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SOUTH YORKSHIRE
SYMCA



MAYORAL
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

Adult Skills Fund Funding & Performance Management Rules (FPMR)

2025/26 Academic Year - 1st August 2025 - 31st July 2026



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This document sets out the funding and performance management rules that apply to all learning organisations who receive Adult Skills Funding for South Yorkshire residents.

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Introduction

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. South Yorkshire has had a devolved ASF since 2021 and the South Yorkshire **Skills Strategy** sets out a clear framework for how we will support residents across South Yorkshire to succeed.

Alongside our Skills Strategy there are also a number of other national, regional and local plans which will inform how we focus the ways we deploy ASF and FCFJ funding for 2025/2026 and beyond.

Connect to Work, Growth Accelerator, UKSPF and the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer under the programme **Pathways to Work** will support economically inactive residents across South Yorkshire to access work or move closer to the labour market and develop skills to support them into employment with consideration of longer-term career progression.

Our **Local Skills Improvement Plan** (LSIP) has a focus on the need for improved levels of baseline digital skills as well as the need for specific digital skills to allow working residents to be able to adapt to new technologies and ways of working in order to access and safeguard good quality jobs locally.

The **Plan for Change** target to build 1.5million homes across the country will mean we need to ensure that South Yorkshire residents have the right skills fit for the future in expanding the building workforce to support this ambition.

The **SYMCA Plan for Good Growth** highlights four growth areas within South Yorkshire where SYMCA aims to increase regional income and investment with a view to securing more high paid jobs locally.

The **National Industrial Strategy** has identified a number of sectors which resonate with the targets SYMCA have set out to government including Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy, Defence, Digital and professional and business services.

The focus of our delivery in 2025/2026 will be to align ASF and FCFJ provision with our three skills strategy mission areas and to increase provision within our target sectors.

SYMCA Skills Strategy Mission Areas

1. Moving those far from the labour market into work or ready for work.
2. Raise attainment of core knowledge and skills.
3. Increasing the supply of a high skilled workforce.

SYMCA Target Sectors

At the end of 2024 SYMCA confirmed the following priority areas with government:

1. Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, with particular application and nationally specialised clusters in Clean Energy, Defence and Aerospace;
2. Life Sciences, with particular application in preventative health, sport science, food engineering, precision medical devices, workforce health and wellbeing; and
3. Tech, digital and creative, in service of local industrial strengths, as well as in EdTech, MedTech, and hardware.

1. Background

- 1.1. These rules contain conditions of funding for the Adult Skills Fund in South Yorkshire from 1st August 2025.
- 1.2. The content and requirements set out in this document apply to all learning organisations delivering devolved Adult Skills Fund (ASF), Tailored Learning and Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) provision to residents in South Yorkshire funded by the Authority from 1st August 2025. The rules apply to all learning organisations including Colleges, Local Authorities and all learning organisations who have secured a Call-off contract. Some learning organisations may be funded under both arrangements, but different payment rules will apply to each funding agreement.
- 1.3. The principal purpose of the ASF is to engage eligible adults and provide them with individually tailored programmes to support entry to and progression in work, an apprenticeship, or other further learning. In South Yorkshire, this means high quality provision that leads to improved opportunities, and better outcomes. With clear progression pathways for our residents, acquiring skills with a clear line of sight into both current and future local labour market opportunities.
- 1.4. The Authority is focused on securing positive outcomes for residents and as such it places significant importance on the quality of the initial assessment, prior attainment, and tailored learning plans, enabling residents to meet their current and future goals. Learning organisations should develop clear engagement and career pathways, supporting progression from Entry Level and Level 1 into Level 2 then progressing into Level 3 and beyond, focus should be on occupationally relevant skills in areas of economic and job growth.
- 1.5. The Authority is building upon the DFE's current 2025/2026 ASF Funding and Performance Management Rules with changes to reflect local commissioning decisions. These rules are technical in nature, produced for an audience of Colleges, Local Authority Adult and Tailored learning organisations, Independent Training Providers, and other organisations (known henceforth as learning organisations). They are a reference document for the purposes of delivering ASF funded learning for South Yorkshire residents for the academic year 2025/2026.

- 1.6. These rules do not apply to:
- Apprenticeships
 - Advanced Learner Loans
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
 - Pathways to work
 - Skills Bootcamps
 - Skills Bank
 - Any other government or MCA funded programmes unless explicitly confirmed by the Authority
- 1.7. This document forms part of the terms and conditions of funding and must be read in conjunction with the funding agreement and/or Call-off contract. Learning organisations must operate within the terms and conditions of the funding agreement/Call-off contract and the ILR specification. Failure to do so is a breach of the funding agreement with us.
- 1.8. The ASF funding rates and rules will be regularly reviewed, and learning organisations will be notified of any changes. Learning organisations must have due regard to the Authority's priorities as informed by the SYMCA Skills Strategy ([Skills-Strategy-March-2024.pdf](#) [\(southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk\)](#)) and the Local Skills Improvement Plan ([Local Skills Improvement Plan - Doncaster Chamber](#) [\(doncaster-chamber.co.uk\)](#)). Learning organisations should read these core documents and familiarise themselves with our ambitions and priorities.
- 1.9. There is an expectation that all learning organisations will engage with a place-based approach working collaboratively both across South Yorkshire and within each local authority area. The Authority expects all learning organisations and their supply chains to enable high quality learner pathways, both at a local level and across South Yorkshire.
- 1.10. All information, including hyperlinks were correct when this document was published, and the Authority reserves the right to make changes to these rules.

Understanding the terminology

- 1.11. The term 'we' is used in this document it is referring to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA).
- 1.12. When we refer to 'you' or 'learning organisations', this includes Colleges, Higher Education Institutions, Training Organisations, Local Authorities, and other organisations who will receive funding from us to deliver education and training to residents of South Yorkshire. We will use the generic term 'you' or 'learning organisation' unless the requirements only apply to a specific learning organisation type.
- 1.13. We use the term 'funding agreement' to include:

- Grant Funding Agreements (grant agreements with locally based colleges and Local Authorities within South Yorkshire and certain other learning organisations with a base in South Yorkshire that are s.28 designated with a proven track record of delivery);
 - Framework contracts and related Call-off contracts;
 - Individually procured contracts.
- 1.14. We use the terms 'resident' and 'learner' to cover those South Yorkshire residents whose provision is funded by the Authority. Eligible Residents will have a post code which confirms they reside in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, or Sheffield for the duration of their learning. The DFE will release a file with eligible postcodes here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uplift-factors-and-postcode-files>
- 1.15. We use the term 'provision' or 'learning' to refer to all learning that we fund, whether it is a regulated qualification or non-regulated qualification as detailed in the Find a Learning Aim Service - <https://submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/find-a-learning-aim/> or as agreed with the Authority.
- 1.16. If we refer to 'qualifications', these will be from the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) or an Access to Higher Education Diploma recognised and regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).
- 1.17. If we refer to 'learning aims', we mean a single episode of learning which could be a regulated qualification, a component of a regulated qualification or non-regulated learning.
- 1.18. If we refer to 'programmes' we mean a coherent package of learning which may include regulated qualifications, components of regulated qualifications or non-regulated learning with clearly stated aims supporting agreed outcomes.
- 1.19. You can contact us at ASFcontracts@southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk or you can contact your nominated Grant/Contract Manager as detailed in your contract.
- 1.20. We may refer to this document as 'funding rules' or 'the rules'.

2. Principles of funding

- 2.1 ASF funding must be considered in the broader skills funding and policy landscape, which encompasses, local projects such as UKSPF, Skills Bank, Skills Bootcamps and national initiatives including apprenticeships, Learner Loans, HE activity and additional funding and provision made available as part of SYMCA's Skills Strategy. Learning Organisations should ensure that they assess a learner's needs against the full range of provision available and identify a programme of learning most likely to support progression.
- 2.2 These funding rules apply to all Residents starting new learning aims on or after 1st

August 2025 who are a resident within South Yorkshire at the commencement of learning for Colleges and Learning Organisations with a Grant Funding Agreement or Call-off contract. You must check the eligibility of the learner as we will not fund learning for an individual whilst they remain ineligible. You must not fund a learner who is unable to complete a learning aim or programme of study in the time available.

- 2.3 Residents continuing their learning from the 2024/2025 funding year who were a resident within South Yorkshire at the commencement of learning will continue to be funded through the SYMCA. You will be required to ensure that the funding is spent in accordance with the SYMCA's 2025/2026 Funding and Performance Management Rules.
- 2.4 You must not transfer, cross or double fund learning supported by devolved ASF for South Yorkshire residents with:
- ASF from national DFE funds;
 - ASF from other devolved budgets;
 - Apprenticeships;
 - 19+ Free Courses for Jobs;
 - Advanced learner loans bursary fund;
 - Advanced learner loan facility.
 - Skills Bootcamps:
 - UKSPF;
 - Any other training provision funded by SYMCA or the Government unless explicitly confirmed by the Authority.
- 2.5 You must complete learner records accurately, including the resident's Unique Learner Number (ULN) field, in order to access Authority funding. As South Yorkshire's overall ASF allocation is calculated by Government based on residency within the Authority area, it is particularly important that, as part of your initial assessment, you ensure the resident's postcode relates to where the individual resides at the start of their programme of learning and where they expect to be living for the duration of that learning. Should any changes occur in year the Learner Record Service information must be updated.
- 2.6 You must hold evidence to assure the Authority that you are using the funding appropriately. Most evidence will be generated from your normal business processes such as completion of the ILR. We retain the right to request performance management information and related evidence as part of our ongoing risk-based performance management process.

- 2.7 We expect high quality provision delivering measurable impact on the progression and outcomes for our residents and value for money for the public purse.
- 2.8 The Authority supports sub-contracting where it:
- Extends the breadth and reach of provision to under-represented or hard to reach residents, provides opportunities to offer small scale, niche, or specialist provision; or
 - Encourages employers to recruit and develop their workforce.
- 2.9 You must take your own legal advice about the impact of the Public Procurement Act 2023 on your recruitment of delivery Sub-contractors and have this advice available for inspection by us on request. If your organisation does not apply a rigorous sub-contracting due diligence process, we will review your funding arrangements and limit your ability to sub-contract provision.
- 2.10 A maximum of 20% management fee per sub-contracted learning organisation can be applied.
- 2.11 A maximum of 25% of a learning organisations total allocation can be sub-contracted. The only exception to this is for provision delivered by Local Authorities where we recognise the benefits of working with the voluntary and community sector within a local authority area.
- 2.12 Please note that ASF and FCFJ have separate funding requirements. As such the 25% maximum allowed under subcontracting arrangements is by funding stream, not total value of allocation should you have allocations for both.
- 2.13 For the purposes of 2025/2026 delivery SYMCA is not asking for an additional external audit on sub-contracted provision. This will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 2.14 Additional information on sub-contracting can be found at section 10 of this document and within your Grant Agreement or Call-off contract.
- 2.15 For both ASF and FCFJ the Authority has a minimum grant or contract value of £100,000. We may at our discretion consider on a case-by-case basis contracts under this value only if there is a strong demonstration of strategic fit to local priorities and/or the provision is niche in nature.
- 2.16 We will in advance of the 1st August 2025:
- For any new learning organisations starting delivery in 2025/2026 we will undertake additional onboarding activities which may include (but are not limited to) teams and face to face sessions with SYMCA officers;
 - Undertake an initial review of all learning organisations including checks on Ofsted grading;
 - Undertake a due diligence exercise;

- Agree a Delivery Plan (the value of which forms part of your grant or Call-off contract);
- Develop and agree a payment schedule.

2.17 The action undertaken in 2.17 will inform our performance management arrangements, which will apply to your funding agreement in 2025/2026 and will also be set out in further detail in our Performance Management Framework document for 2025/2026. This will be published on our website.

Funding rates and formula

2.18 You can access this information in our ASF: Funding Rates and Formula document 2025/2026. This will be published on our website.

Fees and charging

2.19 You must not make compulsory charges relating to the direct costs of delivering a learning aim to residents we fully fund, including those with a statutory 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.

2.20 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.

Qualifying days for funding

2.21 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 our ASF: Funding Rates and Formula document 2025/2026 (this will be published on the Authority's website). This does not apply where the learner achieves the learning aim.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

2.22 A learner could have prior learning that has been previously accredited by an awarding organisation or could be formally recognised and count towards 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 in regard to 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.

- 2.23 We would not expect RPL or prior attainment to be used against the whole qualification, this is exemption rather than RPL.
- 2.24 You must not use prior learning to reduce funding for English and maths qualifications up to and including Level 2 or essential digital skills qualifications (EDSQs) up to and including Level 1. It is essential that the initial assessment is followed by diagnostic assessment to underpin a tailored programme of learning to address needs.
- 2.25 If a learner enrolls on an advanced subsidiary (AS) Level qualification followed by an advanced (A) level, you must reduce the funding claimed for the A Level to take account of the prior study of the AS Level and record this in the 'Funding adjustment for prior learning' field in the ILR. More information is available here - [Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\) technical documents, guidance and requirements \(submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk\)](https://submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk)

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

- 2.26 Guided Learning is the activity of a learner being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training (including placement, onsite or practical education or training) under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, with the simultaneous presence of the learner and that person in the same physical or virtual space. This could include, but is not limited to, simultaneous presence: in a classroom, in a virtual classroom or breakout room, on site, placement, or other physical learning environment.
- 2.27 GLH can include learners being taught content in the same physical or virtual space (such as a classroom style delivery), as well as undertaking project work, workshops and assessments which are under the regular guidance, supervision and support of a tutor i.e. the tutor is 'circulating', checking in on groups/learners, offering advice, guidance and feedback, asking prompt questions to stimulate ideas, getting learners on the right path etc. This can also include work-based activities and coaching and mentoring among others.
- 2.28 GLH does not cover examples where learners are instructed to do a project independently, in groups or alone where the tutor is not regularly supporting or interacting in the ways described above i.e. it does not include time spent on unsupervised preparation or study, whether at home or otherwise. It also does not include optional, drop-in sessions that learners can book in addition to the planned guided learning hours set out. It does not include watching recordings from live, or prerecorded sessions.
- 2.29 Where guided learning hours delivered are less than 75% of the hours on 'Find a Learning Aim' SYMCA would expect to see a justification within the learner file for any learning aim that falls below 75%.

