



WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY ADULT SKILLS FUNDING PROGRAMME RULES 2026/2027

(for the funding year 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027)

This document sets out the funding rules that apply to all WMCA-funded providers of education and training who receive Adult Skills Fund Programmes funding, including Adult Skills Fund, including Level 3 ring-fenced provision formerly known as Free Courses for Jobs and 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.

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West Midlands Combined Authority

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) was established through the West Midlands Combined Authority Order 2016, following collaboration between the seven metropolitan councils in the region. Since its formation, the Authority has been granted additional powers through subsequent legislation, including the West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 and the West Midlands Combined Authority (Adult Education) Order 2018. These legal frameworks have enabled WMCA to take on a broader role in regional governance, particularly in areas such as adult education and skills development.

From 1st August 2019, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) became responsible for certain adult education functions of the Secretary of State under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. This transfer of functions was achieved by way of orders made under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and the West Midlands Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018 (SI 2018/1144)

Furthermore, in November 2023, a deal between West Midlands Combined Authority and Central Government outlined the principles for awarding an Integrated Settlement to the WMCA. This agreement, part of the "Trailblazer" Single Settlements initiative, consolidates previously fragmented funding streams into a single pot, giving WMCA and its local authority partners greater flexibility and control over how devolved funds are spent. This streamlined approach allows the Authority to better address complex regional challenges, such as economic development and climate goals, by tailoring investments to local needs. Under this new arrangement, funding for the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) is now jointly referred to as Adult Skills Fund (ASF) and, along with Skills Bootcamps (Bootcamps) has been merged under the unified Adult Skills Funding Programmes, enhancing WMCA's ability to deliver impactful, region-specific skills programmes.

Introduction to the Adult Skills Funding Programmes

Introduction

The purpose of the Adult Skills Funding Programmes is to support adult learners in the WMCA region to gain skills which will lead them to meaningful, sustained, and relevant employment, or enable them to progress to further learning which will deliver that outcome.

Within the Adult Skills Fund (ASF), further provision for tailored learning is available that supports wider outcomes, such as improving health and well-being, equipping parents/carers to support their child's learning, and developing stronger communities.

This document sets out the WMCA Adult Skills Funding Programme rules for the 2026 to 2027 academic year (1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027). Providers should review the whole document and the associated guidance listed under [Annexe B](#).

These rules apply to all education and training providers who receive Adult Skills Programme funding from the WMCA.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have published the [ASF funding rates and formula guidance for 2026 to 2027](#). This contains the details of how ASF funding rates are calculated.

All information contained in this document, including hyperlinks, was accurate at the time of publication. WMCA will review and update this document as necessary throughout the 2026–2027 funding year to reflect changes in the economic context.

WMCA reserves the right to amend these rules at any time. Updated versions will be published on the WMCA website. It is your responsibility to regularly check the [website](#) and ensure compliance with the most current version of the rules.

What is new in the Adult Skills Funding Programme rules for 2026 to 2027.

Changes made in 2026/2027

Responsibility for adult skills policy transferred from the Department for Education (DfE) to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on 16 September 2025. The DfE continues to implement the ASF on behalf of the DWP. Throughout this document, references to the DfE have been updated to reflect this change and now refer to the DWP where appropriate.

This section sets out the main changes to the rules for the 2026/2027 funding year.

- Increased the earnings threshold from £34,194 to £36,126, enabling more employed learners to access full funding. ([Earnings Threshold](#))
- Updated the Universal Credit Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET) to £991 per month for single claimants and £1,597 per month for joint claimants. ([Unemployed](#))

- In the [limited length visa](#) section, we have removed the wording ‘High degree of confidence’ from the limited length visa’s section and replaced it with only where there is documented evidence indicating that the learner intends to, and is likely to be eligible to, renew their visa.
- Clarified minimum GLH expectations for [Into Employment Programmes](#) and strengthened requirements around programme planning and delivery.
- Strengthened [Guided Learning Hours \(GLH\)](#) compliance, including clearer expectations on planned delivery, evidence requirements, and potential funding adjustments where delivery falls significantly below published GLH.
- Enhanced the [Wrap-Around Support](#) policy, including clear definitions, eligible activities, evidence requirements, and activities that cannot be funded through wrap-around support.
- Introduced a separate section covering [Occupational Licensing and Mandatory Industry Requirements](#)
- Strengthened expectations around employment outcomes, in-work progression and employer engagement across Into Employment, Construction Gateway and Pre-Apprenticeship provision.
- Expanded the [Construction Gateway](#) model with clearer phased progression routes, outcome expectations and performance measures.
- Clarified programme completion rules, including circumstances where learners enter employment before completing all planned activity.
- Strengthened quality assurance, audit and compliance requirements, including the monitoring of GLH, learner evidence and subcontracting arrangements. ([Evidence](#))
- Clarified the position of Level 3 Ring-Fenced Funding (formerly Free Courses for Jobs) within the wider Adult Skills Fund offer and updated associated eligibility guidance.

Purpose of the Document

This document applies to all providers who receive WMCA-funded Adult Skills Funding Programme funding for the year 2026 to 2027 (1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027).

The funding rules set out the conditions of funding in accordance with section 101 of the Apprenticeships Skills Children and Learning Act 2009 and section 16 of the Education Act 2002. These can be accessed on GOV.UK.

These rules do not apply to:

- Apprenticeships
- Advanced Learner Loans (ALL)

This document forms part of the terms and conditions of funding, and you must read them in conjunction with your funding agreement and the associated documents listed in these rules. You must operate within the terms and conditions of the funding agreement, these rules, rates and formula and the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) specification. If you do not, you are in breach of your funding agreement with us.

All information, including any hyperlinks, is correct at the time of publishing. This document will be kept under review to reflect how WMCA may need to respond to the changing economic context.

We reserve the right to make changes to these funding rules and will publish any updated versions on the [WMCA website](#). It is Your responsibility to ensure that you regularly visit the website and comply with the current version of these funding rules and associated documents.

Definitions and the glossary are included to assist in understanding the terminology and explain technical terms.

Understanding the Terminology

The term ‘We’ refers to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

When we refer to ‘You’, ‘Your’, or ‘Providers’, this includes colleges, local authorities, higher education institutions, training organisations, employers and voluntary sector organisations, who receive WMCA-funded ASF and/or Bootcamps from us to deliver education and training to learners set out in the Who We Fund section.

We will use the generic term ‘You’, ‘Your’ or ‘Provider’ unless the requirements only apply to a specific provider type. We use the term ‘funding agreement’ to include:

Conditions of Funding (grant)

- Grant funding agreement/grant agreement
- Contract for services

We use the terms ‘individual’, ‘resident’ and ‘learner’ to cover those whose provision is funded by us.

When we refer to ‘WMCA-funded Adult Skills Funding Programmes’, this is funding you can claim from us for the delivery of ASF and/or Bootcamp provision to learners set out in the Who We Fund section.

We will use the term ‘provision’ or ‘learning’ or ‘learning aims’ to refer to WMCA-funded Adult Skills Funding Programmes, whether it is a regulated qualification or other learning that is not regulated.

If we refer to ‘qualifications’, they will be from the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) or an Access to Higher Education Diploma recognised and regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

If we refer to ‘learning aims’, we mean a single episode of learning which could be a regulated qualification, a component of a regulated qualification or non-regulated learning.

If we refer to ‘programmes’, we mean a coherent package of learning which may include regulated qualifications, components of regulated qualifications or non-regulated learning with clearly stated aims supporting agreed outcomes.

We may refer to this document as ‘funding rules’ or ‘the rules’.

Contact Us

If you have any questions after reading our funding rules, or if there is anything else you need help with, you can contact us through our query mailbox at QualityandStandards@wmca.org.uk

For data queries, You can contact aebdatareturns@wmca.org.uk.

You can also contact your assigned Skills Delivery Officer (SDO) (Contracts for service/VSS) and/or Assistant Delivery Manager (ADM) (Grant providers) directly or through skills.programmes@wmca.org.uk

Section 1 - General Funding Requirements

Principles of Funding

These rules apply in relation to all learners starting new WMCA-Funded Adult Skills Funding Programme learning aims on or after 1 August 2026 and continuing learners as referenced in the [Who We Fund](#) section.

Funding must be earned in the way set out in the specific funding agreement, and funding rules related to that funding. You will not be paid for over-delivery from the under-delivery on your other allocations that include:

- ASF (which now includes the former Level 3 FCFJ)
- Skills Bootcamp

We will review and monitor whether the provision You provide represents good value for money. If We consider that funding is significantly more than the cost of providing education and training, We may reduce Your funding after consulting with You.

Failure to comply with funding rules could lead to action or intervention. Our policies and guidance about the oversight of providers are set out in [Annexe B](#).

The triggers for action and the type of action we may take are set out in these documents. This is in accordance with provisions in our funding agreements.

Who We Fund

We will fund:

- individual residents in the WMCA devolved region, with an eligible WMCA postcode, undertaking WMCA-Funded Adult Skills Funding Programmes,
- continuing learners who are residents of the WMCA devolved region, who have not completed their learning by 31 July 2026. You must ensure that You meet the cost of continuing learners within your WMCA contract allocation.

Residency

You must check the eligibility of a learner, including where in the WMCA devolved region (England) they are resident, at the start of each learning aim and only claim funding for ASF or Bootcamps for eligible learners. Please refer to the glossary definition of 'learner residency' and the [postcode checker data set](#).

Age

On the first day of learning, a learner must be aged 19 or older on 31 August within the funding year 2026 to 2027 to be WMCA funded.

The age of the learner on 31 August in the funding year determines whether the learner is funded through the programme.

All individuals aged 19 or over on 31 August who are continuing a programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') will be funded through the DWP [16 to 19-year-olds funding guidance](#).

Duration

Learners will be eligible for funding for the whole of the learning aim or programme if they are eligible for funding at the start, even if the duration is for over one year. You must reassess the learner for any further learning they start.

The WMCA also has responsibility for continuing residents who commenced learning in 2025/2026, where their delivery is planned into the 2026/27 funding year. You must ensure, You meet the cost of continuing learners within your 2026/27 WMCA contract allocation.

Potential Issues

If an individual starts a learning aim or programme and is not eligible for funding, we will not fund their learning while they remain ineligible.

You must not fund a learner who is unable to complete a learning aim or programme of study within the timeframe available to them.

Residency Eligibility

Individuals will be eligible for funding if they meet the criteria in the [who we fund section](#), the learning is taking place in England, and they are ordinarily resident in the West Midlands devolved region on the first day of learning.

You must make sure enrolments for WMCA-funded ASF and Skills Bootcamp delivery, support your decision to claim funding and support the individual's case for consideration as ordinarily resident in England, or any exceptions set out in the residency eligibility section.

Individuals who are not eligible for funding

You must not claim funding for individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria set out in the [residency eligibility section](#). Examples of individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria include the following. Please note this list is not exhaustive:

- those who are here without authority or lawful status.
- those who are resident in the UK on a student or graduate visa.
- those who are in the UK on holiday, with or without a visa.
- those who are in the UK on a sponsorship visa, including skilled worker visas and seasonal worker visas.
- those whose biometric residence permit or residence permit imposes a study prohibition or restriction on the individual.

This list is not exhaustive.

For clarification, dependents of all individuals with sponsorship visa status, with the exception of seasonal workers, are eligible for ASF funding.

Learners with limited-length visas

You must not fund learners who would not have enough time on their visa to complete their course and who do not intend to, or would not be eligible to, renew their visa.

Where a course continues past a learner's visa expiry date, you may at your discretion fund that learner only where there is documented evidence indicating that the learner intends to, and is likely to be eligible to, renew their visa.

Please contact QualityandStandards@wmca.org.uk if you have any queries in relation to this.

Learners who have applied for an extension or variation of their immigration permission

Any person who has applied for an extension or variation of their current immigration permission in the UK is still treated as if they have that leave. This only applies if the application was made before their current permission expired. Their leave continues until the Home Office decides on their immigration application. Their leave will continue where they have appealed or sought an administrative review of their case within the time allowed to them for doing so.

Therefore, a person is considered to still have the immigration permission that they held when they made their application for an extension, administrative review or appeal, and their eligibility would be based on this status.

This is on the basis that the provider confirmed at enrolment that the learner intended to and will be eligible to renew their visa.

EEA and Switzerland frontier workers

An EEA or Switzerland frontier worker is someone who is employed or self-employed in the UK who resides in the EEA or Switzerland and returns to that residence in the EEA or Switzerland at least once a week.

Unlike other categories, a frontier worker or their eligible family member does not have to be resident in the UK on the first day of learning in order to have an eligible residency status.

Asylum seekers

Asylum seekers are eligible to receive funding if they:

- have lived in the UK for 6 months or longer while the Home Office is considering their claim, and no decision on their claim has been made, or
- are receiving local authority support under [section 23C](#) or [section 23CA of the Children Act 1989](#) or the [Care Act 2014](#)

An individual who has been refused asylum will be eligible if:

- They have appealed against a decision made by the UK government against granting refugee status, and no decision has been made within 6 months of lodging the appeal, or
- they are granted support for themselves under [section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#), or
- are receiving local authority support for themselves under [section 23C](#) or [section 23CA of the Children Act 1989](#)

No recourse to public funds conditions

The learner's immigration permission in the UK may have a 'no recourse to public funds' condition. Public funds do not include education or education funding. Therefore, this does not affect a learner's eligibility, which must be decided under the normal eligibility conditions.

Learners in the armed forces

British armed forces personnel, Ministry of Defence personnel or civil and crown servant's resident in England, who meet the criteria in the [who we fund](#) section, are eligible for WMCA-funded Adult Skills Funded Programmes where learning takes place in England.

Members of other nations' armed forces stationed in England, and their family members, aged 19 and over, are eligible for WMCA funded Adult Skills Funded Programmes, set out in the [who we fund](#) section, if the armed forces individual has been ordinarily resident in England on the first day of learning. We will not fund family members who remain outside of England.

Fees and Charging

You must not make compulsory charges relating to the direct costs of delivering a learning aim to learners we fully fund, including those with a legal entitlement to full funding for their learning. Direct costs include any essential activities or materials without which the learner could not complete and achieve their learning.

You must not make compulsory charges related to the cost of delivering a learning aim/programme to residents who do not complete their training or stop attending.

If a fully funded learner needs a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to participate in learning, you cannot charge them for this. If the learning is associated with the learner's employment, their employer is responsible for carrying out and paying for this check.

Any non-direct cost fees being charged to a learner must be communicated before starting the programme. Evidence of this should be held in the evidence pack.

