



WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY

Skills Bootcamp Funding Guidance (For the funding year 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027)

This document sets out the funding guidance that apply to all WMCA-funded providers of education and training who receive Skills Bootcamps funding for residents residing in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area. It is implicit that if a Learning Organisation subcontracts provision funded through WMCA employment and skills, these funding rules also apply. To be read in conjunction with your Grant Funding Agreement or Contract for Services. 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.

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WMCA Skills Bootcamp – Key Changes

Please see below the key changes to 2026/27 as compared to 2025/26:

Area	2025/26	2026/27 - Overview of Change/Clarification
Funding rules		Clarification: The Skills Bootcamp guidance should be used in addition to the Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules , Providers are advised to refer to the Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules , for the appropriate funding year, in addition to the Skills Bootcamp guidance for full detail on funding requirements.
Reference to delivery years as Waves		Clarification: To reflect that Skills Bootcamps are included within the WMCA Integrated Settlement offer and are no longer subject the Grant requirements; the reference to “Waves” has been removed.
Prior Attainment		Clarification: Please ensure you refer Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules , (for the applicable funding year) for full details on prior attainment under - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
Minimum GLH		Clarification: Providers must ensure programmes are planned and delivered with sufficient Guided Learning Hours (GLH) to meet minimum completion requirements: Digital Skills Bootcamps must meet a minimum of 100 GLH, planned and delivered over a maximum duration of 16 weeks for a valid completion. All other sector programmes must meet a minimum of 60 GLH, planned and delivered within the same 16-week maximum timeframe for a valid completion. The 80% minimum attendance rule does <i>not</i> override sector minimums
Achievement Milestones		Clarification: Additional clarification on minimum evidence guidance for achievement (Milestone 2) claims
Evidence Requirements		Clarification: Additional clarification around evidence collection and retention. Including overall Skills Bootcamp requirement for Providers to evidence how all Skills Bootcamps are in alignment to Occupational Standards. This ensures all funded activity is directly linked to industry and supports learner progression.
Key performance Indicators	Providers are not permitted to over deliver on Learner starts to account for low achievement of Milestone 2s and 3s.	Change: Providers may enrol up to a maximum of 20% above their planned learner starts to help manage attrition. Progression through milestones will continue to be monitored to ensure learners advance appropriately.
Payment Model	2025/26 Payment Model 30/30/40	Change: Payments for Skills Bootcamps will continue to be paid in Milestones, however, the Funding model will be adjusted to 30/40/30.

		Clarification: The ILR requirements linked to payments has been updated to clarify and match the coding guidance
<u>Data collection</u>	As part of the ILR submission, National Insurance numbers were not a mandatory requirement	As part of the 2026/27 specification changes to the ILR, a learner's national insurance number has been made a collection requirement for Skills Bootcamps
<u>Best Practice & Pre-submission Quality Checks</u>		Clarification: Contract management will follow the intervention as outlined within the Contract for Services Operational Plan .
<u>Additional Clarification</u>		Change: The section on clarification has been moved and expanded - please ensure that you review each new clarification requirements
<u>Clarification on interview for employers</u>		Change: new section has been added to provide clarification on arranging block interviews (large groups of learners attending the same interview with one employer)
<u>Clarification on self-employment</u>		Change: new section has been added to provide clarification on self-employment requirements for M2 and M3 outcomes
<u>Clarification on Achievement and GLH</u>		Change: new section has been added to provide clarification on requirements for achievement, including GLH and assessment
ILR R14		Clarification: Providers must ensure all data is fully updated by R14. R14 is the final ILR submission of the year and becomes the definitive record for funding and performance. As no changes can be made after this deadline, thorough data cleansing is essential to avoid funding clawbacks.
Enrolment form	August 2026	Clarification: providers are responsible for ensuring that all learner data is collected and evidenced in line with the applicable funding rules and programme requirements.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the additional West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) rules for 2026/27 Skills Bootcamp provision. Providers must refer to the [Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules](#), (for the applicable funding year) for full details on funding requirements on skills programmes.
- 1.2. This document forms part of the terms and conditions of WMCA funding
- 1.3. You must operate within the terms and conditions of the funding agreement, the [Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules](#), the *Integrated Settlement Contract for Services Operational Plan* and the [Skills Programme 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.
- 1.4. All information, including any hyperlinks, was correct when the WMCA published this document.
- 1.5. 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.

