

WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY ADULT SKILLS FUNDING PROGRAMME RULES 2025/2026

(for the funding year 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026) Version 1

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 (ASF) and Skills Bootcamps funding for residents residing in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area

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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.

In November 2023, the UK Government issued a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining 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) are 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

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 West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) version 1 of the Adult Skills Funding Programme rules for the 2025 to 2026 academic year (1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026). Providers should review the whole document, and the associated guidance listed under Annex B.

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

The DfE have published the [ASF funding rates and formula guidance for 2025 to 2026](#). This contains the details of how ASF funding rates are calculated.

What's new in the Adult Skills Funding Programme rules for 2025 to 2026

This section sets out the main changes to the rules.

- we have updated Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) to reflect that all eligible learners, irrespective of age, are now funded through your FCFJ funding lines
- references to Adult Skills Fund (ASF) now include both FCFJ and what was previously referred to as Adult Education Budget (AEB)
- we have updated the earnings threshold to £34,194
- we have updated the Administrative Earning Threshold (AET) to reflect changes for 2025 to 2026. Universal Credit (UC) will be £952 a month (if the learner is the sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1534 a month (if the learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- we have amended the layout of the funding rules to make them clearer
- we have changed The Prince's Trust to The King's Trust
- we have removed Multiply, as this adult numeracy programme ended in March 2025

Purpose of the Document

This document applies to all providers who receive WMCA-funded Adult Skills Funding Programme funding for the year 2025 to 2026 (1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026).

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 delivery of ASF and/or Bootcamp provision to learners set out in the who we fund section.

We 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

You can contact us either through our query mailbox at skills.programmes@wmca.org.uk, for data queries, You can contact aebdatareturns@wmca.org.uk.

You can also contact your assigned Skills Delivery Officer

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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 2025 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's resident in the WMCA region, with an eligible WMCA postcode, undertaking WMCA-Funded Adult Skills Funding Programmes,
- continuing learners who are residents of the WMCA region, who have not completed their learning by 31 July 2025. You must ensure You meet the cost of continuing learners within your WMCA contract allocation.

Residency

You must check the eligibility of a learner 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 2025 to 2026 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.

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 2024/2025 where their delivery is planned into the 2025/26 funding year. You must ensure You meet the cost of continuing learners within your 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 in the time they have available, e.g. those starting work/university.

Residency Eligibility

DfE Update Response:

To support adult learners in utilising the adult skills fund (ASF) the WMCA will be adopting the changes to the residency eligibility set out by DfE in its update published on 18 June, 2025. These set out that the rules will be simplified from Friday 1 August 2025. These changes will apply to all devolved provision funded by the WMCA to include ASF, level 3 provision formerly known as FCFJ, and Skills Bootcamps.

Individuals will be eligible for funding if they are ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of learning and the learning is taking place in England.

There is no change to the eligibility requirements for asylum seekers.

Individuals will not be able to access ASF funding if:

- they are here without authority or lawful status
- they are resident in the UK on a student visa, unless they are eligible through meeting any other of the categories
- they are in the UK on holiday

- they are in the UK on a sponsorship visa
- their residence permit imposes a study prohibition or restriction

We will provide full details in an updated version of the ASF funding rules which will be published in early July.

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 fulfil the residency requirements set out in one or more of the categories below.

Unless otherwise stated, individuals must be ordinarily resident in the UK and the West Midlands Devolved region on the first day of learning to meet the residency requirements.

Learners who live in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own funding arrangements. If you are planning to deliver a significant quantity of learning to learners who do not live in England, you must develop arrangements with the relevant devolved administration or DfE.

Temporary residence in the UK for educational purposes

People who have been temporarily resident in the UK solely for the purposes of receiving full-time education would not be deemed ordinarily resident in the UK. This includes, but is not limited to, learners on a student visa. These individuals are therefore not eligible for funding unless they meet one of the other eligibility criteria.

Temporary absences from the UK

Learners who are temporarily outside of the UK for reasons such as education, employment or a gap year, but remain settled in the UK, can count this time outside the UK towards their 3 years ordinary residence.

Where learners move outside the UK during their course, you must cease funding them. This also applies to distance learning; you should only fund distance learners who meet the residency criteria, and you should expect that they remain in the UK for the duration of their course, even if no attendance at a physical location is required. If a learner is temporarily absent from the UK, for example, for a family event, for a short period, for example, a week or less, then they may continue their distance learning course while overseas. If they will be absent for a longer period, then you should not fund them to continue their learning while overseas.

British armed forces, MoD personnel or civil crown servants on postings outside of the UK, or people who are resident in England but work outside England, can be treated as ordinarily resident in the UK. You may continue to fund them despite the above restriction on funding learners outside the UK.

