

WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY

Grant Provider Skills Bootcamp Guidance Version 1

(1st August 2025 – 31st July 2026)

This document is intended for Grant-funded organisations facilitating Skills Bootcamp provision for the 2025/26 academic year. Providers must read this in conjunction with the Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules and associated documents. Please visit our [website](#) to find the most up-to-date information on the documents. This document has been updated to transition Skills Bootcamps for Grant providers to the academic year.

Issue date;	September 2025
Senior policy owner;	Miguel Silva
Document owner;	Lucy Bolton

Contents

WMCA Skills Bootcamp – Key Changes for delivery from 1 st August 2025.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Skills Bootcamps – Agreement Periods/Transition to Academic Year	4
Employer Engagement & Involvement	6
Guided Learning Hours and Course Length	6
Break in Learning	7
Learner Types and Co-Funded Learners.....	7
Achievement Milestones	8
Evidence Requirements & Learner Pack	9

WMCA Skills Bootcamp – Key Changes for delivery from 1st August 2025

Area	Interim Contract Delivery 1 st April – 31 st July 2025	1 st August 2025 – 31 st July 2026
Payment to Grant Providers	Payment issued on Milestone achieved following a 30/30/40 ratio.	From 1 st August 2025, the Skills Bootcamp allocation will be paid on profile. Please refer to the Grant Operational Plan for more information. Reconciliation against actual milestones achieved and evidenced will be completed as part of the R14 reconciliation against agreed milestone ratios of 30/30/40
Delivery period – transition to AY delivery for Skills Bootcamps	This allocation funds all milestones for learners starting within this period e.g. if a learner to start on 31 st July 2025, the maximum duration course would conclude 20 th November 2025, from which point they would have up to 6 months to claim an outcome (i.e. 20 th May 2026).	<p>Delivery period is now inclusive of 1st April 2026 – 31st July 2026 to cover the full 25/26 academic year. You are no longer required to complete all delivery by 31 March 2026.</p> <p>All delivery, including all claims (Milestone-1/2/3) must be achieved within the academic year (i.e. up to 31st July 2026) with all claims reported by R14.</p> <p>All bootcamps must complete within the academic year in which they start. No learners can be carried forward into the next academic year.</p>
7. Earnings Threshold	Earnings Threshold was £32,000.	The Earnings Threshold has increased in line with the WMCA's Adult Skills Fund. Employed learners who have an annual gross income of less than £34,194 enrolled on or after 1 August 2025 will be fully funded, irrespective of the employer's size.
16 Data Submission - ILR	N/A	<p>New Contract Reference numbers will be created for all Bootcamp learning that starts in August 2025 to March 2026. These reference numbers are created for each provider individually have been emailed directly to the provider by WMCA.</p> <p>For starts from April 2026 to July 2026, a further set of Contract Reference numbers will be created. This will allow performance and funding monitoring of the Bootcamp and ensure that the data can be recorded in line with the Department for Education's recording methodology and processes. These reference numbers are created for each provider individually and will be emailed directly to the provider by WMCA in 2026.</p> <p>All outcomes should be claimed using the set of Contract reference numbers for the timeframe the learner started the Bootcamp.</p>
16 Data Submissions - ILR	N/A	<p>For learners starting Skills Bootcamps programmes on or after 1 August 2025 use Event Indicators (EVI) to represent a Milestone 2 event related to the programme. Event Indicators are a Learning Delivery Funding and Monitoring Type, EVI. For continuing learners, one of the three learning aims to claim a Milestone 2 payment should be recorded. Milestone 3 should continue to be recorded in the Achievement Date field of the Programme Aim (ZPROG)</p> <p>Please refer to the coding guidance for more information.</p>

Introduction

This document sets out the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Grant Provider rules for Skills Bootcamp provision that are in addition to those found in the Adult Skills Funding Rules 25/26. This document forms part of the terms and conditions of WMCA funding. You must operate within the terms and conditions of the funding agreement, the **Adult** Skills Programme Funding Rules, the Grant Provider Operational Plan and the WMCA Coding Guidance. If you do not, you are in breach of your funding agreement with WMCA. Please visit our [website](#) to find the most up-to-date information on the documents.

