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Highfield Partnership Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Highfield recognises that many of its approved Centres are working in effective partnerships which are both formal and informal in nature.
- 1.2 Partnership working is a valuable tool within the training and qualification sector. It can also be an efficient means of sharing limited resources. The scope and number of partnerships are increasing, both in the public and private sectors.
- 1.3 It is vital that Highfield is both aware and regularly evaluates partnership arrangements within its Approved Centres to ensure they are robust and compliant with the regulatory requirements.
- 1.4 This policy also outlines the governance arrangements to be observed in undertaking and maintaining partnerships. It also explains in more detail Highfield's scope for Centres working in partnership.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the effective monitoring of partnerships (both existing and new) and to offer guidance to those directly involved in partnerships.
- 2.2 This policy provides Highfield's scope for partnership working, together with outline definitions of partnerships.
- 2.3 The policy seeks to ensure, in the context of each partnership, that:
 - 2.3.1 Both Highfield and the representative partners are clear about its purpose and expected outcomes;
 - 2.3.2 Learners are not misled and/or in any way adversely affected by a Centres partnership arrangement;
 - 2.3.3 Highfield's own strategic objectives, priorities, obligations and regulatory requirements are being met by the partnership;
 - 2.3.4 Partnership involvement, activity and outcomes are monitored and reviewed with responsibilities clearly identified;
 - 2.3.5 Risks for Highfield, and for the partnership, are agreed and regularly assessed;
 - 2.3.6 Each partnership is properly authorised and employers, and its legal status understood by all partners; and

- 2.3.7 The principles of diversity and equalities, as outlined in Highfield's Diversity and Equality Policy, are reflected within its work.

3. Aims

- 3.1 The policy aims to provide clarity to the roles, responsibilities and relationships for any Approved Highfield Centre involved in any type of partnership arrangement that affects any part of the delivery or award of any Highfield qualification.
- 3.2 In addition, the policy will ensure that partnerships satisfy the requirement to properly fulfil our obligations with regard to compliance with qualification regulatory requirements.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 Highfield defines a partnership as a formal or informal working arrangement involving more than one independent body, from any sector, who share responsibility and agree to cooperate towards a common goal.
- 4.2 In summary, all partnerships will agree:
- 4.2.1 Shared vision/objectives;
 - 4.2.2 Resource availability/requirements;
 - 4.2.3 Clear measureable outcomes;
 - 4.2.4 Risks; and
 - 4.2.5 Timescales for review or lifespan of partnership.
- 4.3 Partners should:
- 4.3.1 Be independent bodies or persons working willingly in collaboration with each other;
 - 4.3.2 Agree to co-operate and commit resources to achieve a common goal(s);
 - 4.3.3 Create a documented process by which to work together to develop, implement and monitor a joint programme of work;
 - 4.3.4 Be prepared to share relevant information, risks and rewards;
 - 4.3.5 Recognise the obligations of Highfield and its requirements in the relation to the qualification regulator criteria; and

4.3.6 Be prepared to accept decisions made by the partnership within the agreed parameters.

4.4 A partnership can be as small as two partners and may well be established to deliver a focused, time limited project.

4.5 A partnership includes formal/informal relationships with referral agencies.

5. Identification of Partnership Arrangements

5.1 Organisations must inform Highfield of all partnership arrangements; both during the application for Highfield Centre Approval and as soon as reasonably practicable for any partnerships that may arise after Highfield Centre Approval.

5.2 Highfield will maintain details of partnership involvement within its internal systems. The purpose of this is to:

5.2.1 Provide a mechanism for reviewing partnership involvement; and

5.2.2 Provide clarity regarding which partnerships Highfield is aware of.

6. Partnership Arrangements

6.1 Organisations in partnership must have an enforceable agreement, signed by each of the partners, in place for each partnership. The agreement must include:

6.1.1 Aims and objectives;

6.1.2 Legal status;

6.1.3 Defined liabilities and responsibilities;

6.1.4 Structures and management systems;

6.1.5 Membership and decision making rights;

6.1.6 Risks and their control measures;

6.1.7 Resource and funding arrangements;

6.1.8 Partnership reporting arrangements;

6.1.9 Partner liabilities and assets;

6.1.10 Governance arrangements; and

6.1.11 Monitoring and measuring progress of the partnership.

- 6.2 The above list is not exhaustive.
- 6.3 Unapproved Organisations working in partnership with a Highfield Centre are not permitted to use the Highfield logo or make reference in any way to promote affiliation with Highfield. It is the responsibility of the Highfield Approved Centre to enforce the content of this policy.
- 6.4 For all partnerships, a clear exit strategy must be in place, whether for a partnership with a known limited lifespan or generally to reduce the risks to Highfield and other partners involved in the partnership.
- 6.5 All partnerships that come to an end should be evaluated upon conclusion. The evaluation should highlight the lessons learnt and main outcomes achieved.
- 6.6 Highfield may request copies of the agreements in which its Approved Centres have in place. If such document does not cover the above, Highfield may well request the relevant details.

7. Partnership Review

- 7.1 Each partnership must be reviewed to provide assurance that suitable systems are in place and that its outcomes and performance can be monitored and evaluated.
- 7.2 All partnerships must be reviewed on a regular basis to assess progress and to measure the impact of the partnerships activities, value, effectiveness and outcomes achieved.
- 7.3 The findings of each review should be reported to Highfield, via the Approved Centres Account Manager.
- 7.4 All Approved Highfield Centres will be expected to provide details of any and all partnership arrangements during external visits.

8. Evaluation

- 8.1 Centres that fail to inform Highfield of their partnership arrangements, either during the application process or otherwise approved, and/or fail to operate in accordance with the Partnership Policy, may be subject to sanction.
- 8.2 Such sanctions are outlined in Highfield's Sanctions Policy.
- 8.3 Further, Highfield reserve the right at our absolute discretion not to approve an organisation's partnership arrangement.