Individuals who are residents in areas of WMCA, who work outside of England as part of their job, are eligible for ASF or Bootcamps, as long as some of the learning takes place in England. You cannot claim for the additional expense of delivering learning outside of England.

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 decide 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 upon this status.

Learners with limited length visas

Providers 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, providers may, at their discretion, fund that learner only where they have a high degree of certainty that a learner intends to (and will be eligible to) renew their visa.

As the Home Office moves to a fully online system from January 2025, individuals may have an expiry date of no later than December 2024, which may not accurately reflect the actual expiry of their leave to remain. In order to evidence their immigration status, individuals registered on [view and prove your immigration status](#) will have a share code which the provider can use to confirm the residency status.

Learners will have an eligible residency status if they meet the conditions laid out in one of the following sections:

UK nationals and other persons with right of abode

UK nationals or other person with a right of abode^{[\[footnote 1\]](#)} have an eligible residency status if they have been ordinarily resident in the UK, Republic of Ireland, or the British Overseas Territories, or the Crown Dependencies (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning.

All family members of UK nationals must meet the required residency eligibility criteria in their own right, unless they meet the criteria in the section entitled 'UK nationals in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland', or the criteria in the section entitled 'family members of an eligible person of Northern Ireland'.

The British Overseas Territories are listed in Annexe A

UK nationals in the EEA and Switzerland

UK nationals who have resided in the EEA, Switzerland or EU overseas territories have an eligible residency status if they:

- resided in the EEA or Switzerland, EU overseas territories or Gibraltar by 31 December 2020 (or resided in the UK, having moved to the UK from the EEA, Switzerland, EU overseas territories or Gibraltar after 31 December 2017), and
- resided in the EEA, Switzerland, EU overseas territories, Gibraltar or the UK for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning, and
- remained ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA, Switzerland or EU overseas territories between 31 December 2020 and the start of the course and
- the course starts before January 2028^{[\[footnote 2\]](#)}

Family members of UK nationals, where both the UK national and the family member have resided in the EEA, Switzerland or EU overseas territories, have an eligible residency status if:

- both the UK national and the family member resided in the EEA, Switzerland or EU Overseas Territories by 31 December 2020 (or resided in the UK, having moved there from the EEA, Switzerland or EU Overseas Territories after 31 December 2017), and
- both the UK national and the family member remained ordinarily resident in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland or EU Overseas Territories between 31 December 2020 and the start of the course
- the UK national to whom they are a family member has been ordinarily resident in the UK, EEA, Switzerland or EU Overseas Territories for at least 3 years on the first day of the first academic year of the course
- the course starts before January 2028

A ‘family member’ for these purposes is either:

- the husband, wife, civil partner of the UK national (principal) or
- the child, grandchild, spouse/civil partner’s child or spouse/civil partner’s grandchild of the UK principal who is either:
 - under 21, or
 - dependant on the principal and/or his/her spouse/civil partner

The EEA includes all the countries and territories listed in Annexe A.

EEA and Switzerland nationals in the UK

EEA and Switzerland nationals have an eligible residency status if they have obtained either pre-settled or settled status under EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and have lived continuously in the EEA, Switzerland, Gibraltar, or the UK for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning.

The EEA includes all the countries and territories listed in Annex A.

Although the deadline for most people to apply to EUSS was 30 June 2021, there may be individuals who have reasonable grounds for making a late application to EUSS and there may also be some individuals who have made an EUSS application on time but are still waiting on a final decision on their status from the Home Office, including those that have lodged an appeal. Once a valid application has been made to EUSS (evidenced by receipt of a certificate of application), the applicant will have temporary protection, pending the outcome of that application.

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.

Frontier workers, and their family members, have an eligible residency status if they have been ordinarily resident in the UK, EEA and/or Switzerland for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning.

A 'family member' of an EEA frontier worker for these purposes is either:

- the husband, wife, civil partner of the EEA frontier worker ('principal') or
- the dependant parent or grandparent of the principal or of the principal's spouse/civil partner or
- the child, grandchild, spouse/civil partner's child or spouse/civil partner's grandchild of the principal who is either:
 - under 21, or
 - dependant on the principal and/or the principal's spouse/civil partner

A 'family member' of a Swiss frontier worker for these purposes is either:

- the husband, wife, civil partner of the Swiss frontier worker ('principal') or
- the child or spouse/civil partner's child of the principal

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.