When charging a fee to co-funded learners or their employers, the sum of the WMCA contribution and the fee must not exceed the fully funded weighted rate for the learning aim, and the learner or employer should not have to pay more than 50% of the unweighted rate.

Qualifying Days for Funding

A learner must be in learning for a minimum number of days between their learning start date and the learning planned end date before

You can earn funding, including learning support. The guidance below sets out the minimum days required for funding for ASF.

Planned length of learning aim	Minimum qualifying days
168 or more days	42 days
14 – 167 days	14 days
Fewer than 14 days	1 day

This does not apply where the learner achieves the learning aim.

To assure the quality of delivery and adherence to the planned programme duration, we will monitor the volume of Day 1 withdrawals for short programmes. Where a high percentage is identified, we will conduct a comprehensive review of providers' withdrawal patterns.

Additionally, where planned learning days fall below the recommended GLH and the individual needs of the resident, we may seek removal of the funding.

For Skills Bootcamps, to meet the minimum qualifying days for Milestone 1, learners must complete 10 GLH with 14 qualifying days (calendar days) having elapsed with the learner remaining on the programme. Please note that achievement of the aim does not overrule this requirement.

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

All provision must have a live tutor (or lecturer, teacher, assessor, etc.) present in person, through hybrid teaching, or in a virtual classroom. This is to ensure that WMCA only funds provision that delivers an appropriate standard of quality and impact.

This delivery may take place:

- in person,
- through hybrid delivery, or
- within a structured virtual classroom environment.

GLH must not include unsupervised or solely self-directed study.

This requirement ensures that WMCA funding is applied only to provision that demonstrates active teaching, appropriate supervision, and measurable learning, maintaining high standards of quality and impact for residents.

Delivery of GLH by anyone other than You, will constitute as Supply chain and must be declared as part of Your supply chain agreements.

GLH and Into Employment Programmes

To support high-quality delivery and effective outcomes, we recommend a minimum of 20 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) per week for the non-regulated elements of an Into Employment programme, unless otherwise specified within the programme specification.

Providers must ensure programmes are effectively planned, structured, and deliverable, with sufficient GLH to meet the intended duration, learner needs, and overall programme objectives.

Where programmes are delivered over a longer duration, providers must ensure that the total planned GLH is proportionate and sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes.

Regulated delivery must align with the GLH requirements set out on Find a Learning Aim (FALA) and awarding organisation expectations.

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) Requirements and Funding Adjustments

Providers are required to deliver Guided Learning Hours (GLH) in line with the number specified in their contract and as published on the Find a Learning Aim (FALA) site. The contracted GLH reflects the expected volume of learning necessary to achieve the intended outcomes and must be adhered to in curriculum planning and delivery.

Providers must ensure that schemes of work, curriculum plans, timetables, and staffing arrangements are designed to deliver the full contracted GLH. Whilst funding tolerance rules allow for limited variance, delivery below the contracted GLH should be an exception rather than standard practice.

Where a provider identifies that delivery will fall below the contracted GLH, they must be able to evidence and justify the rationale and ensure that funding claims accurately reflect the volume of learning delivered.

Providers must retain sufficient evidence to demonstrate both planned and actual GLH delivery. Failure to deliver the contracted GLH, or to provide sufficient evidence to substantiate delivery, may result in compliance concerns, audit challenge, and funding adjustments or recovery.

If we identify that the GLH, based on calculations from the Scheme of Work, Curriculum Plan, timetables, registers, timesheets, and/or other supporting evidence, is below the number stated on the Find a Learning Aim site, we will take the following action:

- If the GLH are over 70% of the stated hours, no action will be taken.
- If the GLH are between 50% and 70% of the stated hours, a reduction of 30% of the learning aim value will be applied for the identified learning aims.
- If the GLH are below 50% of the stated hours, we will apply a 50% reduction in funding for the identified learning aims.

Please Note: for Skills Bootcamps the 80% completion rule is not intended to establish a minimum delivery GLH requirement. Given the nature of Skills Bootcamps, where most delivery is non-regulated, this rule aims to ensure that learners classified as Completed/Achieved meet at least 80% of the planned hours. However, for achievement, it is crucial that the delivery of digital skills meets or exceeds 100 GLH; otherwise, we will determine that the Level 3+ benchmark in digital skills has not been met. Providers should ensure that the programmes are planned effectively to ensure any reduction in hours based on PLR is accounted for.

Where a provider is unable to provide sufficient evidence to substantiate the GLH delivered, WMCA may recover funding up to the full value of the learning aim where delivery cannot be evidenced.

Where there is standard practice to deliver below the recommended GLH, You must submit a business case for approval demonstrating that the quality, integrity, and intended outcomes of the learning aim will not be compromised.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A learner could have prior learning or attainment that has been previously undertaken and/or accredited by an awarding organisation or could be formally recognised and count towards the achievement of a qualification. If this is the case, You must:

- Reduce the funding amount claimed for the qualification aim by the percentage of learning that the learner does not need.
- Follow the policies and procedures set by the awarding organisation regarding recognition of prior learning, including any restrictions concerning where RPL or prior attainment may not be applied.
- Ensure you have a robust internal RPL policy and appropriate resources to deliver RPL.

We would not expect RPL or prior attainment to be used against the whole qualification; this is an exemption rather than RPL.

You must not use prior learning to reduce funding for:

- English and maths qualifications up to and including level 2 or
- essential digital skills qualifications (EDSQs) up to and including level 1.

If a learner enrolls on an advanced subsidiary (AS) level qualification followed by an A level, you must reduce the funding claimed for the A level to take account of the prior study of the AS level and record this in the 'funding adjustment for prior learning' field in the ILR. More information is available in the DWP's [ILR guidance](#).

The WMCA does not set limits on the length of either prior learning or previously certified learning. However, where the individual's learning and/or achievement occurs outside of a five-year period, You must assess whether the learning is still valid and relevant. Where provisions have been made against this, You should ensure the justification is documented.

Breaks in Learning (BIL)

You and the learner can agree to suspend learning while the learner takes a break from learning. This allows the learner to continue later with the same eligibility that applied when they first started their learning.

We will not fund a learner during a break in learning.

You must record the date a learner starts a break in learning and the date they restart their learning in the ILR. Further guidance on recording breaks can be found in the guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/provider-support-manual

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. When the learner returns to learning, You must re-plan and extend the remaining delivery as required.

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.

You must not use a break in learning for short-term absences, such as holidays or short-term illness.

For Skills Bootcamps. The way we process BILs will depend on the amount of learning already completed, as set out below. This only applies to those who have not 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.

The WMCA will not allow Breaks In learning after Milestone 2 is claimed.

What We Will Not Fund

We will not fund:

- provision that is not part of a provider's agreed delivery plan or has not been given prior written approval by Us,
- qualifications, units or learning aims that are not listed on [find a learning aim](#) or on the [list of qualifications approved for funding](#),
- provision to learners in custody – the [Ministry of Justice \(MoJ\)](#) funds prison education in England, unless they are released on temporary licence,
- any part of any learner's learning aim or programme that duplicates provision they have received from any other source,
- training where a learner is undertaking an apprenticeship and or a degree, where that training will:
 - replicate vocational and other learning aims covered by the apprenticeship standard or framework, including English and maths.
 - offer career-related training that conflicts with the apprenticeship/degree aims.

- be taking place during the apprentices working hours. Where an apprentice has more than one job, working hours refers to the hours of the job the apprenticeship is linked to.
- repeat the same regulated qualification where the learner has previously achieved it. The exceptions are that it is for any GCSE where the learner has not achieved grade 4 (C) or higher, or for English and maths where the learner has been assessed as having an existing skill level lower than grade 4 (even if they have previously achieved a GCSE or equivalent qualification in English or maths),
- a learner to sit or resit a learning aim assessment or examination where no extra learning takes place.

Evidence

You must hold evidence to assure us that you are using WMCA-funds appropriately, and the evidence pack must assure the WMCA that the learner exists and the claims are valid. Most evidence will occur from your normal business process. You must make sure enrolments for WMCA-funded support your decision to claim funding and support the individual's case for consideration as ordinarily resident in England and the WMCA, or any exceptions set out in the [residency eligibility](#) section.

In line with [General Data Protection Regulations](#) (GDPR), you must record in the evidence pack what appropriate documentation you have seen rather than take photocopies to prove eligibility.

Where Your data does not support the funding, You have claimed, WMCA will act to get this corrected and could recover the funds You have claimed.

[Annexe D](#) contains the details on the evidence required for all WMCA-funded Adult Skills funded programmes. Please also refer to the Skills Bootcamp Funding Guidance in [Annexe B](#).

Supply Chain/Subcontract

The WMCA will implement additional controls related to subcontracting and associated third-party services. More details can be found in WMCA's Supply Chain Funding Rules on the [WMCA website](#). Note that organisations (with separate legal entities) within the same company group are classed as supply chain delivery members/sub-contractors.

The detailed supply chain arrangements that underpin Your Agreement will need to be agreed upon as part of Your delivery plan. If You do not have an Agreement in place at the beginning of the funding year, You cannot enter into a supply relationship without the express written agreement of the WMCA.

Please note that WMCA reserves the right not to accept any proposed supply chain delivery partner or subcontractor and will not be liable to the provider as a result of taking such a decision.

Whistleblowing and Complaints Guidance

Providers, and where appropriate sub-contractors and/or supply chain members, must ensure that all applicants, learners, and staff are aware of the WMCA's Whistleblowing and Complaints policies and processes, copies of which can be found under [Annexe B](#).

Whistleblowing should be submitted via the [WMCA portal](#).

Complaints should be sent to customerservices@wmca.org.uk, and for skills-related complaints, include Qualityandstandards@wmca.org.uk

Quality Assurance

As part of our assurance work, the WMCA will be monitoring the data you submit. In order to gain assurance, the WMCA will undertake regular reviews of all providers in line with the [Quality and Standards Framework](#).

The reviews may include, but not be limited to:

- Systems and processes
- ILR Data
- EAS submission
- Learner files
- Supply Chain/Sub-Contracting arrangements.
- Other contractual requirements

To provide further assurance, the WMCA may use the services of external suppliers to undertake field-based activity as part of our annual assurance programme of work, comprising funding compliance audits and targeted thematic funding assurance reviews.

Unemployed Definition

We will update the UC thresholds (AET) to align with any revisions made by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

For funding purposes, we define a learner as unemployed if one or more of the following apply, they:

- receive Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only.
- receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- receive UC, and their take-home pay as recorded on their UC statement (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is less than £991 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1597 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- are released on temporary licence, studying outside a prison environment, and not funded by MoJ.

The WMCA will also fully fund other learners (Inactive) if either of the following apply.

The learner:

- receives other state benefits (not included in the list above) and their take-home pay (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is less than £991 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1597 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- not receiving any benefits, wants to be employed, and you are satisfied identified learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs. In order to claim full funding for learners who are unemployed and not in receipt of benefits, you must indicate that they earn below the earnings threshold by using LDM code 391 and FFI code 1.

If the learner is unemployed and is claiming benefits you must complete the [Benefit Status Indicator](#) (BSI) to identify the learner is in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) (BSI 1), UC (BSI 4) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (all categories) (BSI 5)

Employed Definition

The WMCA defines residents as employed if they are in receipt of waged income as a permanent, temporary, or self-employed worker.

Contracts of employment that define a resident as employed will include part-time, zero-hour and agency contracts.

Earnings Threshold

We have increased the earnings threshold as part of the eligibility criteria that enables learners to be fully funded if they earn below £36,126. The policy entitlement includes learners who are employed or self-employed.

You may fully fund learners who are employed, or self-employed, up to and including level 2 and the level 3 offers, if they earn below £36,126 annual gross salary.

You must have seen evidence of the learner's gross annual wages in these circumstances. This could be a wage slip or a UC statement within 3 months of the learner's learning start date, or a current employment contract which states gross monthly/annual wages. This list is not exhaustive, but you must provide evidence for your decision to award full funding to an individual who would normally be eligible for co-funding.

Please refer to the Coding Guidance for ILR coding to support full funding.

Learning In the Workplace

The WMCA will fund learning in the workplace to support residents achieve an in-work progression, such as increased pay, responsibility, or promotion. This provision should have a flexible delivery to allow all employed residents to participate according to their needs.

The WMCA will also fund learning in the workplace for work experience linked to Into Employment programmes as part of Your delivery plan.

Job Outcome Payments Linked to ASF Standard Programmes

For fully funded ASF learners who are unemployed, we will continue to pay 50% of the completion/achievement payment if they start a job before completing/achieving the learning aim. If the learner then completes/achieves the learning aim, we will pay the remaining achievement payment. The following conditions apply:

- the learner must provide you with evidence through a declaration that they have a job for at least 16 hours or more a week for 4 consecutive weeks,
- where the learner was claiming benefits relating to unemployment, they must also declare that they have stopped claiming these.

Job Outcome and Sustainment Payments Linked to Into-Employment Programmes (excluding Skills Bootcamp)

For funding, the learner must have met the conditions of funding listed in the specification for that course, which may include a day 1 payment and/or a 13-week sustained employment payment. The payment and costing are found in each programme specification.

Day 1 Outcomes

For funding, You must hold evidence appropriate evidence (e.g. employer confirmation, payslips, learner declaration) of

- a job or apprenticeship which must be continuous employment for at least 4 weeks and relates directly to the skills acquired on the programme of study.
- If the temporary assignment is for less than 4 weeks, there must also be confirmation that further assignments will follow.

The job must be for at least 7.5 hours per week. Universal Credit work allowances may still apply for those residents' eligible who become employed and will reduce in time, based on the earnings taper rate.

13-week Sustainment (Continuous)

For funding, You must hold evidence appropriate evidence (e.g. employer confirmation, payslips, learner declaration) of

- 13-week sustainment in a job or apprenticeship where they remain in continuous employment for 13 consecutive weeks from their job start date, with no breaks.

The sustainment must be for at least 7.5 hours per week. Universal Credit work allowances may still apply for those residents' eligible who become employed and will reduce in time, based on the earnings taper rate.

Any break during this period means sustained progression is not achieved.

Job Outcome Linked to Skills Bootcamp:

For funding, the learner must have met the conditions of a Milestone 3 as outlined in the Skills Bootcamp guidance depending on learners starting point.

- For 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.
- For 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.
- For 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.

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).

Appropriate evidence (e.g. employer confirmation, payslips, learner declaration). Please refer to the Skills Bootcamp guidance for additional definitions and clarifications.

Section 2 - Support Funding

The WMCA's overarching aim is to support as many eligible adult learners as possible to access learning. Some learners will need additional support to start or stay in learning. Where you identify that a learner has a learning difficulty and/or disability, or a financial barrier, your WMCA-funded Adult Skills Funded Programme allocation enables you to claim learning support and/or learner support funding to meet the additional needs of learners.

