

Adult Skills Fund: Funding Rules 2025 to 2026

Version 1 June 25

This document outlines the funding rules for the 2025-2026 funding year (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026). These rules apply to all Providers who receive Adult Skills Funding (ASF), including Free Courses for Jobs funding (FCFJ), for the delivery of skills to residents in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority area. It is implicit that if a Provider subcontracts provision funded by the Authority, these funding rules apply.

To be read in conjunction with your Grant Funding Agreement or Contract for Services.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Adult Skills Fund (ASF) Funding Rules 2025/26

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Purpose of the document

This document applies to all Providers and their subcontractors who receive Adult Skills Funding (ASF), including Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ), for the 2025 to 2026 funding year (1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026).

These rules do not apply to:

- Skills bootcamps
- Apprenticeships
- Advanced learner loans
- Provision of ASF/FCFJ delivered outside of the Combined Authority area

This document forms part of the terms and conditions of funding, and you must read them in conjunction with your funding agreement. 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.

Definitions and the glossary are included to assist in understanding the terminology and explain technical terms. We may make changes to these rules at any time.

Terminology

The term 'we' and 'Authority' refers to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority.

The term 'you' or 'Providers' includes colleges, higher education institutions, training organisations, local authorities, specialist designated institutions and employers and any other organisations that receive funding from the Authority to deliver education and training through the devolved ASF. We will use the generic term 'you' or 'Provider' unless the requirements only apply to a specific Provider type.

'Resident/learner' covers those individuals participating in provision funded by the Authority.

'DfE' refers to the Department for Education

'Provision/courses' refers to all learning that we fund, whether it is a regulated qualification or other learning that is not a regulated qualification, as detailed in the DfE's 'Find a Learning Aim Service' available at <u>Find a learning aim</u> or as agreed with the Authority.

Qualifications will either be from the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) or an Access to Higher Education Diploma recognised and regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

'Learning aims' refer to a single episode of learning, which can be a regulated qualification, a component of a regulated qualification, or Non-Regulated Learning.

'Programmes' 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.

Introduction to the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

The purpose of the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) is to support adult learners to gain skills which will lead them to meaningful, sustained, and relevant employment, or enable them to progress to further learning.

Within the ASF, further provision for learning is available that supports wider outcomes such as improving health and wellbeing, equipping parents/carers to support their child's learning, and developing stronger communities. This includes Tailored Learning and Non-Regulated Learning.

The Authority will publish a Local Growth Plan by July 2025 and a Local Get Britain Working Plan by September 2025. These concise documents will guide commissioned providers in aligning the provision and skills offered with local needs. They will inform the plan-led grant-funded agreements and shape what is procured and delivered through contracts for services.

Another key document that will have a significant influence is the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The revised LSIP will be co-produced between the Authority and Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce, as the designated Employer Representative Body (ERB), but it will not be published until 2026. LSIPs focus on Post 16 Technical Education at L3+, and all skills providers with a DfE contract worth over £1m must publish an annual accountability statement demonstrating how they respond to this local need. Until a new LSIP has been produced, providers should continue to meet the needs identified in the existing LSIP, which can be found https://example.com/here.co

This document replaces the ASF Funding and Performance Management Rules 2024 to 2025. We strongly recommend that Providers review the whole document.

To support Providers with their planning, in the immediate term, the Authority has set out the following aims for the Adult Skills Fund for 2025-26 which have been derived using a strong evidence base, which includes:

- The Local Skills Improvement Plan Quarterly Regional Labour Market Analysis
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's State of the Region Analysis
- Skills England Driving Growth and Widening Opportunities
- Data City Industrial Strategy Sector Guidance
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Health Data East of England

Adult Skills Fund 2025-26 Aims

1. Provision that reduces regional skills shortages

ASF must be used to deliver provision that aims to reduce regional skills shortages in foundation and priority sectors. Provision can also be delivered that seeks to address national skills shortages.

Regional Priority Sectors	Regional Foundation Sectors	National Priority Sectors
Advanced Manufacturing	Construction	Creative Industries
Life Sciences	Adult Health and Social Care	Defence
Agri-tech	Logistics and distribution	Financial Services
Digital Technologies Clean energy industries	Engineering	Professional and business services
3		Hospitality and Tourism

Success measure: The Authority will monitor the breadth and depth of skills provision across these sectors and the success rates (achievement and retention) of provision. These will be benchmarked to the <u>National Rates</u> to see how well providers perform regionally. The Authority expects providers to offer skills provision at entry level, including level three.

2. Delivery of the four legal entitlements

ASF must be used to deliver the '4 Legal Entitlements'. These entitlements are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children Learning Act 2009, and enable eligible learners to be fully funded for the following qualifications:

- English and maths up to and including level 2 for individuals aged 19 and over who have not previously achieved a GCSE grade A* C or grade 4 or higher, and/or have 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)
- 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
- Essential Digital Skills qualifications (EDSQs) OR Digital Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs), up to and including Level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below Level 1

Success measure: The Authority will monitor delivery success rates (achievement and retention), which will be benchmarked against <u>National Rates</u> to see how well providers are performing regionally.

3. Provision that develops transferable skills

ASF must be used to deliver skills to develop the individual's employability, confidence and self-esteem, health and mental wellbeing, financial awareness, independent living skills, and broader awareness of sustainability and carbon literacy.

Success measures: The Authority will monitor delivery success rates (achievement and retention) where provision is regulated. These rates will be benchmarked against <u>National Rates</u> to see how well providers are performing regionally.

The Authority will also use the new Wider Outcomes Framework to measure the distance travelled for each learner participating in this type of provision.

Priority Learners

The Authority expects providers to target and engage with the following priority learners:

- 1. Adults aged 19 66 who are economically inactive, particularly in areas where rates are highest, Peterborough and Fenland
- 2. Adults aged 19-23 who do not yet have a full Level 3 qualification and are not in employment, education or training.
- 3. Adults aged 19–21-year-olds who are NEET, particularly in Peterborough and Fenland.
- 4. Adults aged 19-66 who are employed in low-wage, low-skilled jobs who need to up-skill or reskill for in-work career progression.
- 5. Adults aged 19-66 who have English as a second language.

The Authority will use the Individual Learner Record (ILR) to monitor the levels of engagement and participation of these priority groups.

Headline ASF changes for 2025-26

What's new in the 2025-26 Funding Rules:

- We have changed The Prince's Trust to The King's Trust
- We have amended the Learning for Level 2 and below (including the full level 2 entitlement) section to make it clearer
- We have removed Multiply, as this adult numeracy programme ended in March 2025
- We have updated free courses for jobs (FCFJ) to reflect that all eligible learners, irrespective of age or when they started their learning, are now funded through your FCFJ funding lines
- 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)
- All evidence associated to the delivery of ASF must be retained for 6 years.

Local Flexibilities and Funding Uplifts:

The Authority uses its local 'freedoms and flexibilities' through the devolution of the Adult Skills Fund to target and support adult skills delivery. The list below outlines the flexibilities the Authority is implementing throughout 2025-26.

If a provider seeks additional flexibilities not already set out below, they should contact the Authority via their designated Officer.

Funding	Flexibility

Disadvantage Uplift: Funding can support the targeting and engagement of adult learners from the region's most deprived areas.

The Authority will provide a disadvantage uplift on the Main learning aim.

NEW Partial Youth Offer Payment: An aggregated amount of £200 per learner for provision less than 30 GLH through the Youth Offer for 19–23-year-olds.

Evidence

The Authority takes the Education and Skills Training domain from the Index of Multiple Deprivation and will apply an uplift to postcodes that fall under the 30th percentile (most deprived 30%):

- Top 10% most deprived receive a 1.29303 uplift
- 11% to 20% receive a 1.24088 uplift
- 21% to 30% receive a 1.20185 uplift

All other disadvantage uplifts remain the same as academic year 2024-25.

Guided Learning Hours	Youth Offer Uplift
Min 5hrs	£50
Up to 10	£75
Up to 20	£125
Less than 30	£200

This uplift can be claimed from within the provider's funding allocation using the ILR. For guidance on how to claim this, please see the CPCA Coding Guidance. Providers must keep a record of what was delivered and what the impact of delivery was.

Full Youth Offer Payment: A flat amount of £250 per learner for provision over 30 GLH through the Youth Offer for 19-23yr olds. Funding can support the targeting and engagement of young adult learners.

This uplift can be claimed from within the provider's funding allocation using the ILR. For guidance on how to claim this, please see the CPCA Coding Guidance. Providers must keep a record of what was delivered and what the impact of delivery was.

Fully-funded ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

The Authority will continue to fully fund ESOL provision to encourage and support levels of

participation. All evidence must be supplied through the ILR.

Low Wage scheme: The Authority is extending the low wage scheme at a rate of £30,491 for the academic year 2025-26.

The Authority has extended the Low Wage Scheme for 2025-26 at the same rate as 2024-25. This rate is higher than the national rate set out by the Department for Education. This increases access to fully funded skills provision for some learners who are working but earning £30,491 or less.

Bursary for Care Leavers: Providers can draw down funding from their funding allocation to support Care Leavers, aged 19-22. This will be paid at a rate of £1500 per learner and must be used for reasonable expenses that would support the learner to progress to employment.

The Bursary can be claimed when a learner is studying a programme of learning at 60GLH or above. This should be claimed through the ILR. The provider must keep evidence of expenditure in the same way they would for general learning or learner support. The Authority advises providers to build this into their own Learning/Learner support policies.

Licenses to Practice:

Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) and the Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence.

These are fully funded for learners who meet the residency criteria and earn below the Low Wage threshold of £30,491. Evidence must be submitted through the ILR.