Family members of EEA or Swiss nationals

A family member of an EEA or Swiss national is eligible for funding if:

- where required to do so, they have obtained pre-settled or settled status under EUSS and
- the EEA or Swiss national (principal) has obtained pre-settled or settled status under EUSS and has been ordinarily resident in the UK, EEA and/or Switzerland for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning

Family members of an EEA or Swiss national can apply to EUSS after 30 June 2021 if they are joining them in the UK on or after 1 April 2021. They have 3 months to apply to EUSS from the date they arrive in the UK. They will have temporary protection and therefore be eligible for funding during those 3 months and pending the outcome of any EUSS application made during that period (and of any appeal). More information on [applying to join a family member in the UK](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

A 'family member' for these purposes is either:

- the husband, wife, civil partner of the EEA national (principal) or
- the dependant parent or grandparent of the principal or of the principal's spouse/civil partner or

- the child, grandchild, spouse/civil partner's child or spouse/civil partner's grandchild of the EEA principal who is either:
 - under 21, or
 - dependant on the principal and/or his/her spouse/civil partner

Irish citizens in UK or Republic of Ireland

Irish citizens in the UK or Republic of Ireland have an eligible residency status if they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands, and/or Republic of Ireland for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning.

Irish citizens in EEA and Switzerland

Irish citizens have an eligible residency status if they:

- resided in the EEA or Switzerland by 31 December 2020 (or resident in the UK, having moved to the UK from EEA or Switzerland after 31 December 2017), and
- resided in the EEA, Switzerland, Gibraltar or the UK for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning and
- remained ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA or Switzerland between 31 December 2020 and the start of the course and
- are on a course which starts before January 2028

The EEA includes all the countries and territories listed in Annexe A.

Other non-UK nationals

Non-UK nationals have an eligible residency status if they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning and:

- have permission granted by the UK government to live in the UK and such permission is not for educational purposes only, or
- have obtained pre-settled or settled status under EUSS

Family members of an eligible person of Northern Ireland

Family members of an eligible person of Northern Ireland^{[\[footnote 3\]](#)} have an eligible residency status if:

- they have been living in the UK by 31 December 2020, and
- they have obtained pre-settled or settled status under EUSS, and
- the eligible person of Northern Ireland (principal) has been ordinarily resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning

A 'family member' for these purposes is either:

- the husband, wife, civil partner of the person of Northern Ireland (principal) or
- the dependant parent or grandparent of the principal or of the principal's spouse/civil partner or

- the child, grandchild, spouse/civil partner's child or spouse/civil partner's grandchild of the principal who is either
 - under 21, or
 - dependant on the principal and/or his/her spouse/civil partner

Long residence

A person who, on the first day of learning, has lived in the UK half their life or a period of 20 years or more, where this period of residence is ongoing, has an eligible residency status.

Learners may be able to prove this status via a confirmed entry date from Immigration Control, verified by the Home Office. Alternatively, they may provide evidence that they have been living in the UK for the period in question. This should ideally be from an official and independent source. Examples could include a signed letter on headed paper from someone in a leadership position at the school they attended, a letter from their GP, wage slips or a P45/P60. Providers funding learners under this category should obtain enough evidence to assure themselves beyond a reasonable doubt that the learner was living in the UK for the necessary period.

Individuals with certain types of immigration status and their family members

Individuals with any of the statuses listed below, or leave under the listed schemes, has an eligible residency status and is exempt from the 3-year residency requirement rule. In relation to these categories, you must have seen the learner's immigration permission. This would include the biometric residence permit (BRP) and/or an accompanying letter from the Home Office describing their status.

Refugee status

Individuals with refugee status, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

Family members of individuals with refugee status, as defined below:

- the spouse or civil partner of a person with refugee status is eligible if all of the following apply:
 - they were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the asylum application date, and
 - have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to remain or enter
- the child of a person with refugee status, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if all of the following apply:
 - they were the person with discretionary leave's child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum application date, and
 - they were under 18 on the asylum application date, and
 - they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were given leave to remain or enter

Humanitarian protection status

Individuals with humanitarian protection status, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

The family members of individuals with humanitarian protection status, as defined below:

- the spouse or civil partner of a person granted humanitarian protection is eligible if all of the following apply:
 - they were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the asylum application date, and
 - have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK
- the child of a person with humanitarian protection status to enter or remain, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if:
 - they were the person with humanitarian protection status's child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum application date, and
 - were under 18 on the asylum application date, and
 - have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were given leave to enter or remain

Discretionary leave to enter or remain

Individuals with discretionary leave to enter or remain, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

- the spouse or civil partner of a person granted discretionary leave to enter or remain is eligible if all of the following apply:
 - they were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the asylum or leave application date, and
 - they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given discretionary leave to enter or remain in the UK
- the child of a person with discretionary leave to enter or remain, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if:
 - they were the person with discretionary leave's child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum or leave application date, and
 - they were under 18 on the asylum or leave application date, and
 - they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were given discretionary leave to enter or remain

Extant leave to remain as a stateless person

Individuals who have extant leave to remain as a stateless person, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were granted such leave.