Support for learners undertaking tailored learning is funded from within the tailored learning allocation.

Learning Support

Learning support is available to meet the cost of putting in place a reasonable adjustment, as set out in the [Equality Act 2010](#), for learners who have an identified learning difficulty and/or disability, to achieve their learning goal.

Learning support must not be used to deal with everyday difficulties that are not directly associated with a learner's learning on their programme.

You must:

- carry out and document a thorough assessment to identify the learner's learning difficulty and/or disability - the cost of this assessment cannot be claimed through ASF.
- agree and record the assessment and outcome of your assessment in the evidence pack.

- record details of the reasonable adjustments required and how support will be planned and delivered.
- record and retain the appropriate evidence to demonstrate that the planned support has been delivered for each month you have claimed.
- confirm the continuing necessity and appropriateness of these reasonable adjustments on a monthly basis.
- report in the ILR that a learner has a learning support need associated with an identified learning aim, by entering code LSF1 in the 'Learning Delivery Funding and Monitoring' field and entering the corresponding dates in the 'Date applies from' and 'Date applies to' fields. This does not apply to any non-formula tailored learning.
- learning support funding can only be claimed for each month in which reasonable adjustments are provided to the learner and where evidence of costs can be provided. For months in which no reasonable adjustments are necessary, or no costs have been incurred, a claim for learning support funding must not be made.

All learning support claims must be reported in the ILR. To claim any costs that exceed the fixed monthly rate, up to £19,000 you must also use the earnings adjustment statement (EAS). For any costs over £19,000 please see the next section for [exceptional learning support](#).

You must keep evidence of these additional costs in the evidence pack. You must only record the excess amount on the EAS, not the whole learning support cost.

Exceptional Learning Support Claims Above £19,000

If a learner needs significant levels of support to start or continue learning and has support costs of more than £19,000 in a funding year, you can claim exceptional learning support (ELS) but only for the amount above £19,000.

The amount up to £19,000 should be claimed through the monthly rate and any excess funding through the EAS.

Learners aged 19 to 24 who require significant levels of support should have an EHC plan provided by their local authority and, therefore, would access funding from their local authority.

Claims should be submitted via a business case in a timely manner and will need formal approval before submitting a claim via Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS)

If approved You must submit ELS claims at the beginning of the learner's programme, or when you identify the learner requires support costs more than £19,000 in a funding year, by completing and sending the [ELS claims document](#).

To claim exceptional learning support for a learner aged 19 to 24 you must confirm why the individual does not have an EHC plan. This should be a letter or email from the learner's local authority stating the reason(s) why the individual does not need an EHC plan.

When you claim exceptional learning support you must explain why you have claimed the amount you have, which would be linked to the learner's assessment and planned learning

support claim. You must only claim amounts for your costs of providing the support to the learner and not include any indirect costs or overheads.

ELS will be funded from within your Skills funding allocation.

Learner Support

Learner support is available to provide financial support for learners with a specific financial hardship preventing them from taking part/continuing in learning. Before you award support to a learner, you must identify their needs within the following 'categories'.

- Hardship funding – general financial support for financially disadvantaged learners to support participation learning.
- 20+ childcare funding – for learners aged 20 or older on the first day of learning who are at risk of not starting or continuing learning because of childcare costs.
- Residential Access funding – to support WMCA funded Adult Skills Funded Programme learners (set out in the who we fund section) where they need to live away from home in order to access provision and this is agreed in advance by the WMCA.
- ICT devices and connectivity – to support disadvantaged learners who cannot undertake online delivery without this provision.

You must not claim more than 5% of your total learner support as administration expenditure. You must document your process for managing your administration costs over the current funding year and record, report and retain evidence on spending for each of the categories. You must follow these rules and claim learner support using the appropriate method as set out below.

You must:

- have criteria for how you will administer and distribute your funds; these must reflect the principles of equality and diversity and be available to learners and to us on request.
- assess and record the learner's needs, demonstrating the need for support – you must record this information and retain in the evidence pack.
- report the appropriate Learner Support Reason codes in the 'Learner Funding and Monitoring' fields in the ILR. This does not apply to non-formula tailored learning.
- report Learner Support timely through the ILR.
- consider the availability of other support for learners, for example from Jobcentre Plus
- make it clear to learners it is their responsibility to tell DWP about any learner support they are receiving from you, as learner support payments may affect their eligibility to state benefits.
- use either ASF or loans bursary to support specific provision funded by either ASF or ALL where a learner is on 2 courses at the same time.

You must not use learner support funds for any of the following:

- essential equipment or facilities if the learner is eligible for full funding with the exception of the items covered in the first clause of the hardship section and the flexibilities in ICT devices and connectivity section.
- a learner in custody or released on temporary licence.
- a learner carrying out a higher education course or learning aims fully funded from other sources.
- to pay attendance allowances or achievement and attendance bonuses

Hardship

You can use hardship funds for the following:

- course-related costs, including course trips, books and equipment (where costs are not included in the funding rate)
- support with domestic emergencies and emergency accommodation provided by others, or by providing items or services or cash direct to the learner, this can be in the form of a grant or repayable loan provided by you.
- transport costs (but not make a block contribution to post-16 transport partnerships or routinely fund transport costs covered in the local authority's legal duty for learners of sixth form age)
- examination fees
- accreditation fees, professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies
- your registration fees

In exceptional circumstances, you can use hardship funds to assist with course fees for learners who need financial support to start or stay in learning. If an asylum seeker is eligible for provision, you may provide learner support in the form of course-related books, equipment, cash payments or a travel pass.

Childcare

For 20+ learners you can only use childcare funding to pay for childcare with a childminder, provider or childminder agency, registered with Ofsted.

You must not use childcare funding to:

- fund informal childcare, such as that provided by a relative
- set up childcare places or to make a financial contribution to the costs of a crèche.

Learner support may be used to “top up” childcare costs for 19-year-old learners receiving care to learn funding if their costs exceed the weekly maximum rates for that scheme.

The top up may only be applied to childcare provision [eligible under the Care to Learn scheme](#) rules. The provider must hold evidence that the maximum amount is being paid under care to learn to confirm that a top up is required.

Any top up paid must be made in line with care to learn guidance and paid directly to the childcare provider.

Providers must claim for care to learn top-up through learner support – 20+ childcare category.

To claim learner support to top-up care to learn providers must follow the same process currently set out in the learner support section.

Residential Access Funding

Please note: this section is under review, and further information will be released shortly

You can use residential access funding to support WMCA funded Adult Skills Funded Programme learners who meet eligibility criteria in the who we fund section, where agreed in advance by the WMCA, where they need to live away from home, for example to access specialist provision which involves a residential element, or to support learners who cannot access provision locally. You must:

- set out the criteria and procedures for considering and agreeing applications for support from your residential access funds.
- only pay for travel costs for learners who are awarded residential access funding in exceptional circumstances.
- only claim residential access funding for the period the learner is resident; this could be in accommodation you own or manage or other accommodation which you have agreed to fund in line with your criteria.
- ensure you evidence the costs that make up your claim represent value for money for the local area.
- publish your rates where you have your own residential facilities on your website.

ICT Devices and Connectivity

You can support disadvantaged learners who are undertaking classroom or blended learning to continue to participate via online learning where the learner does not have:

- internet access at home, and/or
- a suitable device, for example a laptop or tablet, to complete the necessary online course work.

You must secure value for money when purchasing IT devices and/or internet access including:

- deploying any unused devices before you purchase new ones.

- exploring options to access low cost second hand or recycled devices
- avoiding entering long term contract arrangements
- holding a record of actual costs for any IT devices and/or internet access bought for this purpose and make this available to us, if asked

IT devices you purchase must only be loaned out to learners and returned at the end of their learning aim to allow them to be re-used by other learners. Learners must sign a declaration, confirming:

- they will return the device when their online learning aim(s) is complete, or if they leave before completing their learning.
- they will return the device in the same condition in which they received it.

You must maintain an up-to-date record of the loan and return of devices to learners.

You must record the following evidence in the learner's evidence pack:

- the outcome of the assessment undertaken to identify the learner's individual needs.
- the learner declaration referred to above

Wrap Around Support

For programmes that include wrap-around support, the focus should be on enabling individualised transitions into employment for those not currently in work, while also developing transferable skills to help learners adapt to future changes in the labour market.

Wrap-around support must be delivered outside of the core programme. Access to this support should be determined through a formal assessment of individual need and must be clearly linked to supporting progression into employment. It should only be used where identified gaps require targeted intervention to facilitate learner transition and progression between attainment levels, ensuring that learners are not disadvantaged and are able to participate fully and progress successfully.

Wrap-around support must not be used to provide financial assistance for learners experiencing hardship that prevents them from starting or continuing their learning. This includes support for emergencies, essential items or services, emergency accommodation provided by third parties, or direct costs such as transport.

Please note that wrap-around support is not available across all contracts; providers must refer to individual specifications and contractual requirements for clarity.

Examples of Wrap-Around Activities

Wrap-around support may include, but is not limited to:

- Seminars to further learners' transversal and technical/vocational skills, for example to provide guidance on the application of course content in specific real-world context to attain employment.
- Targeted mentoring and coaching, delivered on 1:1 tutorials or small group basis, to address specific barriers to participation or progression (e.g. confidence, motivation, direction aligned with learners' goals and aspirations, as outlined in their Individual Learning Plan (ILP))
- Interventions to bridge identified gaps in attainment and readiness, including study skills, independent learning capability, and confidence to transition within or beyond current learning levels.
- Counselling to address low self-esteem, confidence, or mild anxiety, where this impacts participation or progression.
- Access to or referrals for specialist support, such as substance misuse services, where required to address barriers affecting learning or progression.
- Targeted life skills development, to enable transition, including independent travel, healthy living, personal finance management, staying safe, and preparing for employment or further learning.

Key Principles

- Support must be individualised, based on identified needs at any stage of the learner's journey, including post-programme progression and tracking.
- Delivery should be focused on direct 1:1 or small group intervention to address barriers and enable successful progression.
- Providers cannot claim for charges relating to direct costs that cover essential activities or materials without which the learner could not complete and achieve their learning (e.g. certification/registration costs, basic employability support).
- Providers must have a clear policy on how wrap-around support is identified, delivered, and costed.

What Wrap-Around Support Must Not Include

Wrap-around support must not be used to fund core programme delivery, direct costs of learning, financial or hardship support (e.g. travel, subsistence, emergency payments), occupational licence costs, or generic/un-targeted activity delivered to all learners.

It must not duplicate provision already funded through the programme, or be used without a clear individual need, formal assessment, and robust evidence of delivery and impact.

Assessment and Evidence

For each learner receiving wraparound support, providers must retain:

- A formal needs assessment showing the learner's need, why the support needed, sits outside the core programme, and how it addresses that need.
- Evidence what will be delivered

- Evidence of completion, such as learner confirmation, invoices etc

This documentation is required to justify funding and ensure compliance.

Funding and Licensing (Occupational requirement)

The WMCA will continue to fund licenses that are an “occupational requirement” (e.g. SIA, FLT, CSCS) up to £500, where outlined within the contract. In exceptional cases, costs above £500 may be considered in line prior approval.

However, moving forward, WMCA will not categorise these as “wraparound claims” but as “occupational requirements”.

Providers cannot claim for charges relating to direct costs that cover essential activities or materials without which the learner could not complete and achieve their learning (e.g. certification/registration costs).

Section 3 – WMCA funded Adult Skills Funded Programmes

The WMCA's Employment and Skills Strategy sets out a joined-up approach to creating a stronger, more prosperous and inclusive West Midlands by developing a unified employment and skills system that supports residents, employers and communities. Over three years, the strategy will focus on four priorities:

- building strong and inclusive communities;
- providing a good education up to Level 2;
- moving residents into employment and supporting career progression;
- and meeting future skills needs through upskilling and reskilling.

Alongside this, the WMCA will invest in a stronger regional employment and skills ecosystem, building the leadership, capacity and partnerships needed to transform outcomes across the region.

These priorities directly support the ambitions of the West Midlands Growth Plan, which aims to raise living standards, increase productivity, bring more people into good-quality employment and deliver inclusive economic growth across all communities. WMCA-funded Adult Skills Fund (ASF) programmes provide the skills pipeline required to achieve these ambitions. Through Tailored Learning, Foundation Skills, English, maths, digital and ESOL provision, residents can overcome barriers to learning and employment, improving confidence, wellbeing and community resilience. Employment-focused programmes, including Into Employment, Construction Gateway and Pre-Apprenticeships, help residents access sustainable jobs and progress in work, while Level 2, Level 3, Level 4+ provision and Skills Bootcamps support employers by addressing current and future skills shortages in priority growth sectors. Collectively, these programmes enable more residents to participate in and benefit from economic growth, helping to deliver the WMCA's vision for a more productive, inclusive and prosperous West Midlands.

Programme Alignment with WMCA Adult Skills Strategy Pillars:

Strategy intent	Programmes
Building Strong Communities	• Tailored Learning • King's Trust • Digital Divide

Provide a good education up to level 2	• Legal Entitlements • English and maths for those aged 19 or older • English Language Acquisition (ESOL) • Digital entitlement for those aged 19 or older • Full level 2 • Level 2 Tailored Study Programmes • Foundation Skills
Moving residents into good jobs	• Into Employment programme. • Construction Gateway programme • Pre-Apprenticeships
Upskilling and Reskilling	• Full Level 3 • Level 4+ • Free Courses for Jobs • Skills Bootcamps

An overview of funding for each area is outlined below.

Building Stronger Communities

Introduction

Our vision is to build a more prosperous and better-connected West Midlands, which is fairer, greener, and healthier. Employment and skills are critical to achieving this ambition, but the impacts of adult learning extend far beyond this into the very fabric of our wider lives, our families and our communities. Likewise, strong communities, comprised of healthy, resilient, connected and proactive residents are the basis for strong economic development and inclusive growth.

Adult learning, delivered in or by communities, plays a critical role in connecting individuals and families, improving their resilience, supporting mental and physical health, engaging those furthest away from civic and community life, as well as providing access to good work. Poor mental health, in particular, can have a devastating impact on the working age population, with almost 14.3m working days lost annually due to mental ill health.