Learners who earn above the Low Wage threshold are not eligible for funding.

TESOL/CELTA qualifications

These are fully funded for learners who meet the residency criteria and earn below the Low Wage Threshold of £30,491. Evidence must be submitted through the ILR.

Learners who earn above the Low Wage threshold are not eligible for funding.

NEW Assessing Qualifications

L3 Award in underpinning principles and practices of Assessment

L3 Award in Assessing Vocational Related Achievement

L3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment

These L3 qualifications in Assessing Vocational Achievement will be fully funded for learners that meet the Authority residency eligibility criteria and intend to work in Further Education as a **new Assessor** to assess within the following priority sectors:

- Construction & the built environment
- Engineering

L3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Digital
- Early Years
- Transport and Logistics
- Green Tech/Green Energy
- Agri-Tech
- Health and Social Care

This will be funded through ASF (FM38) regardless of earnings or previous qualifications held. The learner must meet eligibility and residency criteria and be a newly employed Assessor within the Further Education (FE) sector in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, involved in delivering provision within the priority sector areas outlined above.

Providers must supply additional evidence to demonstrate how the learner meets the eligibility criteria. This will typically be a supporting statement from the employer.

NEW Supported Employment Qualifications: The following L3 Supported Employment qualifications (AO: Gateway) will be fully funded for learners who meet the Authority eligibility criteria:

- Certificate for Supported Employment Practitioners
- Award in Engaging Employers in Supported Employment
- Award in Engaging Job Seekers in Supported Employment
- Award in Job Matching and Securing Supported Employment
- Award in In-work support and Career Development for Supported Employment
- Award in working with job seekers to identify and plan for supported employment

This will be funded through ASF (FM38) regardless of earnings or previous qualifications held. The learner must meet eligibility and residency criteria and be an employed worker within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, involved in delivering Connect to Work or an IPS/SEQF model of supported employment.

Providers must supply additional evidence to demonstrate how the learner meets the eligibility criteria. This will typically be a supporting statement from the employer.

General Funding Requirements

These rules apply in relation to all learners starting new ASF learning aims on or after 1 August 2025 and continuing learners as referenced in the who we fund section.

We align our approach for funding residents in the 2025/26 funding year to the current national system operated by the Department for Education. Unless specifically stated by the Authority, all the current approaches taken by the DfE in relation to ASF funding will be adopted.

You must not transfer funding between different funding agreements and the following budgets:

- Adult Skills Fund (ASF)
- Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ)
- Apprenticeships
- Advanced learner loans bursary fund
- Advanced learner loan facility
- Skills Bootcamps

We will review and monitor whether the ASF 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.

All Providers will be treated equally and fairly. To aid transparency the value of grant allocations, contracts for services and sub-contracted provision will be published annually and updated in-year.

You must ensure, as part of your initial assessment, that you check the postcode where the learner will be living for the duration of their training. It must be within the Authority postcode area. You must also verify that the learner is aged 19 or older as of 31 August (before the time of enrolment) within the 2025-2026 academic year.

You must hold evidence to support any claims you make, ensuring that you are using the funding appropriately. The Authority reserves the right to request sight of your evidence, expenditure, or to require additional performance management information/evidence at any point during the lifetime of the funding agreement and for up to a period of 6 years thereafter.

Failure to comply with the Funding Rules may result in action or intervention. The triggers for action and the type of action we may take are outlined in our Policy for Monitoring and Interventions and are in accordance with the provisions in your Grant Agreements/Contracts for Services.

The relationship between the Authority and the provider will primarily be strategic rather than transactional. It will emphasise joint, proactive performance management and quality improvement. It will expect high-quality provision, delivering a measurable impact on the progression and outcomes for residents, which is well-aligned to priority sectors and place-based needs.

1. Who we fund

1.1 Residents in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough area

The Authority will only fund learners who are residents within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. You must check the eligibility of a learner, including where in England they are resident, at the start of each learning aim and only claim funding for ASF for eligible learners living within the Cambridgeshire or Peterborough area. The Authority resident postcodes can be found here: Adult skills fund (ASF) postcode files - GOV.UK

1.2 The authority will consider funding learners who are considered 'out of region' on an individual basis. Providers must notify the Authority as soon as they become aware that a learner does not meet the residency rule, so that a decision can be made. The Authority will consider the learner's needs, their home postcode, and their employment status, as well as their employer's address. Until the Authority confirms that it will fund the learner, the learner remains ineligible for funding.

1.3 Age

On the first day of learning, the learner must be 19 or older on the 31st August of the academic year 2025-26. Learners will be eligible for ASF 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.

2. UK Residency eligibility

- 2.1 Individuals will be eligible for ASF if they meet the criteria in the who we fund section, the learning is taking place in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and they fulfil the residency requirements set out in one or more of the categories as set out by the Department for Education in the ASF Funding Rules 2025-26. Providers must refer to this document separately. It can be read here:
 - Adult skills fund: funding rules 2025 to 2026 GOV.UK
- 2.2 Unless otherwise stated, individuals must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of learning to meet the residency requirements.
- 2.3 The DfE update the UK residency rules from time to time, and so the Provider must check the residency requirements each time a learner is enrolled.

3. Unemployed

- 3.1 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)
- are released on temporary licence, studying outside a prison environment, and not funded by MoJ
- 3.2 Providers may also use their discretion to fully fund other learners if either of the following applies. The learner:
 - receives other state benefits (not included in the list above) and their take-home pay (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is less than £952 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1534 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
 - not receiving any benefits, wants to be employed, and you are satisfied identified learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs

4. Earnings threshold for full funding

- 4.1 The Authority has introduced the earnings threshold as part of a new eligibility criteria that enables learners to be fully funded if they earn below £30,491. The policy entitlement includes learners who are unemployed, employed or self-employed. This threshold is specific to the Authority.
- 4.2 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. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list; however, you must provide evidence of your decision to award full funding to an individual who would normally be eligible for co-funding.
- 4.3 If the learner is unemployed and is claiming benefits, you must complete the Benefit Status Indicator (BSI) to identify whether the learner receives Jobseeker's Allowance (BSI 1), Universal Credit (BSI 4), or Employment and Support Allowance (all categories) (BSI 5).

5. Fees and charges

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.

5.3 For Tailored Learning provision, Providers must have a fair and transparent fees policy in place. Providers should consider charging employers where their tailored learning is employer-facing.

6. Qualifying days for funding

6.1 A learner must be in learning for a minimum number of days between their learning start date and learning planned end date before you can earn funding, including learning support. You can access this information in the Authority Funding Rates and Formula Guidance.

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

7. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- 7.1 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 the achievement of a qualification. If this is the case, you must:
 - Reduce the funding amount claimed for the qualification aim by the percentage of learning 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
- 7.2 We would not expect RPL or prior attainment to be used against the whole qualification; this is an exemption rather than RPL.
- 7.3 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 up to and including Level 1

8. Breaks in learning

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 We will not fund a learner during a break in their learning.
- 8.3 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.

- 8.4 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.
- 8.5 You must not use a break in learning for short-term absences, such as holidays or short-term illness.

9. What we will not fund

9.1 We will not fund:

- Qualifications, units or learning aims that are not listed on <u>find a learning aim</u> or on the <u>DfE</u>
 <u>list of qualifications approved for funding</u> unless you have applied for specific permission to
 deliver.
- Provision to learners in custody the <u>Ministry of Justice</u> funds prison education in England.
 Please note you can use your Authority funded ASF to fund individuals released on temporary licence
- End-point assessment outside of apprenticeship standards, which is subject to Ofqual external quality assurance and regulated as a qualification
- Any part of any learner's learning aim or programme that duplicates provision they have received from any other source
- Training through the Authority funded ASF, where a learner is undertaking an apprenticeship and where that training will:
 - Replicate vocational and other learning aims covered by the apprenticeship standard or framework, including English and maths
 - approved English and/or maths qualifications which are required for an apprentice to complete their apprenticeship, where an apprentice does not already hold a suitable equivalent qualification, please refer to apprenticeship funding rules
 - Offer career-related training that conflicts with the apprenticeship 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
- Non-regulated provision that is a direct duplicate of a regulated qualification or an unapproved version of a currently fundable qualification.
- Provision used solely to accredit prior learning, without new substantive learning taking place

10. Evidence

You must hold evidence to assure us that you are using the Authority funded ASF appropriately. This evidence must be retained for 6 years after the start date of learning. Most evidence will occur from your normal business process. You must make sure enrolments for the Authority funded ASF support your decision to claim funding and support the individual's case for consideration as ordinarily resident in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, or any exceptions set out in the Residency eligibility section.

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

Annex F contains the details on the evidence required.

11. Authority Funded ASF

Authority-funded ASF includes support for four legal entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners.

The legal entitlements for Level 2 and Level 3 follow the definition of fullness in the <u>full level 2</u> and <u>full level 3</u> sections respectively. A learner can only be fully funded for one vocational qualification from the entitlement qualifications list when exercising their legal entitlement. Appropriate information, advice and guidance should be given to a learner, and the learner should be made aware of their entitlement rights and progression routes on completing an entitlement qualification.