2. Skills Bootcamps – Key Principles

- 2.1. The Skills Bootcamp cycle runs in line with the Financial Year (April to March) rather than the Funding Year (August to July). Accordingly, 2026/27 Bootcamps:
 - 2.1.1. Can commence from 1st April 2026.
 - 2.1.2 Training must be concluded by 31st March 2027.
 - 2.1.3 Outcomes need to be achieved within 6 months of the training completion date (and so the latest possible outcomes window will close 30th September 2027).
- 2.2. Skills Bootcamps are flexible training courses of up to 16 weeks, with attendance of 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.
- 2.3. Skills Bootcamps must be delivered at Level 3-5 or equivalent (except for Skills Bootcamps in Construction and Green Skills which may be delivered at Level 2 or equivalent). It is expected that the GLH is sufficient for the level of the Skills Bootcamps and Providers will be expected to evidence that the planned GLH will achieve the required outcome for each learner.
- 2.4. All training must either be accredited, aligned to occupational standards 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.
- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. Skills Bootcamps are designed for individuals 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. Due to the Skills Bootcamps Programme being intensive and delivered at Level 3, it is essential that Providers ensure the suitability of learners for the programme. Therefore, if a Provider enrolls a learner who has been unemployed for longer than 12 months, a comprehensive and well evidenced initial assessment and CIAG must be completed to confirm that the programme is suitable for the learner and that a progression outcome is reasonably achievable.
- 2.7. Skills Bootcamps should be designed to encourage the participation of underrepresented groups which may include, but 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.
- 2.8. 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.
- 2.9. We expect all Independent Learners (not self-employed nor co-funded by their employer) to attend 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.
- 2.10. Independent Learners, who are currently in employment, are required to confirm that they intend to change employer if offered a suitable role following the interview (included in the [Enrolment Form](#))

- 2.11. We expect that learners who start as self employed and/or who wish to become self employed to be supported on programme in the creation of an action plan which outlines how the new learning/skills have been/will be applied to acquire new opportunities/contracts.

3. Prior Attainment

- 3.1. Although there are no formal entry requirements, it is essential that robust CIAG is carried out at the start of the programme to ensure the learner is in a suitable position to successfully complete that level of course.
- 3.2. Providers must ensure that learners do not already possess a substantial proportion of the prior knowledge, skills or behaviours that the Skills Bootcamp is intended to deliver, thereby preventing duplicate or ineligible learning. Providers may implement structured selection procedures and/or initial assessment processes to determine eligibility, suitability and prior attainment as part of their learner recruitment approach
- 3.3. If a learner does not meet the assessment requirements or it is discovered at CIAG that they would benefit from improving on their [Functional Skills](#) then please signpost them to the relevant organisation.
- 3.4. A learner may generally only undertake one Skills Bootcamp per financial year (1 April to 31 March) and must not be on more than one Skills Bootcamp at any one time. Providers have an obligation to ask prospective learners whether they have already undertaken a Skills Bootcamp in that funding year and if they are currently undertaking a Skills Bootcamp.
- 3.5. Providers must ensure that they have checked the PLR to ensure that this requirement is met.
- 3.6. However, where an individual 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 (limited to two starts per financial year).
- 3.7. Where an individual starts a Skills Bootcamp in one financial year, and for some reason does not complete it until the next financial year, the start date will determine whether they are eligible to undertake another Skills Bootcamp.
- 3.8. Please ensure you refer to [Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules](#), (for the applicable funding year) for full details on prior attainment under- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- 3.9. You must not actively recruit learners who live outside of England. We will only fund learners who live within WMCA geography. You must not actively recruit learners who live outside of the WMCA geography
- 3.10. Please ensure you refer to the [Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules](#), (for the applicable funding year) for full details on eligibility under - Section 1 - General Funding Requirements.

4. Employer Engagement & Involvement

- 4.1. Training providers should engage employers from the outset in the design and/or delivery of their Skills Bootcamp provision. Providers should also secure employer commitment to interview Skills Bootcamp candidates for relevant and live vacancies, or establish the expected impact where employers are training their own employees.
- 4.2. Training 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.

- 4.3. To this end, Employer Engagement Activity will be monitored by WMCA monthly. In the event where WMCA do not feel that suitable and appropriate employer engagement activity has been implemented, WMCA will follow performance management processes.
- 4.4. All providers should ensure that there are sufficient live vacancies aligned to each Bootcamp and for all Learners.

5. Guided Learning Hours and Course Length

- 5.1. Learners must receive a value-for-money programme that effectively supports their progression into or within the workforce.
- 5.2. Providers must ensure programmes are planned and delivered with sufficient Guided Learning Hours (GLH) to meet minimum completion requirements:
 - 5.2.1. Digital Skills Bootcamps must meet a minimum of 100 GLH, planned and delivered over a maximum duration of 16 weeks
 - 5.2.2. All other sector programmes must meet a minimum of 60 GLH, planned and delivered within the same 16-week maximum timeframe.
- 5.3. The 80% minimum attendance rule does not override sector minimums. Learners must complete at least 80% of the programmes planned GLH, but completions must meet the programme minimums.
- 5.4. Therefore, planned GLH must be set high enough so that 80% of delivery does not fall below 100 (Digital) or 60 (Other Sectors).
- 5.5. 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. These guidelines, which are derived from calculations within the Scheme of Work and Curriculum Plan, are outlined as follows:
 - 5.5.1. If the planned GLH falls between 50% and 70% of the prescribed hours for the learning aim, a funding reduction of 30% will be implemented for those identified learning aims. This means that providers will receive 70% of the original learning aim value for those hours that meet this threshold.
 - 5.5.2. In cases where the planned GLH is below 50% of the specified hours, a more significant funding reduction of 50% will be applied to the identified learning aims. Therefore, providers will only receive half of the original learning aim value for these reduced hours.
- 5.6. 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. Please refer to [Skills Programme Coding guidance](#) for more information.
- 5.7. 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.

