

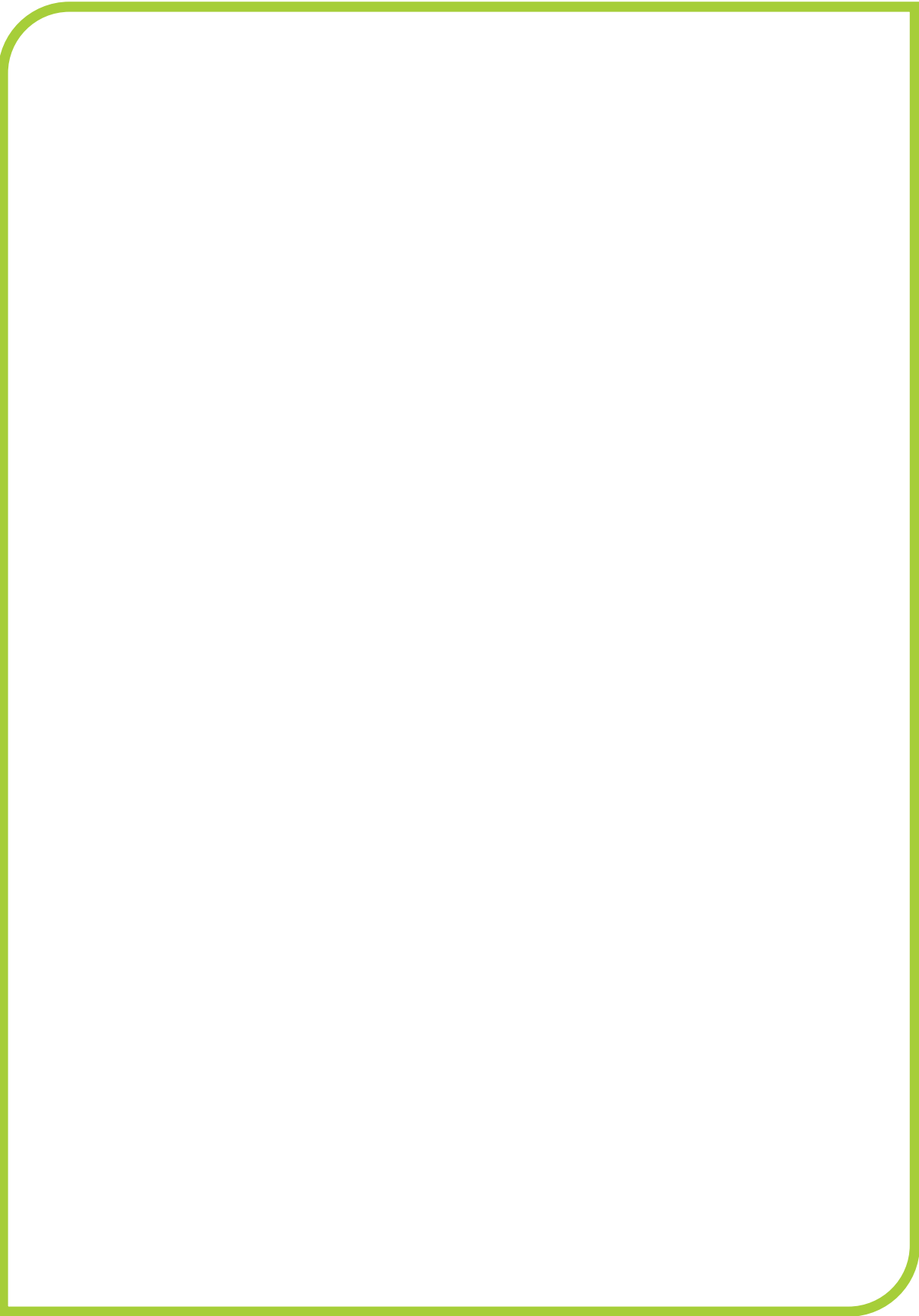
# Evaluation of London's Adult Education Budget - Full Year Report 2022/23

September 2024



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# 1 Executive Summary

## Introduction and methodology

Since August 2019, the Mayor of London has been responsible for the capital's share of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), previously managed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Certain changes were introduced for the 2019/20 academic year, including a number of changes to funding rules to further support disadvantaged learners, changes to improve the management of the AEB, and various measures designed to support learners and providers to deal with the impacts of COVID-19. Since the 2020/21 academic year, the Mayor has phased in more of the strategic policy changes to the AEB proposed in the GLA's Skills for Londoners Framework and the [Skills Roadmap for London](#).