These entitlements are set out in the <u>Apprenticeships</u>, <u>Skills and Children Learning Act 2009</u>, and enable eligible learners to be fully funded for the following qualifications:

- English and maths up to and including level 2 for individuals aged 19 and over who have not previously achieved a GCSE grade A* - C or grade 4 or higher, and/or have 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)
- 2. First full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or
- 3. First full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23
- 4. Essential Digital Skills qualifications (EDSQs) OR Digital Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs), up to and including Level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below Level 1

Learners who meet the residency eligibility criteria in Section 1 and are below the earnings threshold criteria will also be fully funded for qualifications within policy entitlements that include:

- Free Courses for Jobs
- Level 2 local flexibility
- HGV

- TESOL and CELTA
- Licenses: SIA and CSCS
- The King's Trust
- ESOL
- The Youth Offer
- Skills for Employment
- Skills for Growth

11.1 Learning for Level 2 and below (including the full Level 2 entitlement)

- 11.1.1 We will fully fund learners who meet the residency eligibility, are aged 19 and over, and who meet the definition of being below the earnings threshold, to undertake learning:
 - Up to and including Level 2 qualifications from the local flexibility offer and/or
 - Qualifications from the full Level 2 legal entitlement qualification list
- 11.1.2 Learners aged 19 to 23 who have not previously achieved a full level 2 qualification must be fully funded, regardless of the earnings threshold, if they choose a qualification from the level 2 legal entitlement list. You must not charge them any course fees.
- 11.1.3 Learners who have exhausted their first full level 2 entitlement and do not meet the definition of being below the earnings threshold will be co-funded.
- 11.1.4 For the funding year 2025 to 2026, Providers can find the qualifications we have approved in the DfE list of qualifications approved for funding.

11.2 Learning at Level 3 legal entitlement and the Level 3 Free Courses For Jobs

- 11.2.1 Learners aged 19 to 23 who have not previously achieved a full Level 3 qualification must be fully funded, regardless of the earnings threshold, if they choose a qualification from the Level 3 legal entitlement list. You must not charge them any course fees.
- 11.2.2 For the funding year 2025 to 2026, Providers can find the qualifications approved in the <u>DfE list</u> of qualifications approved for funding,
- 11.2.3 Learners who meet the residency eligibility, have exhausted their first level 3 legal entitlement and do not meet the definition of being below the earnings threshold have the option of funding through an Advanced Learner Loan (ALL).

11.3 Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) offer

The Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) offer is a targeted programme designed to support adult learners to gain valuable qualifications that improve their employability, progression opportunities, and earnings potential. This offer is available to learning organisations with an approved 2025/26 FCFJ allocation from the Authority.

The offer includes:

- Fully funded access to approved Level 3 qualifications from the Department for Education's list of qualifications eligible under the Free Courses for Jobs initiative.
- A funding uplift, applied to specific qualifications, to support delivery and associated costs.

11.3.1 Learner Eligibility for Full Funding

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

11.3.2 Avoiding Duplication of Funding

You must not claim Authority-funded FCFJ funding where a learner is already receiving funding for the same qualification through another source, such as:

- An Advanced Learner Loan (ALL);
- A Skills Bootcamp; or
- Any other publicly funded route covering the same learning aim.

The ALL funding rules provide further detail on loan-funded provision.

11.3.3 Identifying Eligible Learning Aims

To determine whether a qualification is eligible for FCFJ funding, providers must ensure the learning aim is marked with one of the following category codes in the Learning Aims Reference Service (LARS):

- Code 45: National Skills Fund Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs rate 1
- Code 46: National Skills Fund Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs rate 2
- Code 48: National Skills Fund Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs only
- Code 56: Free Courses for Jobs MCA and GLA only flexible delivery qualifications
- For short courses: Code 49 National Skills Fund Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs short qualification

Note: The Category Code Effective to date must be on or after the planned start date of delivery.

The full list of qualifications currently approved for the Free Courses for Jobs offer can be accessed at: <u>DFE Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Qualification List</u>

11.3.4 Funding Uplift

A funding uplift is payable on certain qualifications and is based on national earnings methodology. The uplift is only applicable to learning aims coded as follows:

- Category code 45 (*National Skills Fund Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs rate 1*) increases the weighted rate by £600
- Category code 46 (National Skills Fund Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs rate 2) increases the weighted rate by £150

Qualifications with other category codes (including codes 48, 49, and 56) may be eligible for funding but do not attract an uplift.

11.3.5 Funding Source for 19–23 Learners

Where a learner can access their legal entitlement to a first full Level 3 qualification under the 19 to 23 entitlement, this must be used prior to accessing the Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) entitlement.

New for 2025/26: All qualifications included in the FCFJ offer will be funded through the FCFJ budget, regardless of the learner's age. In previous years, learners aged 19 to 23 undertaking an FCFJ aim were funded via the core Adult Skills Fund (ASF); this will no longer apply in 2025/26.

11.4 English, maths and digital for those aged 19 or older

English and maths

- 11.4.1 We will fully fund eligible learners for the following qualifications:
 - GCSE English and/or maths
 - Functional Skills English and/or maths from Entry to level 2
 - Stepping stone qualifications (including components, where applicable) in English and/or maths approved by DfE
- 11.4.2 To be eligible for the legal entitlement, the individual must meet the residency eligibility in section 1, and:
 - Be aged 19 or over, and
 - Not previously attained a GCSE in English or maths at grade 4 or above (or a
 qualification which is at a comparable or higher level) or have 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), as part of their legal
 entitlement
- 11.4.3 If a learner wants to retake GCSE English and maths qualification because they did not achieve a grade 4 (C), or higher, we will not fund the learner to only resit the exam.
- 11.4.4 You must not fund an apprentice for English and/or maths from the Authority funded ASF.
- 11.4.5 You must not enrol individuals on qualifications which are not necessary for progressing towards a GCSE or Functional Skills Level 2.

11.5 Digital Skills

- 11.5.1 We will fully fund eligible learners, including those who are employed, for the following qualifications:
 - Essential Digital Skills Qualification (EDSQ) up to and including Level 1
 - Digital Functional Skills Qualifications (DFSQ) up to and including Level 1
- 11.5.2 To be eligible for the legal entitlement the individual must meet the residency eligibility in Section 1, and be:
 - · Aged 19 or over, and
 - Assessed as having digital skills levels below Level 1

11.6 General funding principles for English, maths and digital entitlement

11.6.1 We will fully fund non-regulated English, maths and digital for learners, including those learners assessed at pre-entry level with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities as part of a personalised learning programme, where assessment has identified the learner cannot undertake the entitlements above through your grant funded tailored learning allocation.

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 curriculums or DfE published English and Maths Functional Skills subject content the national standards for essential digital skills or DfE published Functional Skills subject content

or;

- carry out an appropriate diagnostic assessment to inform and structure a learner's evidence pack to use as a basis for a programme of study
- enrol the learner on a level above that at which they are assessed and/or of which they have prior attainment, and be able to provide evidence of this
- deliver ongoing assessment to support learning
- record the evidence of all assessment outcomes in the evidence pack

The assessments must place a learner's current skills levels within the level descriptors used for the RQF.

12. Tailored Learning

- 12.1 The primary purpose of the national approach to 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 communities.
- 12.2 The Authority has established its own list of *Ten Tailored Learning Outcomes* in collaboration with Providers. Whilst these outcomes are aligned to the national <u>'seven purposes'</u>, they provide scope for greater levels of flexibility to meet place-based needs. Providers must align the provision of Tailored Learning to these ten outcomes:

Tailored Learning Outcome	Definition
1. Increased confidence	learner demonstrates they can be successful in their course, work and or community.
	Skills to enable learners to progress to further learning; and can include generic skills such as study skills and/or sector
3. Improved skills for work	Skills to enable learners to gain and sustain employment; and can include generic employability skills and/or sector specific or technical skills.
4. Improved essential skills	Essential skills are defined as English (or ESOL), maths and digital skills.
5. Improved ability to support a child's learning	Parents/carers more active in the support of their child's learning and development, and better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning.
6. Improved physical health	Improved or maintained physical health that leads to the ability to work or become an active citizenship
7. Improved mental health and well being	Improved or maintained mental health and well-being that leads to the learner participating in the learning
community life	Learners have the knowledge and skills to take an active role in their local community in work or through volunteering.
9. Increased understanding of democratic values	Learners understand and demonstrate the fundamentals of British values
10. Improved Skills for Independent Living.	The skills that learners need to live a life with purpose usually with a focus on life outside of work

- 12.3 We would expect you to encourage and support all learners to progress on to 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.
- 12.4 To deliver Tailored Learning, you must:
 - Have a Tailored Learning funding allocation
 - Submit ILR data under funding model 11 for the delivery and support
- 12.5 You must not use tailored learning funding for learning that is:
 - primarily or solely for leisure purposes. We define learning for leisure purposes as learning where the primary or sole intent of the learning is for leisure
 - 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 record the costs of Tailored Learning for audit purposes.
- 12.6 You must include the use of your tailored learning funding to cover learning and learner support costs up to the value of your tailored learning allocation. 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
- 12.7 Our approach to measuring the impact of Tailored Learning is covered by the Wider Outcomes Framework that CPCA has developed in partnership with grant-funded providers. Further guidance on the Wider Outcomes Framework can be obtained from the Authority.
- 12.8 Providers must have in place and operate a fair and transparent local fee remission policy that requires individuals to pay a course/tuition/joining fee but also sets out clear eligibility criteria for those individuals who, due to their circumstances, qualify for either partial or total fee remission.
- 12.9 To demonstrate best use of public funding, providers will be asked to provide a 'Pound Plus' statement at the end of the year as part of the end of year funding statement. In this case, the 'Pound' represents public funding and the 'plus' calculations will be contributions for volunteering as well as a calculation of the total amount of fee income generated and any sponsorship or resources in kind such as room hire. Providers are expected to re-invest Pound Plus fee income/savings to support those least able to participate. Providers' 'Pound Plus' statements must also cover the work of any sub-contractors.
- 12.10 The eligibility principles we apply to tailored learning provision are as follows:
 - it must not be provision linked to UK visa requirements
 - it must not be provision linked to occupational regulation unless there is an agreed concession in place
 - it must not be learning, for example, 'induction to college', that should be part of a learner's experience

- it must not be used primarily or solely for 'leisure' purposes
- it must not be a non-regulated version of a regulated qualification. It must not be a regulated qualification that is not currently approved for funding
- it must not be above notional level 3
- 12.13 Where you are delivering tailored learning, you must ensure you have appropriate and robust quality assurance processes in place. For instance, you could follow 'the recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) cycle'. Further information on RARPA is available from the Learning and Work Institute.