All information, including any hyperlinks, was correct when the WMCA published this document. The WMCA reserves the right to make changes to these rules and will publish any updated versions on the WMCA website. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure they are compliant with the latest funding rules.

Skills Bootcamps – Agreement Periods/Transition to Academic Year

Following the notification that Skills Bootcamps are included within the WMCA Integrated Settlement offer from 1st April 2025. As of 1st August 2025, Skills Bootcamps will now align with the academic year for Grant-funded providers. To enable the transition, funding has been allocated across the following contract periods:

Interim Grant Agreement: 1st April 2025 – 31st July 2025

An Interim Grant Agreement was awarded to Grant providers to fund all learners who started their Skills Bootcamp within this timeframe, including all milestone payments, even where delivery continued beyond 31st July 2025.

The timeline of this interim period is illustrated below:



To outline the delivery and outcomes window for this interim contract, the last possible commencement day for a learner is 31st July 2025. Delivery for those learners enrolled on the maximum duration course of 16 weeks would conclude 20th November 2025 when you would then have 6 months from this point to achieve an outcome 20th May 2026.

This delivery is paid on actual delivery recorded in the ILR and follows the 30/30/40 ratio. Outcomes for delivery undertaken in the interim contract will be paid from the interim contract allocation.

For further guidance for learners funded under the interim agreement, please refer to the [2025/26 Wave 6 Guidance](#) on the WMCA website.

2025/26 Academic Year Agreement: 1st August 2025 – 31st July 2026

The Grant Provider Skills Bootcamp allocation is for the 2025/26 Academic Year. Bootcamps for learners within this period:

- Can commence from 1st August 2025.
- All claims (Milestone-1/2/3) must be achieved within the 25/26 academic year, with all claims reported by R14.
- All bootcamps must complete within the academic year in which they start. No learners can be carried forward into the next academic year.

Payments will be made on profile for this allocation as detailed in the Grant Provider Operational Plan. Reconciliation of milestones achieved and evidenced, aligning to the 30/30/40 funding ratio (shown below) will be completed following receipt of the provider's R14 2026 funding return.

Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Milestone 3
On Programme Payment	Course completion and attendance of a guaranteed job interview (or equivalent)	On job outcome (or equivalent)
30%	30%	40%
ILR Payment Trigger		
Entering the Learning Aim Reference Code for the Bootcamp + 14 calendar days elapsing	Entering the Milestone 2 – Course completion and attendance of guaranteed interview	Entering the Milestone 3 – On job outcome (or equivalent)

Key Principles

Skills Bootcamps are flexible training courses of up to 16 weeks, with a guaranteed job interview (where a candidate is being recruited to a new job or new opportunities), which equip adults with technical skills that enable them to access in-demand jobs, apprenticeships and new opportunities (including for the self-employed) leading to increased income and productivity over time.

Skills Bootcamps must be delivered at Level 3-5 or equivalent (with the exception of Skills Bootcamps in Construction and Green Skills, which may be delivered at Level 2 or equivalent).

All training must either be accredited, aligned to occupational standards managed by the Institute for Apprenticeship & Technical Education, or utilise a recognised standard for representing attainment (e.g. RARPA, SFIA) – Where the third pathway is chosen, WMCA will expect a higher standard of evidence for employer engagement.

Courses are fully funded for Unemployed learners and for employed/self-employed learners below the earnings threshold. These learners must not be charged for any element of the Skills Bootcamp.