- 2.30 Where GLH are less than 75% than the published rate on 'Find a Learning Aim' we expect all learning organisations to reduce funding claimed proportionally for RPL where this is applicable.
- 2.31 For the 2025/2026 academic year SYMCA will not be introducing a minimum GLH requirement as part of contracts and/or funding agreements. This will be reviewed during 2025/2026 with any changes expected to apply from the start of the 2026/2027 academic year.
- 2.32 For learning organisations delivering non-regulated programmes and/or tailored learning the learner file must evidence 100% of the delivery costs claimed for.

Breaks in learning

- 2.33 You and the learner can agree to suspend learning while the learner takes a break from learning. This allows the learner to continue later with the same eligibility that applied when they first started their learning. We will not fund a learner during a break in learning.
- 2.34 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 in learning can be found in the ILR provider support manual for 2025/2026. [Individualised Learner Record \(ILR\) technical documents, guidance and requirements \(submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- 2.35 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.
- 2.36 Checks on learner eligibility must be undertaken again for all learners following a break in learning which is over a 6 month period. This must be kept within the learner file.
- 2.37 You must not use a break in learning for short-term absences, such as holidays or short-term illness.

Residency eligibility

- 2.38 You must check the eligibility of a learner at the start of each learning aim or programme and only claim funding if the resident is eligible and has a post code which confirms they reside in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, or Sheffield. This can be checked here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uplift-factors-and-postcode-files>

2.39 Additional information on eligibility is contained in Annex A.

3. Local Flexibilities for 2025/2026

3.1 The Authority has approval (subject to strategic fit and affordability) to take forward a number of additional flexibilities in the 2025/2026 academic year. Some of these flexibilities were applicable from the 1st August 2024 whilst a number will be developed throughout the 2025/2026 academic year in conjunction with learning organisations.

Continuation of funding flexibilities in place during the previous year 2024/2025

- 3.2 Development and introduction of Level 4 and Level 5 capacity building courses.
- 3.3 Development and introduction of units and shorter qualifications to allow learning organisations to develop programmes including units and short qualifications combined.
- 3.4 Offer pre-Level 1 English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL) to support learners not yet ready to undertake regulated ESOL aims.
- 3.5 We will continue to offer full funded legal entitlement courses for all learners 19+ (currently 19-23 only) undertaking English and maths and (where applicable) up to Level 2 to encourage take up of legal entitlement courses and enable more disadvantaged learners to receive fully funded provision.
- 3.6 We will continue to fully fund Maths and English courses to those with previous qualifications, who need to refresh their skills or learn new ones.
- 3.7 We are increasing the low earnings threshold for Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) only from £30,476.96 to £34,977.43 to enable progression. This is based on the South Yorkshire median wage data.

Future Changes to Funding Flexibilities during and/or post 2025/2026

3.8 Introduce an outcomes framework to enable bespoke tracking and increase positive outcomes for learners, to support the reduction of unknown outcomes (49% for 2022/2023).

- 3.9 **Responsive funding uplifts** – 20% uplift for specific high priority courses including Support Workers and Teaching Assistants.
- 3.10 **Digital Skills** – piloting engagement outputs for essential digital skills.
- 3.11 **Introduce a standard of minimum guided learning hours (GLH)** to promote high quality training and skills in line with awarding body standards, providing South Yorkshire residents with the skills to succeed and progress.

4. What we fund

Eligible Non-Regulated learning

- 4.1 Where you are contracted to deliver non-regulated learning via Lot 2 and tailored learning, you must ensure it is eligible for funding. The learning could include:
- independent living skills or engagement learning supporting adults to operate confidently and effectively in life and work;
 - locally commissioned and/or locally developed basic knowledge and skills needed to access technical qualifications;
 - employability and labour market re-entry;
 - locally commissioned and/or locally devised technical education short courses (also known as taster sessions);
 - tailored learning courses, please refer to Annex C for additional information;
 - basic skills digital courses, including where learners are unable to undertake digital skills qualification specified in the digital entitlement for those aged 19 or older.
- 4.2 The eligibility principles we apply to non-regulated learning are as follows:
- it must not be provision linked to UK visa requirements;
 - it must not be provision linked to statutory employer requirements (including a licence to practise) unless there is an agreed concession of the type described in Clause 3.1 in place;
 - it must not be vendor-specific provision, linked to a particular employer or commercial system;
 - it must not be 'engagement' activity undertaken;
 - it must not be learning, for example, 'induction to college', that should be part of a resident's experience;
 - it must not be a non-regulated version of a regulated qualification;
 - It must not be above notional Level 2. (that is at notional Level 3 or 4 or above);
 - at notional Level 2 it must focus on technical provision;
 - where appropriate for the resident, you can deliver local flexibility provision alongside a legal entitlement qualification; and

- residents aged 19 to 23 progressing towards their first full level 2, must undertake learning at entry and/or Level 1 only from funding flexibility.
- 4.3 Where you are delivering non-regulated learning, you must ensure you have appropriate and robust quality assurance processes in place, such as 'The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle'. Further information on RARPA is available from the Learning and Work Institute <https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/rarpa/>

Approved qualifications

- 4.4 Where you deliver regulated qualifications and/or their components, you must ensure they are eligible for ASF funding and available on [Find a Learning Aim](#), unless agreed in writing by exception with the Authority.
- 4.5 Where you deliver approved qualifications and/or their components you must ensure that learners are registered for the qualifications and/or components 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.
- 4.6 You must make sure that learning is eligible for funding before the Learner starts. Find a Learning Aim contains details of eligible regulated qualifications, qualification components and non-regulated learning aims OR programmes of learning agreed with the Authority that have then been entered on the 'Find a Learning Aim' service.
- 4.7 If the National Academic Recognition Information Centre or UK ENIC (<https://www.ecctis.com/>) have confirmed the authenticity of a qualification gained overseas and confirmed it is comparable/compatible with a regulated qualification in England, currently part of the Level 2 and Level 3 legal entitlement, the resident will be deemed to have achieved their first Level 2 and/or Level 3 qualification. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/qualifications-approved-for-public-funding>),
- 4.8 Certain qualifications that are linked to occupational regulations or a licence to practice may be eligible if agreed as part of your Delivery Plan. You can find more information about these qualifications at the qualification's website (<https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk>).
- 4.9 Before delivering a component unit of a qualification, you must check with the awarding organisation they provide a Learner registration facility, and the resident can achieve it alone or as part of accumulating achievement towards a full qualification.
- 4.10 You must provide accurate unique learner number (ULN) information to awarding organisations and ensure all information you use to register learners for qualifications is correct. You can find more information in the Learner Records

Service (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-access-your-personallearning-record>) guidance.

National funding rates

- 4.11 For 2025/2026 the Authority are adopting the DFE's national funding rates for all ASF legal entitlements and core skills and learning and learner support.
- 4.12 National funding rates also support the delivery of flexible tailored provision for adults, including qualifications and components of these and/or non-regulated learning, up to Level 2. This will be referred to in the rules as the 'National Funded Offer'. This funding is full or co-funded depending on the learner's age and circumstances. Details on full and co-funding can be found within the graphs below paragraph 4.19.
- 4.13 Where appropriate for the learner and where it does not duplicate regulated learning for example, literacy and numeracy regulated aims whilst undertaking non-regulated tailored learning literacy and numeracy, you can deliver the National Funded Offer alongside a legal entitlement qualification. Details of the courses available under this offer are included here - <https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk/>.
- 4.14 Learning organisations delivering flexible tailored learning non-regulated qualifications must have a contract for tailored learning to do so.
- 4.15 Learners aged 19-23 progressing towards their first full Level 2, must undertake it from the National Funded Offer.

National Funded Offer and legal entitlements

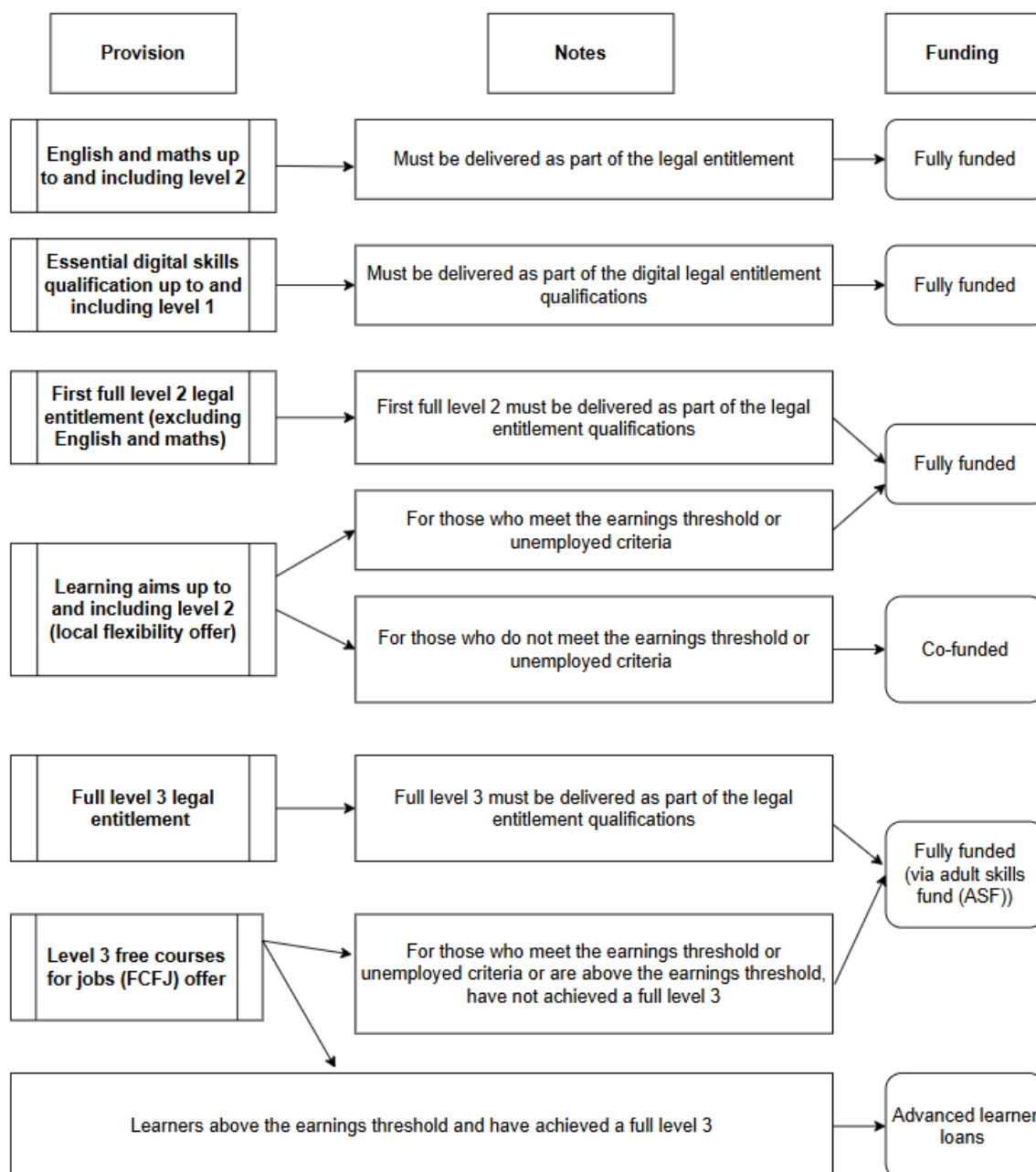
- 4.16 We will fully fund learners who are aged 19-23 and have not previously achieved a full level 2 if they choose a qualification from the level 2 legal entitlement list - <https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk>. You must not charge them any course fees.
- 4.17 Any other learners aged 19 and over wishing to undertake a qualification at level 2 or below (either from the legal entitlement list or the local flexibility offer) will be fully funded if they meet the definition of being below the earnings threshold or unemployed. If they do not meet the definition of being below the earnings threshold or unemployed they will be co-funded.

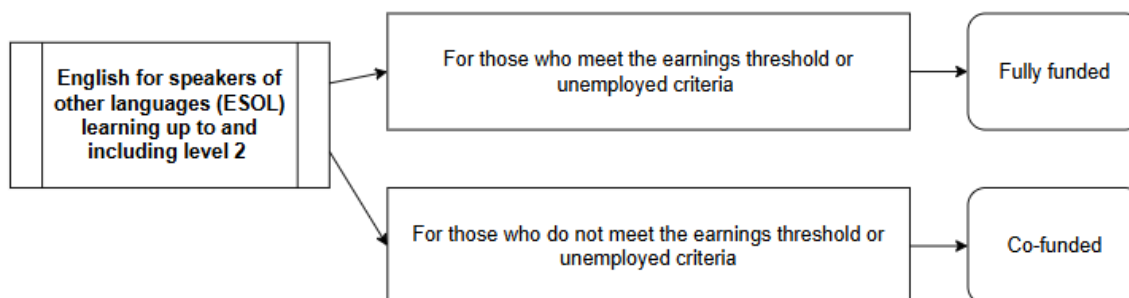
Contribution tables

- 4.18 The level of contribution for South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority's funded ASF is set out in the table below, please note Level 3 provision delivered to 19-23 year olds will be funded from your Free Courses for Jobs funding where you have an allocation, not the ASF as in previous years.