Family members of individuals with extant leave to remain as a stateless person, as defined below:

The spouse or civil partner of a person granted stateless leave is eligible if all of the following apply:

- they were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the leave application date, and

- they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK
- The child of a person with stateless leave, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if:
 - they were the person with stateless leave's child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the leave application date, and
 - they were under 18 on the leave application date, and
 - they have been ordinarily resident in the UK since they were given leave to enter or remain

Leave outside the immigration rules

Individuals with leave outside the immigration rules, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

The spouse or civil partner of a person granted leave outside the rules is eligible if all of the following apply:

- they were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the asylum or leave application date, and
- they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK

The child of a person with leave outside the rules, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if:

- they were the person with leave outside the rules' child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum or leave application date, and
- they were under 18 on the asylum or leave application date, and
- they have been ordinarily resident in the UK since they were given leave to enter or remain

Ukraine schemes

Individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under one of the Ukraine schemes listed below.

- the husband, wife, civil partner or child of a person granted leave under one of the Ukraine schemes listed below:

The following are the "Ukraine schemes" eligible:

- Ukraine Family Scheme
- Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine)
- Ukraine Extension Scheme
- Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme

As stated in the learners with limited length visas section a learner can still be funded even if their visa does not cover the full duration of the course, if the provider has a high degree of certainty that the learner intends to apply for, and be eligible to receive, further permission to remain in the UK for the duration of their course. Learners who currently have permission under one of the Ukraine schemes **and** intend to apply for the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme (or have applied but not yet had permission granted) may be treated as eligible on that basis.

Afghan schemes

Persons granted leave under one of the Afghan schemes:

- individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
- individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- some individuals with this leave to enter or remain may have the Afghan Locally Employed Staff ex-gratia (ALES) scheme (see below) listed on their BRP. They should be able to provide other documentation detailing that their leave is under ARAP
- British Nationals evacuated from Afghanistan under Operation Pitting
- British Nationals evacuated from Afghanistan by the UK government before 6 January 2022

Persons granted leave under the ALES ex-gratia Scheme must meet the 3 year ordinary residence requirements and are **not exempt**.

Indefinite leave to remain as a bereaved partner or victim of domestic abuse

Individuals with indefinite leave to remain or enter, granted only:

- as a victim of domestic abuse where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK since they were given leave to remain or enter [\[footnote 4\]](#)
- as a bereaved partner, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK since they were given leave to remain or enter [\[footnote 5\]](#)

Individuals granted indefinite leave to remain for any other reason must meet the 3 year ordinary residence requirement to be eligible.

Other forms of leave

Individuals with leave to remain or enter granted:

- under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 leave [\[footnote 6\]](#)
- under Calais leave to remain [\[footnote 7\]](#)

British Indian Ocean Territory

British citizens who were born in the British Indian Ocean Territory or, prior to 8 November 1965, in those islands designated as the British Indian Ocean Territory on that date, or are direct descendants (such as a child, grandchild, great-grandchild and so on) of a person who was born in the British Indian Ocean Territory or, prior to 8 November 1965, in those islands designated as the British Indian Ocean Territory on that date.

Children of Turkish workers

A child of a Turkish worker is eligible if both the following apply:

- the Turkish worker is ordinarily resident in the UK on or before 31 December 2020 and has Turkish European Community Association Agreement (ECAA) rights or extended ECAA leave and
- the child has been ordinarily resident in the UK, EEA and/or Turkey for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of learning and is resident in the UK on or before 31 December 2020

Asylum seekers

Asylum seekers are eligible to receive funding if they:

- have lived in the UK for 6 months or longer while their claim is being considered by the Home Office, 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 does not include education or education funding. Therefore, this does not affect a learner's eligibility, which must be decided under the normal eligibility conditions.

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 visa unless they are eligible through meeting any other of the categories described above
- those who are in the UK on holiday, with or without a visa
- any family member of a person granted a student visa, who have been given immigration permission to stay in the UK and have not been ordinarily resident in the UK for the previous 3 years on the first day of learning
- those whose biometric residence permit or residence permit imposes a study prohibition or restriction on the individual

Learners in the armed forces

British armed forces personnel, Ministry of Defence personnel or civil and crown servants 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 for the previous 3 years on the first day of learning. We will not fund family members that 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.

We will monitor the volume of day 1 withdrawals, where it is identified that this is a high percentage, We will take a full review of the providers' withdrawals.

Where planned learning days are below the recommended GLH and additional 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.

Qualifying Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for funding

We have implemented rules around GLH to ensure delivery is in line with the number stated on the [Find A Learning Aim](#) site.