13. Non-Regulated Learning

- 13.1 Where non-regulated learning aims are delivered under the Adult Skills Funding Model 38, the Authority expects providers to maintain high-quality, structured delivery supported by robust quality assurance processes. Providers must apply recognised methods such as the Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) to ensure each learner's progress is effectively captured, monitored, and reviewed. Further support on RARPA is available from the Learning & Work Institute.
- **13.2** Non-regulated learning must be purposeful, planned, and eligible for public funding. The following eligibility principles apply:
 - The provision must not be linked to UK visa requirements.
 - It must not relate to statutory employer requirements (including licences to practise), unless an explicit concession has been agreed by the Authority.
 - It must not be vendor-specific learning connected to a particular employer, brand, or commercial system.
 - It must not duplicate activities that should be part of a learner's general educational experience (e.g., college induction).
 - It must not be primarily or solely designed for leisure purposes.
 - It must not replicate a regulated qualification in a non-regulated format.
 - It must not exceed notional level 3.
 - At notional level 2 or 3, the content must have a clear technical focus that supports occupational competence or progression.
- **13.3** Where appropriate for the learner, providers may deliver non-regulated local flexibility provision alongside a legal entitlement qualification.

13.4 New for 2025/26

From the 2025/26 academic year, the Authority is introducing additional criteria to ensure all non-regulated aims funded under the Adult Skills Fund (Funding Model 38) meet a defined purpose and align with local priorities. To be eligible for funding, a non-regulated aim must meet one of the following two conditions:

1. The aim must fall within SSA Tier 14 – *Preparation for Life and Work*, and the learning aim title must begin with '*Non-regulated Adult skills formula funded provision*'.

Please note aims beginning with 'Non-regulated SFA formula funded' or any within any other SSA tier will no longer be eligible for funding.

OR

- 2. The aim must be a non-regulated learning aim that has been specifically set up by the Authority in response to an identified local need or agreed flexibility.
- 13.5 If a provider wishes to deliver a non-regulated aim that does not fall under either of the above categories, written permission from the Authority must be sought in advance. If written permission is not granted by the Authority, the aim will not be eligible for funding.
- 13.6 All non-regulated provision must be accurately recorded using the ILR and relevant codes from the Learning Aims Reference Service (LARS). In limited cases, earnings adjustment statements may be used where permitted and pre-agreed.

14. Supporting People Into-Employment

The Authority has commissioned providers to deliver specific programmes that support people into employment, including **Youth Offer (19-23)**, **Skills for Employment (24+)**, **and Skills for Growth (19+)**. The funding methodology has been designed to drive better outcomes for learners in bespoke provision that moves them into employment.

These programmes must be co-created with employers and be designed not only to meet local employer skills requirements but also to help residents transition into employment, upskill, and support the progression of those in low-paid jobs.

14.1 Eligibility

Learners who participate in the Youth Offer and Skills for Employment must be:

- Unemployed
- Economically Inactive
- Employed but earning less than the low wage threshold

Learners who participate in the Skills for Growth programme are expected to be in employment, but in a low-wage, low-skilled job, and the purpose of upskilling is to secure better job prospects and pay.

15.The Youth Offer (19-23)

- 15.1 The Youth Offer (19-23) should offer the provision of an individualised and inclusive programme of study for young people aged 19-23, particularly those furthest from the labour market, to enable progression to further education, an Apprenticeship or sustainable employment.
- 15.2 This programme expects the provider to work closely with DWP and/or local employment support services, FE Suppliers and employers to design and deliver bespoke skills programmes that lead to a sustainable outcome.

- 15.3 The programme should include the following components:
 - Transferable Skill Development (21st Century Skills) the development and application of soft/transferable skills such as:
 - Collaboration Working with others to reach a goal using individual talents and knowledge.
 - Digital Literacy Using technology to assess, evaluate and create information.
 - Creativity and Innovation Sharing thoughts, questions, ideas and solutions.
 - o Problem Solving Looking at problems in a new way. Linking learning.
 - Critical Thinking Sound reasoning, making complex choices and connections.
 - Career and Life Skills Flexibility, initiative, self-control and leadership
 - Employability skills, including CV writing, interview techniques and self-marketing.
 - Enrichment and tutorial (including British Values and PSHE as relevant)
 - Careers Information Advice & Guidance (CIAG)
 - Mentoring, coaching, and counselling as required by the individual.
- 15.4 This can be delivered using an accredited qualification or a suite of accredited qualifications. Alternatively, if the provision is non-accredited, RARPA must be used to recognise and record progress and achievement.

The course may also include:

- A work experience placement or volunteering opportunity for a length of time appropriate for the individual learner.
- O Unit accreditation or accreditation in various sizes and formats, as appropriate, paid at the specified rate on the Find a Learning Aim website. Qualifications must be appropriate to the intent of the course and must be delivered in line with the guided learning hours specified. The Authority reserves the right to seek additional information if the planned delivery is less than 60% of the specified guided learning hours (FALA).
- A full vocational accredited qualification from the first Level 2 or first Level 3
 Legal Entitlement list. (paid at the specified rate on the Find a Learning Aim
 website). This is capped at one full accredited vocational qualification, either L2
 or L3, per learner, per course.
- English, ESOL, Maths, and Essential Digital Skills qualifications (if required)
 (paid at the specified rate on the Find a Learning Aim website). We would expect
 unit accreditation or stepping-stone qualifications rather than Functional
 Skills/GCSEs, but this is flexible.
- \circ Carbon Literacy Accreditation paid at a flat rate of £25 per learner.

16. Skills for Employment (24+)

16.1 Skills for Employment (24+) should offer the provision of motivational and flexible programmes for unemployed or economically inactive residents to fill specific job vacancies. This programme

expects the provider to work closely with DWP and/or local employment support services, employers and the FE sector to design and deliver bespoke skills programmes that lead to sustainable employment.

The programme should include the following components:

- Transferable Skill Development (21st Century Skills) the development and application of soft/transferable skills such as:
- Collaboration Working with others to reach a goal using individual talents and knowledge.
- Digital Literacy Using technology to assess, evaluate and create information.
- Creativity and Innovation Sharing thoughts, questions, ideas and solutions.
- Problem Solving Looking at problems in a new way. Linking learning.
- Critical Thinking Sound reasoning, making complex choices and connections.
- Career and Life Skills Flexibility, initiative, self-control and leadership
- Employability skills, including CV writing, interview techniques and self-marketing.
- Enrichment and tutorial (including British Values and PSHE as relevant)
- Careers Information Advice & Guidance (CIAG)
- Mentoring, coaching, and counselling as required by the individual.
- 16.2 This can be delivered using an accredited qualification or a suite of accredited qualifications. Alternatively, if the provision is non-accredited, RARPA must be used to recognise and record progress and achievement.

The course may also include:

- A work experience placement or volunteering opportunity for a length of time appropriate for the individual learner.
- Unit accreditation or accreditation in various sizes and formats, as appropriate, paid at the specified rate on the Find a Learning Aim website. Qualifications must be appropriate to the intent of the course and must be delivered in line with the guided learning hours specified. The Authority reserves the right to seek additional information if the planned delivery is less than 60% of the specified guided learning hours (FALA).
- A full vocational accredited qualification from the <u>first Level 2 or first Level 3</u>
 <u>Legal Entitlement list.</u> (paid at the specified rate on the <u>Find a Learning Aim</u>
 website). This is capped at one full accredited vocational qualification, either L2 or L3, per learner, per course.
- English, ESOL, Maths, and Essential Digital Skills qualifications (if required)
 (paid at the specified rate on the <u>Find a Learning Aim</u> website). We would
 expect unit accreditation or stepping-stone qualifications rather than Functional
 Skills/GCSEs, but this is flexible.
- o Carbon Literacy Accreditation paid at a flat rate of £25 per learner.

17. Skills for Growth (19+)

- 17.1 Skills for Growth (19+) should offer the provision of bespoke training for employers in the key growth sectors as identified in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Skills Improvement Plan and our underpinning industries throughout the region.
- 17.2 Providers will have the flexibility to co-design programmes of learning to meet the individualised needs of the employer and their employees and may include:
 - Awards, Certificates or Extended Certificates or units of qualifications at entry level, level 1, 2 and 3, 4 or 5 Qualifications must be appropriate to the intent of the course and must be delivered in line with the guided learning hours specified. The Authority reserves the right to seek additional information if the planned delivery is less than 60% of the specified guided learning hours (FALA).
 - Carbon Literacy accreditation
 - All programmes must include the provision of high-quality Careers Advice and Guidance.

And/or

• Non-regulated bespoke learning, aligned to local needs. This will be paid at a rate of £8 per hour, per learner.