6. Course length:

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. 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 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. Providers should ensure that in these circumstances there is evidence that the programme will maintain the integrity of a level 3+ programme.

7. Course Content & Flexibility

- 7.1. The Provider must ensure that the Skills Bootcamps:
 - 7.1.1. Can be reasonably delivered to a Learner concurrently employed in either a full-time or part-time role or around other commitments,
 - 5.1.1 Are accessible to Learners; Training Providers must make reasonable adjustments, as appropriate for those Learners with Protected Characteristics (as defined by the [Equality Act 2010](#)).
- 7.2. The Provider must deliver a comprehensive ‘wraparound service’ for learners as part of their core programme. This should include a coaching and mentoring approach from the application stage, throughout the programme, and after completion, to support learners in progressing into jobs, new roles, or other opportunities. This should include:
 - 7.2.1. upfront screening of applicants, soft skills (or work readiness) training to support the occupational skills training, vacancy/role/opportunity identification,
 - 7.2.2. high-quality advice and guidance to support the learner into a positive employment outcome (for example, CV writing support, mock interviews)
 - 7.2.3. pastoral services to help participants complete the Skills Bootcamp and
 - 7.2.4. follow-up services to participants and employers to support job placement mentorship
- 7.3. The cost of any wraparound support is included within the Learning aim value, and no additional funds will be issued.
- 7.4. The Provider may deliver Skills Bootcamps remotely online or face to face or through a blended approach. However, you must ensure that delivery meets the definition of [Guided Learning Hours GLH](#).
- 7.5. All Skills Bootcamps delivery must be completed by 31st March 2027.
- 7.6. All Skills Bootcamp outcomes must be achieved within 6 months of course completion and by 30th September 2027 at the latest.
- 7.7. We will not fund any part of any learner’s learning aim or programme that duplicates the provision they have received from any other source.

8. Break in Learning

- 8.1. Break in Learning (BIL) - Providers should ensure that learners have full commitment to the programme prior to commencing, however, we understand that there are genuine reasons that learners may need a break in learning for circumstances that are out of their control.
- 8.2. To support a Break in Learning (BIL), while ensuring the programme length requirements are achieved, we will process and approve BILs via two processes, depending on the amount of learning completed on the programme as outlined in [The BIL process](#).
- 8.3. You can suspend learning while the learner takes an agreed and organised break from learning, where it is known that the intention of the learner is to return.
- 8.4. This allows the learner to continue later with the same eligibility that applied when they first started their learning. Typical examples include long-term sickness.
- 8.5. Breaks in learning must not be used to 'suspend' learning where contact is lost, or the attendance or academic performance of the resident is poor.
- 8.6. You must not use a break in learning for short-term absences, such as holidays or short-term illness, programme commitments should be addressed during Initial Advice and Guidance (IAG) to ensure they can complete the programme.
- 8.7. Where the resident does not return, you must report the aim/programme as withdrawn from the last date of attendance that you hold evidence for.
- 8.8. WMCA will monitor the volume of BIL processed throughout the academic year.
- 8.9. The WMCA will not fund a resident during a break in learning.
- 8.10. THE WMCA will not allow BILs after M2 is claimed.

9. The BIL process:

- 9.1. You must have evidence that the learner agrees to return and continue with the same learning aim; otherwise, you must report the learner as withdrawn.
- 9.2. The way we process 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 ([Part A - Achievement](#)):
- 9.3. Less than 50% delivery:
 - 9.3.1. You will need to update the ILR to record a Break in Learning, please refer to the [Skills Programme Coding guidance](#). Once the learner returns, the record can be reopened and updated, when required, to reflect the actual completion date.
- 9.4. More than 50% delivery:
 - 9.4.1. 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.

10. Learner Types and Co-Funded Learners

- 10.1. WMCA will fund eligibility of learners for 2026/27 in line with the below information.