If We identify that the GLH, based on the calculations from the Scheme of Work/Curriculum Plan/timesheet 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, and 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.

- Providers will be able to submit a Business Case, with justification, should they wish to have a variation to the recommended GLH.
- GLH will not be counted when they are part of a programme, for example, an Into Employment programme, however, providers should ensure that the programme is planned effectively and sufficient GLH is planned/provided to demonstrate that it meets the requirements set out and the length of time planned on programme.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A learner could have prior learning or attainment that has been previously accredited by an awarding organisation or could be formally recognised and count towards 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 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 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 DfE's [ILR guidance](#).

The WMCA does not set limits on the length of time of either prior learning or previously certificated 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 [ILR 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 haven't met Milestone 2:

- Less than 50% delivery: You will need to update the ILR to record a Break in Learning. Please refer to the Coding guidance. Once the learner returns, the record can be reopened and updated, when required, to reflect the actual completion date.
- More than 50% delivery: After the 50% threshold, you should update the ILR as Withdrawn/No Achievement. If the learner returns, they can complete the programme, but the original end date will remain the same; Once completed, the outcome can be changed to "achieved" if they meet the Milestone 2 (M2) requirements.

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

Supply Chain/Subcontract

The WMCA will implement additional controls related to subcontracting and associated third-party services provided in the delivery of Skills Programmes. More details can be found in WMCA's [Supply Chain Funding Rules](#).

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.

You must not use Your supply chain to meet short-term funding objectives.

The WMCA requires all its providers to have a clear rationale at course level as to why they use a supply chain in the delivery of Adult Skills Programmes.

We require greater transparency and closer collaboration in relation to the supply chain delivery and those services provided by third parties

If during the funding year, You wish to make in-year changes to Your agreed supply chain delivery member or arrangement, You must provide a business case with a clear rationale in advance of making any changes to allow for the approval process to be completed. 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.

The WMCA will be reviewing, using the ILR and its Performance Management Reviews, the contributions of Supply Chain Partners to Your Delivery Plan.

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

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 [DfE 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.
- The WMCA will not fund a learner to repeat the same qualification where they have previously achieved it unless it is for any GCSE where the learner has not achieved grade C, or grade 4, or higher.
- The WMCA will not fund 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. 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 or secured self-declarations from the resident, 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.

Quality Assurance

As part of our assurance work, the WMCA will be monitoring the data you submit to the DfE from the ILR and the EAS.

In order to gain assurance, the WMCA will undertake regular reviews of all providers in line with the Quality and Standards Framework.

The reviews will include, but not be limited to:

- Systems and processes
- ILR Data
- EAS submission
- Sample check of 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 £952 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1534 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- The WMCA will also define economically inactive residents who are not currently employed and/or claiming an active benefit as unemployed.

To support assurance, activity providers should secure self-declarations from residents that can be evidenced to identify employment status.

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.

To support assurance, activity providers should secure self-declarations from residents that can be evidenced to identify employment status.

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 £34,194. 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 £34,194 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, taking into account GDPR regulations.

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.

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
- 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

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.

Examples of Wrap-Around Activities

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

- Tutorials and seminars, including Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)
- Mentoring and coaching aligned with learners' goals and aspirations, as outlined in their Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- Counselling to address low self-esteem, confidence, or mild anxiety
- Access to or referrals for specialist support, such as substance misuse services

- Life skills development, including independent travel, healthy living, personal finance management, staying safe, and preparing for adult or university life

Key Principles

- Support must be individualised, based on identified needs at any stage of the learner's journey, including post-programme progression and tracking.
- Activities must be recorded in the learner's ILP and must not duplicate support already funded through other parts of the programme.
- Providers must have a clear policy on how wrap-around support is identified, delivered, and costed.

Funding and Licensing

- Wrap-around support funding covers the full learner journey, from initial engagement to progression.
- WMCA will fund the cost of occupational licences (e.g., SIA, FLT, CSCS) up to £500 where required for employment. In exceptional cases, higher costs may be approved.
- Licence costs must not be included under Direct Costs of Learning (see Glossary for definition).

Job Outcome Payments Linked to ASF Standard Programmes

For fully funded ASF learners who are unemployed, we will 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 Payments Linked to Into-Employment Programmes:

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

The following conditions apply:

- the resident must provide You with evidence that they have a job for at least 7.5 hours or more a week for four consecutive weeks. 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.

Section 2 – WMCA funded Adult Skills Funded Programmes

The WMCA's Employment and Skills Strategy aims to enhance the success We have achieved so far by outlining a plan for a unified employment and skills system for the West Midlands region. This system will help us promote economic growth, improve outcomes for residents and businesses, and create more prosperous and healthy communities. Our focus for the next three years will be on:

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

We will also invest in the development of a broader effective regional eco-system for employment and skills, building the leadership capacity and capability to transform outcomes for residents, businesses and the region.