18. Programme funding (Youth Offer, Skills for Employment and Skills for Growth)

18.1 A base rate of £8 per guided learning hour, per learner, will be paid for all non-regulated delivery.

For example:

Guided Learning Hours	Funding Available
30hrs	£240
60hrs	£480
90hrs	£720
120hrs	£960

- Regulated learning will be paid at the specified rate on the Find a Learning Aim website
- Carbon Literacy accreditation will be paid at a flat rate of £25 per learner
- Disadvantage uplifts will apply to the main aim
- The Youth Offer will attract the Youth Offer uplift at a whole or aggregated rate depending on delivery model.

18.2 Job Outcome Payments for Youth Offer, Skills for Growth and Skills for Employment

These programmes will attract a Day-1 job outcome payment and a Week 13 sustained employment payment of £100 and £250, respectively (evidenced by a declaration signed by the employer, learner, and provider). This should be claimed via the ILR.

19. CSCS & SIA Licences

19.1 Where a learner is enrolled on a programme that is leading to a job within the security industry or construction industry, in addition to the programme funding, the Authority will pay the cost of a license where it is an occupational requirement (e.g. SIA and CSCS) up to £750 per licence. Learners must meet eligibility and residency criteria and be unemployed or earning below the low-wage threshold.

In advance of delivery, the cost breakdown associated with any licence must be discussed and agreed with the Authority. See the Funding Rates and Formula and the ILR coding documents for full details.

20. Work placement for 19 to 24 year olds

- 20.1 The Authority will fully fund a work placement for learners who meet the criteria in the section on who we fund, where they:
 - are aged 19 to 24 on 31 August within the funding year 2025 to 2026; and
 - enrol on one or more learning aims from the ASF core offer, or a vocational qualification listed on <u>find a learning aim</u>, alongside a work placement learning aim
- 20.2 A learner's work placement must take place with an employer and allow the learner to develop new workplace knowledge, skills and behaviours. In total, the work placement element must be between 70 and 240 hours, and it must not involve virtual or simulated learning in an artificial environment.
- 20.3 A learner can have separate work placements in different organisations. These must last at least 2 weeks with each employer, and at least 70 hours in total with each placement, supporting progression linked to their learning plan.
- 20.4 For learners on JSA or UC, work placements can be between 70 to 240 hours.
- 20.5 A learner who is undertaking work experience as part of a SWAP funded through DWP must not be funded through the 19 to 24 work placement.
- 20.6 For eligible learners aged 19 to 24, the work placement will be funded through the DfE-funded ASF funding methodology, with further information available in the <u>funding rates and formula guidance</u>.

- 20.7 Providers must use learning aims that are marked with Adult Skills Fund Work Placement, refer to the <u>funding rates and formula guidance</u>.
- 20.8 The employer must offer at the end of each work placement (which you must evidence) either:
 - a formal interview for a job or apprenticeship vacancy, plus feedback, or
 - an exit interview, written feedback and evidence of the learner's time and activities during the work placement

21. HGV Training

HGV driver training flexibilities have been developed to support an increase in HGV driver training.

The 2025 to 2026 offer:

- includes level 2 qualifications which will prepare learners for HGV licence acquisition of all vehicles up to category C and E (articulated)
- includes any new additional qualifications that are approved for training in this sector throughout academic year 2025 to 2026
- allows all eligible learners, fully funded and co-funded, to be reimbursed for the cost of HGV licences and medical
- 21.1 The offer will be available to all learners aged 19+ who reside in a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority postcode and enrolled on one of the targeted approved for funding level 2 qualifications listed in find a learning aim or as part of an agreed programme of delivery.
- 21.2 The Authority will fund the first attempt only for:
 - The HGV licence as part of a programme of training and
 - The medical, at a cost of £61 per learner and/or
 - A licence to upgrade from category C to category C+E
- 21.3 HGV Claiming Funding of additional elements

Unless specified as part of a bespoke offer, Providers must:

- Use learning aims that are marked with category code 50: HGV, to identify an approved qualification.
- Category code 51: HGV Medical for the additional learning aim to represent the HGV medical and
- Category code 52: HGV Licence, for the additional learning aim(s) to represent parts
 of the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) tests required to attain
 the licence, when learners undertake these elements
- Record an outcome of "Achieved" in the ILR where you have a recorded learning aims for the HGV licence and medical aim, to generate reimbursement funding for these activities
- Have criteria for how you will administer and distribute your funds
- Retain and provide evidence in the learner file confirming that you have verified the medical test and licence documentation and evidence from your accounts of the

payment made to the learner and learner's receipt of the funds as agreed with the Combined Authority

22. Carbon Literacy and Sustainability

The Authority supports the delivery of accredited carbon literacy training by covering the cost of delivery up to £25 per learner.

22.1 A single payment of £25 can be claimed for learners who take part in and complete an accredited course on carbon literacy and sustainability. As an example, the Authority recommends The Carbon Literacy Project.

23. The King's Trust Team Programme

- 23.1 The Kings 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. To deliver the team programme, you must get approval from the King's Trust before commencing delivery.
- 23.2 For eligible learners aged 19 to 25, we fund the team programme through the DfE funded <u>funding methodology</u>. Please also refer to The King's Trust section in the <u>funding rates and formula guidance</u>.

24. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

- 24.1 ESOL qualifications are part of the ASF learning at level 2 and below offer, please refer to this section for eligibility criteria.
- 24.2 Providers offering ESOL qualifications may need to deliver additional learning to individual learners that incurs additional cost above the qualification rate. You can access information on how to do this in the funding rates and formula guidance.

25. Youth Offer Payment

- 25.1 A full or aggregated payment of £250 per learner can be drawn down by the provider, from their existing funding allocation, to support the targeting and engagement of young adult learners aged 19-23
- 25.2 The provider must have a local policy in place to demonstrate how this funding will be used and should hold evidence of this. Providers may choose to use this funding to create a 'personal support budget' for learners, which can provide incentives, or they may opt to use it for marketing campaigns to increase participation. It is down to the provider how they wish to use this funding.

25.3 Payments will be linked to the total guided learning hours of the programme of study as follows:

Guided Learning Hours	Youth Offer Payment
Min 5hrs	£50 per learner
Up to 10hrs	£75 per learner
Up to 20hrs	£125 per learner
Up to 30hrs	£200 per learner
31hrs and over	£250 per learner

25.3 Providers should refer to the ILR coding and funding rates document for guidance on how to claim this via the ILR.

26. Care Leaver Bursary

- 26.1 Providers can draw down funding from their funding allocation to support Care Leavers, aged 19-22. This will be paid at a rate of £1500 per learner and must be used for reasonable expenses that would support the learner to progress to employment.
- 26.2 The Bursary can be claimed when a learner is studying a programme of learning at 60GLH or above. This should be claimed through the ILR. The provider must keep evidence of expenditure in the same way they would for general learning or learner support. The Authority advises providers to build this into their own Learning/Learner support policies.

27. TESOL and CELTA

- 27.1 For 2025/26 the Authority will continue to fund the Level 5 Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA).
- 27.2 Unemployed learners and employed learners who fall under the earnings threshold will be fully funded. Learners who do not meet these requirements will not be funded.

28. Assessing Qualifications for the FE Sector

- 28.1 For 2025/26 the Authority will fully fund the following qualifications that support the growth of occupationally competent assessors within the further education sector:
 - L3 Award in underpinning principles and practices of Assessment
 - L3 Award in Assessing Vocational Related Achievement
 - L3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment

- L3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- 28.2 Learners must meet the Authority residency eligibility criteria and intend to work in Further Education within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area as a new Assessor within the following priority sectors:
 - Construction & the built environment
 - Engineering
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Digital
 - Early Years
 - Transport and Logistics
 - Green Tech/Green Energy
 - Agri-Tech
 - Health and Social Care
- 28.3 This will be funded through ASF (FM38), regardless of earnings or previous qualifications held.
- 28.4 Providers must supply evidence to demonstrate how the learner meets the eligibility criteria. This will typically be a supporting statement from the employer.

29. Qualifications for the Supported Employment Workforce

- 29.1 For 2025/26 the Authority will fully fund the following qualifications that support the growth of an occupationally competent workforce for the successful delivery of Connect to Work and supported employment via the Individual Placement Support and SEQF models. These qualifications are available through the awarding organisation Gateway.
 - Certificate for Supported Employment Practitioners
 - Award in Engaging Employers in Supported Employment
 - Award in Engaging Job Seekers in Supported Employment
 - Award in Job Matching and Securing Supported Employment
 - Award in In-work support and Career Development for Supported Employment
 - Award in working with job seekers to identify and plan for supported employment
- 29.2 This will be funded through ASF (FM38) regardless of earnings or previous qualifications held. The learner must meet eligibility and residency criteria and be an employed worker within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, involved in delivering Connect to Work or an IPS/SEQF model of supported employment.
- 29.3 Providers must supply additional evidence to demonstrate how the learner meets the eligibility criteria. This will typically be a supporting statement from the employer.