By working closely and collaboratively with our Local Authority and voluntary and community sector partners, We are committed to further developing a strong place-based offer of learning for communities in all parts of the region that:

- Supports good health and well-being: particularly the mental health of those experiencing isolation, for younger adults affected by the pandemic, and for adults outside of the labour market due to poor health or a disability.
- Builds confidence: increasing residents' resilience to face life's challenges and changes, encouraging them to think critically and creatively, and effecting behaviour change that enables them to engage in further learning, civic life and/or the labour market.
- Improves inclusion and integration: developing stronger communities with more self-sufficient, connected, and pro-active citizens, leading to increased volunteering, civic engagement and social integration.
- Develops key life skills: equipping parents and carers to support and encourage their children's learning (for example through family learning), enabling social mobility, improving progression towards independent living, improving understanding of sustainability, and improving digital, financial and communication skills.
- Prepares learners for employment or further learning: moving more people on to further learning opportunities in more formal settings.

Set out below are our training offers, which will support residents to support with developing stronger communities.

- Tailored Learning.
- King's Trust
- Digital Divide

Tailored Learning

This section only applies to providers with a non-formula Tailored Learning allocation included in their Agreement.

Tailored Learning is a long-term investment in individuals and in our communities. It is the first step in a path, leading to improved health, acquisition of skills to access further learning or employment and thereby delivering social and economic outcomes.

Tailored Learning brings together citizens from different backgrounds and socioeconomic levels to increase their social and cultural capital, as they develop key life skills, improve their health and well-being, and become more involved in community life. This promotes social renewal by bringing communities together.

The purpose of Tailored Learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation, and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds to:

- progress towards formal learning or employment and/or
- improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or
- develop stronger communities.

Offer

The Tailored Learning objectives ask You to widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances. We would expect You to encourage and support all learners to progress onto new or more stretching provision to help them into more formal learning or employment.

We would not expect to see multiple enrolments on similar level courses, or a repeat of similar learning aims where this does not benefit the learner's development.

Tailored Learning courses are delivered and reported on the ILR under the following 7 delivery strands which link to the Tailored Learning purposes.

- Engaging and/or building confidence
- Preparation for further learning
- Preparation for employment
- Improving essential skills (English, including English for Speakers of Other Languages, maths, and digital provision)
- Equipping parents/carers to support children's learning.
- Health and well-being
- Developing stronger communities

Please note, non-formula Tailored Learning funding follows funding model 11. You must deliver non-formula funded Tailored Learning provision in line with the existing Tailored Learning objectives set out in the Tailored Learning Objectives section below, up to this maximum amount.

Non-formula Tailored Learning funding will be reconciled against the Tailored Learning allocation line at the end of the funding year. You must repay funding that has not been used for Tailored Learning or where its use cannot be evidenced.

You must attribute costs for eligible learners, up to the value of Your non-formula Tailored Learning allocation. This must include the use of Your non-formula Tailored Learning funding to cover learning and learner support costs. If You do, You must:

- claim for learning and learner costs through the final funding claim and follow the policy in line with the support funding section,
- record these costs in the learner's evidence pack and maintain evidence that support the costs for audit purposes.

We will monitor Tailored Learning provision through the ILR and claim submissions and may require You to provide information on Your delivery where it does not represent value for money.

If We fund You through a grant or financial memorandum, You have the flexibility to use all, or some, of your non-formula Tailored Learning funding in line with the ASF formula-funded methodology (funding model 38), to meet local demand. This flexibility works one way; You cannot use Your WMCA formula funded ASF to fund additional Tailored Learning and We will not fund above value in Your Agreement.

You can use this amount of non-formula Tailored Learning funding to deliver non-regulated provision that may be similar to Tailored Learning, and/or regulated qualifications to meet local demand. If You do deliver regulated and non-regulated qualifications, You must:

- follow ASF formula-funded methodology and submit ILR data under funding model 38 for the delivery and support.
- enrol learners following ASF eligibility requirements.
- You must not use Your non-formula Tailored Learning local fee remission policy.
- If We fund your organisation through a Contract for Services, You do not have this flexibility, and We will reclaim unspent non-formula Tailored Learning funding at year-end.

You can support learners aged under 19 if they meet both of the following, they are:

- a parent, carer or guardian attending provision delivered through family learning.
- funded through non-formula Tailored Learning using funding model 11 in the funding model field (refer to ILR guidance for more information)
- You must not use non-formula Tailored Learning funding for learning that is eligible for funding through an advanced learner loan.

Eligibility principles

The eligibility principles the WMCA applies to Tailored Learning are as follows:

- It must not be provision linked to UK visa requirements.
- It must not be provision linked to statutory employer requirements (including a licence to practise) unless there is an agreed concession in place.

- It must not be vendor-specific provision, linked to a particular employer or commercial system unless this has been agreed as a flexibility.
- It must not be learning, for example, ‘induction to college’, that should be part of a resident’s experience.
- It must not be a non-regulated version of a regulated qualification.
- It must not be above notional level 2 (that is, at notional levels 3 or 4). At notional level 2, it must focus on technical provision.
- Where You are delivering Tailored learning, You must ensure You have appropriate and robust quality assurance processes in place. For instance, ‘The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle’. Further information on RARPA is available from the Learning and Work Institute.
- It is the intention of the WMCA to use the RARPA model to monitor, review and measure the quality and outcomes from non-regulated provision. Tailored learning should have clear achievement aims for the residents and identified progression outcomes prior to commencement of learning.
- Providers must have a fair and transparent fees policy in place. Providers are asked to collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot. Your fees policy must be available on your website and, where appropriate, in the venues where you deliver tailored learning.

Tailored Learning and the role of language acquisition

Tailored Learning plays a significant role in engaging those residents isolated in communities who need to develop their English communication skills to support both their own personal health and well-being and secure work through English Language acquisition.

We expect Tailored Learning provider to have offers of regulated provision (across the levels) and non-regulated English Language acquisition to support residents’ progression to further learning and work. In addition, We expect Tailored Learning providers to establish online learning related to English Language acquisition, which could be through collaborative working.

Tailored Learning Objectives:

- focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills.
- collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
- widen participation and transform people’s destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances, including:
 - improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning.
 - acquisition of skills preparing people for training, employment, or self-employment
 - improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills.
 - parents/carers better equipped to support and encourage their children’s learning.
 - improved/maintained health and/or social well-being.
- develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected, and pro-active citizens, leading to:
 - increased volunteering, civic engagement, and social integration
 - reduced costs on welfare, health, and anti-social behaviour.

- increased online learning and self-organised learning.
- the lives of our most troubled families being turned around.
- commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives, including:
 - bringing together people from backgrounds, cultures, and income groups, including people who can/cannot afford to pay.
 - using effective local partnerships to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services.
 - devolving planning and accountability to neighbourhood/parish level, with local people involved in decisions about the learning offer.
 - involving volunteers and voluntary and community sector groups, shifting long term, 'blocked' classes into learning clubs, growing self-organised learning groups, and encouraging employers to support informal learning in the workplace.
 - supporting the wide use of online information and learning resources
 - minimising overheads, bureaucracy, and administration.

The King's Trust Team Programme

The [King's Trust](#) Team Programme (formerly known as The Prince's Trust) is a 12-week course designed to improve confidence, motivation and skills for eligible 16 to 25-year-olds. Each team recruits a mix of 16 to 25-year-olds of different abilities and backgrounds, including employees sponsored by their employer. We fund the team programme. Providers in partnership with the King's Trust run and manage it on a local basis.

In order to deliver the team programme, you must get approval from [The King's Trust](#).

For eligible learners aged 19 to 25, we fund the team programme through the WMCA funded funding methodology. Please also refer to The King's Trust section in the [funding rates and formula guidance](#). For eligible learners aged 16 to 19, the team programme is funded through the DWP's 16 to 19 funding methodology, with further information available in the funding [rates and formula document](#).

Digital Divide

The Digital Divide programme is designed to tackle digital exclusion among residents in identified Local Authority areas, including individuals with no fixed abode. It supports those who are digitally excluded, whether employed, earning below the low wage threshold, (including part-time and zero-hours contracts), self-employed, or economically inactive without digital skills, by guiding them through a structured pathway from initial engagement to device access, accredited learning, and ultimately into good employment.

Support is delivered on a one-to-one basis by dedicated key workers, ensuring personalised guidance tailored to each resident's needs. Attendance is voluntary and should reflect the individual's circumstances; however, learners are expected to engage weekly throughout the duration of the support.

All support must be aligned with the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and focused on progressing residents in line with the WMCA's Digital Blueprint, addressing barriers to digital inclusion and promoting long-term digital empowerment.

The delivery model includes:

- Initial engagement and stabilisation
- Introduction to essential digital skills
- Progression to accredited training via Adult Community Learning or the Adult Education Budget

Funding for this programme is limited to Voluntary Sector Organisations that have been awarded a contract under the Digital Divide procurement.

Organisations without this contract are not eligible to receive funding through this programme.

Provide a Good Education Up to Level 2

Ensuring that all adults have a good education up to level 2 is essential to improving residents' life chances and tackling inequalities. It provides the necessary foundation for progression into further learning. It helps people succeed at work, find employment and earn more. It builds confidence and self-esteem, improves health and well-being. It helps people with day-to-day activities such as managing finances and accessing public services.

Set out below are our training programmes, which will support residents get good Education Up to Level 2:

- Legal Entitlements
- English and maths for those aged 19 or older
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (English Language acquisition)
- Digital entitlement for those aged 19 or older
- Full level 2
- Level 2 Tailored Study Programmes
- Foundation Skills

For all English, maths, ESOL and EDSQ or Digital FSQ programmes You must:

- carry out a thorough initial assessment to determine an individual's current level using current assessment tools based on the national literacy and numeracy standards and core curricula prior to enrolment.
- carry out an appropriate diagnostic assessment to inform and structure a resident file to use as a basis for a programme of study.
- enrol the resident on a level above that at which they were assessed and be able to provide evidence of this.
- deliver ongoing assessments to support learning.
- record the evidence of all assessment outcomes in the evidence pack.
- The assessments must place a resident's current skill levels within the level descriptors used for the RQF.

Legal Entitlements

We will continue to fund Legal entitlement qualification as listed below, in addition to creating bespoke programme that supports the movement of residents to level 2;

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C), or higher, and/or
- first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or
- first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23 and 24+ as part of WMCA flexibilities.
- EDSQs or Digital FSQs, up to and including level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below level 1.

English and maths for those aged 19 or older

We will fully fund individuals, including individuals who are employed, aged 19 or older, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A* to C or grade 4, or higher, in English and maths, as part of their legal entitlement on the day they start the following qualifications:

- GCSE English language or maths.
- Functional Skills English or maths from Entry to level 2.
- Stepping-stone qualifications (including components, where applicable) in English or maths approved by the DWP.
- If a resident wants to ‘retake’ their GCSE English and maths qualification because they did not achieve a Grade 4 or higher (C or higher), We will not fund the resident to only resit the exam.
- You must not enrol individuals on qualifications which are not necessary for progressing towards a GCSE or Functional Skill level 2.
- You must not fund an apprentice for English or maths from the WMCA ASF.

The Offer:

All English and maths are funded as part of the statutory entitlement. Therefore, all courses funded as part of the entitlement can be found by accessing.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualification-funding-approval/other-approval-principles-statutory-entitlements>.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (English Language acquisition)

We will fully fund individuals aged 19 and over on the day they start their English Language acquisition learning aim where they are not in employment and meet the eligibility criteria. Where residents are employed, earnings threshold flexibility applies.

Providers offering English Language acquisition qualifications may need to deliver additional learning to individual residents that incurs additional costs above the qualification rate. You can access information on this in the ASF funding rates and formula 2026 to 2027 guidance.

The Offer:

Our intent is to fund a high-quality adult offer that enables residents to develop English Language communication skills to support both their own personal health and well-being, secure work, or support in-work progression.

WMCA wants to see English Language acquisition become embedded within the delivery of occupational training or programmes of study. To support people into work providers can

establish a non-regulated offer in English Language acquisition contextualised in line with the language expected within the sector e.g., care, retail, and construction.

WMCA also want to see the development of online delivery to make English Language acquisition training more accessible to residents, following a robust Initial Assessment to ensure they have the required digital skills to engage.

For all English Language acquisition training either accredited or non-regulated it is important to Us that individuals are clear on what they can progress to following successful completion of their learning.

WMCA has set clear expectations from providers that a minimum of 25% of English Language acquisition delivered should be vocational English Language acquisition.

Identification of Vocational English Language acquisition will be through a DAM code as referenced in the [Skills Programme Coding guidance](#).

Our expectation is that colleges and ITPs will also develop contextualised English Language acquisition embedded within wider occupational skills development to support residents into work.

Supporting Our inclusive growth agenda, We expect to see an improvement in progression to further learning and work through the development of essential English communication skills for our communities.

Digital entitlement for those aged 19 or older

Digital skills are as important to employability and participation in society as English and maths, yet an estimated one in five adults lack basic digital skills.

We will fully fund individuals, including individuals who are employed, aged 19 or older, assessed at below Level 1, as part of their legal entitlement on the day they start the following qualification.

Non-regulated digital skills provision must be aligned with the [Digital blueprint Guidance](#).

Full level 2

The WMCA values provision at level 2 as it provides individuals with the opportunity to develop core occupational skills. In addition, it provides the opportunity for progression to level 3 technical qualifications, which are key to supporting productivity and economic growth.

We will focus on ensuring that provision funded at level 2 enables progression to further learning and provides the opportunity to move to better-paid jobs.

If a resident aged 19 to 23 has achieved a level 2 qualification that was, at the time they started, or still is classed as a full level 2, any subsequent level 2 qualifications will be fully funded if they meet the definition of unemployed or meet the eligibility criteria for learners for the earnings threshold.

Please refer to [Annexe C](#) for the definition of a Full level 2 and the list of qualifications approved for funding.

Offer.

To encourage increased delivery of high-value level 2 provision aligned with sector plans and relevance to employers, to support learners into sustainable employment, the WMCA has provided a 10% uplift to full level 2 qualifications which align with sector propositions for Health & Social Care and level 2 qualifications aligned to sector plans in Construction.

By mapping clear vocational routes into entry points for working in these sectors, We aim to support more people to progress into work or within work. There is a Health & Social Care Plan for the health sector and the construction pathways are in place, and We are looking to collaborate with the sectors and our providers to map out further sector plans and set out the vocational routes to points of entry into work for Digital, Business & Professional and Engineering & Manufacturing.

For Construction, We will only fund Level 2 provision on the Construction Level 2 uplift list, as these qualifications have been identified in collaboration with the sector as aligned with current skills needs. Any additional requests will be reviewed through the business case process.

We want to continue collaborating with employers and learning organisations to ensure We can align provision in other sectors (business & professional, engineering & manufacturing, etc) to employer needs and vocational entry points and extend the Level 2 uplift to other sectors.