Programme Alignment with WMCA Adult Skills Strategy Pillars:

Strategy intent	Programmes
Building Strong Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tailored Learning• King's Trust• Digital Divide
Provide a good education up to level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
Moving residents into good jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Into Employment programme.• Construction Gateway programme• Pre-Apprenticeships

Upskilling and Reskilling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Level 3 • Level 4+ • Free Courses for Jobs • Skills Bootcamps
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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 citizens 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 DfE funded 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 in 2023/24. 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 DfE'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, underemployed (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 DfE .
- 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 2025 to 2026 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.

To address this, the DfE introduced an entitlement to fully fund digital qualifications at Level 1, alongside the existing legal entitlements to English and maths.

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 from the academic year 2023/24 and will continue into the 2025/26 funding year.

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 don't 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.

Wrap around support

The programme offered should have a focus on wrap-around support to enable transition into employment for those who are not in employment and offer transferrable skills that will enable learners to adapt to future changes in the labour market. See the Wrap Around Support section for more information.

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
4	385 to 484 hours	£3434
5	300 to 384 hours	£2715
6	up to 299 hours	£5105

Foundation Skills

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.

- 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).

- Wrap around support.

Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to determine what area of vocational training at level 2 provides best opportunity to support progression and clearly identified through a commitment from both Component parts of English and Maths can be delivered e.g., speaking and listening, or using calculations where initial assessment identifies the gap.

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.
- Construction Gateway programme
- Pre Apprenticeships

Into Employment Programme

Into Employment Programmes are 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

Programmes are designed to move residents into employment and to upskill and support the progression of those in low-paid jobs.

The Into Employment Programme funding methodology has been designed to replace SWAP/SG/CG delivery, with the aim of driving better outcomes for learners in bespoke provision that moves them into employment.

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.

The programme should not be driven by qualifications and aims but focused on the progression outcome. Delivery should include a mix of teaching, instruction, coaching and mentoring.

Into-employment programmes should include wrap-around support bespoke to the resident which would include Careers, Education, Initial, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), mentoring/coaching to develop the individual's transferable skills for progression into further learning and accelerate in-work progression.

The programme should build on levels of attainment once the individual secures a job or, for those already in-work, supports their in-work progression through accessing CEIAG wrap-around to raise aspirations.

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.

Phase 1

All Phase 1 Into Employment programmes must include the following components:

- Occupational-specific training related to the job opportunity.
- Relevant work experience related to the job role.
- Job interview at the end of the programme

Wrap-around support funding will be available to cover the full live cycle of the learner's journey, including progression and tracking and not duplicate what is delivered as part of the components.

All Into Employment programmes will attract a Day-1 job outcome payment and a Week 13 sustained employment payment. The payment amount for job outcomes is dependent on the learning aim and can be found in FALA

The WMCA will pay the cost of a license where it is an occupational requirement (e.g., SIA, FLT licence, CSCS) up to £500, through Wrap around support. In exceptional cases, the WMCA may agree additional payment where the cost is above £500. Please refer to the guidance on wrap around support .

For performance, we have set a KPI on sustainable employment at the 13-weeks of 65%

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.

Phase 2 and 3

Phase 2 and 3 programmes will support residents who have moved into work following a Phase 1 programme or support residents who are in work and need additional training to upskill.

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.

The programme should not be driven by qualifications and aims but focused on the progression outcome. Delivery should include a mix of teaching, instruction, coaching and mentoring.

Programmes should include wrap-around support bespoke to the resident which would include Careers, Education, Initial, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), mentoring/coaching to develop the individual's transferable skills for progression into further learning and accelerate in-work progression this must not duplicated what is delivered under the main programme of learning.

The programme should build on levels of attainment once the individual secures a job or, for those already in-work, supports their in-work progression through accessing CEIAG wrap-around to raise aspirations.

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

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

- Provision must be in line with CSCS, CPCS or equivalent industry carding scheme requirements to ensure on completion of the programme the resident holds CSCS and an appropriate industry accredited card e.g., CPCS.
- A guaranteed job interview on completion of the programme
- Content of the delivery should be influenced by employers to enable the progression into employment.

For each resident they 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.

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.

A minimum of 65% of completers progressing to employment and retaining this employment for a minimum of 13 weeks.

Phase 2

Phase 2 programme can be offered to unemployed/economically inactive and those who are employed and low wage. Learners can start directly onto Phase 2, where required or progress from Phase 1. Four funding options are available for learners, we will only fund one per learner within a funding year.

Phase 2 must include the below elements to support residents in successfully transitioning into secure employment.