30. Innovation

- 30.1 Funding for developing innovative provision enables eligible providers to earn up to 5% of their ASF allocation on the development of innovative provision. The purpose of this flexibility is to encourage local innovation and to support eligible providers to be able to develop new provision, in partnership with local employers and others.
- To be eligible to utilise up to 5% of your ASF allocation for the development of new innovative provision you must have a 2025 to 2026 ASF allocation over £50,000
- 30.3 We expect that provision developed using this flexibility will reflect the priorities outlined in the Local Growth Plan, Local Get Britain Working Plan and Local Skills Plan.
- 30.4 You have the flexibility to use all, or some, of the 5% and you must use this flexibility to fund the development costs of establishing new provision. This includes:
 - research and developments costs to support work with large employers and/or local SME/micro businesses to scope and develop non-accredited provision bespoke to that employer
 - project management costs to support the costs of overseeing the project development and setting up of new non-accredited provision. It could also cover the staff costs of developing and preparing new qualifications for submission to DfE/awarding bodies approval processes
 - training for the trainer developing training for teaching staff to be able to deliver provision in new and emerging fields such as green skills and artificial intelligence
- 30.5 You must submit a Business Case to the Authority that sets out your intent, implementation plans and expected impact. This will also be used as a 'funding claim'. You must be able to demonstrate that the above activity has been delivered and ensure you clearly document and retain records as evidence of the complete breakdown of costs that have been incurred and paid.
- 30.6 This evidence may well form part of the documentation comprised of your normal financial systems and processes which demonstrate the different costs spent from this funding such as direct costs (such as invoices, expenses), personnel costs (such as payroll, time records) and any indirect costs (how these have been calculated).
- 30.7 Your spend may also have been subject to an audit from your own statutory or internal auditors, in which case assurance of spend may be accepted where this can be evidenced from audit reports/audit committee minutes. We will recover funding that is not duly spent, recorded and evidenced as above, or duly assured by your auditors and evidenced from relevant audit reports, or evidenced from formal audit committee minutes, as stated above.
- 30.8 You must not use this flexibility for any capital costs, building/estates refurbishments, maintenance and restoration.

31. Support funding

31.1 Authority-funded ASF'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 Authority funded ASF 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.

32. Learning support

32.1 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 in 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
- 32.2 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
- 32.3 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 <u>earnings adjustment statement (EAS)</u>. For any costs over £19,000, please see the next section for exceptional learning support.

33. Exceptional learning support claims above £19,000

- 33.1 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.
- 33.2 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.
- 33.3 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.
- 33.4 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.

34. Learner support

- 34.1 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
 - Care to Learn top up for 19-year-olds
 - ICT devices and connectivity to support disadvantaged learners who cannot undertake online delivery without this provision
- 34.2 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
- complete 3 funding claims throughout the year in line with funding claims guidance if you
 have a grant contract, else record delivery through the earning adjustment statement each
 month if on a contract for services
- 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

35. Hardship

- 35.1 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
- 35.2 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.

36. Childcare

36.1 For learners age 20+ 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
- 36.2 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.
- 36.3 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.
- 36.4 Providers must claim for care to learn top-up through learner support 20+ childcare category.
- 36.5 To claim learner support to top-up care, the learn must follow the same process currently set out in the learner support section.

37. ICT devices and connectivity

- 37.1 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 compete the necessary online course work
- 37.2 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
- 37.3 IT devices you purchase must only be loaned out to learners and returned at the end of their learning, to allow them to be reused 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.

- 37.4 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

38. Job outcome payments linked to programme funding

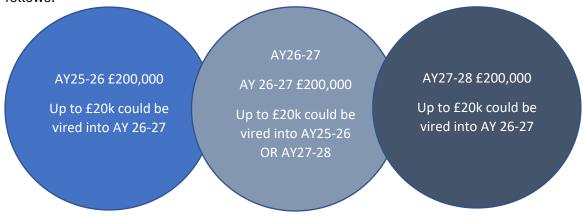
- 38.1 For fully funded learners who are unemployed, we will pay 50% of the completion/achievement payment if they start a job before completing/achieving the learning aim. If the learner then completes/achieves the learning aim, we will pay the remaining achievement payment. The following conditions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

39. Contract Growth

39.1 Whilst the Combined Authority recognises the benefits of offering contract growth opportunities, the budgets for both ASF and FCFJ are finite, and contract growth will only be available if there is a budget to fund it.

40. Virement of ASF between academic years (for contracts and grants that are 3 years in length)

- 40.1 Virement is allowed in each year of the grant funding agreement/contract, but will be capped at 10% of the annual contract value.
- 40.2 For example, if the total contract value was £600,000 over the three years, the annual contract value is split equally between the three years. This means a total of £20,000 could be vired as follows:



- 40.3 Virement of funding must be agreed upon with the Authority before 31 March, as set out in the table below. The provider should provide a business case for the virement. The Authority will provide a template for this.
- 40.4 The Authority will take virement into account when reconciling delivery at R14 for each academic year. Where a provider has requested virement, their profile will be updated accordingly. If no request for virement has been received, the Authority may reconcile funding and clawback any funding that has not been used on delivery.

40.5 Virement Timetable

Virement Request	Deadline for Business Case
To transfer 10% of 2025-26 funding allocation	31 st March 2026
into 2026-27	
To transfer 10% of 2026-27 into 2025-26	As soon as possible and no later than 31st March
	2026
To transfer 10% of 2026-27 into 2027-28	31st March 2027
To transfer 10% of 2027-28 into 2026-27	31 st March 2026

41. Data Submissions

- 41.1 As a Provider you must ensure you have the capacity and capability for accurate data and evidence collection, management, and reporting, and must be able to comply with both the Combined Authority and the DfE submission of data including but not limited to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) or Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS) and any associated evidence before you enter into contract and start delivery, with prompt changes to learner data e.g., withdrawals from learning being actioned in the ILR.
- 41.2 Providers must ensure that all documentation relating to the enrolment of Combined Authority residents and the record of learning activity is completed accurately.
- 41.3 ILR data submitted for Combined Authority residents will continue to be sent to the ESFA through "Submit Learner Data. ILR files will be validated at the point of transmission against both definitions and validation rules. If any data fails the validation checks, then the learner record and all associated records for that learner will be rejected.
- 41.4 Rejected records are not loaded into the national ILR database and so do not generate funding; these records are reported on the rule violation report. This will ensure that the data received by the Combined Authority is accurate and complete, as this will be the basis upon which you will get paid.
- 41.5 As part of our assurance work, we will be monitoring the data you submit to the DfE from the individualised learner record (ILR) and the earnings adjustment statement (EAS). We will carry out regular desktop reviews of how the national funding system and our funding rules are operating, allowing us to identify errors in the devolved ASF funding claimed for Authority

residents by Providers, which might require further investigation. Details of Authority funding rates and rules are available on our website.

42. Individual Learner Record (ILR)

- As a Provider delivering provision to Combined Authority residents, you will be required to complete the Individual Learner record in the 2025/26 academic year. The DfE will continue to hold ILR data in a single national data set. Providers must upload their ILR data via the DfE; they cannot submit the data directly to the Combined Authority. We require that a first complete return for all ASF-funded learning should be made at the R03 point.
- 42.2 The purpose of these codes is to identify learning aims that need to be monitored as part of new flexibility or to identify elements that are being funded via the EAS. The details of what you need to provide will be dependent upon the Lots you are delivering, and the details will be included in the data schedule of your Grant/Contract.
- 42.3 If you do not have an MI system capable of generating an XML file, then you should use the DfE, ILR Learner Entry Tool which will enable you to create an ILR file for upload to Submit Learner Data. ESFA and we recommend uploading the data as compressed files. The file must contain all Learner records and Learning Delivery records for all Combined Authority funded residents for the year to date.
- 42.4 As a Provider, you must submit a single file containing all your learner, learning and destination records for all ASF funding for the year to date. Each file overwrites all previously submitted records by you. This means that you cannot split the data into separate files and transmit each file separately. You cannot send records for learners funded from different funding models in separate files, as these will overwrite one another.
- 42.5 Once you submit a file to Submit Learner Data, it cannot be deleted if the file contains incorrect data; this can only be corrected by submitting another ILR file to overwrite the incorrect one.

 The last file submitted by you will be the one loaded into the national database for that return.
- 42.6 If you have a grant agreement, we will contact you when we identify that you have submitted data that does not meet our funding rules and ILR requirements. We will require you to correct inaccurate Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS) data or to adjust your final funding claim.
- 42.7 For provision funded through a contract for service, we will use the information you provide in your funding claims, ILR and EAS data to review, in-year, your contract value for 2025/26. If at the performance-management points we have evidence that you will not deliver your contract value in full, we may reduce it to a level that is in line with your actual in-year delivery. We will make these reductions in line with these rules and consider them after period 6 and at the end of the year.

43. Recording Late Data in the ILR

- 43.1 If a learner is continuing learning at the final R14 collection at the end of the year, but you record in the subsequent ILR year that they should have left in the previous ILR year, you will have earned funding that you need to pay back.
- 43.2 You can pay this funding back through the EAS recording a negative figure in the 'Authorised claims' adjustment type. You do not need our permission to use this adjustment type to pay back funding; you only need permission to use this adjustment type for claiming funding.