- 4.19 For those learners falling into the 'co-funded' categories below, the SYMCA expects that there is a minimum funding contribution towards the costs of learning of at least 50% of the course cost (before any uplifts are applied).

SYMCA contribution for ASF funded for 19–23-year-olds





SYMCA Contribution for ASF funded for those 24+

Provision	Notes	Funding
English and maths up to and including level 2	Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement	Fully funded
Essential digital skills qualification up to and including level 1	Must be delivered as part of the digital legal entitlement qualifications	Fully funded
Level 2 and learning up to a level 2 (local flexibility and access to level 2 legal entitlement qualifications 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 learners 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	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

Legal Entitlements

- 4.20 The ASF currently supports four legal entitlements, which enable full funding for eligible adult residents. These are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. If a resident meets the legal entitlement eligibility criteria, you must not charge them any course fees.
- 4.21 The current legal entitlements enable eligible residents 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 attained 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
 - EDSQs or Digital FSQs, up to and including Level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below Level 1.
- 4.22 The legal entitlements for Level 2 and Level 3 follow the definition of fullness in the full Level 2 and full Level 3 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 resident and the learner should be made aware of their entitlement rights and progression routes available on completing an entitlement qualification.

English and maths for those aged 19 or older

- 4.23 We will fully fund eligible learners for the following qualifications:
- GCSE English and/or or maths.
 - Functional Skills English or maths from Entry to Level 2;
 - Stepping-stone qualifications (including components, where applicable) in English or maths approved by the Department for Education.
- 4.24 To be eligible for the legal entitlement the individual must meet the residency eligibility in Annex A, 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 of higher level) or have been assessed as having an existing skills 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
- 4.25 If a learner wants to 'retake' their GCSE English and maths qualification because

they did not achieve a grade 4 or higher (C), or higher, we will not fund the learner to only resit the exam.

- 4.26 You must not enrol residents on qualifications, which are not necessary for progressing towards a GCSE or Functional Skills Level 2. It is essential that the initial assessment is followed by diagnostic assessment to underpin a tailored programme of learning to address needs.
- 4.27 You must not fund an apprentice for English and/or maths from the ASF.
- 4.28 You must not enrol individuals on qualifications which are not necessary for progressing towards a GCSE or Functional Skill level 2.
- 4.29 For those learning organisations who have a contract to deliver tailored learning we will fully fund non-regulated English and maths learning for Residents, including those assessed at Pre-Entry Level, aged 19 years and over with significant learning difficulties or disabilities as part of a personalised learning programme. Where assessment has identified the learner cannot undertake:
- GCSE English Language or maths,
 - Functional Skills English or maths from Entry to Level 2 or:
 - Stepping-stone qualifications (including components, where applicable) in English or maths approved by the Department for Education.
- 4.30 You must:
- Carry out a thorough initial assessment to determine a resident'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.
 - Offer CEIAG throughout the learners programme.
 - 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 were assessed and/or of which they have prior attainment and be able to provide evidence of this.
 - Deliver ongoing assessment to support learning; and
 - Record the evidence of all assessment outcomes in the Learner file.
- 4.31 The assessments must place a Learner's current skills levels within the level descriptors used for the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

Digital skills for those aged 19 and over

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

- Essential Digital Skills Qualification (EDSQ up to and including Level 1)
- 4.33 We will fully fund non-regulated learning for learners, including those assessed at pre-entry level with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities as part of a personalised learning programme, where assessment has clearly identified that the resident cannot undertake an Essential Digital Skills qualification approved by the Department for Education at Entry Level or Level 1.
- 4.34 This provision must be aligned with the national standards for essential digital skills (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-essential-digital-skills>) and must not be a non-regulated version of a regulated qualification (see rules for non-regulated learning).
- 4.35 You must:
- Carry out a thorough initial assessment using current assessment tools based on the national standards for essential digital skills Offer CEIAG throughout the learners programme.
 - 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 were assessed and be able to provide evidence of this:
 - Deliver ongoing assessment to support learning; and:
 - Record the evidence of all assessment outcomes in the evidence pack.
- 4.36 The assessments must place a learner's current skills levels within the level descriptors used for the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

- 4.37 We will fully fund provision for all residents aged 19 and over on the day they start their ESOL learning aim if learners are earning under the earnings threshold or are unemployed. We will fund ESOL learning up to and including Level 2.
- 4.38 Providers offering ESOL qualifications may need to deliver additional learning to residents that incurs additional cost above the qualification rate. You can access information on this in the ASF: Funding Rates and Formula and the subsequent related documents for 2025/2026 which are published on the Authority's website.

British Sign Language

- 4.39 We will fully fund any resident aged 19+ whose first language is BSL to study for a first qualification in BSL, up to and including Level 2, where there is no other appropriate funding available. Funding for BSL will be at the national rates. The following qualifications will be covered under this entitlement:
- Entry Level award in BSL (accredited by iBSL or ABC).
 - Level 1 certificate in BSL (accredited by Signature, iBSL or ABC); and

- Level 2 certificate in BSL (accredited by Signature, iBSL or ABC). Providers will be required to ensure if they intend to deliver this element, it must be included in their delivery plan and any agreement with the Authority will be confirmed in writing.

4.40 Details on how you claim this funding is included in Annex E. The impact of this change will be monitored and kept under review.

Full Level 2

- 4.41 Level 2 is the level of attainment which, is demonstrated by:
- A General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in five 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 here – https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-and-college-performance-measures?_ga=2.195388143.2128884714.1663254470-411273729.1637826888
- 4.42 If a learner, aged 19 to 23 has achieved a Level 2 qualification that was, at the time they started, or still is, classed as a full Level 2, any subsequent Level 2 qualifications will be co-funded. It will be fully funded if they, meet the definition of legal entitlement, unemployed or meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of a low income. Please email qualifications.approval@education.gov.uk if you need advice on a previous qualification's designation.

Full Level 3

- 4.43 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
 - Core maths at Level 3
 - Technical, or applied general qualification at Level 3, which meets the requirements for the 16 to 19 performance tables.
- 4.44 If a learner, has achieved a Level 3 qualification that was not classed as a full Level 3 at the time they started it but has since been classed as a full Level 3 and wants to enrol on any subsequent Level 3 qualification of any size, they may apply for an advanced learner loan (provided the qualification is designated for funding, and subject to learner eligibility conditions), or pay for their own learning.
- 4.45 A learner will be fully funded under the Level 3 adult offer if they, meet the definition of legal entitlement, unemployed or meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of a low income. Please see the contribution tables at paragraph

- 4.46 Please email qualifications.approval@education.gov.uk if you need advice on a previous qualification's designation.
- 4.47 For new linear AS and A Levels, where a learner enrolls on an AS qualification and continues with further study to take the A Level qualification in the same subject, you must record both the AS and A Level in the ILR. The AS learning aim will be funded separately to the A Level learning aim and you must adjust the funding in line with paragraph 2.23 – 2.26 Recognition of Prior learning

19 – 23 Adult Offer and the Level 3 legal entitlement

- 4.48 Eligible 19 to 23-year-old learners can access all qualifications from the Level 3 adult offer. If a learner aged 19 to 23 completes a qualification that is:
- Included on both the legal entitlement list and the Level 3 adult offer list they will have exercised their Level 3 legal entitlement. For more information on the eligibility criteria please refer to the tables at paragraph 4.19 onwards.

19+ Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ)

- 4.49 The Level 3 adult offer has been developed to support adults without an existing full Level 3 qualification. The offer includes:
- Level 3 qualifications which will support the development of new skills for adult learners and improve the prospects of eligible adults in the labour market. In particular, eligible adults aged 19+ can now access (subject to employment status and low earnings threshold) fully-funded Level 3 provision from the list of Level 3 free courses for jobs qualifications available via the DFE list of qualifications approved for funding ([DFE list of qualifications approved for funding](#))
 - Support funding: our 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 SYMCA ASF funding enables you to claim learning support and/or learner support funding to meet the additional needs of learners.
- 4.50 An uplift is payable at 2 different rates and follows the earnings methodology set out in our funding rates and formula document. This uplift should be used to support delivery of the Level 3 adult offer.
- 4.51 Only Level 3 qualifications included in this offer will attract an uplift. There may be additions to the list to ensure it meets the needs of the economy; we encourage providers to check availability regularly.

- 4.52 When qualifications are added to the list of qualifications included in this offer, they will become eligible for funding from that publication date and will not be backdated to the start of the Level 3 adult offer (1st April 2021) or the start of the funding year.
- 4.53 The mix and balance of the split between regulated delivery on the DFE approved list and additional SYMCA priority provision under ‘flexibilities’ is subject to prior approval by the Authority. The Authority will not fund provision not previously agreed for approval and in line with agreed delivery plans.
- 4.54 We will fully fund individuals as part of this offer where they:
- Are aged 19 or above on 31st August within the 2025/2026 funding year, enrol on the level 3 FCFJ qualifications approved for funding and meet the eligibility of being below the FCFJ low earnings criteria of £34,977.43 or are unemployed;
 - Are aged 19 – 23 on 31st August within funding year 2025/2026, enrol on the level 3 FCFJ qualification approved for funding and have not achieved a full Level 3 qualification, or above which meets the requirements set out in the full Level 3 section or;
- 4.55 Once a learner has achieved their qualification(s) in line with the paragraphs above, they will have exhausted their eligibility for the offer.
- 4.56 Please refer to Annex E which sets out how you should record the information needed to enable accurate payments to be made
- 4.57 You must not claim for ASF funding where learners are already being funded through an advanced learner loan (ALL), or Skills Bootcamp (where applicable), for qualifications that are in the Level 3 adult offer. The criteria for ALL can be found in the ALL funding rules 2025 to 2026.

Learning in the workplace

- 4.58 We will fund any regulated qualifications and/or learning aims which are delivered on site at an employee’s workplace. You must ensure they are approved for ASF funding and available on [find a learning aim](#).

The King’s Trust Team Programme

- 4.59 This is a 12-week course designed to improve confidence, motivation, and skills for eligible 16-25-year-olds. Each ‘team’ recruits a mix of young people of different abilities and backgrounds, including employees sponsored by their employer. The Authority fund the team programme, providers in partnership with the King’s Trust run and manage it on a local basis.

4.60 In order to deliver the Team Programme, you must get approval from the King's Trust. (<https://www.kingstrust.org.uk>). The Authority will fund the Team Programme eligible residents aged 19 to 25 through our ASF funding methodology. Please also refer to the Kings' Trust section in the ASF: Funding Rates and Formula for All Learning Organisations for 2025/2026.

Job outcome payments

4.61 For fully funded residents who are unemployed, we will pay 50% of the achievement payment if they start a job before achieving the learning aim. If the resident then achieves the learning aim, we will pay the remaining achievement payment. The following conditions apply:

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

What we will not fund

4.62 We will not fund:

- Qualifications, units, or learning aims that are not listed on the Find a Learning aim or on the DFE list of qualifications approved for funding manual. <https://submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/find-a-learning-aim/List> of DFE qualifications approved for funding on the <https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk/Search>
- Residents in custody. The Ministry of Justice funds prison education in England. Please note you can use ASF to fund individuals released on temporary licence as set out in the unemployed section.
- Any part of any learner's learning aim or programme that duplicates provision they have received from any other source
- Training through devolved 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 the apprenticeship funding rules for further information
 - 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.
- A resident to repeat the same regulated qualification where they have previously achieved it, unless it is for any GCSE where the learner has not achieved grade (C) or higher or Grade 4 or higher, or for English and maths

where the learner has been assessed in accordance with rule 3.29 that they have an existing skill level lower than grade 4 (even if they have previously achieved a GCSE or equivalent qualification in English or maths)

- A resident to sit or resit a learning aim assessment or examination where no extra learning takes place.
- Residents who are ineligible for funding.
- Residents whose Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is extended by the local authority beyond their 25th birthday. The local authority must continue to provide top-up funding and contract directly with the institution.

5. Who we will fund

- 5.1 We will fund individuals who are South Yorkshire residents, who on the first day of learning within the 2025/2026 Funding Year are aged 19 or older on the 31st August 2025.
- 5.2 You must check the eligibility of the learner and their residency ensuring they reside within the local authority areas of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield at the start of each learning aim and only claim funding for eligible Residents unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Authority. Please refer to the following:
- Learner Eligibility – Annex A of this document
 - Learner Postcode - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uplift-factors-and-postcode-files>
- 5.3 The age of the resident on 31st August in the funding year determines whether their learning is funded through the Authority's ASF funding methodology (for individuals aged 19 and over), or the DFE's young people's funding methodology (for individuals aged 16 to 19 and those aged 19 to 24 with an Education Health & Care Plan).
- 5.4 All individuals aged 19 or over on 31st August who are continuing a programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') will be funded through the DFE's young people's funding methodology (for 16 to 19-year olds).
- 5.5 To be funded by the Authority, on the first day of learning a resident must be aged 19 or older on 31st August within the 2025/2026 funding year. The resident must be able to achieve the learning aim or programme of study in line with their initial assessment and individual learning plan.
- 5.6 Residents will be eligible for funding for the whole of the learning aim or programme if they are eligible for funding at the start, even if the duration is for over one academic year. You must reassess the learner eligibility for any further learning they start.