This report is part of a series that is produced for the AEB evaluation. For each academic year there will be a process evaluation report. This process report is based on analysis of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), together with qualitative analysis of 20 interviews with AEB-funded providers, a small-scale survey of 20 AEB-funded providers, 20 learners who completed AEB-funded courses during 2022/23, three stakeholders and a discussion with GLA staff.

For this report, complete ILR data was available for the academic years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/12 and 2022/23.

## Learner volumes and learning aim starts have increased

**The post-Covid 19 rebound which began in 2021/22 strengthened in 2022/23.** After learner numbers reduced between 2018/19 and 2020/21, learning aim starts were at 473,000 during 2022/23, a 4 percentage point increase since 2021/22, and the highest since devolution in 2019/20. The volume of learners who started a learning aim increased by 3 percentage points (Adult Skills) and 5 percentage points (Community Learning).

## The policies introduced in 2022/23 were well-received, but providers would like some of them to be more flexible

The GLA's overarching goals for the devolved AEB in terms of learners are outlined in its Theory of Change (ToC) as of 2022/23 onwards and can be broadly summarised as:

- to improve access to Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 learning in key sectors to support London's economic recovery since Covid;
- to make it easier for Londoners in need to access AEB funded provision; and
- to equip more disadvantaged adult Londoners with English language, vocational qualifications and work-related skills, and learning that supports their wellbeing and mental health, supporting them to move into work or to progress into better quality work.

Since delegation, the GLA has introduced a range of different policy flexibilities, each with their own individual aims, but which as whole aim to address these overarching goals. For example, in terms of the goal to improve access to Level 2, 3 and 4 learning in key sectors, **Free Courses for Jobs, Level 3** delivered 4,180 learning aim starts in 2022/23, up from 3,380 in 2021/22. This flexibility has been

positively received by providers, a number of whom reported that the funding had a significant impact on their provision.

As an example of policy flexibilities making it easier for Londoners in need to access AEB funded provision, the GLA **removed the three-year residency requirement for Londoners on certain immigration schemes**, and introduced the 12 month permission to stay in the country requirement. This policy was well-received by providers as it enabled them to offer more ESOL, basic skills support, and skills provision to learners in potentially vulnerable groups, like refugees from Ukraine.

In terms of examples of equipping disadvantaged adult Londoners with qualifications and learning that supports wellbeing, movement into work or progression in work, the newly introduced **Funding for License to Practice accreditations in construction and hospitality sectors** saw 1,632 learning aim starts, most of which were for Construction Skills Certification Scheme or 'First Aid at Work' courses needed to gain or stay in employment in certain roles. However, some providers do not offer these courses and called for the funding to be widened to cover other sectors. **Full funding for learners in receipt of less than the London Living Wage** expanded in 2022/23, amounting to 15% of learning aim starts (51,240), up from 10% (43,480) in 2021/22, improving access to learning for people in low-waged jobs.

**The Good Work for All Fund** saw 13,530 funded learning aim starts in 2022/23. Providers most commonly spent funding in the Health and Social Care sector. Some providers did comment on the lack of flexibility of the funding where they had established new opportunities with employers in between submitting their bid and the grant being confirmed.

Providers typically felt that the **end of procured contracts** was communicated effectively, and they had been given sufficient and clear information on the process.

### Providers appreciate the GLA's more consultative approach

**Overall, providers were satisfied with the fourth year of AEB delegation.** Key areas of satisfaction were the delivery team relationships, GLA's collaborative approach, and the consultation that informed policies. In terms of areas for attention, some felt that devolution had led to an additional administrative burden for those who were still also accessing funding through the ESFA. Others also noted that the number of funding streams introduced by the DfE has added complexity.

In terms of GLA staff **relationships**, providers were still positive about having their own Delivery Manager, and felt communication was consistent or had improved over the last year. A few had concerns about where there were changes to GLA staffing, as they regarded having a consistent contact to be important.

Providers were positive about **GLA communications** and felt the approach had improved since AEB delegation. They particularly liked the provider forums/ webinars and welcomed the increase in these during 2022/23. Some did mention that the AEB-relevant areas of the GLA website could be more user friendly and easier to navigate to find specific information about policy changes.