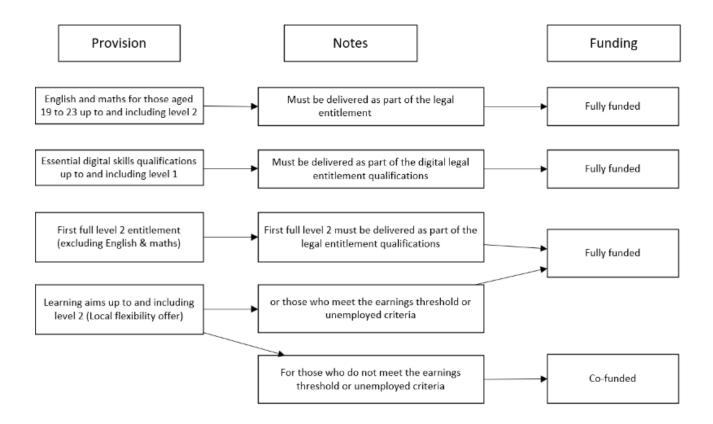
44. Earnings Adjustment Statement

- 44.1 The Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS) is the mechanism for Learning Organisations to claim funding for eligible activity that cannot be recorded through the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). This includes specific categories of learner support, exceptional delivery costs and authorised claims.
- 44.2 The EAS is not a mandatory return unless you are making a claim for one or more of the following categories:
 - Excess Learning Support
 - Authorised Claims
 - The King's Trust Programme
 - Learner Support: 19+ Hardship
 - Learner Support: 20+ Childcare
 - Learner Support: Residential Access Fund
 - Learner Support: IT Devices and Connectivity Costs
 - Learner Support: Administration Expenditure
- 44.3 Where you make an EAS claim, you must submit an EAS file to the Authority monthly, alongside your ILR return. You must not wait until the final funding claim point to supply this data.
- 44.4 Once an EAS claim has been submitted, you must continue to submit EAS data in all subsequent returns for the remainder of the academic year. The EAS is a cumulative return, and each file must include the totality of claims made to date.
- 44.5 If an EAS return is submitted with previously claimed data removed, the Authority may recover any payments associated with that data. Subsequently, if EAS data is not included in your final R14 ILR return, it will not be paid.
- 44.6 There is no standard EAS template provided by the Authority. You must use the standard format as defined by the DfE and ensure all claims are accurate, clearly evidenced and aligned with Authority rules.
- 44.7 You must retain full supporting evidence for each EAS claim, including:
 - Learner eligibility
 - Description of support provided, or cost incurred
 - Dates of activity and related documentation

- Authorisation or agreement (where required)
- 44.8 All EAS claims are subject to performance management, monitoring and audit by the Combined Authority. Claims without sufficient evidence or which fall outside of published rules may be rejected and may lead to funding recovery.
- 44.9 The Authority may, in line with its strategic priorities, authorise additional or exceptional EAS use to support local flexibilities, pilot programmes or targeted interventions. These must be preapproved in writing and appropriately referenced within submitted EAS files.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ASF Contribution Charts

Chart 1: 19- to 23-year-olds



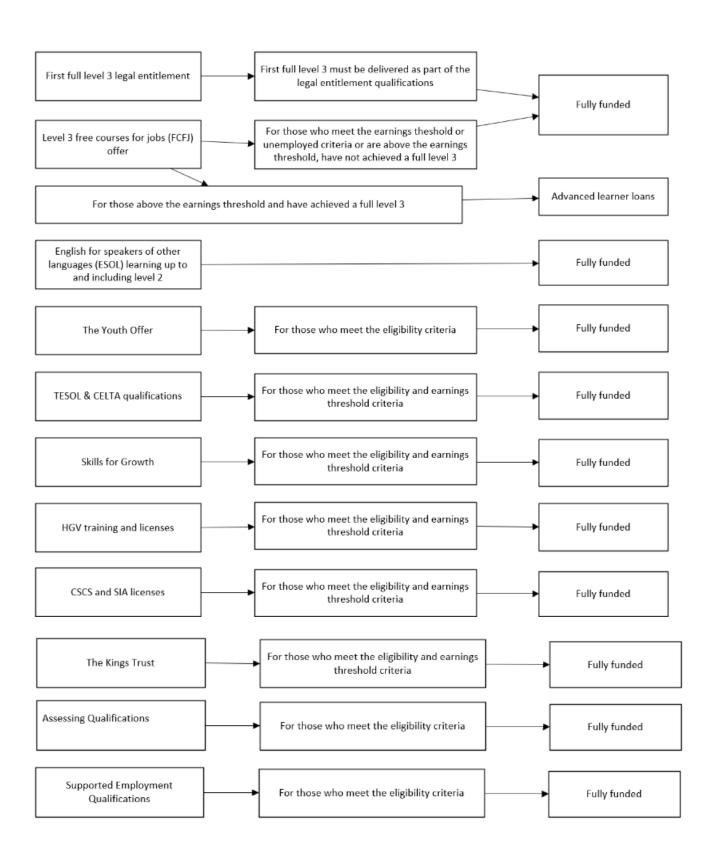
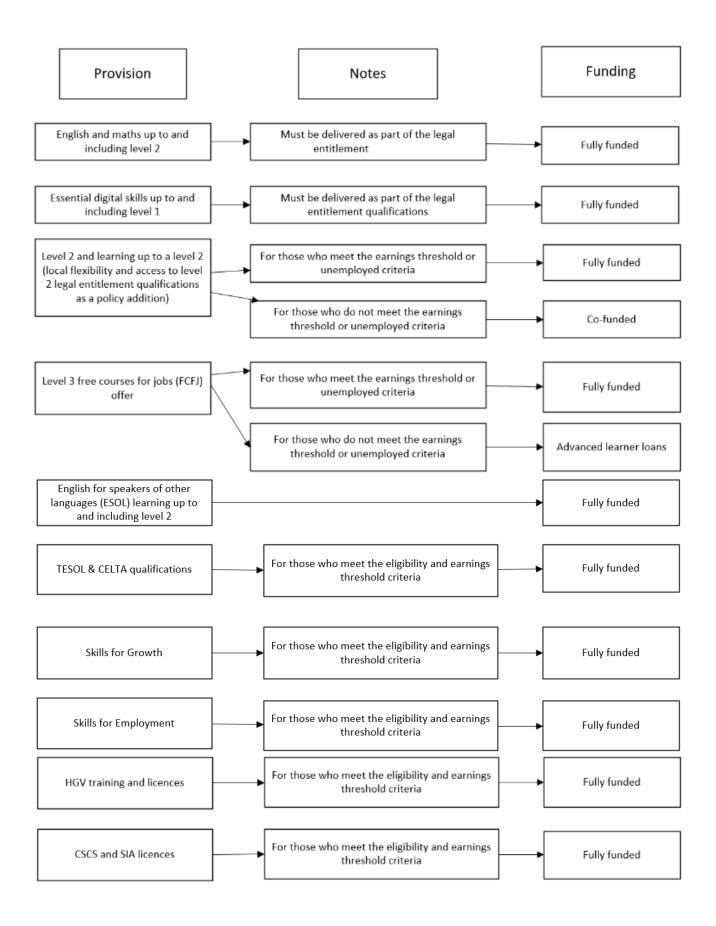
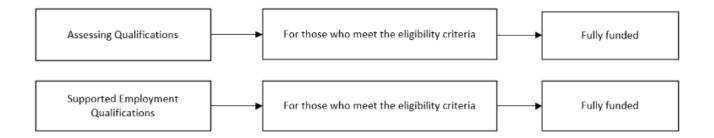


Chart 2: 24+





Annex A: eligibility for funding

This annex sets out the countries falling within the below categories as referenced in the <u>residency eligibility</u> section of the DfE's rules: <u>Adult skills fund: funding rules 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK</u>

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 ASF Funding Rules.

Denmark	The following is part of Denmark: Greenland Faroe Islands
Finland	The following is part of Finland and the EU: Aland islands
France	The following is part of France and the EU: the French Overseas Department (DOMS) (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana (Guyana), Reunion and Saint-Pierre et Miquelon) The following is part of France: New Caledonia and its dependencies French Polynesia Saint Barth lemy
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.

Annex B: Devolution of adult education functions

As a devolved authority we have the responsibility for funding ASF to its residents. Details of all powers and funding that have been devolved to individual areas can be found through the <u>local government</u> <u>association website</u>.

Annex C: Data Collection and Data Protection

Data underpins the funding and commissioning decisions made by the Authority. It also underpins and informs the work of Ofsted and other agencies. When aggregated, it presents the progress and position of the FE sector to the Authority, sponsoring departments and to the Government, thereby informing policy making decisions.

The Authority will in 2025/26 be using the data recorded on the ILR to calculate funding earned by Providers. The data will provide management information, including performance indicators, which will be used to manage your current Grant Agreement or Contract for Services.

The data gathered provides information about the effectiveness of the learning programmes in terms of who they reach, what learning they receive and what outcomes are subsequently achieved. The Authority is interested in developing the types of information collected to ensure that it can adequately assess progression, impact and outcomes which will be different from those currently reported. In 2025/26, the Authority will require Providers to return information not recorded in the ILR at certain intervals to support this.

The data collected in the ILR will also be used to ensure that the ASF funding devolved to the Authority is being spent in line with its statutory duties and its wider skills ambitions. Authority ASF funded learning is recorded using code 115 in the Funding model field.

Individualised Learner Record (ILR) file

You can collect the data required to make an ILR return in whatever way you wish to and in the best way that supports your natural business processes. For example, information about a learner may be gathered on a paper enrolment form or through an online enrolment process. Much of the information about the learning aims and programmes being undertaken may be held within a Management Information System (MIS) and can be exported directly from this. However, the information must be collated and submitted in accordance with the ILR guidance which relates to provision delivered by the Combined Authority.

Data Protection

You should make sure that all learners have seen the Privacy Notice, which informs them about how their data will be used. The Privacy Notice can be found here. You should ask learners if they do not wish to be contacted for marketing, survey or research purposes and record this information in the Learner contact preference fields in the ILR. You are required to ensure that the requirements of the Data Protection Act are always maintained.

Annex D: Authority contribution charts text version

Lists 1 and 2 are the text version of charts 1 and 2 and show the level of Authority funded ASF.