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

- 10.2. Where a learner is unemployed, the Skills Bootcamp will be fully funded.
- 10.3. Where the learner is Employed/Self-employed AND earning below the earnings threshold the Skills Bootcamp will be fully funded.
- 10.4. 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.
- 10.5. Where the employer is training an existing employee, and the 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).
- 10.6. In the case of large employers, 30% of the agreed learner rate to be funded by the employer.
- 10.7. In the case of small and medium employers the employer contribution is 10%.
- 10.8. Existing employees are defined as someone directly employed by the employer, not a worker, sub-contractor freelancer, director or officeholder.
- 10.9. 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](#).
- 10.10. 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).
- 10.11. Providers are responsible for ensuring they collect and maintain evidence of payment of the employer's contribution. This will need to be evidenced in the form of an invoice from the training provider to the employer.
- 10.12. Providers are free to agree on further funding contributions from employers should they want to enhance the content of the Skills Bootcamp. All contributions must be evidenced.
- 10.13. Individuals must not be charged for any element of the Skills Bootcamp.

11. Earnings Threshold

- 11.1. Under 2026/27 of our initiative, we are pleased to continue with the low-wage threshold; designed to enhance accessibility to our Skills programmes. Specifically, we will fully fund employed learners who have an annual gross income of less than £34,194.00. This measure aims to support individuals striving to improve their skills while also balancing their financial commitments.
- 11.2. To ensure compliance with this funding provision, it is essential that you collect and retain evidence of the resident's gross annual wages at the outset of the learning programme.

- 11.3. Acceptable forms of documentation include a wage slip dated within the three months leading up to the resident's learning start date, a bank statement that reflects the amount paid, or an employment contract that explicitly outlines the gross monthly or annual wages.
- 11.4. Proper verification of this information is crucial to facilitate the funding process and guarantee that eligible learners receive the necessary support.

12. Whistleblowing & Complaints Guidance

- 12.1. Providers, and where appropriate sub-contractors, must ensure that all applicants, learners, and staff linked to Skills Bootcamps delivery are aware of the WMCA's [Whistleblowing](#) and [Complaints](#) policies and processes. This will be monitored as part of the contract monitoring process

13. Achievement Milestones

- 13.1. To make a claim and meet the requirements of the funding rules, providers must ensure they hold evidence of the following:

14. Milestone 1 – Learner Starts:

- 14.1.1. Registration for and attendance of Day 1,
- 14.1.2. Completion of 10 GLH
- 14.1.3. Has remained on the programme for 14 qualifying days (calendar days)

15. Milestone 2 – Learner Completions:

- 15.1. Successful completion of a Skills Bootcamp training course which requires both.
- 15.2. **Part A:**
 - 15.2.1. Participation in a minimum of 80% of the planned Guided Learning Hours (GLH) is required. However, this must still meet the minimum GLH thresholds of 100 hours for Digital Skills Bootcamps and 60 hours for all other sectors. Where the delivered GLH falls below these minimum requirements, a funding reduction will be applied.
 - 15.2.2. Successful completion of all required assessments, exit reviews and certification. For non-regulated provision, this must be fully aligned to the RARPA process, with clear evidence of progress and achievement mapped to agreed learning outcomes. Robust assessment evidence (e.g. portfolio, assessed work, observation records) must be present to demonstrate that outcomes have been met
- 15.3. **Part B (according to learner type):**
 - 15.3.1. Independent/Unemployed Learner – Written confirmation of attendance of an interview that aligns to the Skills Bootcamp.
 - 15.3.2. Self-employed Learner – Written confirmation from the learner of how the new learning/skills have been/will be applied to acquire new opportunities/contracts.
 - 15.3.3. 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.

16. Milestone 3 – Learner Outcomes:

- 16.1. Positive outcomes (according to learner type) must be achieved within 6-months of course completion (or by 30th September 2027, the outcomes time limit – whichever occurs first).
 - 16.1.1. Independent/unemployed Learner – evidence of starting a new job which must be continuous employment for at least 12-weeks or an apprenticeship and relates directly to the skills acquired on the Skills Bootcamp.
 - 16.1.2. Self-employed Learner – evidence the learner has secured new contracts or opportunities that are expected to last for a minimum of 12 weeks and relates directly to the skills acquired on the Skills Bootcamp.
 - 16.1.3. Co-funded Learner – evidence of a new role or additional responsibilities in an existing role that relate directly to the Skills Bootcamp and relates directly to the skills acquired on the Skills Bootcamp.

17. Evidence Requirements & Learner Pack

- 17.1. We have created a template for the [Skills Bootcamp enrolment form](#), which providers are welcome to use. Alternatively, providers may use their own version, provided it captures all required information. Regardless of the format used, providers are responsible for ensuring that all learner data is collected and evidenced in line with the applicable funding rules and programme requirements.
- 17.2. The [Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules](#) for the appropriate year, outline the WMCA's eligibility and evidence requirements, providers must gather learner evidence as listed in (Annexe D Evidence pack).
- 17.3. In addition to this guidance, WMCA have produced a set of evidence assurance requirements (to which our audit process is aligned), that will need to form part of each participants Learner Evidence Pack. Please see please refer to [Appendix 1: Evidence Table](#) for full details of evidence options by milestone). You should collect and retain this evidence for each individual learner.
- 17.4. If, on review, the evidence provided by the Provider is deemed insufficient to substantiate a data submission by the Provider, or the data/evidence submitted by the Provider is otherwise found to be incorrect, we will look to reclaim any funds that were paid out based on that data submission/claim.
- 17.5. We also reserve the right to suspend payments to the Provider where data quality gives rise to concern about the accuracy of the data provided by the Provider.