Skills Bootcamps are designed for residents who are closer to the labour market and the assumption is that the majority of participants will have been away from the labour market less than 12-months. A Provider may only deliver a Skills Bootcamp to support adults who have been out of the labour market for longer than 12-months if they judge that a Skills Bootcamp will support them effectively into a job or an apprenticeship outcome.

No prior attainment is required unless specifically prescribed by an employer and/or specifically related to the job and sector within which the vacancies offered are situated.

Providers are advised to check that the learner does not already have a significant proportion of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that the Skills Bootcamp is designed to help them acquire. However, Providers may have defined selection processes and/or assessments as part of their approach to the recruitment of learners.

If a learner does not meet the assessment requirements, or it is discovered at IAG that they would benefit from improving on their [Functional Skills](#) then please signpost them to the relevant organisation.

A learner may generally only undertake one Skills Bootcamp per academic year and must not be on more than one Skills Bootcamp at any one time. Providers have an obligation to ask and record whether a

prospective learner has already undertaken a Skills Bootcamp in that funding year and if they are currently undertaking a Skills Bootcamp.

However, where a learner starts a Skills Bootcamp and then realises that it is not suitable for them for whatever reason, they may start, and be funded for, another Skills Bootcamp so long as they have **not met/achieved** the first milestone payment.

Skills Bootcamps should be designed to encourage the participation of underrepresented groups which may include, but are not exclusively, ethnic minority backgrounds, disability, women, veterans, prison leavers, serving prisoners due to be released within 6-months of completion of the Skills Bootcamp, prisoners on temporary release or Learners with childcare or similar responsibilities.

These may include those with protected characteristics (as defined in the [Equality Act 2010](#)) and those who might face barriers to employment.

Learner Eligibility

The [Skills Programme Funding Rules](#) contain full learner eligibility details in Section 2 – Skills Programmes Learner Eligibility and Section 3 – Skills Programmes Residency eligibility.

We expect all Independent Learners (not self-employed nor co-funded by their employer) to undertake a job interview upon the completion of the Skills Bootcamp. This should be for a genuine vacancy, with a new employer and be related to the skills gained through the Skills Bootcamp and the job must be expected to last at least 12 weeks.

Independent Learners, who are currently in employment, are required to confirm that they intend to change employers if offered a suitable role following the interview.

Employer Engagement & Involvement

Providers should engage employers from the outset in the design and/or delivery of their Skills Bootcamp provision, as well as gain commitment to interview candidates from the Skills Bootcamps for relevant vacancies or to establish what the impact will be if they are training their own employees. Providers will be required to provide evidence of their work with employers. This could include the provision of behavioural skills support, coaching and mentoring, design and/or the delivery of content, as well as evidence of interviews taking place and where participants have been recruited by an employer.

All providers should ensure that there are sufficient live vacancies aligned to each Bootcamp.

We will only fund a completion and/or outcome if it relates to an organisation registered as a UK company under the Companies Act 2006 and/or is located in England.

Guided Learning Hours and Course Length

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The Provider must offer Skills Bootcamps of a minimum of:

- Minimum 100 GLH over a maximum of 16 weeks for Digital Skills Bootcamps.
- Minimum 60 GLH over a maximum of 16 weeks for all other sectors.

We understand that there may be instances where it is necessary to reduce the GLH in order to accommodate students' Prior Attainment levels. To address this, we will adopt the same guidelines regarding

GLH reductions that are currently applied to other Skills-funded courses. Please refer to the Adult Skills Funding Rules for more information.

We want to emphasise that we expect these instances of reduced GLH to be exceptions rather than the norm. In cases where such reductions are necessary, providers must make a funding adjustment in their Individualised Learner Record (ILR) submission to Milestone 2. If we find that the delivery falls short of the recommended GLH, we will seek to conduct a reconciliation process to address these discrepancies and ensure that funding reflects the actual learning delivery.