On the **administration and management of the AEB**, providers felt that the GLA were consultative and wanted to work with them to help them to achieve their targets. A number of improvements were suggested though, around: more ILR data analysis and reports; longer-term timeframes for funding; more focus on the quality of provision, and more flexibility with funding.

## Conclusions and areas for attention

**Evidence on policies such as the Level 3 flexibility, the non-formula funding flexibility and full funding for learners receiving below the London Living Wage (LLW) shows increasing provision during 2022/23, aligned with the overall objectives of improving access to learning for disadvantaged groups, improving local flexibility and supporting economic recovery.** However, there continues to be a risk that some providers lack capacity to expand future provision at Levels 3 and 4 due to issues such as staff recruitment challenges.

**In line with strategic objectives to improve the accessibility of adult education and skills for more disadvantaged Londoners, this increased participation is being successfully targeted at Londoners who are unemployed or are employed below the LLW,** as shown by the increasing proportion of learners who are fully funded through the LLW full entitlement.

**ILR analysis shows a continuing focus on learners from ethnic minorities (who are more likely to be in the low-income, disadvantaged groups that the GLA is seeking to support).** While the data indicates a slight increase in the proportion of AEB-funded learners who are disabled, this is still an area that warrants additional focus from the GLA and providers.

Improvements identified for the design and management of the AEB in London were:

- **Continued dialogue and consultation** with providers and their stakeholders. Stakeholders in particular welcomed the GLA's partnership-based approach to working with the adult education sector and appreciated that the GLA has listened and acted on feedback. Some of the providers who took part in the interviews or survey would like more frequent forums and webinars from the GLA.
- **Simplification of the AEB funding rules enabling greater flexibility to respond to learner and employer needs.** Similar to previous years, some providers felt that simplification would improve their capacity to use the funds flexibly, and therefore more effectively, for example through greater local flexibility.
- **Higher performance thresholds** for providers that are over delivering. Again similar to 2021/22, in the qualitative interviews, providers who regularly met or exceeded delivery targets wanted to see higher thresholds for over-performance to reward high-performing providers and stimulate growth in provision.

## 2 Introduction

### Context

- 2.1 Since August 2019, the Mayor of London has been responsible for the capital's share of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), previously managed centrally by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The AEB covers skills provision for learners aged 19+ including Adult and Community Learning, but not apprenticeships. It is delivered by a broad range of providers, comprising general FE colleges, local authorities (LAs), Independent Training Providers (ITPs), Institutes of Adult Learning (IALs) and a small number of universities.
- 2.2 The Greater London Authority (GLA) allocates the vast majority of the AEB to approved providers as an annual block grant where the provider has freedom in what education and training to deliver as long as it complies with the AEB Funding Rules. The remainder of the AEB allocation is distributed through a mixture of grant agreements and funding given to independent training providers through a competitive grant award process.
- 2.3 The GLA committed to maintaining stability for the sector during the transition to the devolved AEB, with reforms being introduced incrementally. The Mayor set out his priorities for skills and education in the Skills for Londoners Strategy and outlined how he plans to achieve his ambitions through the Skills for Londoners Framework. Certain changes were introduced for the 2019/20 academic year, including changes to funding rules to support more disadvantaged learners so that learning was more accessible, changes to the management of the AEB, and various measures designed to support learners and providers to deal with the impacts of COVID-19, such as the COVID-19 Response Fund and flexibilities in providers' reconciliation approach.
- 2.4 From the 2020/21 academic year, the Mayor began to phase in more of the changes to the AEB proposed in the Framework as well as additional measures to alleviate the economic impacts of COVID-19. Following widespread consultation with the sector during Summer 2021, the GLA set out its [Skills Roadmap](#) for 2021/22 onwards, published in January 2022. .
- 2.5 The GLA developed a Theory of Change (ToC) for AEB delegation during 2019/20 and 2020/21 (see Appendix 1 to this report) which set out the short, medium and long-term outcomes and impacts that it is seeking to achieve through delegation. The ToC summarises the key activities for how the GLA plans to achieve these. According to the ToC, the GLA's intended short-term outcomes of activities implemented during 2019/20 and 2020/21 were to ensure continuity of provision during the COVID-19 pandemic; make learning opportunities more accessible; support more disadvantaged adult Londoners to achieve basic skills qualifications and English language skills; and get a better understanding of local skills needs and priorities.
- 2.6 From 2021/22 onwards, the immediate need to maintain continuity of provision during COVID-19 receded and the priorities in the Skills Roadmap became even more important: ensuring more locally relevant skills; helping Londoners to lead happier and healthier lives; improving the accessibility of adult education and skills provision; and measuring the social and economic impacts of adult education and skills. The Theory of Change (ToC) for AEB delegation was reviewed and revised for 2021/22 and 2022/23 (see Appendix 2 to this report) to reflect this. Short-term outcomes include that Londoners are more easily able to access training at Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 focussed on sectors key to London's recovery; Londoners in need are more able to access funded AEB provision; and the overall quality of training delivered is improved and quality marked.
- 2.7 Building from this, in the medium-term, the aims are to support more disadvantaged adult Londoners to achieve vocational qualifications and work-related skills, progress into good jobs, and pursue learning that supports their wellbeing and mental health. The long-term goals are for providers to be incentivised to focus more on the impacts of their provision and tailor their offer to meet local needs and priorities, and for the GLA to use increased evidence on the impacts of adult education to target funding to more impactful approaches. Ultimately the aim is for