18. Evidence Requirements

- 18.1. You should collect and retain this evidence for each individual learner.

19. For each Skills Bootcamp.

- 19.1. Full details of all the aspects of the learning to be carried out, including supporting evidence of the number of planned guided learning hours set out in a Scheme of Work (SoW).
- 19.2. Evidence that all employers engaged with the Skills Bootcamp have received the Skills Bootcamp Employer Privacy Notice and agreed to the collection and sharing of data as set out in the Notice.
- 19.3. Alignment and evidence of how each Skills Bootcamp is aligned to Occupational Standards or utilise a recognised standard for representing attainment (e.g. RARPA, SFIA).

- 19.4. Employer Engagement and Demand must be evidenced through the contract year; providers must provide a list of employer partners involved in delivery or recruitment.
- 19.5. Evidence of employer demand for the skills and roles linked to the Bootcamp.
- 19.6. Codesign details, outlining how employers have shaped or contributed to the curriculum.

20. For each individual Learner:

- 20.1. Providers must implement rigorous and consistent processes that accurately identify learner starting points, enable informed decision-making, ensure learner understanding and justify the suitability of the programme for each individual. All decisions must be evidence-based, recorded and subject to quality assurance. This includes:
 - 20.1.1. Basic skill assessments must be aligned to current national literacy and numeracy standards. Diagnostic tools must be valid, reliable, and fit for purpose, with regular review and calibration. Results should be analysed consistently via standardised marking guidance, moderation and internal standardisation.
 - 20.1.2. Learners must understand the structure, purpose and expectations of the course before fully enrolling or progressing. Learners must be informed of Programme intent, aims and expected outcomes. Commitments required (attendance, engagement, assessments), Progression routes, Employment expectations. This must be recorded, confirmed and reflected in their learning plan.
 - 20.1.3. Learner and course suitability decisions must be evidence-based and supported by multiple information sources. Triangulation must include Initial assessment results, CEIAG outcomes, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) screening, Personal Learning Record (PLR) checks and Learner aspirations, prior experience, Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
- 20.2. The provider must offer a statement as to:
 - 20.2.1. Assessment triangulation has been completed,
 - 20.2.2. all relevant sources of evidence have been reviewed to ensure the enrolment decision is informed, valid, and appropriate.
 - 20.2.3. Confirm that the learner is being enrolled onto the appropriate level of programme
 - 20.2.4. how they will deliver the learning and skills
 - 20.2.5. how the resident will achieve their outcomes related to further progression e.g., employment, self-employment or additional skills
- 20.3. Please refer to [Appendix 1: Evidence Table](#) for full details of evidence by milestone.

21. Evidence Assurance Requirements

- 21.1. [Appendix 1: Evidence Table](#) – Gives details of the minimum required evidence to validate learner progress through a Skills Bootcamp. The evidence is aligned with the Milestone points.
- 21.2. 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.
- 21.3. 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.

- 21.4. Sampling of evidence will be done throughout the Contract Period to verify evidence to support claims submitted by the Provider. In cases where irregularities are identified, we reserve the right to carry out further checks and other remedial actions.
- 21.5. The [Adult Skills Programme Funding Rules](#) outlines the WMCA's requirements in relation to the use of digital/electronic signatures in Annexe D Evidence Pack.

22. Key Performance Indicators

- 22.1. Skills Bootcamps are short, intensive employer led opportunities that should be designed to meet the need of the current labour market. Skills Bootcamps must be developed with employers to ensure there are opportunities for all Learners.
- 22.2. The required KPIs are detailed within the specification document.
- 22.3. Providers may enrol up to a maximum of 20% above their planned learner starts to help manage attrition. Progression through milestones will continue to be monitored to ensure learners advance appropriately.

23. WMCA Payment Schedule

- 23.1. Payments will be made in accordance with [data submitted via the ILR](#)
- 23.2. All courses and payments are structured 30/40/30 – Providers must ensure they hold valid evidence for each claim.

Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Milestone 3
On Programme Payment	Contract Delivery	Outcome
	Course completion and attendance of a guaranteed job interview (or equivalent)	On job outcome (or equivalent)
Payment		
30%	40%	30%
Payment Trigger		
A Programme aim and component learning aim have been added to the ILR, and 14 days have passed since the learning start date, and the completion status is set to continuing. Please note that if a completion/withdrawal date has been added before the 14 day qualifying period, no payments will be issued.	All elements must be met as below: - The status of the Learning aim is set to 'Completed' and 'Achieved' - An Event indicator has been recorded Please note: At least 80% of GLH planned for the Skills bootcamp must be completed.	All elements must be met as below: - The status of the Learning aim is set to 'Completed' and 'Achieved' - An Event indicator has been recorded - The Programme aim of the Bootcamp is set to Completed' and 'Achieved'. - The outcome date is recorded in the achievement date field of the Programme aim.

- 23.3. Please refer to the [Skills Programme Coding guidance](#) for more information

24. Data – Overview & Purpose

- 24.1. WMCA has provided Privacy Notices for Learners (incorporated into our [Enrolment Form](#), Learner Declaration, Privacy Notice including Q&A, Case Study Consent Form) and Employers. Which can be found in the [Adult Skills Funding Programme Rules](#). Delivery partners should pass these on to learners and employers respectively, so all individuals are aware of how any personal data collected will be used. The data return will request confirmation from Providers that learners and employers have received this.
- 24.2. Providers must supply the WMCA with data in Adherence with the UK GDPR and DPA 2018. To support payments to be made, enable reconciliation to take place and to support the contract management process.

25. Data Submissions – ILR

- 25.1. Delivery partners are expected to make their monthly submissions via the ILR return ONLY. The ILR return should be completed in line with [WMCA Skills Programme Coding Guidance](#).
- 25.2. The guidance below will detail how data returns should be submitted.
- 25.3. In addition to the [Skills Programme Coding guidance](#) (above), we have created the [Learner Entry Tool Guidance](#) document to assist you with the submission of this data.
- 25.4. Delivery partners are expected to submit ILR returns in line with the [data submission timetable](#).
- 25.5. Please note, the dates displayed are the collection window closing deadlines. The collection window typically opens 3-weeks beforehand and closes at 6pm on the dates displayed below.
- 25.6. R13 and R14 are the final two supplementary, end-of-year data collection periods where data for the academic year can be finalised. Providers should ensure that data is updated correctly.
- 25.7. R14 (Hard Close) is the final Individualised Learner Record (ILR) submission of the academic year, acting as the definitive record for funding, quality monitoring, and achievement rates.
- 25.8. Because no amendments can be made after the deadline, thorough data cleansing is essential to avoid funding clawbacks.
- 25.9. The latest possible outcomes window for 2026/27 Bootcamps is 30th September 2027. Providers therefore have until R03 of 2027/2028 to record any Milestones claims that fall into a valid 6-month window.

26. Data Submission Timetable 2026/27

	ESFA ILR Collection Dates (4 th Working day of each month)
R09	07/05/2026
R10	04/06/2026
R11	06/07/2026
R12	06/08/2026
R13	14/09/2026
R14	22/10/2026
2026/2027	
R01	04/09/2026
R02	06/10/2026
R03	05/11/2026
R04	04/12/2026
R05	07/01/2027
R06	04/02/2027
R07	04/03/2027

R08	06/04/2027
R09	07/05/2027
R10	04/06/2027
R11	06/07/2027
R12	05/08/2027
R13	14/09/2027
R14	21/10/2027
2027/2028	
R01	06/09/2027
R02	06/10/2027
R03	04/11/2027

27. Best Practice & Pre-submission Quality Checks

- 27.1. The quality of the data submitted is the responsibility of the provider. Successive instances of errors being submitted that should have been resolved may result in contract management intervention as outlined within the [Operational Plan](#).

28. Contacting Us

- 28.1. Please always contact your Skills Delivery Officer in the first instance. Should you need to use the below contacts, please ensure you copy your Skills Delivery Officer into any emails.
- 28.2. You can contact us through our query mailbox at skills.programmes@wmca.org.uk
- 28.3. For ILR data queries, you can contact aebdatareturns@wmca.org.uk
- 28.4. For Quality and Compliance questions, please contact the Quality and Standards team QualityandStandards@wmca.org.uk

29. Additional Clarification

- 29.1. To support providers in ensuring that their delivery and evidence meet the minimum required standards, we have outlined additional clarification across key areas below. Please ensure these are fully reviewed and adhered to.

30. Clarification on the use of Recruitment Agencies

- 30.1. 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.
- 30.2. 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.
- 30.3. The following will not be accepted as satisfying the milestone 2 interview requirement.
- 30.3.1. Providers sending lists of interviews to learners.
- 30.3.2. Learners being signed up to recruitment agencies.
- 30.3.3. General interviews with recruitment agencies without a live vacancy attached.

- 30.3.4. Interviews arranged where learners are invited to employer meet and greet sessions (e.g. an employer insight day).
- 30.3.5. Interviews arranged where learners are invited to meet employers as part of an initial screening process.
- 30.3.6. Interviews arranged where learners are invited to webinars and open days.