Unemployed residents

- 5.7 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 £1,534 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 the Ministry of Justice
- 5.8 Learning Organisations may also use their discretion to fully fund other residents if any of the following apply. The learner:
- Receives other state benefits (not included in the list above) and their take-home pay (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is less than £952 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £1,534 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
 - Wants to be employed, or progress into more sustainable employment, 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 £1,534 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner), and you are satisfied identified learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs
- 5.9 This evidence should be retained in a learner's evidence pack.

Residents aged 19+ (including English, maths, ESOL and Digital)

- 5.10 We will fully fund learners aged 19+, including residents who are employed on the day they start the following learning:
- Qualifications defined within the legal entitlement
 - First full Level 2, and/or:
 - First full Level 3 as part of the legal entitlement
 - Local flexibility provision;
- 5.11 We will co-fund provision up to, and including, a Level 2 for learners who have already achieved a full Level 2 or above, who are employed. The low earnings flexibility may apply.
- 5.12 Please see paragraphs 4.37 to 4.38 in relation to ESOL.

Residents aged 24 or older (excluding English, maths and ESOL)

- 5.13 We will fully fund residents aged 24 or older on the day they start provision up to, and including, a Level 2, if they are unemployed. In addition, we will fund qualifications from the Level 3 adult offer, if learners do not have a full Level 3 qualification and they meet the eligibility criteria.
- 5.14 We will fully fund residents aged 24 or older on the day they start provision up to Level 2/ GCSE/or equivalent qualifications in English and maths. For those learners who need to refresh skills or learn new ones. Learners must be assessed in accordance with rule 4.22 that they lack sufficient numeracy or literacy skills to operate in everyday life.
- 5.15 If you have secured a Lot 1 Call-off contract where you can fully fund residents undertaking a full Level 2 please follow the guidance set out in Annex E.
- 5.16 Otherwise, we will co-fund all other learners aged 24 years and older for provision up to and including a Level 2.
- 5.17 Please see paragraphs 4.37 to 4.38 in relation to ESOL.

Residents with learning difficulties or disabilities

- 5.18 The Authority will fund residents with learning difficulties and disabilities as set out in the Apprenticeship, Skills, and Children Learning Act 2009 and securing reasonable facilities for education and training suitable to the requirements of persons who are 19 and over set out in para 4.1. This includes residents with an identified learning difficulty or disability who have previously had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) plan and have reached the age of 25.
- 5.19 The young people's funding methodology will apply to learners aged 19 to 24, who have an EHC plan and require provision and support costs.

Residents with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

- 5.20 To access provision and support costs you must inform us before the start of the 2025/2026 funding year where a resident:
- has reached the age of 25 and has not completed their programme of learning as set out in their EHC plan by the end of the previous funding year; or
 - will reach the age of 25 in the funding year, where their EHC plan is not extended by their local authority to allow them to complete their programme of learning.
- 5.21 The resident must:
- have an EHC plan that confirms their needs could only be met by the training

- organisation they are, or were, attending
- continue to make progress on the programme of learning as set out in their EHC plan.

5.22 We will not fund residents whose EHC plan is extended by the local authority beyond their 25th birthday. The local authority must continue to provide top-up funding and contract directly with the institution.

5.23 If a learner has an EHC Plan you must report this in the 'Learner Funding and Monitoring' fields in the ILR.

Residents in receipt of low earnings/low income

5.24 The Authority has set a low-earnings threshold salary level to **£34,977.43** for level 3 Free Courses for Jobs to enable progression. For all other learners we will maintain the Real Living Wage or the equivalent of the new real living wage of £12.60 per hour, and full time equivalent e.g., £24,570 for 37.5-hour week. The salary level will be kept under review.

5.25 You must be satisfied the resident meets the eligibility criteria and note the amount of the real living wage in paragraph 5.24.

5.26 You must have seen evidence of the resident's gross annual wages in these circumstances. This could be a wage slip within 3 months of the resident's learning start date, or a current employment contract, which states gross monthly/annual wages. You must record what evidence you have seen, with a signature from the member of staff to acknowledge the said evidence. Please note this is not an exhaustive list but you must have audit evidence on file to support your decision to award full funding to an individual who would normally be eligible for co-funding. Please refer to Annex E which sets out how you should record the information needed to ensure accurate payments to be made.

5.27 To claim full funding for learners who meet the low earnings threshold, excluding those on qualifications included in the Level 3 free courses for jobs offer, you must use LDM code 391 and FFI code 1.

Learners in The Armed Forces

5.28 We will fund Armed Forces personnel, Ministry of Defence (MoD) personnel or civil and crown servant's resident in South Yorkshire who meet the criteria in section 3, and where learning takes place in South Yorkshire. We will class members of the British armed forces on postings outside of the EU, including their family members, as ordinarily resident in the UK.

5.29 We will not fund family members that remain outside of England

Learners temporarily resident outside of South Yorkshire

5.30 Learners' temporarily resident in areas outside of devolved authority areas and who work outside of the South Yorkshire area as part of their job, are eligible for Combined Authority funded ASF providing some of the learning takes place in South Yorkshire.

5.31 Learning organisations cannot claim for the additional expense of delivering learning outside of South Yorkshire.

Learners who live in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland

5.32 Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own funding arrangements. You must develop arrangements with the relevant devolved administration if you are planning to deliver a significant quantity of learning to learners who do not live in South Yorkshire.

Who we will not fund - residents not eligible for funding

5.33 You must not claim funding for individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria set out above. Examples of individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria include the following. Please note this list is not exhaustive:

- Those who are in the UK without authority or lawful status.
- Those who are resident in the United Kingdom on student visa unless they are eligible through meeting any other of the categories described in Annex A.
- Those whose biometric residence permit or residence permit imposes a study prohibition or restriction on the individual.
- Learning organisations must not fund learners who do not have enough time left on their visa to complete the course and/or programme of learning and who do not intend to or will not be eligible to re-new their visa.
- Where a course continues past a learners visa expiry date learning organisations may at their discretion fund that learner only where they have a high degree of certainty that the learners intends and will be eligible to re-new their visa.

5.34 Armed Forces family members that remain outside of South Yorkshire.

5.35 The Authority will not fund a resident whilst on a break on learning:

- If a resident starts a learning aim or programme and is not eligible for funding, we will not fund the learning while they remain ineligible.

- We will not fund learners whose EHC plan is extended by the local authority beyond their 25th birthday. The local authority must continue to provide top-up funding and contract directly with the institution.

6. Learning and Learner support

Learning Support

- 6.1 The ASF's over-arching aim is to support as many eligible adult residents as possible to access learning. Some residents will need additional support to start or stay in learning. Where you identify that a learner has a learning difficulty or disability, or a barrier to their learning, your ASF allocation enables you to claim learning support and/or learner support funding to meet the additional needs of residents.
- 6.2 Support for learners undertaking tailored learning is funded from within the tailored learning allocation. Any costs claimed must be based on actual costs incurred and supported by evidence within the learner file.
- 6.3 Learning support is available to meet the cost of putting in place a reasonable adjustment, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, Equality Act 2010 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>) for residents who have an identified learning difficulty or disability, to achieve their learning goal. Learning support must not be used to deal with everyday difficulties that are not directly associated with a learner's learning on their programme.
- 6.4 You must:
 - Carry out a thorough assessment to identify the support the learner needs.
 - Agree and record the outcome of your assessment in the learner file.
 - 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.
 - Record all outcomes on the evidence pack and keep all evidence of the assessment of the needs, planned and actual delivery, and:
 - 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. 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.
- 6.5 You can claim learning support at a fixed monthly rate if you report it in the ILR. You must use the EAS if your costs exceed this monthly rate and you must keep evidence of these costs. You can claim learning support if learning continues past

the planned end date and the learner needs continued support. There is an exception when you may claim the entire cost through the EAS. This would be where the learning aim is delivered in less than one calendar month. This does not apply to any non-formula funded tailored learning.

- 6.6 All learning support claims must be reported in the ILR. To claim any costs that exceed the fixed monthly rate, up to £19,000 you must also use the earnings adjustment statement [EAS](#). For any costs over £19,000 please see the next section for exceptional learning support.
- 6.7 You must keep evidence of these additional costs in the evidence pack. You must only record the excess amount on the EAS, not the whole learning support cost. The only exception to this would be where a learning aim is delivered in less than one calendar month, in this case you may claim the entire cost through EAS.

Exceptional learning support claims above £19,000

- 6.8 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 the amount above £19,000 as exceptional learning support (ELS). The amount up to £19,000 should be claimed via the fixed monthly rate claim process set out above.
- 6.9 Residents 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.
- 6.10 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 an ELS claim form to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exceptional-learning-support-cost-form> copying in your Contract Manager.
- 6.11 To claim exceptional learning support for a learner aged 19 to 24 you must confirm why the resident does not have an EHC plan. This should be a letter or email from the learner's local authority stating the reasons(s) why the resident does not need an EHC plan.
- 6.12 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 the amount for your costs of providing the support to the learner and not include any indirect costs or overheads.

Learner support

- 6.13 This funding is included in your ASF grant or contract and will be paid as part of your agreed payment profile. This is not an additional amount of funding to your confirmed allocation total.
- 6.14 Please see Annex B for additional information on learner and learning support.

Residential Access Fund

- 6.15 Residential Access Funding may only be claimed where there is prior agreement with the Authority to deliver residential learning as part of your ASF or FCFJ allocation.
- 6.16 Please see Annex B for additional information.

ICT Devices and Connectivity

- 6.17 Please see Annex B.

7. South Yorkshire Framework Procured Provision

- 7.1 The Authority is committed to maintaining stability in the system so will continue to mirror DFE's ASF (where appropriate) current national funding rates and formula, learning aims and qualifications as well as delivering statutory entitlement learning as per our devolved responsibilities.
- 7.2 The Authority is applying the National Funding rates to Lot 1 provision only, and you must make sure that the resident and the learning aim or programme are eligible for funding. You must also refer to our ASF: funding rates and formula document 2025/2026 and Annex E which sets out how you should record the information needed to enable accurate payments to be made.

Framework Agreement Lot 1 Unemployed, Employed and Self-Employed residents.

- 7.3 This lot is for provision to support South Yorkshire residents looking to reskill or upskill by gaining qualifications, and is complementary or additional to any national/regional or locally funded activity and should include at least the following activities:
- Learner must be 19+ - First qualification, Legal entitlements, Maths & English, RQF, Regulated learning only.
 - Robust IAG – use of learner and learning support.
 - Unemployed & SWAPS - Inactive – linking/progressing into Apprenticeships, UKSPF, Skills Bootcamps, tailored learning support and other provision.
 - Employed, self-employed, at risk of redundancy.
 - Employed - Priority SSA's – **Health/Care, public services, Construction/built**

environment. Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Science and Maths, Information. Communication Technology/Digital & Green skills.

- 7.4 If you have secured a contract for this provision, you should submit the data through the ILR and it can include up to Level 2 qualifications in English, maths, and digital. reflecting the current national entitlement (as a minimum).
- 7.5 Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP)- Information on how you should deliver the SWAPs will have been agreed as part of your Call-off contract are set out below.
- 7.6 The SWAP must be linked to our key employment sectors. 1- Health, Public Services and Care; 4 - Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies; 5 - Construction, Planning, and the Built Environment; 6 – Information and Communication Technology; 7 - Retail and Commercial Enterprise and 15 - Business, Administration and Law.
- 7.7 The SWAP can last up to six weeks and will have 4 components;
- Pre employment training
 - Work experience
 - A guaranteed job interview
 - Licences to practice (directly related to a job)
 - Outcome payment of £250 for sustained employment of 13 weeks.
- 7.8 Only the pre-employment training element and the outcome payment can be funded through ASF. Jobcentre Plus fund the other components and will pay any travel and childcare costs while claimants are on the work experience placement. Unless the authority as part of your funding agreement has agreed an additional flexibility.
- 7.9 Learning organisations who are successful; will be part of the SWAP local design process, working closely with local JCP colleagues enable referrals to be made.
- 7.10 You must record in the evidence pack that you have seen the claimant's SWAP referral notification issued by Jobcentre Plus setting out start date and times for their ASF funded pre-employment training.
- 7.11 Please refer to Annex E which sets out how you should record the information needed to enable accurate payments to be made.

Framework Agreement Lot 2 Reducing Barriers - Person Centred Approach model

- 7.12 The focus will be on residents who face complex and/or multiple barriers providing person centred support, and motivation to enable them to develop confidence and resilience and be more active members of their local community.

- Learners must be 19+, Non-regulated.
- Robust IAG – use of learner and learning support.
- Moving hard to reach residents into work, such as inactive, over 50's, NEETS, ethnic minority groups, male/female into underrepresented industries, learners with disabilities etc.
- Progression in/from eligible ASF training courses in Lot 1, FCFJ, Grant & Tailored Learning provision.
- Recognising specialist provision.
- Deliver non-regulated programmes to support in work progression.
- Filling the gaps of Grant provision and Adult Tailored Learning.
- On-going support to increase achievements and progressions onto higher level. regulated learning aims, into employment linking, Apprenticeships, UKSPF, Skills Bootcamps, community learning support and other provision. Should not duplicate - unemployed and economically Inactive – UKSPF, and other programmes working hand in hand.

7.13 Provision could include but is not limited to a focussed person-centred support with individually tailored programmes and consistent with the non-regulated training. New approaches to flexible delivery and progression/destination tracking for up to a maximum of three years. Innovative end to end delivery models for specific cohorts of residents in each Local Combined Authority area within South Yorkshire

8. South Yorkshire's adult education offer – tailored learning

- 8.1 The Authority will not be following the DFE approach for 2025/2026 by allowing all learning organisations to utilise 5% of their allocations to deliver tailored learning. This will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 8.2 This section only applies to grant providers based in South Yorkshire and with a confirmed allocation from the Authority. Delivery plans will support the development of a South Yorkshire adult education offer, building on the excellent provision being delivered to residents in some of our most disadvantaged communities and those with complex and challenging lives.
- 8.3 The direction of travel is to engage residents in our most deprived and rural communities and enable them to connect to the world of learning and progress into employment.
- 8.4 Please also refer to Annex C for further information on tailored learning.