employers to have more access to the skills they need and for more adult Londoners, particularly those under-represented in learning and work, to be equipped to participate in society, realise their goals and progress in education and work.

- 2.8 This evaluation sits alongside a wider programme of research on the AEB and specific funding streams.

## Methodology

- 2.9 This report brings together data from several sources, covering the academic years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. These sources were analysed using data processing software to provide a descriptive summary of AEB delivery in London, and to analyse trends over time.
- 2.10 The quantitative analysis is accompanied by qualitative data based on depth interviews with 20 AEB-funded providers, conducted in July and August 2023. The qualitative interviews explored: providers' views of the impacts of AEB delegation to date, focusing on the 2022/23 academic year; future plans for delivery of AEB-funded provision; and their views of the GLA's management of and communication about the AEB. The provider interviews were evenly split between FE colleges, Independent Training Providers (ITPs), and Local Authorities, and between grant and procured providers.
- 2.11 In addition, a small online survey of AEB-funded providers was conducted in February-March 2024, asking them to reflect on changes made to their AEB-funded learning, and views on how the AEB is designed and managed. Twenty providers completed this survey: their responses have been analysed qualitatively due to the small number involved, to supplement the existing findings.
- 2.12 There were also three interviews with provider representative bodies: the Association of Colleges (AoC), HOLEX representing adult and community learning providers, and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) representing independent training providers. These are referred to as stakeholders throughout the report. The provider and stakeholder research was complemented by a discussion with a small group of GLA officers, to better understand the policies implemented, and their intended purposes.
- 2.13 Between November 2023 and January 2024, 20 AEB-funded learners took part in qualitative interviews about their learning journey, their experience of the course they had done, and subsequent outcomes related to employment, further learning, or wellbeing. These learners were purposively sampled based on their responses to the 2022/23 LLS follow-up survey.
- 2.14 Most of the quantitative data used for this report is sourced from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). This is the official record of Further Education and Adult Education in England, maintained by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE). The ILR records, at an individual level, all starts on learning aims at publicly funded Further Education and Adult Education providers. Use of other data sources is cited where relevant in the report and includes Good Work for All (GWfA) self-evaluation reports completed by providers who were funded under that programme.
- 2.15 ILR R14 (full year) data for 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 was supplied by the GLA and processed by IFF. Data for multiple academic years was supplied, enabling time series to examine any impact of changes made by GLA on the profile of provision and learners relative to the 2018/19 baseline prior to delegation and to COVID-19.
- 2.16 Quantitative analysis from the ILR is typically reported using the number of learning aims, or learners, who started a programme. This is defined from the ILR as those on an Adult Skills or Community Learning programme which is funded through GLA (or ESFA if started in 2018/19) and was at least 19 years of age at the start of the programme. Occasionally, analysis is conducted on the number of enrolments on an AEB funded learning aim, instead of the number



of starts. Throughout the report it is clear where analysis is on learning aim starts compared to learning aim enrolments.