- Occupational-specific training related to the job opportunity.
- Employability support and transferable skills development
- A guaranteed job interview on completion of the programme.

Provision must be in line with CSCS, CPCS or equivalent industry carding scheme requirements to ensure on completion of the programme the resident holds CSCS and an appropriate industry-accredited card e.g., CPCS.

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

For performance, we will set a benchmark of 65% of adults who start as unemployed/inactive, progress into employment and sustain employment within 3 months of completion or 65% of adults who started as employed 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.

Where learners start as unemployed/inactive, providers can claim a Day-1 job outcome Payment and a Week 13 sustained employment payment. Please note, that only one Job outcome and 13-week sustainment can be claimed in one funding year across Phase 1 and 2. Sustainment claims must evidence 13 weeks of continuous employment.

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

Phase 3

Phase 3 programme can be offered to those who are employed and meet the earnings threshold. Learners can start directly onto Phase 3, where required or progress from Phase 1/2. Three funding options are available for learners, we will only fund one per learner within a funding year.

Phase 3 must include the below elements to support residents in successfully transitioning into secure employment.

- Occupational-specific training related to the job opportunity.
- Employability support and transferable skills development

Provision must be in line with CSCS, CPCS or equivalent industry carding scheme requirements to ensure on completion of the programme the resident holds CSCS and an appropriate industry-accredited card e.g., CPCS.

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.

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.

Wrap Around Support

The programme offered should have a focus on wrap-around support to enable transition into employment for those who are not in employment and offer transferrable skills that will enable learners to adapt to future changes in the labour market. See the Wrap Around Support section for more information.

Pre - Apprenticeships

We expect the pre-apprenticeship offer will be responsive and flexible and provide transitional support from unemployment into sustainable apprenticeships and leading to further good work pathways.

The delivery of Pre-apprenticeships should 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 minimum.

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.

Pre-Apprenticeship programmes should include wrap-around support bespoke to the resident which would include Careers, Education, Initial, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), mentoring/coaching to develop the individual's transferable skills for progression into further learning and accelerate in-work progression.

All Pre-Apprenticeship will include.

- Occupational-specific training related to the job opportunity.
- Relevant work experience related to the job role.
- Job interview at the end of the programme

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-weeks 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 programmes linked to SSA. The full coding is provided in the Skills Programme Coding guidance.

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.

Full level 4+

We are continuing local flexibility in 2025/26 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 don't 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's also important to Us that individuals are clear on what they can move onto and progress to, following successful completion of their learning.

Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ)

Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) is a targeted level 3 offer to support adults who meet the definition of being below the earnings threshold or unemployed.

From 1 August 2025 all learners aged 19 or over on 31 August 2025 when they started their learning are now funded through your FCFJ funding line and will include the relevant uplift.

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 FCFJ offer. 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

We will fully fund learners who meet the residency eligibility as part of this offer where they:

- are aged 19 or above on 31 August within funding year 2025 to 2026, enrol on the level 3 FCFJ qualifications approved for funding and meet the eligibility of being below the earnings threshold or unemployed
- are aged 19 to 23 on 31 August within funding year 2025 to 2026, enrol on the level 3 FCFJ qualification approved for funding, have not achieved a full level 3 and earn above the earnings threshold criteria

The Offer:

The offer includes:

DfE Approved FCFJ Qualifications:

- level 3 qualifications which will support the development of new skills for adult learners and improve the prospects of eligible adults in the labour market. In particular, eligible adults can now access fully-funded level 3 provision from the list of level 3 FCFJ qualifications available via the [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 to support delivery of the level 3 FCFJ offer

WMCA Approved FCFJ Qualifications:

In addition to the DfE list of qualifications approved for funding the WMCA will also fund additional qualifications as listed below in line with the Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) 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 DfE 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.

Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamps were introduced in 2020 to support adults to upskill and retrain in priority sectors with skills shortages, such as construction, digital and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driving.

They are employer co-designed, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, with an offer of a job interview for eligible participants on completion of the course.

Skills Bootcamps have additional funding rules that must be complied with as part of the funding rules. These additional rules can be found here

[2025-25 Wave 6 Bootcamp Guidance](#)

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: Åland 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

[Performance & Management Rules](#)

[Skills Programme Coding Guidance](#)

[Skills Bootcamp Guidance](#)

[Financial Due Diligence and financial health monitoring](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

[Whistleblowing policy and process](#)

[Complaints policy and process](#)

[Skills Programme Supply chain funding rules](#)

[Quality and Standards Framework](#)

[Destination Portal 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 [DfE 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 [DfE 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.

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](#) provides 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

Evidence Pack

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

Evidence in the evidence pack must assure us that the learner exists.

The learner must confirm information they provide is correct when it is collected.