31. Clarification on interviews for employers

- 31.1. WMCA has seen an increase in providers arranging block interviews (large groups of learners attending the same interview with one employer).
- 31.2. The intention of the interview requirement at Milestone 2 is not to complete a procedural task. Its purpose is to:
 - 31.2.1. meaningfully support learners into genuine, appropriate job opportunities
 - 31.2.2. ensure interviews are realistic, relevant, and aligned to employment in the sector
 - 31.2.3. help learners engage with employers in a way that increases their chances of progression
- 31.3. Interviews must add value and contribute to actual employment outcomes.
- 31.4. Use of Block / Large-Group Interviews. Block interviews should only be used when:
 - 31.4.1. there is a large number of vacancies available, justifying a group format
 - 31.4.2. the employer's recruitment process is genuinely suitable for group assessment
 - 31.4.3. learners can reasonably expect equal and fair access to opportunities
- 31.5. Block interviews must not be used as a default method simply to meet Milestone 2 requirements.
- 31.6. When Vacancies Are Limited – (Where an employer has limited vacancies), providers must ensure that learners have:
 - 31.6.1. the opportunity to attend additional interviews, not just a single block session
 - 31.6.2. ongoing support from the provider to secure further interviews
 - 31.6.3. guidance to help them improve their confidence, interview skills, and employer engagement
 - 31.6.4. access to multiple, meaningful interview opportunities, not “one-and-done” sessions
- 31.7. Providers must actively support learners to continue seeking appropriate employment where the initial interview is not successful. Evidence of this should be available.

32. Clarification of Paid Employment for a Minimum of 12 Continuous Weeks

- 32.1. Job guarantee evidence to support payment claims is acceptable where the following apply.
 - 32.1.1. Confirmation that the learner has started a job that uses the skills acquired during the Skills Bootcamp (including the job role) and the role will be continuous for 12 weeks guaranteed.
 - 32.1.2. If the temporary assignment is for less than 12 weeks, there must also be confirmation that further assignments will follow.
 - 32.1.3. Where the initial job is a temporary assignment of less than 12 weeks, evidence must include the role, start date, and length of the assignment.
 - 32.1.4. For learners employed on a zero-hours contract by an employer, this is acceptable provided that evidence outlined in 32.1.1, 32.1.2 and 32.1.3 is supplied.
 - 32.1.5. For learners employed on a zero-hours contract by an agency, this is only acceptable where evidence outlined in 32.1.1, 32.1.2 and 32.1.3 is supplied. If there is no line of sight to a guaranteed job or future assignments, this remains unacceptable.

33. Clarification on self-employment

- 33.1. This section explains what is required at Milestone 2 and Milestone 3, for both newly self-employed learners and those already self-employed at the start of the Bootcamp.
- 33.2. Self-employment evidence can be used to support payment claims only where the conditions below are met

34. Milestone 2 – Evidence of Self-Employment Using Bootcamp Skills

- 34.1. You must have clear evidence that the learner's self-employment activity uses the skills gained through the Skills Bootcamp. This can include:
 - 34.1.1. an action plan showing how they will/have apply their new skills along with:
 - 34.1.2. examples of work completed using Bootcamp skills
 - 34.1.3. a portfolio, website, or social media page demonstrating skills in action
 - 34.1.4. statements from the learner or clients confirming what skills are being used linked to the Bootcamp
- 34.2. The Bootcamp must have directly supported the learner to widen or improve their self-employment opportunities.
- 34.3. For Learners Who Have Become (or Will Become) Newly Self-Employed as a Result of the Bootcamp, providers will need to ensure that they hold:
 - 34.3.1. confirmation of registration with Companies House, where appropriate
 - 34.3.2. a Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR)
 - 34.3.3. evidence in the learner's CIAG record confirming that self-employment was their planned and discussed progression route
- 34.4. Providers must show how they supported the learner to achieve a strong and sustainable self-employment outcome, including help with:
 - 34.4.1. setting up their business correctly,
 - 34.4.2. understanding compliance, tax responsibilities and good business practice,
 - 34.4.3. building networks and sector contacts,
 - 34.4.4. finding customers and new opportunities,
 - 34.4.5. applying their Bootcamp skills confidently in a real-world setting
- 34.5. For learners who were self-employed when they began the Bootcamp, evidence must show that the Bootcamp helped them grow, improve or expand their business. Acceptable forms of evidence include:
 - 34.5.1. new contracts or customers as a result of the Skills Bootcamp,
 - 34.5.2. new types of work they can undertake because of Bootcamp skills,
 - 34.5.3. greater scope or improved quality of services offered

35. Milestone 3 – Evidence of Actual Self-Employment Activity.

- 35.1. To meet Milestone 3, we require evidence of active self-employment directly linked to the Bootcamp learning. This may include:
 - 35.1.1. Evidence of new contracts or new paid opportunities
 - 35.1.2. extended or enhanced services
 - 35.1.3. invoices showing delivery of work related to the Bootcamp skills
 - 35.1.4. other documentation confirming that Bootcamp skills are being applied in real work
- 35.2. The evidence must demonstrate that the Skills Bootcamp has enabled the learner to start, widen or enhance their self-employment offer.

