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AUTHORITY

Adult Skills Fund Payments & Performance Management Framework

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



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This document sets out the payments and performance management framework that applies to all learning organisations who receive Adult Skills Funding for South Yorkshire residents.

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Executive summary of changes from 2025/2026 Payment and Performance Management Framework

Section	Change
2.5	Confirmation you cannot vire funding between contracts where learning organisations are part of a wider group of companies who may also hold contracts with the Authority.
2.7	Updated dates for 2025/2026
3.1	Update to residential postcode file link.
3.7	Confirmation any growth for Call-off contracted learning organisations will follow a procurement process.
4.23	Addition of new paragraph
5.6	Amended for 2025/2026
6.4	Updated dates for 2025/2026
6.9	Amended to 19+
6.10	Addition of new paragraph
6.12	Addition of new paragraph
7.1	Amended table for 2025/2026
7.4	Addition of new paragraph
7.6	Amended for 2025/2026
7.14 – 7.16	Removed for 2025/2026
7.20	Amended for 2025/2026
7.25 – 7.27	Amended to 2025/2026
7.34	Amended for 2025/2026
7.36	Amended for 2025/2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document provides payment and performance management information for all procured learning organisations and Grant-funded learning organisations in receipt of devolved Authority Adult Skills Fund (ASF) funding and Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) for provision starting 1st August 2025.
- 1.2 Through devolution, the Authority will bring a sharper focus to meeting residents' needs through its risk-based performance management approach. The Authority's focus is working collaboratively focused on place-based delivery, that drives different provider behaviours and new approaches enabling residents to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to enter and progress in the workforce, valued by employers.
- 1.3 It is important to us that we develop new relationships and new ways of working, and that we embed our organisational values in how we work with our learning organisations. We believe that the new flexibilities provided to the Authority through devolution have enabled us to commission learning organisations who value collaborative partnership working, focused on place whilst delivering high quality provision.
- 1.4 The Authority will work with its learning organisations in-year to continue to identify ways of broadening access for our residents to engage in training directly aligned wherever possible to our priorities in the SYMCA Skills Strategy and other actions coming from the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), The National Industrial Strategy and Local Growth Plans.
- 1.5 This document sets out how learning organisations should submit data and how the Authority will undertake its financial due diligence, make payments, performance manage, and gain assurance from its learning organisations. This document should be read alongside learning organisations call off contract or grant agreement, the Authority's Funding and Performance Management Rules for 2025/2026, the Authority's Funding Rates and Formula document for 2025/2026 the DFE ILR specification and provider manual for 2025/2026 (<https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/>), and any other relevant sources referred to in those documents.
- 1.6 This guidance will be updated to reflect any changes and will be reviewed before July 2026. Learning organisations are advised to check on the Authority website to ensure that they are using the most up-to-date version of this guidance.

2. Overview

- 2.1 It is important to us that we establish place based local delivery networks, working collaboratively across the Authority, providing clear progression pathways for residents into work or progression in work, an apprenticeship or further learning. Whilst the Authority will work with learning organisations to manage contract performance and compliance, we also expect our learning organisations to work collaboratively with each other. Whether you are funded through a grant or a call-off contract you should be focused on a more strategic and joined-up skills offer that better meets local employer and resident needs, especially for those residents who have complex needs in our most disadvantaged communities.
- 2.2 Our performance management approach will be risk based and allow us to move funding around in year in response to performance and need. Alongside the regular performance management reviews, we expect all our learning organisations to identify when they are not meeting profiled delivery or when they are experiencing higher demand so we can consider whether it is appropriate to re-distribute funding in-year. Funding will not be transferred in year between Grant and Call-off Contracts.
- 2.3 ASF provision has been commissioning through two routes, both underpinned by a delivery plan:
- Grant-funded provision
 - Procured provision delivered through a framework and the award of call-off contracts.
- 2.4 The principles of how we want to work will be the same for all learning organisations – open, transparent and in partnership underpinned by a delivery plan. There are some technical and process differences in how we apply our payment and performance management framework. This reflects the different regulatory frameworks learning organisations operate under, but the robustness of the approach will be consistent.
- 2.5 ASF Grant Agreements and Call-off contracts remain separate with different payment arrangements. If you hold both you cannot vire funds between the two. You cannot vire funds between your Authority ASF and any other funding streams you receive. You cannot vire funding between contracts where learning organisations are part of a wider organisational group of companies.
- 2.6 All learning organisations are required to submit accurate, timely ILR and Earnings Adjustment Statement data via the DFE on a monthly basis post RO1 as stated in your Grant Agreement / Call-off contract. This information will be used to support our payment and performance management processes.