Level 2 Health & Social Care uplift qualification list

Learning Aim	Learning aim reference
Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care	60188558
Diploma in Care (RQF)	60325549
Diploma in Care	60326116
BTEC Diploma in Care (England)	60327625
Diploma in Care (RQF)	60328253
Certificate in Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care	50115868
Certificate in Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care	60000478
Certificate in Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care (RQF)	60038251
Certificate in Understanding Working in the Health Sector	60141281
Certificate in Common Health Conditions	6014306X
Certificate in Customer Service for Health and Social Care Settings	60304832
Certificate in Common Health Conditions (RQF)	60330053
Certificate in Introducing Caring for Children and Young People (RQF)	60330089
Award in Customer Service for Health and Social Care Settings	60339949
BTEC First Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care	60063129

Level 2 Construction uplift qualification list

Learning Aim	Award Type
Brickwork Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Carpentry & Joinery Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Carpentry (Site) Diploma – Level 2	Diploma
Ceramic Wall & Floor Tiling Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Building Maintenance Operations Level 2	Diploma
Interior Systems NVQ	NVQ
Painting & Decorating Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Plastering Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Construction Industry Scaffolders Scheme (CISRS) Part 2 (Tube & Fitting)	License
Scaffolding NVQ Level 2	NVQ
Roof Slating and Tiling Level 2	Standard
Groundworks	NVQ
Cable Avoidance (Cat and Genny) NPORS	NPORS
Installing, Testing and Maintaining Air Conditioning Diploma (6187-01) Level 2	Diploma
Refrigeration Maintaining Systems Diploma (6187-02) Level 2	Diploma
F-Gases for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning City & Guilds Level 2	C & G
Electrical Installation (2365) Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Electrical Installations Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Smart Metering - Dual Fuel (7428-23) Diploma Level 2	Diploma
F-Gas and ODS Category 1 Regulations Award Level 2	Certificate
Heating & Ventilating Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Plumbing Diploma Level 2	Diploma
Unvented Hot Water Level 2	Certificate
Pipework Systems Mechanical Engineering Level 2	Diploma

We expect more people to take Level 2 courses that help them gain useful skills and move forward.

We also think more learners will progress to Level 3. At the same time, We expect fewer low-value courses that do not lead to better jobs or opportunities.

Level 2 Tailored Study Programmes

We recognise that not all young people complete full-time study by age 19, and the cost of delivering this education does not decrease once a learner turns 19. Additionally, youth unemployment in the West Midlands has consistently been 2 to 5 percentage points higher than the national average, highlighting the need to support young adults in completing study programmes that lead to meaningful employment.

To support this, we have introduced Tailored Study Programmes to support adults aged between 19-24 with a programme of study at level 2 for learners who are not yet ready to begin a qualification at level 3 that supports them to progress to education at a higher level or to employment.

The programmes are designed to meet individual learning needs, offering opportunities to experience the world of work and non-qualification activities that support them to progress to further learning at Level 3, or in/into employment.

Providers can choose to continue to fund young adults on a standalone qualification basis if they deem it to be the most appropriate learning programme.

Eligibility

We will fully fund individuals as part of this offer where they are aged 19 to 24 on 31 August within the funding year and meet the eligibility criteria for ASF programmes.

Learners are usually only eligible for one WMCA funding model at a time as the funding provided is intended to cover the whole of their learning programmes.

Learners undertaking full-time higher education (HE) programmes are ineligible for Study Programme funding.

Study programme principles.

We will fund eligible learners where the WMCA have formally approved a learning organisation to deliver Study Programmes.

As with 16-18-year-olds, the programmes should have a core aim, which will be tailored to the needs of the individual and typically include a substantial qualification (academic or technical) or preparation for employment.

The programme should be flexible and designed to meet learner needs.

Programmes should include non-qualification activities that complement the other elements of the programme and support the learners to progress to further or higher education (HE) or to employment. These could include.

- English and Maths discreet modules
- English and maths GCSE or Functional Skills Level 2, where learners have not yet achieved a GCSE grade 4.
- Digital skills
- Work experience to give learners the opportunity to develop their career choices. and to apply their skills in real working conditions,
- other non-qualification activities to develop learners' character, broader skills, attitudes and confidence, and support progression, such as critical thinking, activities to develop personal confidence, character and resilience and where appropriate activities to develop teamwork, communications skills, leadership and problem-solving skills required by employers.
- Wrap-around support – driven by identified need.

Programmes will be funded by funding bands, which will be linked to the number of planned hours.

Work experience

Work experience is a crucial part of a study programme. It includes work tasters, learner enterprise, social action projects, volunteering, or placements with external employers. It aims to help young adults develop their career choices, get a taste of work and critical employability skills.

All learners are expected to do work experience or training. Work placements can include evening, weekend and holiday hours.

Providers are expected to offer external placements wherever possible.

Planned hours

Each study programme will consist of a number of planned hours (meaning hours that have been timetabled and are supervised by You). You must ensure that the number of hours is realistic and deliverable.

Programmes are designed to be flexible and should cover both full and part-time options that is suitable to the learner.

Funding will be based on planned hours as listed below:

Band	Annual planned hours	National funding rate per learner
1	580+ hours	£5105
2	485+ hours	£4223
3	385 to 484 hours	£3434
4	300 to 384 hours	£2715
5	up to 299 hours	£5105 per full-time equivalent (FTE)

Foundation Skills Programmes

Foundation Skills Programmes will offer a good quality, rounded education with a focus on residents with no or low-level qualifications and in employment, to progress them to Level 2 provision that is aligned with our sector plans and labour market need.

The delivery must be diverse and flexible, allowing access to the provision around their work and personal commitments.

It must draw on learners' life experiences, nurturing their career aspirations with effective wrap-around support to secure strong educational attainment that will also enhance overall physical and mental health.

Offer

Foundation Skills programmes will be offered through two programmes, depending on a learner's starting points and individual learning needs.

- Foundation Skills – Standard Study Programme – Between 11 and 16 weeks
- Foundation Skills – Intensive Short Course Study Programme – Between 6 – 10 weeks

The mandatory elements of each programme will cover:

- Maths (in line with Initial Assessment)
- English (in line with Initial Assessment)

Component parts of English and Maths can be delivered e.g., speaking and listening, or using calculations where initial assessment identifies the gap.

- Digital (in line with Initial Assessment)

Digital Skills can be delivered in modules, using the new WMCA Digital Pathways with appropriate focus, depending on sector, e.g., Word, PowerPoint, Internet and social media.

- Occupational Specific Training

Level 1 vocational offer, which should also provide a realistic context for learners to further develop the literacy, numeracy and digital skills being taught as part of the program. This offer must be aligned to WMCA's sector plans (where applicable) or labour market need and must not include 'award' type qualifications. For ESOL learners only, we will accept Nonregulated vocation learning aims which demonstrate clear vocational learning, progress and outcomes.

- Enrichment
- Wrap around support.

Moving Residents Into Good Jobs

The West Midlands is the UK's Growth Capital. After forging a position as the fastest-growing region outside London in the decade to 2019 and breaking through the £100 billion economic output mark, the region's industrial mix and demography meant it was hit particularly hard by the economic impact of the Covid pandemic and new trade frictions with the EU.

The WMCA's [Employment and Skills Strategy](#) sets out our vision for a responsive and flexible adult skills offer which supports a people-centred approach to ensuring the skills needs of businesses are met and everybody can benefit from economic growth.

We have set out through our West Midlands [Plan for Growth](#) the path to returning to that trajectory, spreading opportunity and jobs across the region and helping level-up with the right employment training provision, which will support our residents in gaining the skills to progress into sustainable employment, thereby playing a crucial role in underpinning this.

As set out in our latest [Local Skills Report](#), the focus is on securing stronger and more inclusive regional growth. Put simply, we want to deliver a better match between the skills of the people in our region and the current and future needs of our businesses, to accelerate productivity and deliver economic growth. We want to make sure more people have the skills they need to enter and progress in work.

Set out below are our training programmes, which will support resident to move into good jobs, these include:

- Into Employment programme and In work progression.
- Construction Gateway programme
- Pre Apprenticeships

Into Employment Programme and In work Progression

Into Employment Programmes are designed to remove barriers to both entering and progressing in work, providing tailored support for unemployed, economically inactive and underemployed residents, including those in insecure or low-paid work, without basic skills, or facing labour market inequalities such as disabled residents, while working closely with employers to deliver bespoke provision that leads to sustained employment outcomes.

You should consult their specification for additional funding conditions.

The Offer

Into-Employment Programmes will be co-created with employers to create a training offer that is occupationally specific to meet the needs of employers.

The programme should have a balance of skills development specific to the occupation and transferrable skill development, including teamwork, communication, critical thinking, resilience and problem-solving skills.

Into employment (Phase 1) should not be solely driven by the delivery of regulated qualifications but focused on the progression outcome. Delivery should include a mix of vocational regulated

and/or non-regulated activity, alongside teaching, instruction, coaching and mentoring, and employment support to best support individuals in moving towards employment.

To support outcomes, programmes should have a clear and purposeful approach to employer engagement. Most programmes include elements such as work experience and guaranteed interviews; even where not mandated, providers are encouraged to incorporate guaranteed interviews wherever feasible and appropriate to support progression into employment.

Progression in work (Phase 2/3): Phase 2 and 3 deliveries, should be qualification-led, with a clear focus on supporting learners to upskill, progress within employment, and achieve higher pay outcomes. Programmes should combine vocationally relevant regulated qualifications with high-quality teaching, instruction, coaching, and mentoring to support the development of both technical and transferable skills. To maximise impact, programmes should include a strong and structured approach to employer engagement. To facilitate progression opportunities such as promotion, increased responsibilities, or movement into higher-paid roles. The overall programme design should ensure sufficient guided learning hours (GLH) and duration to support meaningful upskilling and sustained in-work progression outcomes.

Into-employment programmes should include a mixture of enrichment and transversal Skills to develop the individual's transferable skills for progression into further learning and accelerate in-work progression and where assessment show the need, include wrap-around support bespoke to the resident.

The overarching programme intent is built around progression through defined levels of attainment, supporting individuals to move into employment and, once in work, continue to progress through higher-level skills development. This is underpinned by CEIAG and wraparound support to raise aspirations, increase wages, and deliver wider economic impact through sustained employment and career progression.

To ensure consistency of provision with real value for money, effective curriculum design and a transparent funding methodology, we have established a phased approach to programme funding.

Please note; employability provision is only funded as part of an Into-Employment programme (including Construction Gateway). Generic stand-alone into-employment programmes will not be funded.

Phase 1 Offer

Phase 1 programmes offer an entry routes for learners who are unemployed/economically inactive o support progression into employment.

Phase 1 Into Employment programmes must include the following components:

- Occupational-specific training related to the job opportunity.
- Employability and transitional skills development to support movement to work.
- Work experience relevant to the role (Where contract specification stipulates)
- Job interview at the end of the programme (Where contract specification stipulates but we encourage that this is available to all learners)

Optional elements, in line with the contract specification may include.

- Wrap-around support funding, which will be available to cover the full live cycle of the learner's journey, including progression and tracking.
- Day-1 job outcome payment
- Week 13 sustained employment payment.
- Funding and Licensing (occupational requirement)

The payment amount for job outcomes is dependent on the learning aim and can be found in FALA.

For performance measurement, please refer to the contract specification.

Phase 1 delivery codes will be set out programmes linked to SSA. The full coding is provided in the Skills Programme Coding guidance.

Economically Inactive Residents, will have the option on the length of the programmes, however, the delivery will typically have a stronger engagement activity through partnership working with community groups and the voluntary sector. In addition, delivery may be enhanced to support basic skills provision.

Learners on Into Employment Programmes who suffer from inequality in the workplace or have additional challenges due to ill health or disability, will also have the option of a short or long programme.

Completion and Achievement Requirements

It is the intention of the WMCA to use the RARPA model to monitor, review and measure the quality and outcomes from non-regulated provision. non-regulated learning should have clear achievement aims for the residents and identified progression outcomes prior to commencement of learning.

A programme may only be recorded as completed where all planned components of the programme have been delivered and evidenced, in line with the learner's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and agreed programme design.

Where You are delivering non-regulated learning, You must ensure You have appropriate and robust quality assurance processes in place. For instance, 'The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle'. Further information on RARPA is available from the Learning and Work Institute.

Exception – Early Progression into Employment

Where a learner progresses into employment prior to completing the full programme, providers may record the learner as having completed the programme where:

- at least 80% of the planned programme has been delivered and achieved, and
- there is robust evidence that the learner has met the core intended outcomes of the programme, including those required to support progression into employment.
- The training and support provided, has directly supported the resident into work.

In all cases, providers must:

- clearly evidence the proportion of the programme completed,
- demonstrate that remaining planned activity is not critical to the achievement of the programme's intended outcomes, and

- retain clear documentation to justify the decision to record completion for audit purposes.

Phase 2 and 3

In most cases learners will need to be new entrant who are either:

- Employed and earning below the earnings threshold and holding a CSCS card (or equivalent).

To support progression in employment, Phases 2 and 3 will include.

- An approved FALA Regulated qualifications
- targeted development activities and transitional skills development to support progress in work.

Phase 2 and 3 programmes will depend on your contractual terms or agreed delivery plans for Grants.

Construction Gateway

The core focus of the Construction Gateway (CG) is to provide residents with the skills and knowledge required through the industry-standard outcomes e.g., Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), and work with employers who will both shape the training content and provide the job vacancies for residents to be matched into Construction Gateway is designed to support unemployed and underemployed residents, including those in part-time contracts, zero-hour contracts, self-employed and inactive. Including those in work without basic skills, and sections of the community who suffer from inequality in the workplace, for example, disabled residents.

The Offer

The programme should have a balance of skills development specific to the occupation and transferrable skill development including teamwork, communication, critical thinking, resilience and problem-solving skills.

Delivery should include a blend of industry-approved qualifications, as outlined in the specification, and non-regulated activity, alongside teaching, instruction, coaching, mentoring, and employment support to help individuals progress into employment. Construction Gateway programmes should also incorporate a mix of enrichment and transversal skills to develop transferable capabilities, support progression into work, and accelerate in-work progression. Where assessment identifies a need, bespoke wrap-around support should be provided to ensure individuals are not disadvantaged.

The overarching programme intent is built around progression through defined levels of attainment, supporting individuals to move into employment and, once in work, continue to progress through higher-level skills development. This is underpinned by CEIAG and wraparound support to raise aspirations, increase wages, and deliver wider economic impact through sustained employment and career progression.

To support outcomes, programmes should have a clear and purposeful approach to employer engagement. Providers delivering CG, should have effective mechanisms and strong networks to engage people in work directly, not through an employer-based offer. They should offer a relevant and adaptable curriculum to support those in work to access the construction gateway offer, leading to in-work progression.