36. Clarification on Achievement and GLH

- 36.1. Where a provider makes a claim for Milestone 2 achievement, there must be clear evidence to show that training is either accredited, aligned to occupational standards or has utilised a recognised standard for representing attainment (e.g. RARPA, SFIA) and the minimum attendance has been met

37. Achievement evidence

- 37.1. For regulated training; providers must hold evidence e.g. certification from the awarding body to show completion
- 37.2. For non-regulated provision, evidence of a robust assessment (e.g., portfolio, assessed work, observation records) that demonstrate that outcomes have been met aligned to occupational standards or utilise a recognised standard for representing attainment (e.g. RARPA, SFIA)

38. GLH

- 38.1. The Purpose and clarification of the 80% Completion Rule:
- 38.1.1. The 80% completion rule does not set a minimum GLH requirement. Its purpose is to ensure that learners receive at least 80% of the planned delivery, confirming that sufficient learning has taken place to meet the expectations of the programme. This rule safeguards the quality of provision and ensures learners receive the learning experience they were scheduled to receive.
- 38.2. Learners must receive a value-for-money programme that effectively supports their progression into or within the workforce.
- 38.3. Because Skills Bootcamps are largely non-regulated provision, the 80% rule ensures that any learner reported as Completed/Achieved has undertaken a substantial proportion of their planned learning.
- 38.4. To be recorded as Completed/Achieved, learners must have engaged in at least 80% of their planned GLH, however this cannot be below the requirement of digital (100 GLH) or other programme (60 GLH) If the delivered hours fall below the 100/60 GLH, the programme will not meet the required Level 3+ digital benchmark, and therefore cannot be recorded as Achieved, regardless of the 80% rule.
- 38.5. Providers are advised to ensure that GLH is planned effectively to ensure the minimum GLH requirements are attainable for completion as outlined below:

Sector	Minimum GLH	To ensure 80% Attendance applies, planned GLH must be at least:
Digital	100GLH	125GLH
All other Sectors	60GLH	75GLH

39. Guided Learning is defined as follows:

- 39.1. Guided Learning is the activity of a learner being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training (including placement, onsite or practical education or training) under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, with the simultaneous presence of the learner and

that person in the same physical or virtual space. This could include, but is not limited to, simultaneous presence: in a classroom, in a virtual classroom or breakout room, on-site, placement, or another physical learning environment.

- 39.2. GLH can include learners being taught content in the same physical or virtual space (such as a classroom style delivery), as well as undertaking project work, workshops and assessments which are under the regular guidance, supervision and support of a tutor i.e. the tutor is ‘circulating’, checking in on groups/learners, offering advice, guidance and feedback, asking prompt questions to stimulate ideas, getting learners on the right path etc. This can also include work-based activities and coaching and mentoring among others.
- 39.3. GLH does not cover examples where learners are sent off to do a project independently, in groups or alone where the tutor is not regularly supporting or interacting in the ways described above i.e. it does not include time spent on unsupervised preparation or study, whether at home or otherwise. It also does not include optional, drop-in sessions that learners can book in addition to the planned guided learning hours set out for the Skills Bootcamp.

Annexe A – Relevant Documents

You must operate in accordance with these Funding Rules and Your Funding Agreement, and all associated documents referenced within these, which collectively form part of the Terms and Conditions of Funding.

Failure to comply with these requirements will constitute a material breach of the Funding Agreement.

All associated documents are published on the [WMCA website](#), and it is Your responsibility to ensure they access and comply with the most up-to-date versions at all times.

Documents referenced include (but are not limited to):

- IS Grant Provider Operational Plan (Grant Provider Only)
- IS Contract for Service & VCS Operational Plan (Contract for Service and VCS Only)
- Skills Bootcamp Guidance
- Skills Programme Coding Guidance 2026/27
- Financial Due Diligence and Financial Health Monitoring (Contract for Service and VCS Only)
- WMCA Destination Portal Guidance and Outcomes Framework Coding
- WMCA Supply Chain Management and Funding Rules (Subcontracting Guidance)
- Privacy Notice
- Destination Portal Guidance

Links to the above guidance can be found [here](#)

- [WMCA High-Risk Provider and Subcontractor Policy](#)
- [WMCA Branding and Publicity Guidance \(Media Assets\)](#)
- [WMCA Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- [Whistleblowing policy and process](#)
- [Complaints policy and process](#)
- [Employment and Skills Strategy](#)
- [West Midlands Growth Plan](#)
- [West Midlands Works](#)