- 2.7 In addition to monthly data returns all learning organisations will provide the Authority with six earnings review claims which should reflect the actual delivery of Provision by the learning organisation as at the date of the grant funding claim, and where appropriate, provide a forecast of the delivery of Provision by the learning organisation for the remainder of the Funding Year. The earning review points are:
- R04 claim to be submitted by the learning organisation to the Authority by close of play on the 11th December 2025 following the submission of the R04 claim on the 4th December 2025.
 - Mid-year claim to be submitted by the learning organisation to the Authority by close of play on the 12th February 2026 following the submission of the R06 claim on 5th February 2026;
 - R08 claim to be submitted by the learning organisation to the Authority by close of play on the 15th April 2026 following the R08 deadline date of the 8th April 2026;
 - R10 claim to be submitted by the learning organisation to the Authority by close of play on the 11th June 2026 following the R10 deadline of the 4th June 2026;
 - End-year claim to be submitted by the learning organisation to the Authority by close of play on the 13th August 2026 by the learning organisation to the Authority following the submission of the R12 6th August 2026 and;
 - Final funding claim to be submitted by the learning organisation to the Authority by close of play on the 29th October 2026 following the submission of the R14 on 22nd October 2026.
- 2.8 The Authority will provide learning organisations with a template for submission of claims throughout the 2025/2026 academic year.

3 Performance management approach

Resident postcode

- 3.1 All learners funded by the Authority ASF and FCFJ must be resident in South Yorkshire. Learners outside South Yorkshire will be funded by either the Department for Education or another Combined Authority. This can be checked at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-skills-fund-asf-postcode-files>.

Grant-funded learning organisations

- 3.2 The Authority has awarded Grant agreements initially lasting for one year (1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026).

- 3.3 We will pay learning organisations funded by grant on a standard profile of 12 equal instalments, with the exception of the 19+ Adult Skills Offer (FCFJ) where learning organisations will be paid on actual delivery in arrears, the details will be agreed as part of the delivery plan. The Authority will consult with all Grant learning organisations during the year on the robustness of the profile and will consider re-profiling where there is good evidence to support it.
- 3.4 We will hold grant review meetings aligned to Performance Review Points (as a minimum). These will focus on how learning organisations are progressing in achieving the activity set out in the delivery plan and the timeliness and accuracy of the data returns. At these points funding available due to under-delivery may be re-deployed and payments re-profiled following discussion with grant learning organisations.
- 3.5 The Authority will keep to the current 3% tolerance levels operating in the system for Grant funded learning organisations but this will be under review for 2026/2027. Any unutilised funding outside of this will need to be returned to the Authority. Grant learning organisations should plan on the understanding that they will not receive funding for any over delivery and that paying for over performance against contract will always be subject to availability of funds alongside other factors relating to how the over delivery is meeting local strategic plans and priorities.

Call-off contract learning organisations

- 3.6 The Authority has awarded call-off contracts lasting for one year (1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026). The Authority's call off contract for services learning organisations will be paid on actual delivery in arrears. We will hold contract review meetings monthly and performance management meetings aligned to Performance Review Points (as a minimum). These will focus on how learning organisations are progressing in achieving the activity set out in the delivery plan and the timeliness and accuracy of the data returns. At these points funding available due to under-delivery may be re-deployed and payments re-profiled following discussion with learning organisations.
- 3.7 Call-off contract learning organisations should plan on the understanding that they will not receive funding for any over delivery and that any additionality of delivery required will in the first instance go out to all learning organisations who are on the framework via a procurement process

4 Due diligence

- 4.1 The due diligence process is a control measure and as such is a key stage in procurement and contract award. Due Diligence provides a standard framework for the review of the financial stability and operations practice of a learning organisation.
- 4.2 All learning organisations will be required to complete a declaration to indicate that they have in place, or that they will have in place by contract award all required policies and processes and that they understand that they will be required to provide evidence of due diligence prior to contract award and issue.
- 4.3 The due diligence process will be co-ordinated by the Quality and Compliance team. They will work in conjunction with the finance team to ensure appropriate levels of scrutiny and assurance. All policies will be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate, identify personnel with responsibility within the organisation and include a publication date with an indication that there is a cycle of review in place. Due diligence is not complete until all documentation has been received, all cross checks are complete, and all queries are resolved.
- 4.4 Due diligence will be refreshed on an annual basis in line with financial due diligence review. The call for this will be generated by the SYMCA Quality and Compliance team.
- 4.5 This review will inform the risk-based performance management arrangements which will operate with learning organisations in 2025/2026.

Financial intervention regime for FE colleges

- 4.6 To be successful, colleges need to be well managed and financially resilient. While the Authority will be performance managing its FE colleges in relation to delivery of ASF, the DFE will continue to monitor FE colleges nationally and we will use their assurance letters to support our review of FE colleges financial viability.
- 4.7 If the DFE and/or the Authority has evidence of risk or non-compliance with funding requirements, they will work together to intervene in proportion to the seriousness of the issues and the college's context and circumstances. The Authority will be working with the DFE area teams and will be part of any review team set up by the FE Commissioner. This approach will mitigate the need for any separate reviews to be undertaken.