Phase 1

Phase 1 on construction Gateway programme offers an entry routes for learners who are unemployed/economically inactive.

The Content of the delivery should be influenced by employers to enable the progression into employment. Each resident should be linked to a real job vacancy at the start of their programme that they will have the opportunity to be matched against through an interview.

The mandatory requirements for Phase construction gateway provision are as follows:

- Industry standard provision, which must be in line with CSCS or equivalent industry carding scheme requirements to ensure on completion of the programme the resident holds CSCS.
- Occupational-specific training related to the job opportunity.
- Employability and transitional skills development to support movement to work.
- A guaranteed job interview on completion of the programme

Optional elements, in line with the contract specification may include.

- Wrap-around support funding, which will be available to cover the full live cycle of the learner's journey, including progression and tracking.
- Day-1 job outcome payment
- Week 13 sustained employment payment.
- Funding and Licensing (occupational requirement)

The payment amount for job outcomes is dependent on the learning aim and can be found in FALA.

To support retention and progression, providers must have a clear approach for initial advice and guidance, career tracking and destination monitoring at pre, during and post programme delivery.

For Performance; A minimum of 65% of completers of the Phase 1 programme should progress to employment and retaining this employment for a minimum of 13 weeks.

Completion and Achievement Requirements

It is the intention of the WMCA to use the RARPA model to monitor, review and measure the quality and outcomes from non-regulated provision. non-regulated learning should have clear achievement aims for the residents and identified progression outcomes prior to commencement of learning.

A programme may only be recorded as completed where all planned components of the programme have been delivered and evidenced, in line with the learner's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and agreed programme design.

Where You are delivering non-regulated learning, You must ensure You have appropriate and robust quality assurance processes in place. For instance, 'The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle'. Further information on RARPA is available from the Learning and Work Institute.

Phase 2

Phase 2 on construction Gateway programme offers two different entry routes for residents.

This includes.

- new entrant who are either:
 - Unemployed or economically inactive residents holding a CSCS card (or equivalent).
 - Employed and earning below the earnings threshold and holding a CSCS card (or equivalent).
- Residents who progress from Phase 1 must be;
 - Employed and earning below the earnings threshold and holding a CSCS card (or equivalent).
 - Note; Progression from phase 1 for learners who remain unemployed is not valid.

Four funding options are available for learners under Phase 2, please note; we will only fund one option per learner within a funding year.

The mandatory requirements for Phase 2 construction gateway provision are as follows:

- Industry standard provision, which must be in line with CPCS or equivalent industry carding scheme requirements to ensure on completion of the programme the resident holds an appropriate CPCS as outlined in the specification.
- Occupational-specific training related to the job opportunity/progression opportunity.
- Employability support and transferable skills development to support movement into or in work.
- A guaranteed job interview on completion of the programme. (only where started as unemployed as a direct route)

Optional elements, in line with the contract specification may include.

- Wrap-around support funding, which will be available to cover the full live cycle of the learner's journey, including progression and tracking.
- Day-1 job outcome payment (only when started as unemployed as a direct route)
- Week 13 sustained employment payment (only when started as unemployed as a direct route)
- Funding and Licensing (occupational requirement)

Content of the delivery should be influenced by employers to enable the progression into employment or in employment.

For Performance,

- A minimum of 65% of completers who start as unemployed/inactive on the Phase 2 programme should progress to employment and retaining this employment for a minimum of 13 weeks.
- A minimum of 65% of completers who started as employed/low wage achieve one or more of the in-work progression outcomes:
 - Increased salary

- Increased hours
- Promotion

All learners who have not successfully progressed into sustainable employment to receive additional IAG, mentoring and/or coaching to support them into sustainable employment or further learning.

Phase 2 delivery codes will be set out programmes linked to SSA. The full coding is provided in the Skills Programme Coding guidance.

Completion and Achievement Requirements

It is the intention of the WMCA to use the RARPA model to monitor, review and measure the quality and outcomes from non-regulated provision. non-regulated learning should have clear achievement aims for the residents and identified progression outcomes prior to commencement of learning.

A programme may only be recorded as completed where all planned components of the programme have been delivered and evidenced, in line with the learner's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and agreed programme design.

Where You are delivering non-regulated learning, You must ensure You have appropriate and robust quality assurance processes in place. For instance, 'The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle'. Further information on RARPA is available from the Learning and Work Institute.

Phase 3

Phase 3 programme can be offered to those who are employed and earn below the earnings Threshold.

Learners can start directly onto Phase 3 or progress from Phase 1 and or Phase 2.

Three funding options are available for learners, we will only fund one per learner within a funding year.

The mandatory requirements for Phase 3 construction gateway provision are as follows:

- Industry standard provision, which must be in line with specification and may include SSSTS/ SMSTS, Blue Card or equivalent to ensure on completion of the programme the resident holds an appropriate outcome as outlined in the specification.
- Occupational-specific training related to the progression opportunity.
- Employability support and transferable skills development to support movement into in work.

Optional elements, in line with the contract specification may include.

- Wrap-around support funding, which will be available to cover the full live cycle of the learner's journey, including progression and tracking.
- Funding and Licensing (occupational requirements)

For performance, we will set a benchmark of 65% of adults who started as employed to achieve one or more of the in-work progression outcomes:

- Increased salary
- Increased hours
- Promotion

Phase 3 delivery codes will be set out programmes linked to SSA. The full coding is provided in the Skills Programme Coding guidance.

Completion and Achievement Requirements

It is the intention of the WMCA to use the RARPA model to monitor, review and measure the quality and outcomes from non-regulated provision. non-regulated learning should have clear achievement aims for the residents and identified progression outcomes prior to commencement of learning.

A programme may only be recorded as completed where all planned components of the programme have been delivered and evidenced, in line with the learner's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and agreed programme design.

Where You are delivering non-regulated learning, You must ensure You have appropriate and robust quality assurance processes in place. For instance, 'The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle'. Further information on RARPA is available from the Learning and Work Institute.

Work Trial

Work Trials can be offered once, either as part of Phase 1 or Phase 2 to support progression.

Work Trials are intended to be on-site in a simulated/ controlled environment to demonstrate construction plant job readiness.

Funding for work trials will be in addition to Phase 1 – 2 funding. Only one Work trial can be funded per funding year.

Pre - Apprenticeships

Pre – Apprenticeships are designed to enable young people who are not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) and between the ages of 19-29 to enter a range of quality apprenticeship offers across the region, which align with the local and regional labour market to link our residents with good quality jobs. The pre-apprenticeship offer should prepare young people for apprenticeship entry and have a balance of skills development specific to the occupation of entry, as well as digital, green skills and employability as a minimum.

We expect the pre-apprenticeship offer to be responsive and flexible, providing transitional support from unemployment into sustainable apprenticeships that lead to further good work pathways.

The Offer

Pre-Apprenticeship programmes must be co-created with employers to create a training offer that is occupationally specific to meet the needs of employers.

The programme should have a balance of skills development specific to the occupation and transferrable skill development, including teamwork, communication, critical thinking, resilience and problem-solving skills.

All pre-apprenticeship programmes will need to include.

- Occupational-specific training related to the job opportunity.
- Employability and transitional skills development to support movement into an apprenticeship.
- Work experience relevant to the role.
- Job interview at the end of the programme (Where contract specification stipulates but we encourage that this is available to all learners)

Optional elements, in line with the contract specification may include.

- Week 13 sustained employment payment.

Only one pre-apprenticeship per funding year, can be funded for each resident.

Wrap-around support funding is funded as part of the learning aim value and must be available to cover the full life cycle of the learner's journey, including progression and tracking.

For performance, we will set a benchmark based on sustainable apprenticeships at the 13-week mark of 65%. Sustainable apprenticeships are defined as apprenticeships offered by employers as part of their workforce plans that are a minimum of 1 year in duration.

Pre-Apprenticeship delivery codes will be set out by programme linked to SSA. The complete coding is provided in the Skills Programme Coding guidance.

Completion and Achievement Requirements

It is the intention of the WMCA to use the RARPA model to monitor, review and measure the quality and outcomes from non-regulated provision. non-regulated learning should have clear achievement aims for the residents and identified progression outcomes prior to commencement of learning.

A programme may only be recorded as completed where all planned components of the programme have been delivered and evidenced, in line with the learner's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and agreed programme design.

Where You are delivering non-regulated learning, You must ensure You have appropriate and robust quality assurance processes in place. For instance, 'The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle'. Further information on RARPA is available from the Learning and Work Institute.

Up-Skilling and Re-Skilling

Higher-level skills and qualifications are becoming increasingly important to our regional economy in strengthening existing businesses, in improving productivity and in attracting inward investment. They matter for individuals too. People with higher level qualifications and who develop higher level skills throughout their working lives are more likely to be employed, more likely to earn more when employed, and are more resilient to labour market change.

We plan to work with employers, colleges and training providers to expand our level 3 training offer. Our goal is to make this training accessible to those who are employed, affordable for those who are low-paid, and aligned with regional economic priorities. Achieving this will require greater collaboration between providers, more flexibility in delivery and additional investment in level 3 training.

Set out below are our training programmes, which will support residents to up-skill and reskill:

- Full Level 3
- Level 4+
- Free Courses for Jobs
- Skills Bootcamps

Full level 3

It is key that We build the right skills in our workforce to deliver improved productivity and prosperity, enabling all groups to access jobs. While qualification levels are improving, significant shortfalls remain at level 3, impacting productivity, competitiveness and inward investment, which hold back the growth of the regional economy. In addition, low skills also impact on earnings and household income for residents in securing sustainable employment in higher-skilled job roles.

Please refer to [Annexe C](#) for the definition of a Full level 3 and the list of qualifications approved for funding.

The Offer

We are clear that We want to establish an adult offer at level 3 to meet Our regional skills plan priorities. We expect to see entitlement qualifications and Our priorities reflected in course portfolios at level 3 and will continue to use Our funding flexibilities to support residents.

The WMCA will provide partial or full funding Level 3 qualifications and units where they support progression in work or career changes through re-training.

This will be agreed as part of your Delivery Plan with agreed levels of contribution in line with WMCA priorities.

Level 3 ring-fenced Allocation (Formally Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ))

Eligibility

In addition to the eligibility of residents in the [Who We Fund](#) section; the following funding eligibility is in place for those residents undertaking these Level 3 and above courses where providers have a Level 3 allocation (grants) or FCFJ allocation (contract for services):

- All employed learners undertaking their **first** level 3 or above are **fully funded** irrespective of their wage;
- All employed learners who **already** hold a level 3 or above qualification and earn **less** than the earnings threshold will be **fully funded**;
- All employed learners who **already** hold a level 3 or above qualification and earn **more** than the earnings threshold will be **co-funded**;
- All unemployed learners, **irrespective** of previous qualifications, will be **fully funded**.

A decision tree showing the eligibility can be found in [Annexe E](#).

All learners aged 19 or over on 31 August 2026 when they started their learning are now funded through your Level 3 Allocation (Grant providers) FCFJ (contract for services providers) funding line and will include the relevant uplift. Please note, this is only where a provider holds a FCFJ allocation.

You must not claim for WMCA-funded ASF funding where learners are already being funded through a Skills Bootcamp or Adult Learning Loan (where applicable), for qualifications that are in the FALA. You must:

- use LDM code 378 and FFI code 1 to claim for funding for 19- to 23-year-olds learners, who have **not** achieved a full level 3 **and** earn above the earnings threshold.
- use LDM code 378, FFI code 1, and LDM code 391 when recording learners who **meet** the earnings threshold criteria or are unemployed or are 19 to 23 years old and have **not** achieved a full level 3.
- record the employment status of learners accessing the offer in the ILR.

The Offer:

The offer includes:

Approved Level 3 ring-fenced FCFJ Qualifications:

- All the level 3 qualifications that appear in FCFJ list are fully funded, as per the eligibility criteria set out above. The list can be accessed here: [DfE list of qualifications approved for funding](#)
- an uplift is payable at 2 different rates and follows the earnings methodology set out in the [funding rates and formula document](#). This uplift should be used by You, to support delivery of the level 3 FCFJ offer.

WMCA Approved Level 3 ring-fenced FCFJ Qualifications:

In addition to the approved list of qualifications approved for funding, the WMCA will also fund additional qualifications as listed on the WMCA website in line with the above funding eligibility.

The WMCA approved FCFJ will be subject to a 12.2% uplift, in the same way it has been applied, to ASF provision. This will not apply to the government approved list, which already has an uplift applied.

You must ensure you use LDM code 378 when recording these learners on the ILR and LDM code 391 when recording learners who are unemployed or meet the earnings threshold eligibility.

Grant Providers:

Grant Providers please refer to the Grant Provider Operational Plan for further guidance on your Level 3 allocation (formerly FCFJ).

Skills Bootcamps for the 2026/27 funding year

To support our objectives of building the right skills within the workforce to drive improved productivity and prosperity, while enabling all groups to access employment opportunities, Skills Bootcamps were introduced in 2020. These programmes support adults to upskill and retrain in priority sectors with skills shortages, such as construction, digital, and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driving.

Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible 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) They give people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with an employer.

Further information can be found in the 2026/27 Skills Bootcamp Guidance. Skills Bootcamp providers should use this document in conjunction with Skills Programme Funding rules.

The Offer;

Skills Bootcamps must be delivered at Level 3-5 or equivalent, except 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., Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA), Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) – Where the third pathway is chosen, We would expect a higher standard of evidence for employer engagement.

Bootcamps are Co-funded for independent learners, unless they meet the conditions as set out within these rules e.g. unemployed or below the earning thresholds, For residents who are employed above the low wage threshold and where the Skills Bootcamp is being delivered/led by an employer, we ask for a 30% contribution from large employers or a 10% contribution from SMEs.

An adult 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 must ask prospective learners whether they have already undertaken a Skills Bootcamp in that funding year and if they are currently undertaking a Skills Bootcamp and additionally check the PLR prior to claim. 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).

For the full rules and conditions, please refer to the Skills Bootcamp Guidance for the relevant contracted funding year, which can be found on the WMCA [Website](#).

Full level 4+

We are continuing local flexibility in 2026/27 academic year to support local skills needs at Level 4 and above.

Providers wishing to offer level 4+ qualifications must have these agreed as part of their approved Delivery Plan with the WMCA prior to any delivery commencing.

These can be full or modular level 4+ qualifications either available from Learning AIM or a locally agreed qualification.

The Offer

Provision at level 4+ will be developed exclusively against Our priorities as set out in the WMCA Employment and Skills Strategy. We will consider either full or unitised delivery against published courses.