## The structure of this report

2.17 This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 3 provides an overview of the profile of AEB-funded learners and learning aims from 2018/19 (the year prior to AEB delegation), 2019/20 (Year 1 of delegation), 2020/21 (Year 2), 2021/22 (Year 3) and 2022/23 (Year 4).
- Chapter 4 explores the impacts of policy changes introduced by the GLA since 2019/20, drawing on ILR analysis as well as provider views from the qualitative interviews (focusing on the most recent changes, made for 2022/23).
- Chapter 5 focuses on Good Work for All (GWfA), drawing on the ILR, funding data, a small number of qualitative interviews with GWfA providers and analysis of end-of-programme provider self-evaluation reports.
- Chapter 6 focuses on procured provision ending in 2022/23, drawing on the ILR, funding data and a small number of qualitative interviews with procured providers.
- Chapter 7 focuses on management of the AEB, exploring providers' views of key changes implemented by the GLA, and their reflections on the overall effects of delegation to date.
- Chapter 8 sets out conclusions and areas for attention.

2.18 Throughout the report, short vignettes developed from the qualitative interviews with learners provide illustrative examples of outcomes from AEB-funded learning. All names have been changed to preserve learners' anonymity.

### 3 AEB funded provision

- 3.1 The GLA AEB budget in London, which was transferred from ESFA to GLA for the 2019/20 academic year, funds a range of post-19 adult learning, divided broadly into Adult Skills and Community Learning. This chapter summarises the level of funding, and its usage.

#### Funding

- 3.2 On handover from the ESFA to the GLA for 2019/20, the AEB budget in London was £302m<sup>1</sup> and has since increased to approximately £333m in 2022/23. The figures shown for 2018/19 are estimated<sup>2</sup>, since ESFA data did not at this time separate out learning which was to be transferred to GLA from 2019/20.
- 3.3 As shown in Figure 3.1, there was a £10m increase in actual funding paid by GLA to providers for GLA-managed AEB in 2022/23 compared with the previous year. The increase from £317m to £327m was a year-on-year increase of 3 percentage points (pp).

**Figure 3.1 Total funding allocated and paid for AEB activity in London, 2018/19 to 2022/23**



Sources: 2019/20 and 2020/21: GLA AEB allocation and payments data. 2021/22 and 2022/23, GLA AEB reconciled financial data.

#### Breakdown of funding: 2021/22 and 2022/23

- 3.4 Table 3.1 below shows the breakdown of funding activities (i.e. how much GLA paid to learning providers for delivering AEB programmes) for 2022/23 and the previous year.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes additional COVID-19 Response Fund funding.

<sup>2</sup> This is done using ESFA data for 2017/18, calculated during the planning process for devolution of the AEB budget, which did split out funding in this way. The proportion of learning delivered which could be eligible for GLA funding after devolution was calculated by ESFA for each provider, using data for November 2017 to July 2018. IFF applied this to the overall funding for each provider recorded by ESFA in 2018/19 to obtain figures for likely provision within London in that year.

- 3.5 As can be seen in Table 3.1, the year-on-year increase for total funding paid to providers shown above in Figure 3.1 is primarily attributable to funding for Adult Skills increasing from £219m to 229m between years, a 5pp increase.
- 3.6 There were also increases in what GLA paid to providers for Community Learning funding, from £56m to £59m (+5pp), and for Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) funding, from £7m to £10m (+40pp). AEB procured payments fell from £35m to £30m (-17pp).
- 3.7 There was a slight shift towards grant funding, which made up 91% of total funding paid to learning providers in 2022/23 compared with 89% in 2021/22, with the proportion of procured funding reducing from 11% of total funding to 9% between years.

**Table 3.1 Total funding paid to learning providers in each funding stream, 2021/22 and 2022/23**

	2021/22	2022/23
<b>Adult Skills (Grant)</b>	£218.7m	£228.6m
<b>Adult Skills (Procured)</b>	£34.9m	£29.6m
<b>Community Learning</b>	£56.0m	£58.7m
<b>Total GLA AEB funding paid to providers</b>	<b>£308.4m</b>	<b>£316.0m</b>
<b>National Skills Fund – FCFJ (Grant)</b>	£7.3m	£10.2m
<b>National Skills Fund – FCFJ (Procured)</b>	£1.2m	£0.9m
<b>Total funding paid</b>	<b>£316.9m</b>	<b>£327.1m</b>
<i>of which grant...</i>	<i>£282.0m (89%)</i>	<i>£297.6m (91%)</i>
<i>of which procured...</i>	<i>£34.9m (11%)</i>	<i>£29.6m (9%)</i>
<b>Total funding paid</b>	<b>£316.9m</b>	<b>£327.1m</b>

Sources: GLA AEB allocation and earnings data for 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years, February 2024.

