics of the trade, gaining essential skills, knowledge, and behaviours necessary to be employable as an apprentice. This stage is delivered through off-the-job training in 5-day block releases every 4 weeks, equipping apprentices with a strong understanding of health and safety, basic skills, and essential tools for their trade.
- Stage 2, Speed vs Quality, builds on the skills learned by concentrating on repetition, speed, and quality. Delivered in 3-day block releases every 4 weeks, this stage prepares apprentices for targeted speed tests, balancing speed and quality to meet stringent industry standards, ensuring readiness for the challenging EPA.
- Stage 3, Topping Out, focuses on detailed and technical finishing skills. This stage, delivered in 2-day block releases every 4 weeks, transitions apprentices to real-life working environments, fostering the skills required to excel as tradespeople.

7.2 Avant Construction Apprenticeship Delivery

Avant is involved in the initial engagement and on-boarding with all apprentices, following our ***Learner and Employer Engagement Process***. This ensures employers and apprentices engage with Avant from the start and understand our role in the apprenticeship programme.

An **Employer Engagement Pack** is completed with all employers. This gives us critical information to be added to PICs and to set up their Apprenticeship Service account. Every employer is then added to the Apprenticeship Service, or if they are already registered each employer is guided through the process in how to add us as a provider with the relevant permissions. This enables us to reserve funding on the system, select the start date and plan the induction of their new apprentice.

Avant undertakes the following on-programme assessment with every construction apprentice at three critical stages in their apprenticeship programme, which are essential for monitoring progress, providing additional support, and ensuring that apprentices are on track to meet the standards:

- Stage one after six months on programme and stage two after 12 months on programme.

Both of these stages are known as internal point assessment (IPA) summaries, captured on **IPA Summary Assessment** documents, and enable us to ensure the apprentice is on target, is meeting the required standards and prepared for the next stage of their training.

Each assessment is undertaken individually with the apprentice, assessing their knowledge, skills and behaviours development through professional discussion, reviewing their learning and progress to date and providing recapping, reiteration and reflection of training to further reinforce learning and development.

The apprentices Occupational Development Coach (ODC) from OTE is invited into the feedback session, to discuss any areas where the apprentice may be struggling and facilitate the necessary support and resources to help them overcome challenges and meet their targets or make any appropriate changes to the delivery or ITP to inform future planning.

- Stage three is completed prior to preparation for gateway and is known as a mock end point assessment, with a specific **Mock End Point Assessment** document completed. These documents are aligned to each of the construction apprenticeship standards, previously outlined.

Conducted with every apprentice, the assessment helps ensure the apprentice is prepared for gateway. Including a number of readiness checks, which ensures that all IPAs have been completed, employer confirmation has been received, minimum time has been completed, required level of English and maths achieved, evidence portfolio is complete and that the range of evidence presented meets the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) required in the standard.

Each Mock EPA is undertaken individually with the apprentice. Their employer and ODC from OTE attend the feedback, which determines the apprentice's preparedness for EPA or whether further development is required.

All three stages of on-programme assessment are conducted by a Programme Tutor Assessor employed by Avant Skills Academy.

All *IPA Summary Assessment* documents are signed by the apprentice, Avant and OTE.

The same parties and the apprentice's employer also sign the *Mock End Point Assessment* document.

The on-programme assessments undertaken by Avant are critical milestones in the apprenticeship journey, and our structured assessments ensure that apprentices are fully prepared for their final evaluation through EPA.

By continually monitoring their progress and addressing any gaps, we help apprentices approach the EPA with confidence, ready to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and behaviours. The construction industry demands skilled and competent professionals, and our rigorous assessment process ensures that apprentices complete with the proficiency and expertise required to excel in their careers. By maintaining high standards throughout the training programme, we contribute to the development of a capable and reliable workforce that meets industry needs.

Our rigorous on-programme assessment ensures a holistic learner-centred approach and is essential to enable each apprentice's progress, secure the successful achievement of EPA and thus completion of their apprenticeship.

8 REVIEW

We review our subcontracting arrangements annually as part of our business planning process.

WE ARE CURRENTLY NOT SEEKING ADDITIONAL SUBCONTRACTORS