Data submissions

- 4.8 All learning organisations must submit an ILR to the DFE every month via the Submit Learner Data facility <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/> starting at R01 (submitted September 2025) and this must include all ASF activity year-to date.

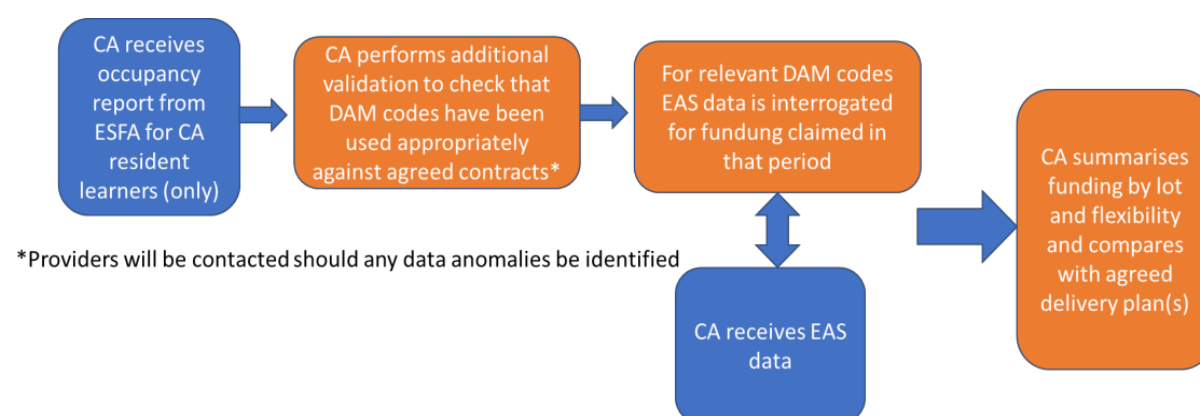
- 4.9 As a learning organisation you must have the capacity and capability for accurate data and evidence collection, management and reporting and you must be able to comply with both the Authorities and the DFE data submission requirements, including, but not limited to, the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS) and all associated evidence, with prompt recording of changes to learner data e.g., withdrawals from learning.
- 4.10 Learning organisations must ensure that all documentation relating to the enrolment of Authority residents and the record of learning activity is completed accurately. ILR data submitted for Authority residents will continue to be submitted to the DFE through the “Submit Learner Data” facility <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/> provided by the DFE. ILR files will be validated at the point of transmission against both definitions and validation rules. If any data fails the validation checks, then the learner record and all associated records for that learner will be rejected. The Authority will inform you where this is the case after each return date.
- 4.11 Rejected records are not loaded into the national ILR database and so do not generate funding; these records are reported on the rule violation report. This will ensure that the data received by the Authority is accurate and complete as it will be used as the basis for the payments you will receive.
- 4.12 As part of our assurance work, the Authority will be monitoring the data learning organisations submit to the DFE from the individualised learner record (ILR) and the earnings adjustment statement (EAS). The Authority will carry out regular desktop reviews of how the national funding system and the Authorities funding rules are being complied with. Allowing us to identify possible errors in the devolved ASF funding claimed for South Yorkshire residents by learning organisation, which might require further investigation.
- 4.13 To provide further assurance, the SYMCA may use the services of the DFE and/or other appointed suppliers to undertake field-based activity as part of our annual assurance programme of work.
- 4.14 In addition, the Authority will expect learning organisations to regularly review their software systems and processes to check for data accuracy. For 2025/2026 providers will continue to be able to access the DFE systems, these are: the Submit Learner Data facility; Individual Learner Record Reports; and the provider data self-assessment toolkit (PDSAT); Funding and Monitoring Reports. These are available here - <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/>

Individual Learner Record (ILR)

- 4.15 Please see guidance on uploading the ILR here – <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/>
- 4.16 ILR data must be submitted to the DFE by uploading a file in XML (extensible mark-up language) format to the DFE's secure online, 'Submit Learner Data', facility and this should be done on a regular basis. If learning organisations do not have an MI system capable of generating an ILR XML file, then learning organisations should consider using the DFE ILR Learner Entry Tool (please note that this tool is limited in terms of learner numbers that can be entered) which will enable learning organisations to create an ILR file for submission to the DFE. The Authority recommend uploading the ILR as a compressed file.
- 4.17 Each learning organisation must submit a single ILR file containing all learners, learning and destination records (where appropriate) for all funding streams (including ASF) for the year to date. Each file overwrites all previously submitted records by learning organisations. This means that learning organisations must not split the data into separate files and transmit each file separately (e.g. for different funding streams).
- 4.18 Once learning organisations submit an ILR file to the DFE it cannot be deleted; if the file contains incorrect data this can only be corrected by submitting a corrected ILR file to overwrite the previous file. The last file submitted prior to the period deadline will be the one loaded into the national database for that return.
- 4.19 As a learning organisation delivering provision to South Yorkshire residents, learning organisations will be required to complete the Individual Learner record in the 2025/2026 academic year. The DFE will continue to hold ILR data in a single national data set. Learning organisations must upload their ILR data via the DFE facility and cannot submit the ILR data directly to the Authority.
- 4.20 Learning organisations should refer to the 2025/2026 ILR Specification, validation rules and appendices to assist them with uploading the data correctly and in the format required by the DFE. The DFE will validate this data in line with their validation rules prior to it being forwarded to the Authority. If the details for the learner do not pass the DFE validation, the data will not be received by the Authority and will not generate funding.
- 4.21 There are a number of changes to how data is to be coded and providers should refer to our Performance and Funding Management Rules 2025/2026 and Funding Rates and Formula 2025/2026. The authority will base all monitoring and analysis on aims coded with a Source of Funding code of 118. This applies to both formula and non-formula funded provision. For general ASF activity delivered by Grant providers Source of Funding code 118 must be used for all Authority residents.