Funding in 2025/2026

- 8.5 Funding Model 11 should only be used for tailored learning aims (see Annex E). These will be agreed as part of your Delivery Plan.
- 8.6 You will be paid in line with the monthly payment profile agreed alongside your Delivery Plan and you must attribute costs to eligible learners up to the value of

your grant, including the costs of delivery and any learning or learner support costs, and these must be recorded in the learner's evidence pack.

- 8.7 You must not use non-formula tailored learning funding for learning that is eligible for funding through an Advanced Learner Loan or apprenticeship.
- 8.8 SYMCA will be asking those providers who are delivering tailored learning provision to submit additional detail on their tailored learning claims at regular intervals during the 2025/2026 academic year as before. Details of this will be included within the Payment and Performance Management Framework document which forms part of your 2025/2026 agreement.

9. South Yorkshire's adult education offer – Innovation Fund (Grant only)

- 9.1 The Authority will not be following the DFE approach for 2025/2026 by allowing all learning organisations to utilise 3% of their allocations to deliver innovative activity.
- 9.2 The Authority is not planning any further Innovation Fund activity in 2025/2026 but instead will be taking forward additional activities linked with the funding flexibilities detailed at the start of this document.
- 9.3 If you have submitted a case for the Innovation Fund prior to the release of this guidance this will still be reviewed and considered for funding.

10 Sub-contracted provision

- 10.1 In advance of any new subcontracted provision permission must be sought from the Authority to proceed. Any learning found to have been subcontracted without prior approval from SYMCA may be subject to claw back of funds.
- 10.2 The Authority defines subcontracting any contract between a learning organisation and a third party under which the learning organisation agrees to source any or part of the provision or service from that third party.
- 10.3 Sub-contracted provision has an important role to play in the delivery of the ASF. Sub-contractors can help widen participation amongst niche groups that would otherwise be hard to reach. It will only be agreed where it meets one or more of the following:
 - It enhances the learning offer
 - It enhances the opportunities available to learners
 - It fills gaps in niche of expert provision or provides better access to training facilities
 - It supports and entry point for disadvantaged groups

- It is in response to SYMCA priorities.
- 10.4 Sub-contracting will be agreed as part of agreeing your Delivery Plan, the value of which will be part of your grant agreement or Call-off contract. You must gain SYMCA agreement if you wish to change your sub-contracted delivery or sub-contractors in-year.
 - 10.5 You must take your own legal advice about the impact of the Procurement Act 2023 on your recruitment of delivery Sub-contractors and have this advice available for inspection by us on request. If your organisation does not apply a rigorous sub-contracting due diligence process, we will review your funding arrangements and limit your ability to sub-contract provision.
 - 10.6 Any changes to sub-contractors or the amount of sub-contracting you want to undertake following agreement of your Delivery Plan must be discussed with your Contract Manager and follow a formal change control process detailed within your grant agreement or Call-off contract. Approval must be given by the Authority before you undertake any delivery. The Authority retain the right to reduce your Grant or Call-off contract if your sub-contracted provision is under performing.
 - 10.7 We define a delivery sub-contractor as a separate legal entity that has an agreement with you to deliver any element of the education and training, we fund. This may include for example (this is not an exhaustive list and acts as guidance only) recruitment of learners to a programme (learner find services), undertaking initial assessment and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and services bought in which form part of the delivery of education and training. A separate legal entity also includes companies within your group, other associated companies, and sole traders. It also includes residents who are self-employed or supplied by an employment agency, unless those residents are working under your direction and control, in the same way as your own employees for example a secondee.
 - 10.8 Unless specifically authorised in writing by the Authority you **may only sub-contract the provision to one level**. For avoidance of doubt the sub-contractor must not further sub-contract the provision that has been subcontracted to it. This is to ensure that you retain clear and transparent control of the quality of training provision, and that proper and appropriate measures are in place to manage the learner experience.
 - 10.9 We expect providers will undertake due diligence on all providers they have a subcontracting relationship with before going into a formal arrangement. The Authority reserves the right to undertake additional due diligence checks on those subcontractors proportionate to their contract value.
 - 10.10 You must review your policy for delivery subcontracting annually. This policy must be signed by your governing body or board of directors and your accounting officer.
 - 10.11 You must publish your policy for delivery subcontracting on your website before

entering into any subcontracting agreements for the 2025 to 2026 funding year.

10.12 As a minimum you must include the following in your policy for subcontracting:

- How your management fee is applied to subcontractors:
- Your contribution to improving your and your delivery subcontractor's quality of teaching and learning:
- How you will identify the support required and associated costs for different delivery subcontractors:
- How and when you communicate and discuss your policy for delivery subcontracting with potential delivery subcontractors, or current ones for new learner starts:
- For each subcontractor, how you will determine a detailed list of your specific costs for managing them, quality monitoring activities and other support activities offered by you to the subcontractor:
- For each subcontractor, how you will determine each cost is reasonable and proportionate to delivery of their teaching or learning and how each cost contributes to delivering high quality learning:
- How you will ensure you describe to each subcontractor, before each subcontracting relationship is agreed:
- Your reason for subcontracting, and the services you will provide when subcontracting to them and the associated costs when doing so, including a list of specific costs for managing the subcontractor, specific costs for quality monitoring activities and specific costs for any other support activities offered by you to the subcontractor:
- How each cost is reasonable and proportionate to delivery of the subcontracted teaching or learning
- and how each cost contributes to delivering high quality learning:
- Payment terms between you and your delivery subcontractors, including the timing of payment
- in relation to delivery and timescale for paying invoices and claims for funding received:
- Timing for review of your policy for subcontracting:
- where you publish your policy for subcontracting; and
- How you will align all subcontracting arrangements to SYMCA priorities.

10.13 For 2025/2026 onwards the Authority expects that **no more than 20%** of their subcontracted delivery should be claimed as 'management fees'.

10.14 For 2025/2026 onwards the Authority expects that **no more than 25%** of a learning organisations total allocation will be sub-contracted. The exception to this rule is only applicable to Local Authorities who by nature subcontract to the voluntary and community sector to ensure reach across their local authority areas in meeting the needs of their residents.

10.15 The Authority may approve an exception to the cap of 25% where there is a

compelling case supported by robust evidence to do so. Learning organisations must follow the process and submit a case for consideration as detailed within the Payment and Performance Management Framework document published on our website. Alternatively please contact your contract manager in the first instance who can share the template and confirm the process with you.

11 Evidence

- 11.1 You must hold evidence to assure us that you are using Authority funded ASF appropriately. Most evidence will occur naturally from your normal business processes.
- 11.2 You must make sure applications for Authority funded ASF, support your decision to claim funding and support the individual's case for consideration as ordinarily resident in England, or any exceptions set out in the residency eligibility' section.
- 11.3 In line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), you must record in the evidence pack what appropriate documentation you have seen, rather than take photocopies to prove eligibility.

Evidence pack

- 11.4 The evidence pack must contain evidence to support the funding claimed and must be available to us if we need it. We expect that learning organisations will undertake regular checks on learner evidence packs and ensure that the evidence matches what they have entered into the ILR.
- 11.5 Evidence in the pack must assure us that the learner exists.
- 11.6 The learner must confirm information they provide is correct when it is collected.
- 11.7 If the time spent in learning is short, the level of evidence in the evidence pack would reflect this.
- 11.8 Where you hold information centrally, you only need to refer to the source.
- 11.9 If applicable, the evidence pack must confirm the following:
 - All information reported to us in the ILR and Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS), and if it applies, the supporting evidence for the data you report and the costs you have incurred for funding claims.
 - Your assessment and verified evidence of eligibility for funding and a counter signed record of what evidence the learner has provided to support their eligibility for funding.
 - Copies of all assessments and diagnostics undertaken to determine a learner's requirements.
 - Records to show independent careers education, information, advice and

- guidance has been given prior to the start of learning.
 - Evidence and Information on prior learning that affects the learning or the funding of any of the learning aims or programme. For example personal learner records (PLR).
 - 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 and/or include evidence and/or an explanation of why this was not collected.
 - Learner support needs identified, including how you will meet these needs and the evidence of that which must include evidence of actual costs incurred
 - That learning is taking or has taken place and records are available.
 - If applicable, a learner's self-declaration as to what state benefit they claim and a record of what evidence has been checked.
 - A learner's self-declaration on their status relating to gaining a job; and
 - Evidence of any work experience placement (where applicable) and hours on placement.
 - All records and evidence of achievement of qualifications/learning aims. This must be available within three months of you reporting it within the ILR.
 - Details of end of course reviews and progression discussions undertaken.
 - Records to show independent careers education, information, advice and guidance has been given on the next steps for the learner as well as throughout the learning where applicable.
 - Awarding body pass list and true and certified copy of certificate of achievement when sent by awarding body.
- 11.10 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.
- 11.11 If a Sub-contractor delivers any provision to the learner, the learning organisation must clearly identify the subcontractor. This must match the information reported to us in the ILR.

Confirmation and signatures

- 11.12 The learner or employer must confirm the information is correct when it is collected. You must have evidence of this, which can include electronic formats.
- 11.13 We accept electronic evidence, including digital signatures, but you must have wider systems and processes in place to assure us that residents exist and are eligible for funding.

- 11.14 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's 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.
- 11.15 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.
- 11.16 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

- 11.17 You can only claim funding for learning when directly related learning starts. This would not include enrolment, induction, prior assessment, diagnostic testing, or similar activities.
- 11.18 For your direct delivery, and any sub-contracted delivery, you and where relevant, your sub-contractor(s) must have direct centre approval and where appropriate, direct qualification approval from the respective awarding organisation for the regulated qualifications you are offering.
- 11.19 Delivery of the qualification (including learner registration with the awarding organisation) for direct delivery and any sub-contracted delivery must be in line with the qualification specification and guidance set out by the relevant awarding organisation.
- 11.20 You must have evidence that the learning took place, and the learner was not certificated for prior knowledge.
- 11.21 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

- 11.22 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 learning.

Individualised Learner Record (ILR)

- 11.23 You must accurately complete all ILR fields as required in the Learner Record even if they are not required for funding purposes.
- 11.24 The ILR must accurately reflect the learning and support (where applicable) you have identified, planned, and delivered to eligible residents. You must not report inaccurate information that would result in an overstatement of the funding claimed.
- 11.25 Where your data does not support the funding you have claimed, we will take action to correct this, and we could recover funds you overstated.
- 11.26 Please see the following page for details on how to submit your ILR - <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/24-25/ilr/overview>
- 11.27 In relation to destination and outcomes tracking of tailored learning it is a mandatory requirement to complete all ILR entries in a timely manner.
- 11.28 The Authority are currently in the process of developing an outcomes framework. The Authority reserves the right to implement participation during 2025/2026.

Self-declarations by residents

- 11.29 All self-declarations must confirm the learner's details and describe what the learner is confirming for requirements set out in this document.
- 11.30 If a learner self-declares prior attainment, you must check this in the Personal Learning Record (PLR) and query any contradictory information with the learner. The PLR will not necessarily override the learner's self-declaration.

12 Payments, financial due diligence and audit

- 12.1 The initial threshold set by the Authority for 2025/2026 will be that grant learning organisations will earn 97% of your total allocation (this includes any in year growth/increase to funding received). This will be under review for 2026/2027.
- 12.2 Procured learning organisations with a call-off contract will be paid on actuals throughout the academic year.
- 12.3 The payments and performance management arrangements will apply for:

- ASF grant agreements; and:
- ASF call-off contracts.

12.4 Providers with an ASF Grant Funding Agreement and Call-off Contract should read both sets of payment arrangements.

Payment arrangement – Grant allocation

12.5 If you have agreed a Delivery Plan with the Authority and allocated grant on a payment schedule which will:

- Fund core ASF on profile using the standard national profile of 12 equal instalments.
- The Authority will run the BACS payments on the 15th working day of each month. Learning Organisations will need to ensure that they have enough cash flow available to accommodate these payment terms.
- Adult 19+ Free Courses for Jobs offer will be paid on actuals in arrears using LDM code 378. The Authority will run the BACS payments on the last Friday of each month. Learning Organisations will need to ensure that they have enough cash flow available to accommodate these payment terms.

Payment arrangement – Call off contracts

12.6 Learning Organisations will be given, in advance of the start of the funding year, an individually agreed payment schedule based on your agreed Delivery Plan the value of which will form part of your Call-off contract.

12.7 You will be notified in advance of any in-year changes being made to the value of your Call-off contract through discussions with your Contract Manager. This applies to changes for under and/or over performance (which is subject to affordability and budget availability)

12.8 The Authority retains the right, based on the risk profile of your organisation, to decide what the payment schedule will be. The Authority has the right to pay on profile, actual delivery or if agreed as part of your delivery plan a different payment schedule.

12.9 The Authority will run the BACS payments on the last Friday of each month. learning organisations will need to ensure that they have enough cash flow available to accommodate these payment terms.

12.10 Detailed information on how the payment and performance management arrangements will be applied to your funding agreement in advance of the start date of your call-off contract. The Authority reserves the right to cease payments, should Learning Organisations be in breach of a Call-off contract.

- 12.11 The Authority, acting by itself or through its auditors have the right during the Call-off contract term and for a period of 6 years thereafter, to assess and audit compliance by the Learning Organisation and/or its key Sub-Contractors of the Learning Organisation's obligations under these rules and your Call-off contract.
- 12.12 Funding cannot be transferred in year between Grant and Call-off contracts should you be a Learning Organisation who has both types of funding agreements.
- 12.13 Funding cannot be transferred between Call-off contracts where companies as part of a wider group both hold contracts with the Authority.