Chart 1: 19- to 23-year-olds

- English and maths for those aged 19 to 23 up to and including level 2; Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement; Fully funded
- Essential digital skills qualifications up to and including level 1; Must be delivered as part of the digital legal entitlement qualifications; Fully funded
- First full level 2 entitlement (excluding English & maths); First full level 2 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications: Fully funded
- Learning aims up to and including level 2 (Local flexibility offer); For those who meet the earnings threshold or unemployed criteria; Fully funded. For those who do not meet the earnings threshold or unemployed criteria; Co-funded
- First full level 3 legal entitlement; First full level 3 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications; Fully funded
- Level 3 free courses for jobs (FCFJ) offer; For those who meet the earnings threshold or unemployed criteria Fully funded. For those above the earnings threshold and have not achieved a full level 3; fully funded. For those above the earnings threshold and have achieved a full level 3; advanced learner loans
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2; Fully funded
- The Youth Offer; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility criteria
- TESOL & CELTA qualifications are fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
- Skills for Growth; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
- HGV training and licences; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
- CSCS and SIA licences; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
- The Kings Trust; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
- Assessing Qualifications; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility criteria
- Supported Employment Qualifications; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility criteria

Chart 2: 24+

- English and maths up to and including level 2; Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement; Fully funded
- Essential digital skills up to and including level 1; Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications; Fully funded
- Level 2 and learning up to level 2 (local flexibility and access to L2 legal entitlement qualification as a policy addition); For those who meet the earnings threshold or

- unemployed criteria; Fully funded. For those who do not meet the earnings threshold or unemployed criteria; Co-funded
- Level 3 free courses for jobs (FCFJ) offer; For those who meet the earnings threshold or unemployed criteria; Fully funded. For those who do not meet the earnings threshold or unemployed criteria; advanced learner loans
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2; Fully funded.
 - TESOL & CELTA qualifications are fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
 - Skills for Growth; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
 - Skills for Employment; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
 - HGV training and licences; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
 - CSCS and SIA licences; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility and earnings threshold criteria
 - Assessing Qualifications; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility criteria
 - Supported Employment Qualifications; fully funded for those who meet the eligibility criteria

Annex E: 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 <u>qualification downloads</u> - <u>list of qualifications approved for funding</u> on GOV.UK or email <u>qualifications.approval@education.gov.uk</u> 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 email <u>qualifications.approval@education.gov.uk</u> if you need advice on a previous qualification s designation.

For new linear AS and A levels, where a learner enrols 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 ESFA funded ASF 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 <u>qualifications website</u>.

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 <u>UK ENIC</u> 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 <u>legal entitlement</u>, 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 <u>Learner Records Service</u> guidance.

Annex F: 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 must be retained for 6 years after the start date of learning.

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.

If applicable, the evidence pack must confirm the following:

- all information reported to us in the ILR, EAS, funding claims, if applicable, and all supporting evidence to substantiate the data that you report
- 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 reported in the ILR
- 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 (including a work placement) and records are available
- if applicable, a learner s self-declaration as to what state benefit they claim
- a learner s self-declaration on their status relating to gaining a job; and
- all records and evidence of achievement of qualifications, learning aims. This must be available within 3 months of you reporting it in the ILR

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.

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 AUTHORITY funded ASF 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.

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.

Individualised learner record (ILR)

You must accurately complete all ILR fields as required in the <u>2025 to 2026 ILR specification</u> even if they are not required for funding purposes.

In addition you must apply specific AUTHORITY ILR coding as detailed in the Authority ILR Guidance 2025/26 which will be available shortly.

Failure to correctly code activity in the ILR may result in a loss of Authority funding.

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

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

Self-declarations by learners

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

If a learner self-declares prior attainment, you must check this in the <u>personal learning record</u> (<u>PLR</u>) and query any contradictory information with the learner. The PLR will not necessarily override the learner s self-declaration.

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.
Benefit Status Indicator (BSI)	Complete the Benefit Status Indicator (BSI) to identify the claimant is in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (BSI 1) Universal Credit (BSI 4), or Employment and Support Allowance (all categories) (BSI 5).
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.

Term	Description
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	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 to specified Mayoral Combined Authorities by way of orders made under section 105A of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, and the delegation of those functions to the Mayor of London under section 39A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, in relation to their areas.
Digital Entitlement	The study of EDS qualifications for learners who have digital skills assessed at below level 1. Qualifications that are designated up to and including level 1 are Essential Digital Skills qualifications and digital Functional Skills qualifications.
Earnings adjustment statement (EAS)	The form Providers need to fill in to claim funding that cannot be claimed through the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).
Earnings Threshold	The earnings threshold is a new eligibility criteria, that enables learners to be fully funded if they earn below than 30,491.
Economically inactive	People who are not involved in the labour market including early retirees, carers and the long-term sick
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.

Term	Description
European Union	A list of member states is available on the <u>EU website</u> .
Employment status	The main types of employment status are:
(formerly employed)	worker
	employee
	self-employed and contractor
	director
	office holder
	More information on <u>employment status</u> is available.
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	The study of English by speakers of other languages.
Authority funded ASF	Funding you can claim for delivery of ASF eligible provision to individuals set out in the who we fund section.
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.

Term	Description
Full level 2	The following qualifications are designated full at level 2:
	General Certificate of Secondary Education in 5 subjects, each at grade C or above, or grade 4 or above
	a Technical Certificate at level 2 which meets or has previously met the requirements for 16 to 19 performance tables
Full level 3	The following qualifications are designated full at level 3:
	General Certificate of Education at the advanced level in 2 subjects
	General Certificate of Education at the AS level in 4 subjects
	QAA Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma at level 3
	Technical or applied general qualification at level 3 which meets or has previously met the requirements for 16 to 19 performance tables
	Core maths qualification at level 3
Full or co-funding Indicator (FFI)	Indicates whether a learning aim is fully funded or co-funded in Adult Skills or Other Adult Funding.
Functional skills	Applied practical skills in English, maths and digital that provide the learner with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to operate effectively and independently in life and work.
Funding agreement	The agreement between the AUTHORITY 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 (i.e 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 AUTHORITY's adult funding system operates on a funding year basis, which starts on 1 August and finishes on 31 July.

Term	Description
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 further education 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 further education.
ILR specification	The <u>ILR Specification</u> is the technical documents, guidance and requirements to help Providers collect, return and check ILR and other learner data.
Job outcome payments	Payments made for learners who are unemployed at the start of learning who cease learning to take up a job.
Learner residency	We use the term resident or residence in this document for different purposes. Residence in the UK, EU and EEA has specific definitions in education law, and this is set out in the residency eligibility section. Following the devolution of adult education functions, there is a new emphasis on residence in England, in determining and evidencing eligibility for AUTHORITY funded ASF - see who we fund and evidence sections. This means the permanent residency of an individual in the AUTHORITY region (i.e. not a temporary address for duration of learning taking place), immediately prior to enrolment determines eligibility for AUTHORITY funded ASF.
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.

Term	Description
Learning aim	Statements that describe the overarching intentions of a course.
Learning aim reference number	The unique eight-character code used to identify a specific learning aim.
Learning delivery monitoring (LDM)	A code used as part of the ILR to indicate participation in programmes or initiatives.
Learning planned end date	The date entered onto the individualised learner record (ILR) when the learner is expected to complete their learning.
Learning support	Funding to enable Providers to put in place a reasonable adjustment, set out in the Equality Act 2010, for learners with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability to achieve their learning goal.
Legal Entitlements	AUTHORITY funded ASF includes support for 4 legal entitlements to full funding for resident eligible adult learners. These entitlements are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children Learning Act 2009 and include: English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A* - C or grade 4, or higher 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 essential digital skills qualifications, up to and including level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below level 1
Leisure Learning	Defined as learning where the primary or sole intent of the learning is for leisure. This applies to curriculum intent and to the learner s purpose for undertaking the learning.

Term	Description
	For example, a learner may participate on a course within the learning aim Creative Arts to improve their confidence, and another to improve their well-being. Similarly, a learner may participate on a course within the learning aim volunteering, active citizenship to develop employability skills, another to contribute to community life.
Local flexibility	Regulated qualifications, and/or their components, that we fund, which is not part of the English and maths, or level 2 or level 3 legal entitlement offer. All regulated that is available for funding through the flexible local offer is listed on find a learning aim.
Non-Regulated Learning	Learning which is not subject to awarding organisation external accreditation in the form of a regulated qualification. It may be designed, delivered and certificated by a provider or another organisation. This could include: independent living skills engagement and confidence building employability skills labour market re-entry essential skills (English, maths, digital) and ESOL
Ofqual	The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation, which regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.
Ordinarily resident	For funding purposes, a person who normally lives in the United Kingdom, are allowed to live there by law, and return there after temporary trips outside the country.
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, further education training Providers, universities or employers.
Policy s	Alongside to the legal entitlements the Authority has policy entitlements allowing full funding for residency eligibility learners, over 19 years old, and meet the earnings threshold criteria, these include:

Term	Description
	Level 2 and below local flexibility including ESOL
	Free courses for jobs
	Work placements
	HGV
	The Youth Offer
	Skills for Employment
	Skills for Growth
	Assessing Qualifications
	Supported Employment Qualifications
	King's Trust
	Tailored Learning
Recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA)	The Learning and Work Institute have published <u>updated RARPA Guidance</u> . 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 <u>The Learning and Work Institute</u> .
Recognition of prior	An assessment method that considers whether a learner demonstrates that they can:
learning (RPL)	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)	The RQF provides a way of understanding and describing the relative level and size of qualifications. The RQF, operated by Ofqual, is a single regulatory framework containing a range of general, technical and professional qualifications.

Description
A process where the learner can confirm something through his or her own signature.
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.
The date on which learning begins. We do not consider enrolment, induction, diagnostic assessment, or prior assessment to be part of learning.
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 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.
For 25/26 Tailored Learning must use FM11. All other non-regulated aims will remain formula funded and FM38 is to be used.
A 10-digit number used to match a learner s achievement to their personal learning record (PLR).
A placement with an employer in a workplace setting as part of a continuing learner s offer.
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.