If the time spent in learning is short, the level of evidence in the evidence pack would reflect this.

Where you hold information centrally, you only need to refer to the source.

The evidence pack must confirm that all information reported to us in the ILR, EAS, funding claims if applicable, and all supporting evidence to substantiate the data that you report and the costs you have incurred for funding claims. Including:

- your assessment and verified evidence of eligibility for funding and a counter signed record of the evidence the learner has provided to support their eligibility for funding
- copies of all assessments and diagnostics undertaken to determine a learner's requirements
- evidence and information on prior learning that affects the learning or the funding of any of the learning aims or programme
- for 'personalised learning programmes', for example, non-regulated learning aims, full details of all the aspects of the learning to be carried out, including supporting evidence of the number of planned hours.
- a description of how you will deliver the learning and skills and how the learner will achieve
- the supporting evidence about why you have claimed funding and the level of funding for a learner
- details and evidence of any learner or employer contribution
- support needs to be identified, including how you will meet these needs and the evidence of that
- that learning is taking or has taken place and records are available. The evidence of learning depends on the methods used, which can include registers, reviews, and online software. Simply attending a classroom or training centre does not confirm that learning occurred. Attendance records should align with planned Guided Learning Hours and their respective dates and inline with the guidance on digital signatures.
- If a learner withdraws from learning without achieving their learning aim, You must only claim funding up to the last date where You have evidence that the learner was still in learning.
- self-declarations from learners, where applicable,
- You must hold evidence for all claims under learner, learning support fund and wrap around support.

- You must hold evidence for assessment and claims for residential support where this has been approved as part of your contract.
- all records and evidence of achievement of qualifications, learning aims. This must be available within 3 months of you reporting it in the ILR
- You must ensure the paperwork includes [WMCA branding](#).
- that resident has been informed that funding has been funded by WMCA
- that progressions into employment or further training have been achieved in line with programme specification

Where the learner is unemployed, this must include a record of what you have agreed with them, including the relevance of the learning to their employment prospects and the labour market needs.

If a subcontractor delivers any provision to the learner, the provider must clearly identify the subcontractor. This must match the information reported to us in the ILR.

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. Please find the link to the Destination Portal in Annexe B.

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 [2025 to 2026 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.

You can accept a reply to an email, text, or message 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 detail 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. Additionally, 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.

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.

Annexe E: 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 starting 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 2025.
Devolution of adult education functions	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Term	Description
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.
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 criteria, that enables learners to be fully funded if they earn below than £34,190
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.
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.

Term	Description
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 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 2025 to 2026.
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.

Term	Description
Funding agreement	The agreement between the Secretary of State for Education acting through the Department of Education(DfE) and providers who receive funding for education and skills training.
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 DfE's 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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This means the permanent residency of an individual in England (as in, not a</p>

Term	Description
	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.
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	<p>ASF includes support for 4 legal entitlements to full funding for resident eligible adult learners.</p> <p>These entitlements are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children Learning Act 2009 and include:</p> <p>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</p> <p>first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23</p> <p>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</p>
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

Term	Description
	<p>learning.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p>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 another organisation. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Adult Skills Performance and Management Framework 2025-26.
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 DfE have policy entitlements allowing full funding for residency eligibility learners, over 19 years old, and meet the earnings

Term	Description
	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
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.

Term	Description
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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Innovative Tailored learning funding	<p>Contract for services will not have a tailored learning allocation or access to deliver non-regulated provision.</p> <p>Funding model 11 is the WMCA funded ASF tailored funding model that providers must use alongside the funding claim for 2025 to 2026.</p>
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.

Annexe F: Footnotes

1. Persons with the right of abode have the right to live and work in the UK without any immigration restrictions. Further details can be found in the [prove you have right of abode in the UK](#) on GOV.UK. [↪](#)
2. This refers to the 7-year offer for UK nationals in EEA and Switzerland. More information on the 7-year offer can be found at [UK nationals in the EEA and Switzerland: access to higher education and 19+ further education](#) on GOV.UK. [↪](#)
3. Further information, can be found at: [apply for an EU Settlement Scheme family permit to join family in the UK: Apply if you're joining a person of Northern Ireland](#) on GOV.UK. [↪](#)
4. As defined in the Immigration Rules Appendix ["Victim of Domestic Abuse"](#) on GOV.UK. [↪](#)
5. As defined in the Immigration Rules Appendix ["Bereaved Partner"](#) on GOV.UK. [↪](#)
6. A child of a person who has received leave under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 will come under this bullet point where they have been granted "leave in line" by virtue of being a dependent child of such a person. [↪](#)
7. A child of a person who has received Calais leave to remain will come under this bullet point where they have been granted "leave in line" by virtue of being a dependent child of such a person. [↪](#)