- 4.22 Devolved Area Monitoring (DAM) Codes – these are new learning aim monitoring fields. The purpose of the DAM codes is to identify learning aims that need to be monitored as part of the devolved funding flexibilities being operated by the Authority or to identify elements that are being funded via the Earnings Adjustment Statement. The detail of what learning organisations need to submit will be dependent upon the Delivery Plans agreed as part of your Grant or call-off contracts.
- 4.23 Data recorded on the ILR return will continue to be used to calculate funding earned by learning organisations and will enable the Authority, as part of its risk-based performance management arrangements, to compare actual volumes and earnings against the delivery plan agreed as part of learning organisations Contract/Grant agreements. The data gathered through the ILR will enable the DFE to generate occupancy reports for both learning organisations and the Authority. These will confirm that the learning aim is valid, run the funding calculation and confirm the actual funding earned. It will also be used to monitor progress against payment profiles.

Data validation undertaken by the Authority



Data collection for tailored learning provision from 2025/2026

- 4.24 SYMCA spend c£5m on tailored learning provision every year but the current data collection does not make it easy to understand the activity delivered and the impact it has. The new approach of coding data will enable the Authority to collate information on the primary purpose of the provision. The types are based on the current tailored learning objectives, and are:

- 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 wellbeing
- Developing stronger communities
- Adult family learning.

- 4.25 In 2026/2027 DFE will be removing learning aims from Find a Learning Aim (FALA) for non SSA courses. The Authority therefore will be asking for more information on tailored learning delivery as part of allocations planning for 2026/2027.

5 Funding Specific Contractual Requirements

ASF – Grant funded learning organisations delivering Adult Education in communities (Tailored Learning) and procured organisations delivering under Lot 2 – Reducing barriers – focussed person-centred support.

- 5.1 Where a learning organisation delivers grant-funded, tailored learning or procured Lot 2 provision as part of their offer the Authority also expects to see that there are relevant routes for progression onto formula funded activity alongside this. Programmes must not solely be for leisure purposes.
- 5.2 Please see the Funding and Performance Management Rules for 2025/2026 for further details on Tailored learning and Lot 2 provision as well as Schedule 12 or 13 in your contract.

Subcontracting

- 5.3 As part of agreeing a learning organisation's delivery plan and in advance of Contract/Grant start date, you will have provided information on the use of subcontractors through a subcontractor declaration. If in-year, any changes need to be made to those initial subcontractors these need to be approved by the Authority through a business case prior to any new learners starting with the subcontractor. We understand that the mix and balance of the provision you plan to deliver could change but there may be cases where learning organisations want to take on a new delivery partner in year and we would expect to see a clear rationale for this decision and how this provision would enhance the offer to residents and see alignment to the Authorities strategic priorities.
- 5.4 Requests for addition of subcontractors purely due to underperformance against your allocation/contract will not be supported.
- 5.5 The Authority is keen to see as much of the ASF as possible is being used to directly support South Yorkshire residents, as such the Authority requires management fees in relation to sub-contractors to be no more than 20% of the total sub-contracted amount with the learning organisation in question.
- 5.6 A maximum of 25% of a learning organisations total allocation can be subcontracted. The only exception to this is for Local Authorities where there is no cap due to the nature of their delivery.
- 5.7 Please note that ASF and FCFJ have separate funding arrangements. As such the 25% maximum allowed under subcontracting arrangements is by individual

funding stream, not total value of allocation should you have both ASF and FCFJ allocations.

- 5.8 Additional information on subcontracting can be found in section 10 of the Funding and Performance Management Rules 2025/2026 and within your Grant Agreement or Call-off contract.