Course Length

Skills Bootcamps are flexible educational programmes designed to support transitions in and within the workforce. To maintain this flexibility, we have set a maximum delivery duration of 16 weeks and established a minimum delivery requirement of 4 weeks. This ensures that participants receive quality provision that meets their needs and planned outcomes.

We understand that there may be circumstances where either an employer or an individual needs adjustment to these established timelines. In such cases, we encourage service providers to seek written approval via a business case from the WMCA for any proposed changes before the cohort begins. This process helps ensure that all parties involved can align their expectations and maintain the integrity of the Bootcamp programme while accommodating specific needs

Data Submissions

New Contract Reference numbers will be created for all Bootcamp learning that starts in August 2025 to March 2026. A further set will be created for starts from April 2026 to July 2026. All outcomes should be claimed using the set of Contract reference numbers for the timeframe the learner started the Bootcamp.

For learners starting Skills Bootcamps programmes on or after 1 August 2025 use Event Indicators (EVI) to represent events related to the programme. Event Indicators are a Learning Delivery Funding and Monitoring Type, EVI. For continuing learners, one of the three learning aims to claim a Milestone 2 payment should be recorded.

Please refer to the coding guidance for more information.

Break in Learning

The WMCA will not permit Breaks In Learning (BiL) after the learner's Milestone 2 has been claimed.

BiLs will depend on the amount of learning already completed, as set out below. This only applies to those who haven't met Milestone 2:

Less than 50% delivery: You will need to update the ILR to record a Break in Learning, please refer to the Coding guidance. Once the learner returns, the record can be reopened and updated, when required, to reflect the actual completion date.

More than 50% delivery: After the 50% threshold, you should update the ILR as Withdrawn/No Achievement. If the learner returns, they can complete the programme, but the original end date will remain the same; Once completed, the outcome can be changed to "achieved" if they meet the Milestone 2 (M2) requirements.

Please refer to the Adult Skills Funding Guidance 2025/26 for more guidance regarding Breaks In Learning

Learner Types and Co-Funded Learners

WMCA has amended the funding eligibility of learners for Wave 6 in line with the below information.

Unemployed	Employed/self-employed learner – Earning below earnings threshold	Independent - Employed/self-employed learner, earning above earnings threshold (Co-Funded)	Employed/self-employed learner – earning above earnings threshold- SME (Employer contribution)	Employed/self-employed learner – earning above earnings threshold– Large employer (Employer contribution)
Fully Funded	Fully Funded	50% - Co-funded	10% contribution from employer	30% contribution from employer

Where a learner is unemployed, the Skills Bootcamp will be fully funded.

Where the learner is Employed/Self-employed AND earning below the earnings threshold the Skills Bootcamp will be fully funded.

Where a learner is Employed/Self-employed but enrolls on a Skills Bootcamp independently from their employer AND is earning above the earnings threshold, funding of the Skills Bootcamps will be 50% of the overall funding.

Where the employer is training an existing employee, and employee is earning above the earnings threshold the employer must contribute to the cost of the course. The amount of contribution is determined by the size of the employer (a small or medium sized employer is defined as having fewer than 250 employees).

- In the case of large employers, 30% of the agreed learner rate to be funded by the employer.
- In the case of small and medium employers the employer contribution is 10%.

Existing employees are defined as someone directly employed by the employer, not a worker, sub-contractor, freelancer, director or officeholder. However, where a director or office holder is also an employee the employer will be expected to contribute. Further information on employment status is in the Adult Skills Funding Programme Rules.

The entirety of the cash co-funding contribution must be from the employer and cannot be substituted for any additional in-kind contribution (e.g. the supply of equipment or expertise etc).

Achievement Milestones

Milestone 1 – Learner Starts:

Registration for and attendance of Day 1, completion of 10 GLH with 14 qualifying days (calendar days) having elapsed with the learner remaining on programme.