Financial due diligence

- 12.14 In advance of the 1st August 2025 the Authority will undertake a financial due diligence review of all learning organisations (excluding Local Authorities). This review will help inform the risk-based performance management arrangements which will operate with you in 2025/2026.
- 12.15 The Authority does not intend to publish the results of its internal financial due diligence review. The approach will include a review of the last 3 years financial statements, and the Authority will share the outcome of the review with each provider prior to 1st August 2025 and will confirm the approach that will be taken in relation to performance management for the 2025/2026 funding year.

Audit, assurance and compliance

- 12.16 In addition to the Authority's own financial assurance and compliance work (which may be undertaken by organisations working on the Authority's behalf), learning organisations will still be subject where appropriate to audit through the national systems operated by DFE such as set out in the Post 16 audit code of practice. The Authority, DFE are responsible for assurance of their own funds however working together they will minimise the administrative burden across the providers for ASF learning and skills activity.
- 12.17 Where South Yorkshire learners are selected for sampling, compliance will be assessed against the Authority's funding and performance management rules.
- 12.18 The Authority will select a sample of learner files to check randomly using a method chosen by the Authority. The frequency, periodicity and size of the samples may change throughout the funding agreement period. We will contact you approximately 3 weeks before to arrange a date for a compliance visit. The audit checklist and sample of learners will be sent to you 2 weeks before the compliance visit is scheduled to take place. As part of our compliance monitoring, we will continue to monitor compliance with the funding rules. We will contact you where we identify you have submitted data that does not meet our funding rules and ILR requirements. We will require you to correct inaccurate ILR and EAS data or to

adjust your final funding claim.

- 12.19 SYMCA reserves the right to increase the audit sample size and undertake an enhanced review of your learner files if learner withdrawal or overclaim rates exceed 20% of the initial sample reviewed.

Ofsted inspection/monitoring visit

Please note that the Ofsted Inspection Framework is currently under consultation and is expected to change with implementation expected later in the 2025/2026 academic year.

- 12.20 Learning Organisations in receipt of a Grant Agreement or Call off contract who are awarded a Grade 4 Inadequate inspection grade from Ofsted will be expected to cease recruitment of any new learners onto their programmes from the date of the inspection feedback.
- 12.21 Learning Organisations who have a sub-contracting relationship with any provider who is awarded a Grade 4 Inadequate inspection grade from Ofsted will be expected to cease recruitment of any new learners with the Learning Organisation in question from the date of the inspection feedback.
- 12.22 Learning Organisations in receipt of a Grant Agreement or Call off contract who receive an insufficient progress grading in any of the themes as part of a monitoring visit from Ofsted, will be expected to cease recruitment of any new learners onto their programmes from the date of inspection feedback.
- 12.23 The Authority will not enter into any new Grant Agreements or Call off contracts with Learning Organisations who have been awarded a Grade 4 Inadequate rating by Ofsted.
- 12.24 The Learning Organisation must have an Ofsted rating of Good or Outstanding or a monitoring visit confirming a reasonable progress judgement covering all three themes (leadership and management, quality of training and safeguarding) as a minimum, from any of your provision. If you are not currently in scope for Ofsted or have not yet had your first Ofsted Monitoring visit or inspection an acceptable explanation and confirmation that the Learning Organisation is working towards the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) is required.

Annex A - Learner nationality eligibility for funding

From the 1st August 2025 the Authority will be following the DfE simplification of residency requirements meaning that from 1st August 2025, adult learners signing up for non devolved ASF courses will be eligible if they can prove they are ordinarily a UK resident on the first day of learning.

This replaces existing rules whereby eligibility was dependent on where learners were from and the length of time they had lived in the UK (3 years).

Individuals will be eligible for ASF if they meet the criteria in section 5, the learning is taking place in England, and they fulfil the residency requirements set out in one or more of the categories below.

Asylum seekers

Asylum seekers are eligible to receive funding if they:

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

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

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

No recourse to public funds conditions

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

Learners in the armed forces

British armed forces personnel, Ministry of Defence personnel or civil and crown servants resident in England, who meet the criteria in section 5, are eligible for Authority funded ASF where learning takes place in England.

Members of other nations' armed forces stationed in England, and their family members,

aged 19 and over, are eligible for Authority funded ASF, set out in section 5, if the armed forces individual has been ordinarily resident in England on the first day of learning. We will not fund family members that remain outside of England.

Annex B - Learner Support

1. Learner support is available to provide financial support for residents 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':
2.
 - Hardship funding – general financial support for disadvantaged learners to support participation in learning.
 - 20+ Childcare funding – for Residents 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
 - Residential Access Funding – to support the Authority funded ASF learners where there is evidence that they need to live away from home and are eligible for financial support in order to access provision.
3. You must not claim more than 5% of your total Learner Support final claim 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. If you do not have a Learner Support allocation, you must follow these rules and claim learner support using the earnings adjustment statement (EAS).
4. If you have a Learner Support allocation 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 Residents and to us on request.
 - Assess and record the learner's needs, demonstrating the need for support in relation to each Learner Support category that may be applicable – 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 a R04, mid-year (R06), R08, Year End (R10), R12 and a final funding claim (R14) as detailed in our ASF: Payment and Performance Management Framework document (and submitting any additional funding claims as required) for 2025/2026;
 - Where you have tailored learning funding submit claims in line with Schedule 4 of your agreement.
 - Consider the availability of other support for residents, for example from Jobcentre Plus; and
 - Make it clear to residents it is their responsibility to tell the Department for Work and Pensions about any Learner support they are receiving from you, as

- Learner support payments may affect their eligibility to state benefits.
 - Use ASF or loans bursary to support specific provision funded by ASF or ALL where a learner is on 2 courses at the same time
5. You must not use learner support funds for any of the following:
- Essential equipment or facilities if the learner is eligible to full funding (however, these learners can get support funding for childcare, transports and residential costs if they meet the eligibility criteria)
 - 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; and
 - To pay attendance allowances or achievement and attendance bonuses.
 - To provide anything deemed an 'incentive' to attract learners to your programmes.

Hardship

6. Where you have assessed that a learner is eligible for Learning Support: Hardship you can use hardship learner support 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 and 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 Residents of sixth-form age).
 - Examination fees.
 - Accreditation fees, professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies.
 - Your registration fees; and
7. In exceptional circumstances, you can use hardship funds with course fees for residents who need financial support to start or stay in learning. Please discuss this with your dedicated Grant/Contract Manager in the first instance.
8. 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.
9. All payments for hardship made to learners must be itemised and evidenced. Any hardship expenditure not evidenced may be subject to clawback.

20+ childcare

10. You can only use childcare funding to pay for childcare with a childminder, provider, or childminder agency, registered with Ofsted.

11. 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; and
 - Fund childcare for residents aged under 20 on the first day of learning; instead you must direct them to the DFES 'Care to Learn' programme.
12. You must not use childcare for those aged 20 years or older to top up childcare payments for those receiving 'Care to Learn' payments.

19 year olds – Care to Learn

13. Learner support may also be used to provide further help with childcare costs for 19-year-old learners in receipt of Care to Learn whose costs exceed the weekly maximum rates for that scheme. The top up may only be applied to childcare provision eligible under the Care to Learn scheme ([Care to Learn guidance - GOV.UK](#)) rules.
14. The institution 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.
15. Please discuss this with your dedicated Grant/Contract Manager in the first instance.

ICT Devices and Connectivity

16. You can support disadvantaged learners who are undertaking classroom or blended learning to continue to participate via online learning where the learner does not have:
 - internet access at home, and/or
 - a suitable device, for example a laptop or tablet, to complete the necessary online course work
17. 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
 - For costs related to assets, a methodology for calculating depreciation should be in line with organisations accounting policy which must be based on

industry practice.

18. IT devices you purchase must only be loaned out to learners and returned at the end of their learning aim to allow them to be re-used by other learners. Learners must sign a declaration, confirming:
 - they will return the device when their online learning aim(s) is complete, or if they leave before completing their learning
 - they will return the device in the same condition in which they received it
 - You must maintain an up-to-date record of the loan and return of devices to learners.
 - You must hold a record of the method and calculation used to determine the cost of loan equipment.
19. 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

Residential Access Funding

20. Residential Access Funding may only be claimed where there is prior agreement with the Authority to delivery residential learning as part of your ASF or FCFJ allocation.
21. Further information/guidance on the Residential Access Fund is available on request.
22. Where you have assessed that a learner is eligible for Learning Support: Residential Access Funding you can use funds for the following:
 - Residential assessment should be per aim unless you have prior agreement from the Authority for a package of learning aims.
 - Learner files must contain clear evidence of the need to stay residentially.
 - Learner files must contain a summary assessment/document linking the Information, Advice and Guidance given to support the decision to stay residentially (as well as any other additional learning support assessments undertaken).
 - If a learner attends additional courses within the academic year, a declaration which confirms 'no change in circumstances' must be completed and retained within the learner file.
 - Residential eligibility criteria must be explicitly linked to residential need on a per aim/programme basis.
 - Evidence for residential eligibility including the assessment undertaken must be retained within the learner file.
 - Residential assessment must be used for all learners on all funded provision

including tailored learning.

23. You can use residential access funding to support the Combined Authority funded ASF learners who meet our eligibility criteria, where they need to live away from home, for example to access specialist provision which involves a residential element, or to support learners who cannot access provision locally.

You must:

- alongside the Learner Support criteria, set out the criteria and procedures for considering and agreeing applications for support from your residential access funds.
- only pay for travel costs for learners who are awarded residential access funding in exceptional circumstances, and;
- only claim residential access funding for the period the learner is resident, this could be in accommodation you own or manage or other accommodation which you have agreed to fund in line with your own criteria.
- Ensure you evidence the costs that make up your claim represent value for money for the local area.
- Publish your rates where you have your own residential facilities.
- Include residential eligibility assessment evidence against the criteria listed within your learner support policy within each learner file.

Annex C – Tailored Learning

Locally delivered adult learning plays a unique and important role in engaging residents who have been outside learning for some time and the provision should focus on the following objectives:

1. Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills
2. Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
3. Widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances, including:
 - Improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning
 - Acquisition of skills preparing people for training, employment, or self-employment
 - Improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills
 - Parents/carers better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning
 - Improved/maintained health and/or social well-being.
4. Develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected, and pro-active citizens, leading to:
 - Increased volunteering, civic engagement, and social integration
 - Reduced costs on welfare, health, and anti-social behaviour
 - Increased online learning and self-organised learning
 - The lives of our most troubled families being turned around.
5. Commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives, including:
 - bringing together people from backgrounds, cultures, and income groups, including people who can/cannot afford to pay
 - using effective local partnerships to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services
 - devolving planning and accountability to neighbourhood/parish level, with local people involved in decisions about the learning offer
 - involving volunteers and voluntary and community sector groups, shifting long term, 'blocked' classes into learning clubs, growing self-organised learning groups, and encouraging employers to support informal learning in the workplace
 - supporting the wide use of online information and learning resources
 - minimising overheads, bureaucracy, and administration

6. The purpose of tailored learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds in order to:
7.
 - Progress towards formal learning or employment; and / or
 - Improve their health and well-being, including mental health; and / or
 - Equip parents /carers to support their child's learning; and/or
 - Develop stronger communities.
8. SYMCA expect that the acquisition of skills gained through tailored learning should prepare residents for a range of next steps, including progress towards further learning, employment or self-employment. Tailored learning courses must be appropriate for the resident, have clear pathways identified and lead to progression.
9. SYMCA would not expect to see multiple enrolments on similar level courses, or a repeat of similar learning aims.
10. Tailored learning eligibility for funding criteria is the same as all other ASF provision.
11. During 2023/2024 the Authority commissioned a review of tailored learning in South Yorkshire and will be engaging with Local Authorities, Colleges and Learning Organisations to progress the outcomes of this during 2025/2026 with the intent of taking forward a number of recommendations in 2025/2026 and beyond. This process will likely span over more than one academic year.
12. The Authority will be looking at:
 - The concept of 'Learning in the Community', i.e. utilising both adult skills and tailored learning funding models in the community. The expected level of funding per resident and exploring the routes for how this might evolve and change in future years
 - Ensuring that an appropriate level of tailored learning provision is available in each Local Authority area to meet the level of demand
 - Ensuring the provision matches the priorities of the local area
 - Expected involvement of stakeholders.
 - That tailored learning programmes are offering progression for learners
13. Tailored learning courses are delivered and reported on the ILR under the following delivery strands:
 - Engaging and/or building confidence
 - Preparation for further learning
 - Preparation for employment
 - Improving essential skills (English, ESOL, maths, digital)
 - Equipping parents/carers to support children's learning

- Health and well-being
 - Developing stronger communities.
14. You must record one of the following learner outcomes on the ILR for all learners undertaking tailored learning activities:
- 1-Increased Confidence
 - 2-Improved skills for progressing into further learning
 - 3-Improved skills for work
 - 4-Improved essential skills
 - 5-Improved ability to support a child's learning
 - 6-Improved physical health
 - 7-Improved mental health and well-being
 - 8-Improved skills to participate in community life
 - 9-Increased understanding of democratic values
 - 10-Improved skills for Independent Living
 - 11-No outcome
15. Learning organisations should record the outcome when the learner completes or withdraws from the learning activity.
16. Learning organisations should record the outcome of learning for each individual learner using one of the 11 attribute codes. The outcome area does not need to match the purpose type. We want to ensure there is flexibility for a learner to achieve in an outcome area that may not directly correspond to their primary purpose for learning. For example, a learner may have started a course to support their child's learning, but their primary outcome area could be an improvement in their maths or English.
17. For activity claimed using the tailored learning, Individualised Learner Record data must be recorded using Funding model code 11.
18. You have the flexibility to use your tailored learning funding in line with the ASF formula funded methodology (funding model 38), to meet local demand. This flexibility works one way, you cannot use your ASF formula funded allocation to fund additional tailored learning, and we will not fund above the value in Schedule 1 of your contract.
19. The data collection requirements are the same for all tailored learning provision, regardless of whether it is directly funded or subcontracted by a Learning Organisation (Funding model 11 and Source of funding 118).
20. Where applicable, your ASF allocation will include an amount of tailored learning funding. We will state this value in your Grant Agreement in line with your submitted delivery plan at Schedule 1. You must deliver tailored learning provision in line with the tailored learning objectives set out above, up to this maximum amount.