6 Payment and performance management

Payments to learning organisations

- 6.1 Whilst payment mechanisms might be different, risk-based performance management principles will apply to all ASF and FCFJ learning organisations, including those funded by Grant. Performance reviews will include quality, delivery, finance, compliance and learning organisations' overall progress against their delivery plans. If the risk profile of the learning organisation changes in-year, then the Authority reserves the right to increase/decrease the level of scrutiny and/or change its performance management arrangements.
- 6.2 The Authority will run BACS payments for Grant learning organisations core ASF delivery (paid on profile) on the 15th working day of each month.
- 6.3 The Authority will run BACS payments for all other delivery which includes FCFJ for all learning organisations and core delivery for Call-off learning organisations (payment on actuals from the ILR) on the last Friday of each month. Learning organisations will need to ensure they have cash flow available to accommodate these payment terms.
- 6.4 Learning organisations will be given, in advance of the start of the funding year, an agreed payment profile based on the learning organisations agreed delivery plan, underpinned by a Grant/Contract. Learning organisations will be advised in writing in advance of any in-year changes being made to the value of its Grant or Contract. The Authority reserve the right to cease payments, should providers be in breach of their Contract/Grant.

Payment Timeline

Day of Month	Action
Workday 4	Provider submits ILR to DFE
Workday 5	DFE runs validation checks
Workday 6	Authority receives occupancy report
Workday 7	Authority checks accuracy of return
Workday 15	BACS run to Grant learning organisations
Last Friday of the month	BACS run to learning organisations paid on actuals taken from the ILR data

Payment Dates for payment on actual delivery

ILR Return	2025/2026 Payment Dates
R01	26 th September 2025
R02	31 st October 2025
R03	28 th November 2025
R04	19 th December 2025
R05	30 th January 2026
R06	27 th February 2026
R07	27 th March 2026
R08	25 th April 2026
R09	29 th May 2026
R10	26 th June 2026
R11	31 st July 2026
R12	28 th August 2026
R13	TBC
R14	TBC – but expected to be January 2027

6.5 For all learning organisation, Grant/Contract agreements will span two financial years:

- August 2025 to March 2026: periods 1 to 8 of the 2025 to 2026 financial year
- April 2026 to July 2026: periods 9 to 12 of the 2026 to 2027 financial year.

Earning Adjustment Statement (EAS)

6.6 EAS claims must now be submitted by all learning organisations monthly and the values claimed will be reconciled with the occupancy reports, ILR and learning organisations agreed delivery plan.

Grant-funded learning organisations

Adult Skills Funding

6.7 Grant-funded providers will have submitted and agreed a delivery plan for the 2025/2026 funding year. The plan includes estimates of volumes, mix of provision and spend across the full range of activity learning organisation expect to deliver and it will reconcile to the total value of the allocation. The Grant can be used only to fund new starts for adult skills, non- formula funded tailored learning (where applicable) and learner and learning support. The delivery plan will underpin learning organisation performance management dialogue.

6.8 Grant learning organisation operating under a “core” ASF grant arrangement will be paid in 12 equal monthly instalments on profile. Any over delivery will not be funded without formal agreement and approval from SYMCA and will be subject to availability of funds as well as strategic fit to the Authority’s objectives.

19+ Free Courses For Jobs (FCFJ)

- 6.9 Grant learning organisations with an allocation for the 19+ Level 3 Adult Offer must ensure that the aims you claim align to those on the Level 3 list you have agreed with the Authority (grant learning organisation specific) and flagged with LDM code 378.
- 6.10 Grant learning organisations can make requests at any time throughout the year to make changes to their FCFJ qualification offer but these will only be approved if they meet the requirements set out at paragraph 7.24 of this document.
- 6.11 Call-off learning organisations with an allocation for the 19+ Level 3 Adult Officer must ensure that the aims you claim align to those on the Level 3 list you have agreed with the Authority and flagged with LDM code 378.
- 6.12 Call-off learning organisations cannot make requests for changes to their qualification offer outside of the Earnings Review Point periods within the Performance Review Schedule within Section 7 of this document. Requests for changes to your qualification offer can only be made within those SSA's submitted via the procurement process and must be made in line with paragraph 7.34 of this document.
- 6.13 Please see Annex E in the Funding and Performance Management Rules 2025/2026 for further details on ILR coding.

Call-off contract learning organisations (ASF and FCFJ funding)

- 6.14 Payments will be made in line with actual delivery via the data you submit via the ILR. At no stage will the cumulative payments made to a learning organisation breach the maximum value of the contract. Any over-delivery will not be funded without formal agreement and approval from SYMCA. Variations to contract values will be formalised where appropriate through a contract variation.
- 6.15 Call-off contract agreements are for a one-year period only (subject to procurement and subsequent contract). We will not guarantee on profile or completion payments for learners when they have knowingly been recruited onto programmes and they cannot complete within the contract period.

7 Performance Management

- 7.1 Performance reviews will include quality, delivery, finance, contract compliance and the timeliness and accuracy of data submissions, alongside overall progress against your Delivery Plan. The expectation is that in the 2025/2026 academic year, formal performance management reviews will take place at least four times a year. At the performance management points (detailed below in the

performance review schedule) the delivery plans and ILR data submitted to date will form part of the review. The current intention is that the performance management points based on your risk profile will take place a minimum of four times a year.