We are also keen to explore providers putting together an adult offer of learning at Level 4 where qualifications do not currently exist e.g., new emerging sectors or to meet the needs of residents.

We want an offer that people can access independently of their employer like the old ‘night school’ concept but offered in flexible ways – modes, times, and locations. It is also important to Us that individuals are clear on what they can move onto and progress to, following successful completion on their learning.

Annexe A: Eligibility for Funding

This annex sets out the countries falling within the below categories as referenced in the residency eligibility section.

British Overseas Territories

- Anguilla
- Bermuda
- British Antarctic Territory
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Montserrat
- Pitcairn, Henderson Island, Ducie and Oeno Islands
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Isles
- St Helena and its dependencies (Ascension and Tristan da Cunha)
- Turks and Caicos Islands

EEA

The EEA comprises of the following countries:

- All Member States of the European Union

You can access a list of member states on the [EU website](#).

With respect to EEA nationality, note that any Cypriot national living on any part of the island qualifies for EU residency and is considered an EU national.

- Iceland
- Lichtenstein
- Norway

The table below lists territories that are categorised as being within the EU and or territories that are categorised as being part of the listed countries such that they satisfy our residency requirements for the purposes of the WMCA Funded Adult Skills Funding Programme rules.

Denmark	The following is part of Denmark: Greenland Faroe Islands
Finland	The following is part of Finland and the EU: Aland islands
France	The following is part of France and the EU: the French Overseas Department (DOMS) (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana (Guyana), Reunion and Saint-Pierre et Miquelon) The following is part of France: New Caledonia and its dependencies French Polynesia Saint Barthélemy
Germany	The following is part of Germany and the EU: Tax-free port of Heligoland
Netherlands	The following is part of the Netherlands: Antilles (Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten) Aruba
Portugal	The following is part of Portugal and the EU: Madeira The Azores
Spain	The following is part of Spain and the EU: the Balearic Islands the Canary Islands Ceuta Melilla

Andorra, Macau, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican are not part of the EU or the EEA.

Annexe B - 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](#)

Providers should refer to the Gov.uK website for policies and procedures listed below.

- College Financial Handbook (*where applicable*)
- Provider Support Manual
- Data Collection Timetable

- Individualised Learner Record (ILR) Specification and Supporting Guidance

Annex C: Qualifications

Full level 2 qualification

Full level 2 is the level of attainment which, is demonstrated by:

- a GCSE in 5 subjects, each at grade 4 (C) or above, or
- a Technical Certificate at level 2 which meets the requirements for the 16 to 19 performance tables.

Please refer to the [list of qualifications approved for funding](#) on GOV.UK and the prior attainment level tables in the [ILR specification: 2025 to 2026](#). You can email qualifications.approval@education.gov.uk if you need advice on a previous qualification's designation.

Full level 3 qualification

Full level 3 is the level of attainment which is demonstrated by a:

- General Certificate of Education at the advanced level in 2 subjects
- General Certificate of Education at the AS level in 4 subjects
- QAA Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma at level 3
- Technical, or applied general qualification at level 3, which meets the requirements for the 16 to 19 performance tables.
- Core maths at level 3

Please refer to the [list of qualifications approved for funding](#) on GOV.UK and the prior attainment level tables in the [ILR specification: 2026 to 2027](#).

You can email qualifications.approval@education.gov.uk if you need advice on a previous qualification's designation.

For new linear AS and A levels, where a learner enrolls on an AS qualification and continues with further study to take the A level qualification in the same subject, you must record both the AS and A level in the ILR. The AS learning aim will be funded separately to the A level learning aim.

Approved qualifications

Where you deliver regulated qualifications and/or their components, you must ensure they are [approved for WMCA funded Adult Skills Funding Programmes](#) and available on [find a learning aim](#).

[Qualifications and public funding](#) provide information on qualifications that are no longer approved for funding.

Where you deliver approved qualifications and/or their components you must ensure that learners are registered for the qualifications and/or component in line with the awarding policies and procedures. You must not 'pre-register' students a significant period in advance of the learner starting the qualification.

We will fund qualifications that are linked to occupational regulation/licence to practise. You can find more information about these qualifications at the [qualifications website](#).

Before delivering a component, you must check with the awarding organisation they provide a learner registration facility, and the learner can achieve it alone or as part of accumulating achievement towards a qualification.

If the [UK ENIC](#) has confirmed the authenticity of a qualification gained overseas and confirmed it is comparable/compatible with a regulated qualification in England, currently part of the level 2 and level 3 [legal entitlement](#), the individual will be deemed to have achieved their first full level 2 and/or level 3 qualification.

You must provide accurate unique learner number (ULN) information to awarding organisations and ensure all information you use to register learners for qualifications is correct. You can find more information in the [Learner Records Service](#) guidance.

Annex D: Evidence

General Rules

You must hold sufficient evidence to demonstrate that WMCA funding has been used correctly and that delivery meets:

- the WMCA Agreement
- your specification and/or delivery plan
- these Funding Rules and
- the Operational Manual

Data and ILR Requirements

- You must complete all ILR fields accurately in line with the [2026–2027 ILR Specification](#), even where they are not required for funding.
- The ILR and claim data must fully and accurately reflect the learning and support you have planned, delivered and claimed.
- You must not submit inaccurate data that could lead to an over-claim of funding.
- WMCA will correct errors and may recover funding where data does not support claims.

Learner and Residency Evidence

- You must be able to demonstrate that the learner exists.
- All learner postcodes must be recorded correctly at the start of the aim.
- Learners must confirm that the information they provide is true and accurate at the point of collection.
- Provider must record what evidence they have seen to confirm eligibility in line with the rules.

Self-Declarations

- Where Self-declarations are permitted these must clearly:
 - confirm the learner's details.
 - state what requirement is being confirmed.
- Acceptable formats include:
 - email, text, or Teams messages (ideally from the same contact details as enrolment)
- For employment or sustainment evidence, WMCA will also accept:
 - employer emails confirming details.
 - DWP confirmation showing benefits have ceased.

Prior Attainment

- If a learner self-declares prior attainment:
 - you must check the Personal Learning Record (PLR)
 - you must resolve any inconsistencies with the learner and ask them to sign a declaration that the data is incorrect.
- The PLR does not automatically override the learner's declaration.

Proportionality and Record Keeping

- The level of evidence should be proportionate to the length and complexity of learning.

Where information is held centrally, you may reference the source rather than duplicate records, provided the original evidence is secure, auditable, and can be readily accessed. All referenced evidence must be complete, up to date, and sufficiently robust to withstand external audit and verification.

Evidence Pack

The evidence pack must contain evidence to support the funding claimed and must be available to us if we need it.

Core Principle

Evidence in the evidence pack must;

- Confirm the learner exists.
- confirm all data reported in ILR, EAS, and funding claims.
- include sufficient evidence to justify eligibility, delivery, and funding levels.

Mandatory Evidence (as applicable)

Eligibility and Enrolment

- Verified evidence of learner eligibility, including a countersigned record.
- Completed self-declarations, where required.

Assessment and Planning

- Initial assessments and diagnostics/Skills Scans
- Evidence of prior learning and how it impacts delivery or funding.
- Evidence of initial CEIAG/IAG discussions with the learner, confirm their starting point, and justify why the course is appropriate.
- Individual learning plan including.
 - full details of planned learning
 - evidence of planned hours
- For non-regulated or personalised programmes (e.g. Into Employment/Skills Bootcamp) this should include the full details of all the aspects of the learning to be carried out, including intent, expected outcomes.

Delivery and Participation

- Evidence that learning has taken place, such as:
 - Registers
 - Reviews
 - online learning records
- Attendance records must:
 - be date and time stamped,

- align with planned Guided Learning Hours,
 - and be sufficiently robust and irrefutable for audit purposes and
 - comply with digital signature guidance.
- Note: attendance alone does not confirm learning, please ensure that you can robustly evidence that learning has taken place

Learner Support

- Evidence supporting:
 - funding claims and funding band/level
 - learning support and support needs, including how these are met.
 - Evidence of support provided.

Learning support Wrap around and professional licence

- Evidence supporting:
 - claims for learner support funding and wraparound support including evidence of payment/invoiced.
 - residential support (where applicable and approved)

Employer of Co Funding contributions

- Evidence supporting:
 - funding claims and funding band/level
 - learner or employer contributions

Achievement

- Evidence of achievement for all learning aims and qualifications - must be available within 3 months of ILR reporting.
- For Nonregulated programmes this should clearly show the completion of all required assessments, and certification. 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.

Outcome and Sustainment

- Evidence of progression into:
 - employment, or
 - further learning (where required by the programme)

Withdrawal

- If a learner withdraws: you may only claim funding up to the **last evidenced date of learning**.

Additional Requirements

- Evidence that:
 - WMCA branding is included on documentation.
 - the learner has been informed WMCA is the funder.

Control systems

You must put in place adequate control systems to ensure that the ILR and Supplementary Data submissions You make to Us are accurate, complete and have a complete audit trail to justify them. Your control systems must allow You to recover evidence for audit quickly and accurately. Your control systems must extend to Your supply chain.

You must regularly test your control systems and Your supply chain's control systems and the learner evidence that they maintain and provide evidence to Us that Your systems operate correctly.

Confirmation and signatures

The learner must confirm the information is correct when it is collected. You must have evidence of this, which can include electronic formats.

We accept electronic evidence, including electronic/digital signatures. Where evidence is electronic, you must have wider systems and processes in place to assure you that learners exist and are eligible for funding.

Both electronic and digital signatures are acceptable. We do not specify which should be used, only that a secure process to obtain and store signatures is followed:

- an electronic signature is defined as any electronic symbol or process that is associated with any record or document, where there is an intention to sign the document by any party involved.
- an electronic signature can be anything from a check box to a signature and/or
- a digital signature is where a document with an electronic signature is secured by a process making it non-refutable.
- it is a digital fingerprint which captures the act of signing by applying security to a document. Usually documents which have a digital signature embedded are extremely secure and cannot be accessed or amended easily.

Where an electronic or digital signature is being held, from any party for any reason, you must ensure it is non-refutable. This includes the definitions of both wet and dry signatures. Systems

and processes must be in place to assure to us the original signature has not been altered. Where any document needs to be renewed, and a new signature taken, it must be clear from when the new document takes effect, and both must be held.

You must keep effective and reliable evidence. You are responsible for making the evidence you hold easily available to us when we need it.

Starting, participating and achieving

You can only claim WMCA funding when directly related learning starts. This would not include enrolment, induction, prior assessment, diagnostic testing, or similar activities.

For your direct delivery, and any subcontracted delivery, you and where relevant, your subcontractor(s) must have direct centre approval and where appropriate, direct qualification approval from the respective awarding organisation for the regulated qualifications you are offering.

Delivery of the qualification (including learner registration with the awarding organisation) for direct delivery and any subcontracted delivery must be in line with the qualification specification and guidance set out by the relevant awarding organisation.

You must have evidence that the learning took place, and the learner was not certificated for prior knowledge.

Where the learning is certificated, you must follow the relevant awarding organisation's procedure for claiming the relevant certificate(s) and ensure the learner receives them. You must evidence this has happened in the evidence pack.

For formula funded non-regulated provision, an in-house certificate should be produced to show that the learning undertaken has been achieved. This should be signed and dated by the awarding provider.

If You are reaching or seem likely to reach the tolerances of your delivery plan and/or contract allocation, including legal entitlement, You will need to ensure the WMCA is notified as soon as possible, funding for any over delivery is not guaranteed and is delivered at the provider's own risk.

Leaving learning

You must report the learning actual end date in the ILR for a learner who leaves learning as the last day that you can evidence, they took part in a learning activity.

As a condition of funding, all destinations and/or progression details of WMCA learners are a mandatory requirement, this includes Tailored Learning. All information must be updated regularly.

Destination and progression must be detailed in the defined fields within the ILR for Bootcamps only and the Destination Portal for all WMCA Adult Skills Funded programmes.

Individualised Learner Record

You must submit ILR data or other agreed formats of learner data from the beginning of the academic year (R01) and then monthly. We expect providers to notify WMCA, in advance, should you be unable to submit for any reason. The WMCA reserves the right not to make payments if your learner data is not submitted.

You must accurately complete all ILR fields as required in the [ILR specification](#) and Skills Programme Coding Guidance even if they are not required for funding purposes.

The ILR must accurately reflect the learning and support (where applicable) you have identified, planned and delivered to eligible learners. You must not report inaccurate information that would result in an overstatement of the funding claimed.

Where your data does not support the funding claimed, we will take action to correct this, and we could recover funds you overstated.

Self-declarations by learners

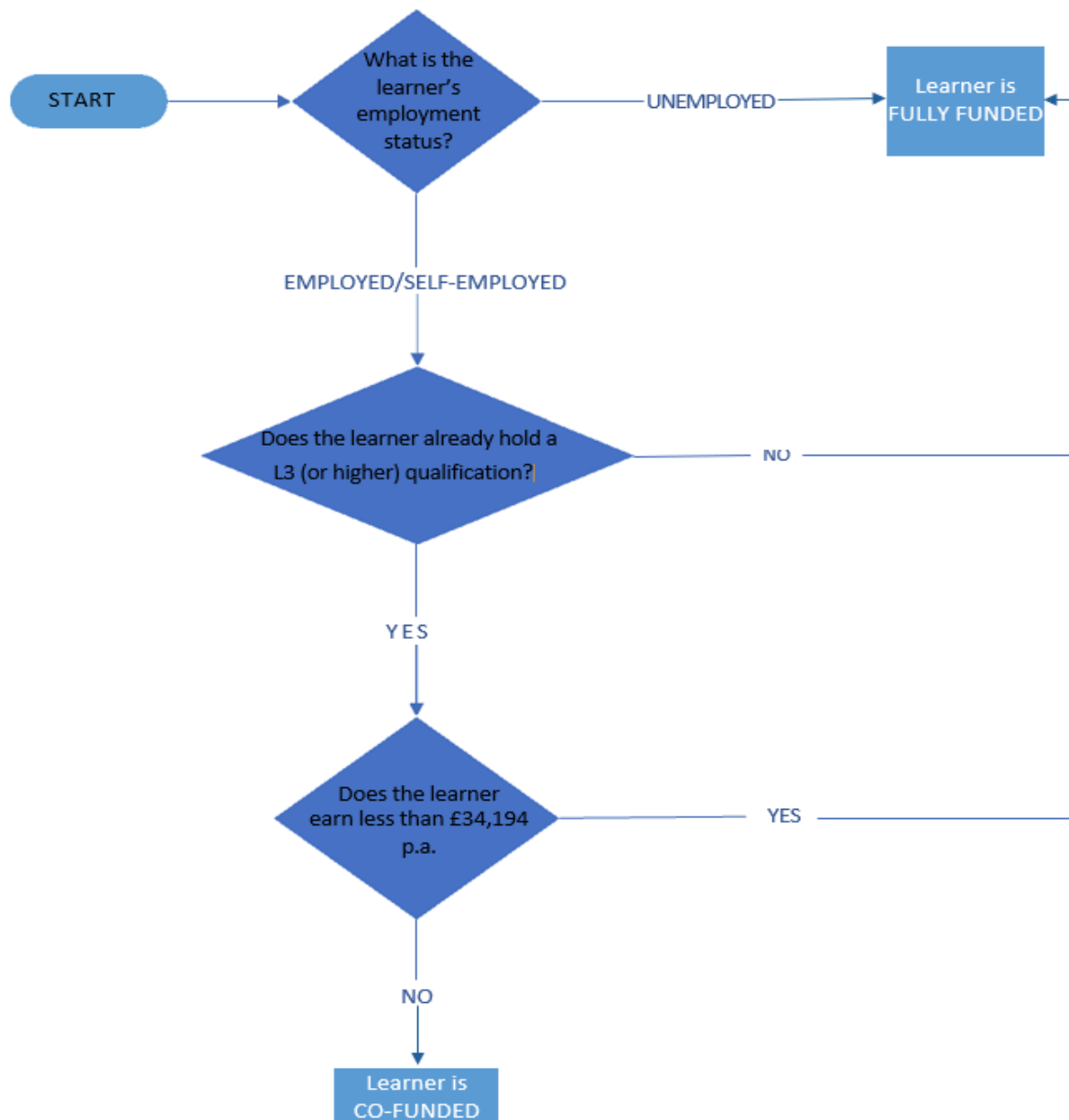
All self-declarations must confirm the learner's details and describe what the learner is confirming for requirements set out in this document.