## Providers

- 3.8 GLA AEB learning is provided by several types of organisation, as follows:

- Colleges (including FE Colleges, Sixth Form colleges and specialist colleges): 60% of funding in 2022/23 (vs. 59% in 2021/22). This was primarily grant-funded Adult Skills provision (92%), with elements of other types of provision.
- Local Authorities (LAs): 22% of funding in 2022/23 (vs. 22% in 2021/22 also). This mostly consisted of a relatively even split between Adult Skills provision (51%) and Community Learning (48%), with a small proportion made of Free Courses For Jobs (FCFJ) grant-funded provision.
- Institutes of Adult Learning (IALs): 10% of funding in 2022/23 (vs. 10% in 2021/22 also). Around two thirds (63%) was grant-funded Community Learning and one third (35%) grant-funded Adult Skills.
- Independent Training Providers (ITPs, including commercial and charitable providers) (7% of funding in 2022/23, vs. 9% in 2021/22). This was exclusively AEB procured funding.

- Higher Education (HE) (<1% of funding in 2022/23, consistent with 2021/22), exclusively grant-funded Adult Skills.

### Number of providers

- 3.9 At the end of the 2022/23 academic year (July 2023), AEB funded learning aim starts were registered by 122 providers on the ILR. The majority of these providers (113, or 93%) had more than 100 learning aim starts and six in ten (60%, 73 providers) had over 1,000 learning aim starts. A smaller number had less than 100 aim starts (9, or 7%) or 10,000 or more starts (14, or 11%).
- 3.10 Table 3.2 shows that the distribution in terms of number of aims delivered by each provider has remained very similar for the past two years. Before this, in 2019/20, there was a significant reduction in the number of providers delivering London AEB learning as it was devolved to GLA. This partly reflects that 2018/19 data could only be filtered for learners *potentially* eligible for GLA funding under 2019/20 rules by their geographic location, rather than by the full set of eligibility rules for GLA AEB funding applicable from 2019/20 onwards. However, the approach taken by GLA also changed, with a minimum floor put in place for funding to an individual provider (of £100,000 worth of GLA AEB delivery), in order to allow efficient administration at a London level.

**Table 3.2 Number of providers delivering GLA AEB provision in London, 2018/19 to 2022/23**

	2018/19*	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Less than 100 learning aim starts	200	26	29	11	9
100 to 999 learning aim starts	107	45	49	42	41
1,000 to 9,999 learning aim starts	59	44	62	62	59
10,000 or more learning aim starts	11	9	8	11	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>122</b>

Source: ILR 2018/19 R14\*, 2019/20 R14, 2020/21 R14, 2021/22 R14, 2022/23 R14. \*2018/19 data (for ESFA administered provision prior to devolution) was filtered for learners eligible for GLA learning, rather than use of GLA funding.

### Profile of AEB-funded provision

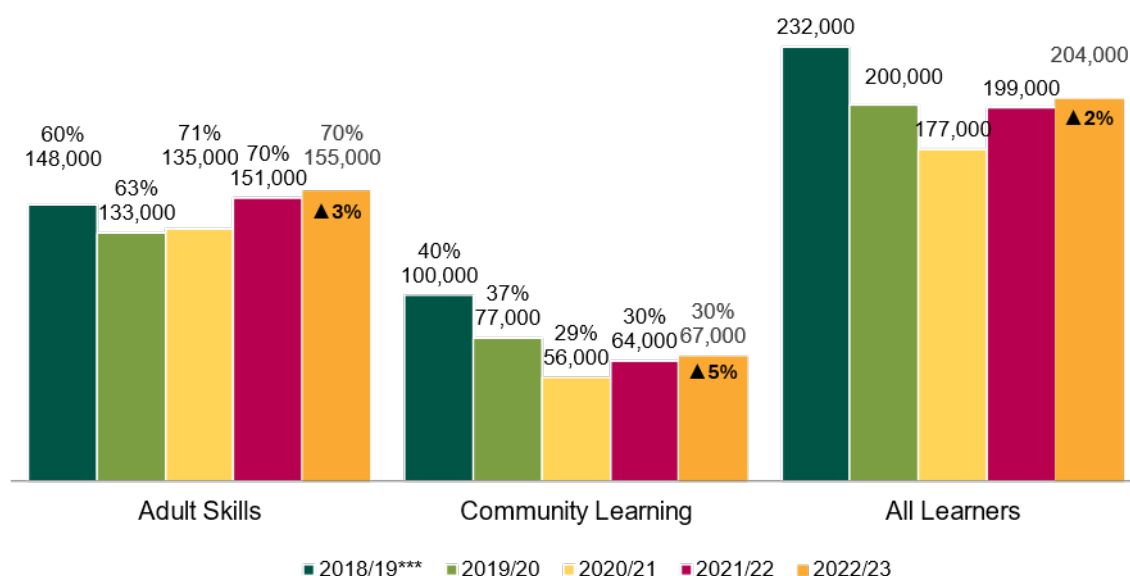
#### Overall number of learners and learning aims