Performance review schedule

Month	25/26	26/27	Monthly review (Call off Contracts only)	Performance Review Point (all Learning Organisations)	Earning Review Point (all Learning Organisations)
Aug-25			R12	R01 - R12	
Sep-25	R01		R13 & R01		
Oct-25	R02		R14 & R02	R01 - R14	
Nov-25	R03		R03		R01 - R14 (Final Funding Claim)
Dec-25	R04		R04	R01 - R04	R01 - R04 (R04 claim)
Jan-26	R05		R05		
Feb-26	R06		R06		R01 - R06 (Mid Year claim)
Mar-26	R07		R07		
Apr-26	R08		R08	R01 - R08	R01 - R08 (R08 claim)
May-26	R09		R09		
Jun-26	R10		R10		R01 - R10 (Year end Claim)
Jul-26	R11		R11		
Aug-26	R12		R12	R01 - R12	R01 - R12 (R12 Claim)
Sep-26	R13	R01	R13 & R01		
Oct-26	R14	R02	R14 & R02	R01 - R14	
Nov-26		R03	R03		R01 - R14 (Final Funding Claim)
Dec-26		R04	R04	R01 - R04	

Performance reviews

7.2 You must ensure throughout the period of the funding agreement you have all the necessary policies, systems, and processes in place to assure the Authority that you are using the ASF appropriately. In order to gain this assurance, the Authority's Education, Skills & Employment team will undertake regular performance reviews of all learning organisations. The number of performance reviews undertaken per year will be dependent upon the RAG rating assigned to you as outlined above.

7.3 The performance reviews will include, but not be limited to:

- Systems and process
- ILR data
- EAS submission
- Sample checks of learner files
- Next steps/learner outcomes at the time of the course completion
- Evidence of learner tracking for progression
- Sub-contracting arrangements
- Other contractual requirements

- Outcome of financial risk assessment and any action required
- Review of any action plan (where applicable)
- Actions arising from any compliance visits
- Review of your delivery plan
- Review of current performance including accuracy and timeliness of data reporting
- Performance against social value outcomes (where applicable)
- Review of residents' journey (where appropriate)
- Review of collaborative working arrangements
- Sub-contractor and supply chain performance (where applicable).

Quality and Compliance

- 7.4 The Authority will carry out quality and compliance activity to validate the audit trail of evidence requirements to support funding claimed and provide assurance that learning organisations are delivering skills, training and support in accordance with the terms in their contract and in line with Funding and Performance Management rules.
- 7.5 The Authority will select a sample of learner files to check using a method chosen by the Authority. The frequency, periodicity and size of the samples may change throughout the funding agreement period.
- 7.6 Audit notification and a audit checklist will be sent to you. Feedback will be presented and a report produced outlining any required actions and/or recommendations. If audit outcomes indicate that internal controls are not sufficiently effective a re-audit may take place.
- 7.7 As part of our compliance monitoring, we will continue to monitor compliance with the funding rules and evidence requirements. 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.

Performance management action

- 7.8 The Authority aims to build strong strategic relationships with all its learning organisations whether they are funded by Grant or a call-off contract. We want a long-term shared vision that results in high quality, localised, flexible provision responding to the needs of businesses and residents, supporting greater productivity and economic growth. This requires proactive and collaborative performance management that supports us to understand and improve the impact and outcomes achieved for our residents.

- 7.9 In addition, meetings with you will include discussions which will be broader than just ASF delivery. They will focus on expectations for future years and are likely to cover the following areas (this list is non-exhaustive):
- Review of collaborative working arrangements
 - The Authority's Strategic Priorities - how your organisation is supporting those.
 - The Authority / DfE /Government policy changes. – what is the direction of travel and how can you work together on these.
- 7.10 The Authority will use these reports as well as outcomes from quality assurance and compliance checks alongside your ILR, EAS and any performance review data, to review the overall position of all Grant Agreements and Call off contracts. At these monitoring points, where learning organisations have identified actual or potential underspend within their current allocation, for reasons outlined in the Progress and Monitoring report, they will be given the opportunity to voluntarily reduce their allocation. Any underspend will be returned to the central pot to be redistributed but will not be consolidated into any future year allocation received by you.
- 7.11 If at any point the Authority has evidence that you will not deliver in full, the Authority may reduce the funding to a level that is line with your actual in-year delivery. Where, the Authority identifies underspend within the central pot, we may offer the opportunity for grant learning organisations to increase their allocation in line with the Growth case process set out below.
- 7.12 The purpose of any Performance Review is to ensure that you comply with the requirements in your individual Call off Contracts/ Grant Agreements. The Authority will use the outcome of its performance review to ensure that you meet the requirement of your Grant agreement or Call-off Contract. Should you fail to meet the requirements and obligations, the Authority will take appropriate informal / formal action.
- 7.13 Information/formal action may include:
- Agreeing a revised delivery plan
 - developing an action plan to resolve issues identified
 - A notice of default/breach of contract and completion of a remedial action plan
- 7.14 In the event of non-compliance of the above this could lead to formal further sanctions up to and including termination of contract/grant.