21. Tailored learning funding is paid on a monthly profile. You must 'attribute costs' for eligible residents, up to the value of your tailored learning allocation. This should include the cost of delivering learning and any support costs, in line with learner and learning support. You must record these costs in the resident's learning plan as auditable evidence.
22. You will have the flexibility to use all, or some, of your tailored learning funding in line with the ASF formula-funded methodology (fund model 38), to meet local demand.

What we will not fund

23. You must not use tailored learning funding for learning that is eligible for funding through an Advanced Learner Loan.
24. You must not use tailored learning funding 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.

Local fee remission policy

25. You must have in place and operate a fair and transparent tailored learning local fee remission policy that requires individuals to pay a course / tuition fees, but also sets out clear eligibility criteria for those individuals who, due to their circumstances, qualify for either partial or total fee remission. Your Local Fee remission policies must be available on your website and / or in the venues you deliver tailored learning to eligible residents.

Partnership working

26. Partnership working underpins the objectives of learning in the community and is critical to developing and delivering an effective community-based offer in a given locality.
27. The Authority expects all learning organisations to engage and work closely with a wide range of relevant partners and stakeholders in your local area to help shape your offer to engage specific groups. These could include specialist partners and voluntary / community / social enterprise (VCSE) organisations.
28. We expect you to work with other Learning Organisations in your local area, and we expect you to develop a strategic, efficient learning offer to reduce duplication of courses in a locality, and signpost residents to other partners as and when appropriate.

Objectives of tailored learning

29. Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills.
30. Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
31. Widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances.
32. Commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives.
33. Supporting the wider use of online information and learning resources
34. Minimising overheads, bureaucracy & administration

Annex D - Glossary

Term	Definition
20+ childcare	A category of Learner support to assist Residents aged over the age of 20 who are at risk of not starting learning or leaving learning due to issues in obtaining childcare.
A Level	A subject-based qualification conferred as part of the General Certificate of Education, as well as a school leaving qualification offered by the educational bodies in the United Kingdom and the educational authorities of British Crown dependencies to students completing secondary or pre-university education.
Action Plan	Document detailing the steps you will undertake to achieve your contract objectives
ASF	means Adult Skills Fund
Advanced Learner loan	means loans available for residents aged 19 or above to provide financial support for tuition costs to undertake approved qualifications at Levels 3 to Level 6, at an approved learning organisation in England and are administered by Student Finance England;
ASF funding methodology	The funding methodology for residents aged 19 and over, participating in ASF learning. You can access ASF methodology on GOV.UK.
AS Level	an independent qualification encompassing the first year of an A Level qualification's content
Break in learning	When a Learner is not continuing with their learning but has informed the Learning Organisation 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.
Call-off contract	the agreement in respect of the provision of the Services consisting of the documents (schedules) which shall be read as one document. In the event of ambiguity, conflict, or

Term	Definition
	contradictions between these documents the conflict will be resolved according to the order of priority in Clause 1.2.7 of the agreement;
Contracts Manager/officer	Nominated individual detailed within your call off contract who is part of the Authority's Education, Skills and Employment team.
Delivery Plan	the plan for delivery of the Provision agreed between the Parties (and amended from time to time between them) for the academic year running from 1 st August 2025 to 31 st July 2026, which will set out the mix and balance of adult education and/skills training to be delivered by the Learning Organisation and as annexed as an Excel workbook at Schedule 1 of your contract;
Department (DFE)	Means the Department for Education (DFE);
Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS)	The DBS enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially involving children or vulnerable adults, and provides wider access to criminal record information through its disclosure service for England and Wales.
Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS)	The form Learning Organisations need to fill in to claim funding that cannot be claimed through the Individualised Learner Record.
Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	An EHCP 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 to ensure that the provision is delivered.
Employed	A resident who has a contract of employment. This does not include self-employed residents unless specifically referenced.
Employment Support Allowance (ESA)	Is a United Kingdom welfare payment for adults younger than the State Pension age who are having difficulty finding work because of their long-term medical condition or a

Term	Definition
	disability. It is a basic income-replacement benefit paid in lieu of wages. It is currently being phased out and replaced with Universal Credit.
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	The study of English by speakers of other languages.
European Economic Area	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 st January 1994. Please refer to Appendix A for more information.
eVisa	An eVisa is an online record of: • your immigration status • the conditions of the type of permission you have to enter or stay in the UK
Evidence Pack	Any information relating to a Learner generated by the Learning Organisation, the Learner or a third party for the purpose of the delivery of the Services;
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' service	Formerly known as the Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS) the 'Find a learning aim' service offers a web-based search facility. It allows users to search by most commonly used fields for Qualifications, Units, Apprenticeship Frameworks and Apprenticeship Standards and their associated validity and funding details.
Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ)	Level 3 qualifications for those aged 19+ which will be fully funded if the learner earns under the FCFJ low wage threshold of £34,977.43 or is unemployed.

Term	Definition
Full Level 2	A General Certificate of Secondary Education in five subjects, each at grade C or above, or grade 4 or above; or a Technical Certificate at level 2 which meets or has previously met the requirements for 16 to 19 performance tables If the National Academic Recognition Information Centre have confirmed the authenticity of a qualification gained overseas and confirmed it is comparable/compatible with a regulated qualification in England, currently part of the Level 2 and Level 3 legal entitlement, the resident will be deemed to have achieved their first Level 2 and/or Level 3 qualification.
Full 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
Functional skills	Applied practical skills in English, maths and ICT that provide the learner with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to operate effectively and independently in life and work.
Funding model (11 and 38)	Identifies the funding methodology applied to submission of finalised ILR data. For ASF funding, Funding Model 11 and 38 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. Refer to 2025 to 2026 ILR Specification for more information.
Funding year	Means the college and provider funding year which runs from the 1st August to the 31st July.
General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)	In the United Kingdom, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is an academic qualification, generally taken in several subjects by pupils in secondary education in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
Grant Funding Agreement	The agreement between the Authority and Grant Funded Providers based in South Yorkshire.
Grant Manager	Nominated individual detailed within your grant agreement who is part of the Authority's Programme and Performance

Term	Definition
	Unit.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Guided Learning is the activity of a learner being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training (including placement, onsite or practical education or training) under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, with the simultaneous presence of the learner and that person in the same physical or virtual space. This could include, but is not limited to, simultaneous presence: in a classroom, in a virtual classroom or breakout room, on site, placement, or other physical learning environment. GLH can include learners being taught content in the same physical or virtual space (such as a classroom style delivery), as well as undertaking project work, workshops and assessments which are under the regular guidance, supervision and support of a tutor i.e. the tutor is ‘circulating’, checking in on groups/learners, offering advice, guidance and feedback, asking prompt questions to stimulate ideas, getting learners on the right path etc. This can also include work-based activities and coaching and mentoring among others. GLH does not cover examples where learners are instructed to do a project independently, in groups or alone where the tutor is not regularly supporting or interacting in the ways described above i.e. it does not include time spent on unsupervised preparation or study, whether at home or otherwise. It also does not include optional, drop-in sessions that learners can book in addition to the planned guided learning hours set out. It does not include watching recordings from live, or prerecorded sessions.
Hardship	Within Learner support, a category of support to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged Residents to remove barriers to education and training.
Individualised Learner Record (ILR)	The primary data collection requested from Learning Organisations for further education and work-based learning in England. 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.

Term	Definition
Kings Trust Programme	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.
Lead Learning Organisation	A Lead Learning Organisation is a college, training organisation or employer that has a direct contractual relationship with the Authority.
Learner	A third party who is a student, trainee or learner similar to whom the College or Learning Organisation is required to deliver any of the Provision and who is resident within the Combined area.
Learner support	Funding to enable Learning Organisations to support Residents with a specific financial hardship that might prevent them from being able to start or complete their learning.
Learning delivery monitoring (LDM)	A code used as part of the Individualised Learner Record (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 Organisation	Those organisations delivering ASF provision. This may include colleges, Local Authorities, Independent Training Provider, Higher Education Institutions and third sector organisations. Where applicable this shall include the Learning Organisation Personnel and permitted assigns and, if a Learning Organisation is a consortium or consortium leader, the consortium members. The term "Learning Organisation" shall mean "Learning Organisations" where the terms and conditions apply to more than one Learning Organisation:
Learning Organisation Personnel	All persons employed or engaged by the College or Provider together with the College or Provider's servants, agents, consultants and Sub-Contractors (and all persons employed by any Sub-Contractor together with the Sub-Contractor's servants, consultants, agents, Providers and Sub-Contractors) whether voluntary or paid used in the performance of its obligations under this Agreement or, in

Term	Definition
	respect of Clause 14 (TUPE, Re-Tendering and Indemnity) and any other TUPE obligation, or an individual employed by the College or Provider in the performance of the Services;
Learning Support	Funding to enable Learning Organisations to put in place a reasonable adjustment, set out in the Equality Act 2010, for Residents with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability to achieve their learning goal.
Local Flexibility	Regulated qualifications, and or their components, and non-regulated learning that the DFE funds, that is not part of the English and maths, or Level 2 or Level 3 legal entitlement offer. All regulated and non-regulated learning that is available for funding through the flexible local offer is listed on The Hub.
Low earnings threshold	The Authority has set a threshold salary level to the Real Living Wage or the equivalent of new real living wage of £12.00 per hour, and full time equivalent e.g., £23,400 for 37.5-hour week, noting we anticipate further increases, the salary level will be kept under review.
LSIF	Local Skills Improvement Fund – fund to enable further education learning organisations to respond to the skills priorities as set out in the LSIP
LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan – plan which sets out key priorities and changes needed within a local area to make post 16 technical education or training more responsive and closely aligned to labour market needs
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is a ministerial department of the British Government headed by the Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor (a combined position). The department is responsible for areas of constitutional policy not transferred in 2010 to the Deputy Prime Minister, human rights law, and information rights law across the UK.
National Insurance Credit	May apply if you're not paying National Insurance, for example when you're claiming benefits because you're ill or unemployed. Please see www.gov.uk for further information on eligibility

Term	Definition
	and how to apply
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 Learning Organisation. This could include: • Independent living skills and engagement learning • Employability and work skills • Labour market re-entry • Technical education tasters • Tailored learning.
Non-formula tailored learning funding	Where applicable, learning organisations receive a non-formula funded tailored learning allocation' as part of their ASF which is paid on a monthly profile. Submission of ILR data does not generate a funding value for the learning aim/s a Learner participates on. Instead, learning organisations attribute costs up to the value of their non-formula tailored learning allocation. Learning organisations submit tailored learning data through funding model 11 – please refer to the 2025/2026 ILR Specification for more information.
Ofqual	The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation, which regulates qualifications, examinations, and assessments in England.
Performance Improvement Notice	Formal letter from the Authority stating the improvement in performance required and timescales applicable in which to demonstrate improvement
Performance Improvement Plan	Formal document which sets out specific performance issues and the activities and actions to be undertaken to remedy them
Personal learning record (PLR)	A database that allows learners to access to their past and current achievement records. These can be shared with schools, colleges, further education Learning Organisations, universities, or employers.
Progress and Monitoring Report	This document will be supplied to you by the Contracts and Performance team.

Term	Definition
Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)	Is the independent body that checks on standards and quality in UK higher education.
Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA)	The Learning and Work Institute have undertaken a consultation on the RARPA Cycle and have published updated RARPA Guidance. This comprises a clear framework designed to support Residents through the learning process, identifying key outcomes. It provides a robust approach to quality control and improvement of non-regulated provision with a focus on self-assessment that supports standards acceptable to the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted). You can access further information from The Learning and Work Institute.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	An assessment method that considers whether a Learner can demonstrate that they can: • Meet the outcomes for a qualification or a component of a qualification through knowledge and 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.
Residents	Means any third party including any student, apprentice, trainee or person who is a resident within the South Yorkshire Authority area and to whom the Learning Organisation is required to deliver the Provision.
Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP)	An up to 6 week-long programme designed to help meet employers' immediate and future recruitment needs as well as to recruit a workforce with the right skills to sustain and grow their business. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sector-based-work-academies-employer-guide
Self-declaration	A process where the Learner can confirm something through his or her own signature.