- 3.11 In 2022/23 the overall number of learners starting an Adult Education Budget (AEB) funded learning aim increased by 2pp, from 199,000 in 2021/22 to 204,000, with an increase in learners starting both Adult Skills learning aims (from 151,00 to 155,000, 3pp) and for Community Learning aims (from 64,000 to 67,000, 5pp).
- 3.12 Figure 3.2 shows how the number of learners has changed over time. In 2018/19 around 232,000 learners were funded by the AEB, falling to 195,000 in 2019/20 (a reduction of 16%), and then falling by a further 12% in 2020/21, to 177,000 (around 24% in total) during Covid-hit

years. Positively, this has increased in the past two consecutive years, with the number of learners at the end of 2022/23 15pp higher than at the end of 2020/21.

- 3.13 The increase in the number of learners over the past two years is likely to be partly related to the continuing diminishing impact of COVID-19 and reflective of how the pandemic prompted individuals to look to reskill and/or retrain.

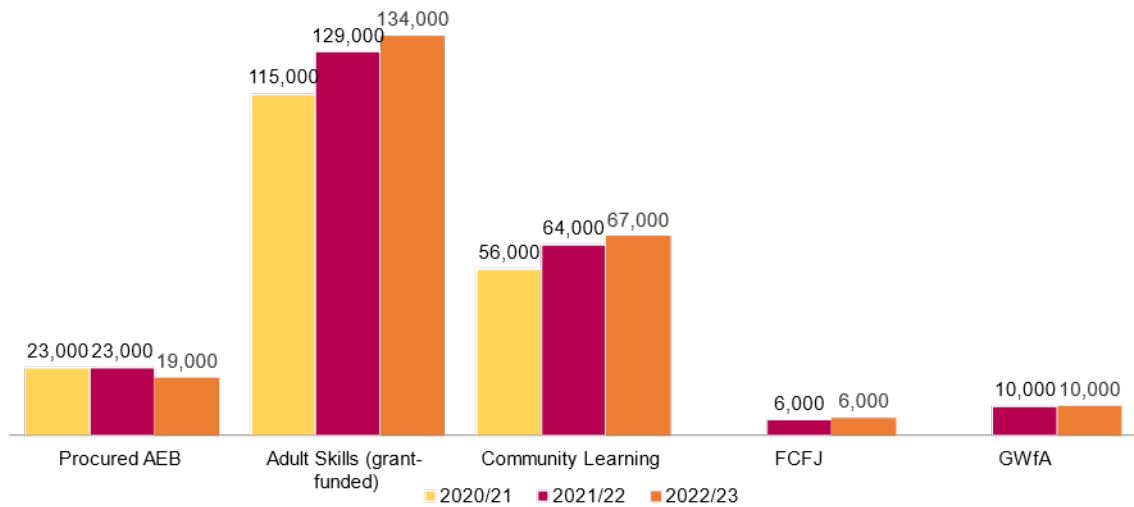
**Figure 3.2 Number of learners starting on AEB-funded learning aims, 2018/19\*\*\* to 2022/23**



Source: ILR 2018/19 R14, 2019/20 R14, 2020/21 R14, 2021/22 R14, 2022/23 R14. \*\*\*2018/19 figures from before AEB budget devolution represent AEB Learning delivered to learners in London; other figures represent GLA funded AEB learning only.

- 3.14 The overall increase in the number of learners starting Adult Skills learning aims in 2022/23 was a result of more starts through AEB grant-funded aims compared with the previous year (134,000 vs. 129,000) (Figure 3.3). There were actually fewer learners starting on AEB procured aims in 2022/23 (19,000 vs. 23,000 in 2021/22). The number of learners starting on FCFJ and Good Work For All (GWFA) learning aims remained consistent with 2021/22 at 6,000 and 10,000 respectively.