Milestone 2 – Learner Completions:

Successful completion of a Skills Bootcamp training course which requires both;

Part A:

Participation in a minimum of 80% of the course GLH (please note this cannot be less than the minimum of 100 GLH for Digital Skills Bootcamps or 60 GLH for all other sectors). (Funding will need to be reduced when below the required amount)

Successful completion of all required assessments and exit reviews.

Part B (according to learner type):

Independent/Unemployed Learner – Written confirmation of attendance of an interview.

Self-employed Learner – Written confirmation from the learner of how the new learning/skills have been/will be applied to acquire new opportunities/contracts.

Co-funded Learner – Written confirmation from the employer of attendance of interview for a new role which utilises skills gained through the Skills Bootcamp or written confirmation from an employer that the learner is equipped to take on additional responsibilities which utilises skills gained through the Skills Bootcamp.

Milestone 3 – Learner Outcomes:

Positive outcomes (according to learner type) must be achieved within 6-months of course completion (or by 31st July 2026– whichever occurs first).

Independent/unemployed Learner – evidence of a new job which must be continuous employment for at least 12-weeks or an apprenticeship.

Self-employed Learner – Evidence of the learner obtaining new contracts or new opportunities linked to the Skills Bootcamp.

Co-funded Learner – evidence of a new role or additional responsibilities in an existing role - all outcomes must utilise the skills acquired via the Skills Bootcamp.

Evidence Requirements & Learner Pack

The [Skills Programme Funding Rules](#) outline the WMCA's eligibility requirements; providers must gather learner evidence as listed in *Annexe D Evidence pack*).

Clarification on *the use of Recruitment Agencies*

Interviews by a recruitment agency will only be accepted where the interview is for live vacancies, and the recruitment agency would be the employer and or contractor for the learner if the learner is successful OR where employers engaged by the provider have contracted with a recruitment agency to interview candidates for relevant job vacancies/roles on their behalf.

If providers cannot provide either of these pieces of evidence at Milestone 2, we will only pay Milestone 2 once Milestone 3 has been evidenced in line with agreed time limits.

The following will not be accepted as satisfying the milestone 2 interview requirement;

- Providers sending lists of interviews to learners.
- Learners being signed up to recruitment agencies.
- General interviews with recruitment agencies without a live vacancy attached.
- Interviews arranged where learners are invited to employer meet and greet sessions (e.g. an employer insight day).
- Interviews arranged where learners are invited to meet employers as part of an initial screening process.
- Interviews arranged where learners are invited to webinars and open days.

Clarification of *Paid Employment for a Minimum of 12 Continuous Weeks*

Job guarantee evidence to support payment claims is acceptable where the following apply;

- We have confirmation of the start of a job that utilises the skills acquired by attending the Skills Bootcamp (to include the job role).
- Where this is for an initial temporary assignment for less than 12 weeks, guaranteed job to include the role, start date and length of the assignment.
- If the job is a temporary assignment for less than 12 weeks there must be confirmation that further assignments will follow.
- If learners are employed on a zero-hours contract by an employer this is acceptable provided the above 3 point are provided.

- If learners are employed on a zero-hours contract by an agency with no line of sight to a guaranteed job this remains unacceptable.
- If learners are employed on a zero-hours contract by an agency this is acceptable provided (A) and (B) & (C) are provided.

Evidence Assurance Requirements

We recognise that there may be instances where a learner has changed their status part way through their Skills Bootcamp e.g., from self-employed to actively looking for, and obtaining, a job, and therefore their expected completion/outcome has changed. Where that is the case, please discuss this with your Skills Delivery Officer to confirm what evidence requirements are expected to enable a claim to be made.

The evidence pack for a Skills Bootcamp must contain evidence to support the funding claimed and must be available to us as requested. In reviewing this evidence, we are seeking assurance that the learner can be verified and that they have undertaken the activities claimed for.

The [Skills Programme Funding Rules](#) outlines the WMCA's requirements in relation to the use of digital/electronic signatures in *Annexe D Evidence Pack*.