Term	Definition
Skills Strategy	https://www.southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/SheffieldCityRegion/media/PDF-library/Education%20skills/SYMCA-SkillsStrategy_Final.pdf
Social Value	To be delivered in accordance with the Tender Submitted.
Start of learning	The date on which learning begins. We do not consider enrolment, induction, diagnostic assessment or prior assessment to be part of learning.
State Benefits	State Benefits are contributions, both financial and non-financial, made by central and local government to residents in certain circumstances to meet their day-to-day living needs.
Statutory entitlement	The statutory entitlement to education and training allows Residents to be fully funded who are aged: • 19 and over, who have not achieved a Grade A*-C, grade 4, or higher, and study for a qualification in English or maths up to and including Level 2; and/or • 19 to 23, if they study for a first qualification at level 2 and/or Level 3. • 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below Level 1
Sub-contract	Any contract between the Learning Organisation and a third party under which the Learning Organisation agrees to source any or part of the provision from that third party;
Sub-contractor	Means the contractors or providers that enter into a Sub-contract with the Learning Organisation;
Technical Certificate	A qualification which provides you with extensive knowledge in your chosen apprenticeship career path. Alongside the NVQ, it is a key component of some apprenticeship programmes. Technical Certificates are issued to Residents who have completed a specialised course of study that is related to specific vocational skills.
UKSPF	UK Shared Prosperity Fund provides local authorities funding for communities, places, businesses, people and skills.

Term	Definition
Unique Learner Number (ULN)	A 10-digit number used to match a Learner's achievement to their Personal Learning Record (PLR).
Universal Credit	Universal Credit is a United Kingdom social security payment that was designed to simplify the benefits system and to incentivise paid work. It is replacing and combining six benefits for working-age people who have a low household income: income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, and Income Support; Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit; and Housing Benefit. Please see www.gov.uk/ for further information on eligibility and how to apply.
Work Placement	A placement with an employer in a workplace setting e.g. Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP)

Annex E - South Yorkshire ASF ILR Coding Requirements

Introduction

1. This Annex sets out our ILR/EAS data collection requirements, for those providers delivering devolved ASF funded provision across South Yorkshire.
2. The data collected will be used to calculate your funding and to support compliance, performance monitoring, inform future planning and ensure that the activity is better aligned to the skills needs of residents and employers across the Authority.
3. The funding model referred to in this document is Funding Model 38 and will only apply to those learners with a South Yorkshire Authority home postcode at the start of each learning aim undertaken. The source of funding code for Authority funded learners is 118.
4. The Authority's postcode list is published by the DFE. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-ASF-postcode-files>
5. The information here does not duplicate information already made available to providers by the DFE within the following, but not limited to:
 - DFE ILR specification, validation rules and appendices 2025/2026 <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/>
 - DFE Provider Support Manual 2025/2026 <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/>
6. Please read the requirements for Funding Model 38 in the above documents before reading this document.
7. This guidance sets out how the Authority will require providers to code specific fields in the ILR depending on whether the aim is being funded via grant (non-procured) or through a call-off contract (procured).
8. The document refers to the use of Devolved Area Monitoring (DAM) codes. These codes will be used to monitor the delivery of specific Authority priorities. They are similar to Learning Delivery Monitoring (LDM) codes (used for DFE funded learners) but the new one is required for use with aims funded only by the Authority. There are six DAM code fields available for each learning aim but only a few of these will be required to identify Authority procured provision.

All providers (subject to agreement/contract award) Source of Funding Code (SoF):

9. The authority will base all monitoring and analysis on aims coded with the above SoF value. This applies to both formula and non-formula funded provision.

Data item	Value to be used
Source of Funding (SoF)	118

British Sign Language and ESOL

10. The Authority will fully fund any resident aged 19+ whose first language is BSL to study for a first qualification in BSL, up to and including Level 2, where there is no other appropriate funding available. Funding for BSL will be at the national rates. The following qualifications will be covered under this entitlement:
- Entry level award in BSL (accredited by iBSL or ABC).
 - Level 1 certificate in BSL (accredited by Signature, iBSL or ABC); and
 - Level 2 certificate in BSL (accredited by Signature, iBSL or ABC). Providers will be required to ensure if they intend to deliver this element, it must be included in their delivery plan and any agreement with the Authority will be confirmed in writing.
11. The table below sets out, for the above learning aims (BSL), how the ILR must be coded:

ILR Field

Name	ILR code	Mandatory	Notes
LSDPostcode	Learner Postcode	Y	Learner must have an authority postcode
FundModel	38	Y	Adult Skills Fund
SOF	118	Y	SYMCA source of funding
FFI	1	Y	Fully funded
DAM	23	Y	Required to prevent validation error
DAM	2	N	Required for ITPs only

12. The table below sets out, for ESOL learning aims how the ILR must be coded:

ILR Name	ILR code	Mandatory	Notes
LSDPostcode	Learner Postcode	Y	Learner must have an authority postcode
FundModel	38	Y	Adult Skills Fund
SOF	118	Y	SYMCA source of funding
FFI	1	Y	Fully funded
DAM	023	Y	Required to prevent validation error
DAM	002	N	Required for ITPs only

Low earnings Pilot (employed learners)

13. For all providers supporting with low earnings employed learners, providers will need to use DAM code: 010 Devolved ASF Low earnings and DAM code 023.

19+ Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ)

14. For Grant providers with an allocation for the 19+ Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs you must ensure that aims you claim align to those on the Level 3 list you have agreed with the Authority.
15. You must:
 - use LDM code 378 and FFI code 1 to claim for funding for 19 to 23 year old learners, who have not achieved a full level 3 and earn above the low earnings threshold.
 - use LDM code 378, FFI code 1, and LDM code 391 when recording learners who meet the earnings threshold criteria or are unemployed, or are 19 to 23 years old and have not achieved a full level 3
 - record the employment status of learners accessing the offer in the ILR
16. To determine qualifications that are eligible for FCFJ funding you must use learning aims that are marked with:
 - FCFJ Adult Skills validity category
 - category code 45: National Skills Fund Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs rate 1
 - category code 46: National Skills Fund Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs rate 2
 - for short courses, you must also use category code 49: National Skills Fund Level 2 Free Courses for Jobs – short qualification

Residential Learners

17. For 2025/2026 onwards, use the DAM code 075 to identify courses that are being delivered to learners in residence.

Sector Work Academies Programme (SWAP) (Grant and lot 1)

18. The Authority will fund the following elements of a SWAP:
 - Pre employment training which will include a main vocational aim and possibly component aims for maths, English, ESOL or digital skills (if assessment dictates).
 - Outcome payment of £250 for lot 1 provision only for sustained employment of 13 weeks (Job-Outcome). For this to be claimed the following must be true:
 - The learner has been employed for 13 consecutive weeks at the same employer
 - The provider must retain signed evidence from the learner that they have worked with the same employer for 13 consecutive weeks. This evidence will need to be kept in the learner file and available for the Authority to check if required.

19. In the ILR the main aim or a component will need to be coded as follows:

ILR Name	ILR code	Mandatory	Notes
EmpStat	11 or 12	Y	Employment Status at the start of the learning aim
BSI	See notes	Y	Benefit Status Indicator ILR must be populated with the appropriate BSI code
LSDPostcode	Learner Postcode	Y	Learner must have an Authority postcode
FundModel	38	Y	Adult Skills Fund
SOF	118	Y	SYMCA source of funding
DAM	002	N	Required only for Procured ASF i.e. All ITP
DAM	013 or 016	Y	Main Aim (013) or Component Aim (016) of a SWAP Programme

20. As a minimum, the Authority will expect each learner participating in the SWAP programme to have a main aim coded as 013. The main aim (regulated or non-regulated) will be the vocational aim of the SWAP (e.g. retail). If the learner is undertaking more than one aim as part of their SWAP programme, then each of those additional aims will need to be coded with a DAM code of 016. The component aims may not necessarily be the same SSA tier as the main aim e.g. maths, English or employability.

Call-off contract providers

21. If you secured a Call-off contract from the Authority following the 2025/2026 procurement round, you are required to code your provision as set out below. It is essential that the ILR is coded correctly to ensure correct payment and enable effective monitoring of activity.

LOT 1 – Unemployed, employed and Self-employed learners.

General LOT 1 ASF activity

22. All unemployed & employed learners are funded according to Authority funding rules. The 'Other Funding Adjustment' field is not required and should be left blank.
23. SWAP provision should be coded as shown above under 'Sector Work Academies Programme (SWAP)'. SWAP outcome payments (lot 1 only) should be coded as shown below.

24. For each learning aim the ILR must be coded as follows:

ILR Name	ILR code	Mandatory	Notes
EmpStat	10,11 or 12	Y	Employment Status at the start of the learning aim
BSI	See notes	Y	Benefit Status Indicator ILR must be populated with the appropriate BSI code
LSDPostcode	Learner Postcode	Y	Learner must have an Authority postcode
FundModel	38	Y	Adult Skills Fund
SOF	118	Y	SYMCA source of funding
FFI	See notes	Y	1 if under earnings threshold, 2 otherwise
DAM	010	N	Only use if under earning threshold - not required for 19-23 legal entitlements
DAM	023	N	Only use if under earning threshold (prevents validation error) - not required for 19-23 legal entitlements
DAM	074	Y	Identifies LOT 1 provision (not SWAP)
DAM	002	Y	Required for Procured ASF i.e. All ITP provision

SWAP Outcome payment (Lot 1 only)

25. Where the outcome payment is to be claimed (sustained employment after 13 weeks) the learner will be enrolled on aim reference Z0009378 and coded as shown in the table below. This will generate an outcome payment of £250.

ILR Name	ILR code	Mandatory	Notes
EmpStat	11 or 12	Y	Employment Status at the start of the learning aim
BSI	See notes	Y	Benefit Status Indicator ILR must be populated with the appropriate BSI code
LSDPostcode	Learner Postcode	Y	Learner must have an Authority postcode
SOF	118	Y	SYMCA source of funding
FundModel	38	Y	Adult Skills Fund
DAM	002	Y	Required for Procured ASF i.e. All ITP provision
DAM	016	Y	Identifies SWAP component

ILR Name	ILR code	Mandatory	Notes
			Aim
Completion	2	Y	Required to get full on-programme funding
Outcome	1	Y	Required to trigger achievement element

26. Start date, planned end date and actual end date can all be set to the date that 13 weeks sustained employment has been confirmed.
27. Due to disadvantage postcode uplift this value may be shown as a higher value in your funding reports but the Authority will cap this value at £250 for payment purposes.

LOT 2 – Person Centred Approach model

28. For all providers supporting with low earnings employed learners, providers will need to use DAM code: 010 Devolved ASF Low earnings. You must not use the DFE LDM code 363.
29. Specific learning aims have been created for lot 2 as follows. These are the only aims to be claimed for under lot 2.
30. Please note under lot 2 provision there are no additional uplifts to be applied e.g. disadvantaged.

Aim Ref	Purpose
Z0010439	Identifies lot 2 provision up to 2 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010440	Identifies lot 2 provision 3 to 4 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010441	Identifies lot 2 provision 5 to 6 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010442	Identifies lot 2 provision 7 to 12 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010443	Identifies lot 2 provision 13 to 20 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010444	Identifies lot 2 provision 21 to 44 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010445	Identifies lot 2 provision 45 to 68 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010446	Identifies lot 2 provision 69 to 92 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010447	Identifies lot 2 provision 93 to 100 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010448	Identifies lot 2 provision 101 to 196 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010449	Identifies lot 2 provision 197 to 292 Guided Learning Hours
Z0010450	Identifies lot 2 provision 293 to 388 Guided Learning Hours

31. For each of the aims above the following must also be used:

ILR Name	ILR code	Mandatory	Notes
EmpStat	10,11 or 12	Y	Employment Status at the start of the learning aim
BSI	See notes	Y	Benefit Status Indicator ILR must be populated with the appropriate BSI code
LSDPostcode	Learner Postcode	Y	Learner must have an Authority postcode
FundModel	38	Y	Adult Skills Fund
SOF	118	Y	SYMCA source of funding
FFI	1	Y	Fully funded low earnings
DAM	010 see notes	N	Only use if under earning threshold low earnings
DAM	023 see notes	N	Only use if under earning threshold low earnings <i>(prevents validation error)</i>
DAM	076	Y	Identifies lot 2 provision
DAM	002	Y	Required for Procured ASF i.e. All ITP provision.

Innovation fund

32. Coding for individual projects may vary, your contract manager will confirm where this is applicable.
33. The Authority reserves the right to request additional information from providers delivering projects as part of the innovation fund.

ILR Name	ILR code	Mandatory	Notes
LSDPostcode	Learner Postcode	Y	Learner must have an Authority postcode
FundModel	38	Y	Adult Skills Fund
SOF	118	Y	SYMCA source of funding
DAM	003	Y	Devolved Innovation Fund

Tailored Learning

34. Please see the new learning aim class codes from 2025/2026 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/DFE-update-12-april-2023/community-learning-new-learning-aim-class-codes-from-the-2023-to-2024-academic-year>

Summary of Main Changes from 2024/2025 to 2025/2026

Version 2 – October 2025 Update

Section	Page	Change
Annex A – Learner nationality eligibility for funding	48	Updated for 2025/2026 to reflect DfE rules regarding removal of the 3-year residency requirement.

Version 1

Section	Page	Change
Annex A – Learner nationality eligibility for funding	52	Updated for 2025/2026. To note at this stage we are not following DfE rules.
Annex B – Learner Support	65	Updated for 2025/2026 to include section on the Residential Access Fund.
Annex C – South Yorkshire adult education offer including tailored learning	70	Updated for 2025/2026.
Annex D – Glossary	75	Updated for 2025/2026.
Contribution Tables	21	Updated for 2025/2026
Evidence	44	Updated for 2024/2025.
Guided Learning Hours	14	Updated definition for 2025/2026.
Innovation Fund	41	Updated for 2025/2026.
Legal Entitlements	20	Updated for 2025/2026.
Level 3 FCFJ	Numerous	Amended age range to be 19+.
Level 3 FCFJ	Numerous	Low earnings threshold increases to £34,977.43.
Local Flexibilities for 2025/2026	16	Updated for 2025/2026.
Tailored Learning	70	Updated for 2025/2026



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