If a learner self-declares prior attainment, you must check this in the [personal learning record \(PLR\)](#) and query any contradictory information with the learner. The PLR will not necessarily override the learner's self-declaration.

You can accept a reply to an email, text, or other digital formats from a resident as proof of self-declaration for a job outcome day 1 or 13-week sustainment. The declaration would need to confirm all the details required to confirm the job outcome or sustainment has been achieved and would ideally be from the same contact details as on the enrolment form. We will accept other formats, where agreed in writing with the WMCA.

Additionally, for ASF programmes, not including Skills Bootcamp, WMCA will accept an email from an employer setting out the same details or DWP to show that the resident is no longer claiming benefits. These must be from an employer email account.

Annexe E: Guided Decision Tree for Funding Classification of Level 3+ allocation/FCFJ applicants



Annexe F: Glossary

Term	Description
20+ childcare	A category of learner support to assist learners aged over the age of 20 who are at risk of not started learning or leaving learning due to issues in obtaining childcare.
Advanced learner loan	Advanced learner loans are available for individuals aged 19 or above to undertake approved qualifications at levels 3 to level 6, at an approved provider in England. Advanced learner loans give individuals access to financial support for tuition costs similar to that available in higher education and is administered by Student Loans Company.
Annual gross salary	Gross salary is the total income before any deductions are removed from that amount. This total income is usually described as an annual salary, and it is the total amount an employee will receive for work completed before tax of national contributions are deducted.
ASF funding methodology	The funding methodology for individuals aged 19 and over, participating in ASF learning.
Break in learning	When a learner is not continuing with their learning but has told you beforehand that they intend to resume their learning in the future.
Care to Learn	A Department for Education scheme to assist young parents under the age of 20 with the childcare costs that may form a barrier to them continuing in education.
Components of regulated qualification	A subset of a qualification, which could be a unit.
Continuing learners	Learners who commenced learning in a previous funding year and remain in learning as of 1 August 2026.
Devolution of adult education functions	The devolution of adult education functions refers to the transfer of certain Secretary of State functions in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. It specifies the Mayoral Combined Authorities by way of orders made under section 105A of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, and the delegation of those functions to the Mayor of London under section 39A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, in relation to their areas.
Digital Entitlement	The study of EDS qualifications for learners who have digital skills assessed at below level 1. Qualifications that are designated up to and including level 1 are Essential Digital Skills qualifications and digital Functional Skills qualifications.

Term	Description
Direct costs of learning	Any costs for items necessary for the learner to complete their qualification. This can include the costs of registration, examination or any other activities or materials without.
Distance Learning	Learning delivered away from the learner's main place of employment or place of learning but must be in England.
Earnings adjustment statement (EAS)	The form providers need to fill in to claim funding that cannot be claimed through the ILR.
Earnings Threshold	The earnings threshold is an eligibility criterion, which enables learners to be fully funded if they earn below than £34,194
Education health and care (EHC) plan	An EHC plan replaces statements of special educational needs and learning difficulty assessments for children and young people with special educational needs. The local authority has the legal duty to 'secure' the educational provision specified in the EHC plan, that is, to ensure that the provision is delivered.
Enrichment	Provision to develop the individual's transferrable skills for progression into further learning and accelerate their access to employment, e.g., teamwork, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, resilience, problem-solving skills (this is not an exhaustive list
European Economic Area (EEA)	The European Economic Area, abbreviated as EEA, consists of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and 3 countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; excluding Switzerland). The Agreement on the EEA entered into force on 1 January 1994. Please refer to appendix A for more information.
European Union	A list of member states is available on the EU website .
Employment status (formerly employed)	The main types of employment status are: worker employee self-employed and contractor director office holder
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	The study of English by speakers of other languages.
Evidence pack	A collection of documents and information brought together to form a single point of reference relating to learning that is taking place. This must provide evidence to prove the

Term	Description
	learner exists, is eligible for funding, the planned learning to be provided, and that learning has been delivered.
Exceptional learning support	Learning support funding to meet the costs of putting in place a reasonable adjustment for a learner who requires more than £19,000 in a funding year.
Find a learning aim	Find a learning aim provides online services to find the latest information on available qualifications, non-regulated learning, apprenticeship standards, T Levels and units. Standards will show you information on funding, dates and common components. Qualifications and units show you funding streams for courses and the last date learners can start.
Free courses for Jobs	A targeted level 3 adult offer available to support adults without an existing full level 3 or equivalent including adults who meet the definition of being below the earnings threshold or unemployed outlined in the funding rules 2026 to 2027.
Full level 2	The following qualifications are designated full at level 2: General Certificate of Secondary Education in 5 subjects, each at grade C or above, or grade 4 or above a Technical Certificate at level 2 which meets or has previously met the requirements for 16 to 19 performance tables
Full level 3	The following qualifications are designated full at level 3: General Certificate of Education at the advanced level in 2 subjects General Certificate of Education at the AS level in 4 subjects QAA Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma at level 3 Technical or applied general qualification at level 3 which meets or has previously met the requirements for 16 to 19 performance tables Core maths qualification at level 3
Full or co-funding Indicator (FFI)	Indicates whether a learning aim is fully funded or co-funded in Adult Skills or Other Adult Funding.
Functional skills	Applied practical skills in English, maths and digital that provide the learner with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to operate effectively and independently in life and work.
Funding agreement	The agreement between the Secretary of State for Education, West Midlands Combined Authority and providers who receive funding for education and skills training.

Term	Description
Funding model (11 and 38)	Identifies the funding methodology we apply to submission of finalised ILR data. For ASF funding, Funding Model 11 (Tailored Learning) and 38 (Adult Skills) are used, noting model 11 is non-formula funded (as in, ILR data does not generate a funding rate and is paid on monthly profile) and model 38 is formula funded. More information is available in the 2025 to 2026 ILR Specification .
Funding year	The adult funding system operates on a funding year basis, which starts on 1 August and finishes on 31 July.
General Data Protection Regulation	The GDPR is retained in domestic law as the UK GDPR, but the UK has the independence to keep the framework under review. The 'UK GDPR' sits alongside an amended version of the DPA 2018.
Hardship	Within learner support, a category of support to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged learners to remove barriers to education and training.
Individualised learner record (ILR)	The primary data collection requested from learning providers for FE and work-based learning in England. The government uses this data to monitor policy implementation and the performance of the sector. It is also used by organisations that allocate funding for FE.
ILR specification	The ILR Specification is the technical documents, guidance and requirements to help providers collect, return and check ILR and other learner data.
Job outcome payments	Payments made for learners who are unemployed at the start of learning who cease learning to take up a job.
Learner residency	We use the term 'resident' or 'residence' in this document for different purposes. Residence in the UK, EU and EEA has specific definitions in education law, and this is set out in the 'residency eligibility' section. Following the devolution of adult education functions, there is a new emphasis on residence in England, in determining and evidencing eligibility for WMCA funded Adult Skills Funding Programmes - see 'who we fund' and 'evidence' sections. This means the permanent residency of an individual in England (as in, not a temporary address for duration of learning taking place), immediately prior to enrolment determines eligibility for WMCA funded Adult Skills Funding Programmes.
Learner support	Funding to enable providers to support learners with a specific financial hardship that might prevent them from being able to start or complete their learning. May be used to 'top up' childcare costs for 19-year-old learners receiving Care to Learn funding if their costs exceed the weekly maximum rates for that scheme.

Term	Description
Learning aim	Statements that describe the overarching intentions of a course.
Learning aim reference number	The unique eight-character code used to identify a specific learning aim.
Learning delivery monitoring (LDM)	A code used as part of the ILR to indicate participation in programmes or initiatives.
Learning planned end date	The date entered onto the individualised learner record (ILR) when the learner is expected to complete their learning.
Learning support	Funding to enable providers to put in place a reasonable adjustment, set out in the Equality Act 2010 , for learners with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability to achieve their learning goal.
Legal Entitlements	ASF includes support for 4 legal entitlements to full funding for resident eligible adult learners. These entitlements are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children Learning Act 2009 and include: English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, where the learner has not achieved grade 4 (C) or higher, or where the learner has been assessed as having an existing skill level lower than grade 4 (even if they have previously achieved a GCSE or equivalent qualification in English and maths) and/or first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23 essential digital skills qualifications, up to and including level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below level 1
Leisure Learning	Defined as learning where the primary or sole intent of the learning is for leisure. This applies to curriculum intent and to the learner's purpose for undertaking the learning. For example, a learner may participate on a course within the learning aim "Creative Arts" to improve their confidence, and another to improve their well-being. Similarly, a learner may participate on a course within the learning aim "volunteering, active citizenship" to develop employability skills, another to contribute to community life.
Local flexibility	Regulated qualifications, and/or their components, that we fund, which is not part of the English and maths, or level 2 or level 3 legal entitlement offer. From 1 August 2025, Performing Arts Graded Exam qualifications will not be funded through the local flexibility offer. All regulated qualifications that are available for funding through the flexible local offer is listed on find a learning aim .
Non-regulated learning	Learning which is not subject to awarding organisation external accreditation in the form of a regulated qualification. It may be designed, delivered and certificated by a provider or

Term	Description
	another organisation. This could include: - independent living skills - engagement and confidence building - employability skills - labour market re-entry - essential skills (English, maths, digital) and ESOL
Ofqual	The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation , which regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.
Ordinarily resident	For funding purposes, a person who normally lives in the United Kingdom, are allowed to live there by law, and return there after temporary trips outside the country.
Business Case	This is the process providers must follow for requests to changes to their delivery including reduction or increases of their funding allocation. More information can be found in the IS Grant Provider Operational Plan 2026-27
Personal learning record (PLR)	A database that allows individual learners access to their past and current achievement records. These can be shared with schools, colleges, FE training providers, universities or employers.
Policy Entitlements	Alongside to the legal entitlements DWP have policy entitlements allowing full funding for residency eligibility learners, over 19 years old, and meet the earnings threshold criteria or are unemployed, these include: - level 2 and below local flexibility including ESOL - free courses for jobs - King's Trust
Recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA)	The Learning and Work Institute have published updated RARPA Guidance . This comprises a clear framework designed to support learners through the learning process, identifying key outcomes. It provides a robust approach to quality assurance and improvement of non-regulated provision with a focus on self-assessment that supports standards acceptable to the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted). You can access further information from The Learning and Work Institute .
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	An assessment method that considers whether a learner demonstrates that they can: - meet the outcomes for a qualification or a component of a qualification through knowledge, understanding, or - skills they already have and so do not need to undertake a course of learning for that component or qualification

Term	Description
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)	RQF provides a way of understanding and describing the relative level and size of qualifications. RQF, operated by Ofqual, is a single regulatory framework containing a range of general, technical and professional qualifications.
Residential Support	Support provided under learner support to learners receiving specialist provision, which involves a residential element, or to support learners who cannot receive provision locally.
Sector-based work academy programme (SWAP)	SWAP is a DWP scheme that offers pre-employment training, work experience placements and a guaranteed job interview for recipients of JSA, UC (all work-related requirements group) or ESA.
Self-declaration	A process where the learner can confirm something through his or her own signature.
Skills Bootcamp	A skills bootcamp is a bespoke employer-led level 3 to 5 programme, designed to meet skills needs within the economy. Following a procurement process, the skills bootcamp programme began in August 2022.
Start of learning	The date on which learning begins. We do not consider enrolment, induction, diagnostic assessment, or prior assessment to be part of learning.
State benefits	State benefits are contributions, both financial and non-financial, made by central and local government to individuals in certain circumstances to meet their day-to-day living needs.
Study programme	Study programmes are for learners aged 16 to 19 and cover all levels up to level 3. Funding is for each learner, rather than for each qualification and can only have one core aim at a time.
Tailored learning	As part of the adult skills fund, the term tailored learning brings together what was AEB community learning, formula-funded AEB non-regulated learning (previously delivered through adult skills) and any new employer-facing innovative provision that is not qualification based. The primary purpose of tailored learning is to support learners into employment and to progress to further learning, in line with the overall purpose of the ASF. It will, however, also support wider outcomes including using it to improve health and wellbeing, equip parents/carers to support their child's learning and develop stronger and more integrated communities.
Innovative Tailored learning funding	Contract for services will not have a tailored learning allocation or access to deliver non-regulated provision. Funding model 11 is the WMCA funded ASF tailored funding model that providers must use alongside the funding claim for 2026 to 2027.

Term	Description
Unique learner number	A 10-digit number used to match a learner's achievement to their personal learning record (PLR).
WMCA funded ASF	Funding you can claim from WMCA for delivery of ASF eligible provision to individuals set out in the who we fund section.
Work placement	A placement with an employer in a workplace setting.
Young people's funding methodology	The funding methodology for individuals aged 16 to 19 (and those aged 19 to 24 with an EHC plan). You can access 16 to 19 funding methodology on GOV.UK.