Grant performance and Earning Review Points (ERPs) in 2025/2026

- 7.15 SYMCA will continue to review performance of Grant learning organisations in 2025/2026.
- 7.16 These performance reviews will inform the formal mid-year review process. Learning organisations will have the opportunity to consider current performance and provide updated delivery plans and end year forecasts which better reflect the activity they will deliver in the remaining part of the year.
- 7.17 The performance reviews are supported by six Earning Review Points as set out in the table below.

Earnings Review Point	Submission Date
R04	11 th December 2025
R06 - Mid-year Claim	12 th February 2026
R08	15 th April 2026
R10 – Year End Claim	11 th June 2026
R12	13 th August 2026
Final funding Claim	29 th October 2026

- 7.18 Actual earnings and end year forecasts will be reviewed at these points for ASF provision, tailored learning, earnings adjustment statements, learner support and FCFJ.
- 7.19 During these reviews discussions will take place on the robustness of end year forecasts based on current delivery. SYMCA reserve the right to adjust in-year Grant Allocations based on actual performance against updated delivery plans and end year forecasts.
- 7.20 There will also be the opportunity for learning organisations to agree a reduction to their in-year grant allocation.

Variations

- 7.21 In the event of any proposed variation to the delivery of your contract or grant please discuss this with your contract manager in the first instance.

Variations to Grant Provision 2025/2026

7.22 Grant learning organisations can request an allocation increase in line with the following principles :

- Subject to affordability and availability of ASF funding.
- The learning organisation has demonstrated a strong track record of performance
- Funding increases must have strong strategic alignment to, first and foremost, economic growth, the SYMCA Skills Strategy and emerging regional and national priorities determined by the Authority.
- Requests for growth must be supported by a business case template supported by evidence of need.
- Funding increases must have sensitivity to geographical distribution of funding.
- Funding increases must make clear why the activity cannot be supported from within existing ASF allocations.
- Funding increases must not duplicate or negatively affect other provision available in South Yorkshire.
- Consideration must be given to the wider financial position and the need to balance investment in new provision with the extent of existing provision.
- Growth cases may be subject to additional board approvals.
- Retrospective growth requests will not be considered.
- Growth requests not submitted in the correct format and on the template supplied by SYMCA will not be considered.

7.23 Grant learning organisations can apply to make changes to their offer, in line with the following principles:

- The learning organisation has demonstrated a strong track record of performance.
- Changes to the mix and balance of provision must have strong strategic alignment to the SYMCA Skills Strategy.
- Changes to the mix and balance of provision must be supported by a business case template supported by evidence of need AND an updated delivery plan so SYMCA can see the impact of accepting your business case.
- Changes to the mix and balance of provision must have sensitivity to geographical distribution of funding.
- Changes to the mix and balance must not duplicate or negatively affect other provision available in South Yorkshire
- Retrospective changes to the mix and balance of your delivery will not be considered.
- Change requests not submitted in the correct format and on the template supplied by SYMCA will not be considered.

Call-off contract performance and Earning Review Points (ERPs) in 2025/2026

- 7.24 SYMCA performance review points are set out in the table below. Please note the tolerance applied is against the delivery profile you have provided forming Schedule 1 (and 2 where you are also delivering FCFJ provision).
- 7.25 We will review your performance against 2 things at each Earnings Review Point:
- Funding claimed and committed for learners on the ILR in comparison to profiled spend in your delivery plan
 - Actual learner numbers on the ILR in comparison to profiled learner numbers in your delivery plan
- 7.26 In the event of delivery, of either funding committed or learners, being less than the threshold in the table at 7.27, SYMCA may reduce your contract value by the difference between current delivery and the threshold.
- 7.27 Example 1 – Profiled versus actual spend at R04 is at 100% against your submitted delivery plan but learner numbers are only at 60%. In this instance overall average delivery across spend and learner numbers is 80% of profile. We may look to reduce your allocation by 5% of the contract value (i.e. the difference between the tolerance at R04 of 85% and your average actual delivery of 80%). We will at this stage want to understand what actions you are planning to take to increase learner numbers to the end of the academic year.
- 7.28 Example 2 – Profiled versus actual spend is at 85% against your submitted delivery plan and learner numbers are also at 85%. No action will be taken.
- 7.29 Please note the above are examples and in the event of a significant discrepancy between the volume of spend and the volume of learners, SYMCA reserve the right to reduce the contract based on either measure.

Performance review point	Date	Tolerance
R04	December	15%
R08	April	10%
R12	July	5%
R14	October	0%

- 7.30 These performance reviews will inform the formal mid-year review process. Learning organisations will have the opportunity to consider current performance and provide updated delivery plans and end year forecasts which better reflect the activity they will deliver in the remaining part of the year.
- 7.31 The performance reviews are supported by three Earning Review Points as set out in the table below.

Earnings Review Point	Submission Date
RO4	11 th December 2025
RO6 - Mid-year Claim	12 th February 2026
RO8	15 th April 2026
R10	11 th June 2026
R12 - Year-end Claim	13 th August 2026
Final funding Claim	29 th October 2026

- 7.32 Actual earnings and end year forecasts will be reviewed at these points: ASF provision, Earnings Adjustment Statements, Learner Support, and other procured/allocated projects (where they continue).
- 7.33 During these reviews discussions will take place on the robustness of end year forecasts based on current delivery. SYMCA reserve the right with the agreement of the learning organisation to adjust in-year Contract Values based on actual performance against their updated delivery plans and end year forecasts.
- 7.34 There will also be the opportunity for learning organisations to agree a reduction to their in-year allocation or contract value.

Variations to call-off provision

- 7.35 The Authority may invite learning organisations to respond to mini competitions to delivery additional provision under its ASF Framework agreement. In line with the following principles:
- Subject to affordability and availability of ASF funding.
 - The learning organisation has demonstrated a strong track record of performance.
 - Provision must have strong strategic alignment to, first and foremost, economic growth, the SYMCA Skills Strategy and emerging regional and national priorities determined by the Authority.
 - Provision must be supported by evidence of need.
 - Provision must have sensitivity to geographical distribution of funding.
 - Provision must make clear why the activity cannot be supported from within existing ASF allocations.
 - Provision must not duplicate or negatively affect other provision available in South Yorkshire.
 - Consideration must be given to the wider financial position and the need to balance investment in new provision with the extent of existing provision.

7.36 Call-off learning organisations can apply to make changes to their provision offer, in line with the following principles and in line with the dates set out in paragraph 7.38:

- The learning organisation has demonstrated a strong track record of performance.
- Changes to the mix and balance of provision must have strong strategic alignment to economic growth, the SYMCA Skills Strategy and emerging regional priorities determined by the Authority.
- Proposed changes to the mix and balance of provision must be supported by evidence of need AND an updated delivery plan so SYMCA can see the impact of accepting your business case.
- Proposed changes to the mix and balance of provision must not be a material change to content of your contract. For clarity requesting to add new SSA's to your delivery plan or change the number of GLH of a course would constitute a material change.
- Changes to the mix and balance of provision must have sensitivity to geographical distribution of funding.
- Changes to the mix and balance must not duplicate or negatively affect other provision available in South Yorkshire
- Retrospective changes to the mix and balance of your delivery will not be considered.
- Change requests submitted outside of timelines in table 7.38 will only be considered at the next review point.
- Change requests not submitted in the correct format and on the template supplied by SYMCA will not be considered.

Timeline for approval of growth cases/change requests

7.37 Please note that growth cases and change requests will only be considered at specific stages within the 2025/2026 academic year in line with the Earnings Review Points as detailed above.

7.38 Please see the table below for key dates:

Earnings Review Point	Deadline for submission of Growth case/Change Request	Outcome of Growth Case/Change Request confirmed by:
R04	11th December 2025	16 th January 2026
R06 - Mid-year Claim	12th February 2026	5 th March 2026
R08	15th April 2026	7 th May 2026
R10	11th June 2026	6 th July 2026
R12 - Year-end Claim	13th August 2026	Not applicable
Final funding Claim	29th October 2026	Not applicable

7.39 Please note the following principles are applied by the Authority when reviewing any growth cases/change requests:

- If a submission deadline is missed procured learning organisations will need to wait until the next point for a review decision. There are no exceptions.
- Growth cases only apply to grant learning organisations. Any additionality required via procured learning organisations will follow a procurement process.
- Growth cases can only be supported where there is availability of funding to support.
- Growth case/Change request templates with any missing information including course details will not be considered.
- Where there is employer or stakeholder evidence to support the growth case this must be supplied on submission.
- Growth cases for additionality of provision already delivered by a learning organisation should still have supporting evidence of need.
- Growth cases submitted retrospectively after delivery has already started are at the risk of the learning organisation and may not be supported.
- The Authority does not expect to see growth cases where the entirety of the delivery is via subcontractors. Learning organisations need to keep within the cap and tolerances relating to subcontracting in line with the Funding and Performance Management Rules 2025/2026.
- Growth cases will not be supported by any learning organisation who has received a grade 3 or 4 at Ofsted. Please note the (Common Inspection Framework) CIF is expected to change during the 2025/2026 academic year so this will be updated further to reflect the changes as soon as this information is available.

7.40 The Authority reserves the right to make changes and updates to the principles of growth cases and change requests throughout the academic year.



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