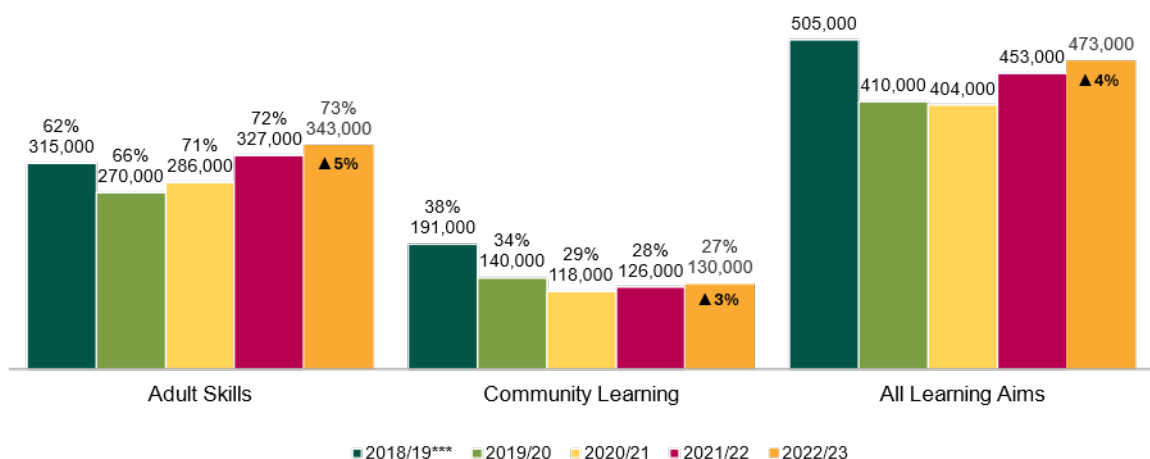
**Figure 3.3 Number of learners starting on AEB-funded learning aims – procured vs. adult skills, 2021/22 to 2021/23**



Source : 2020/21 R14 (n=177,000), 2021/22 R14 (n=199,000) and 2022/23 R14 (204,00).

- 3.15 The pattern seen in terms of number of AEB-funded learning aim starts is similar to that seen for overall learners, with the number of starts having increased for two consecutive years by the end of 2022/23. As shown in Figure 3.4, the total number of learning aim starts in 2022/23 was 473,000, a 4pp increase on the 453,000 in 2021/22 and a 17pp increase on 2020/21. This is the highest number of starts since the AEB was transferred from the ESFA to the GLA in 2019/20.
- 3.16 Learning aim starts for Adult Skills (343,000 in 2022/23) have been increasing each year since 2019/20, when they stood at 270,000, while Community Learning starts have been increasing for the past two years and stood at 130,000 at the end of 2022/23.

**Figure 3.4 Number of learning aim starts which were funded by AEB, 2018/19\*\*\* to 2022/23**



Source : ILR 2018/19 R14, 2019/20 R14, 2020/21 R14, 2021/22 R14 and 2022/23 R14. \*\*\*2018/19 figures from before AEB budget devolution represent AEB Learning delivered to learners in London; other figures represent GLA funded learning only.



### Comparison with delivery plans

- 3.17 Providers who receive grant funding from GLA are required to submit delivery plans for each year's provision to GLA, outlining what they intend to deliver with the funding. This includes the number of learning aim starts and learners projected, broken down by demographic group (e.g., ethnicity, disability, sex) and by type of learning, as well as projected use of specific funding streams.
- 3.18 These delivery plans, submitted by 76 grant-funded providers, show that these providers were intending to deliver 433,359 aims in 2022/23. In total, 432,614 learning aim starts were delivered in 2022/23, or 99.8% of the total intended. This is a significant increase on the 92% of intended starts delivered in 2021/22.
- 3.19 There was some variation by funding type, however. As shown in Table 3.3, while Adult Skills delivery matched what was planned across these 76 providers (99.8% delivered), Community Learning delivery was slightly below planned (97.3% delivered), while FCFJ delivery lagged behind, delivering 80.6% of planned learning aim starts. This is a similar pattern to that observed in 2021/22.

**Table 3.3 Delivery plans; comparison of learning aim starts planned vs. registered on the ILR, 2022/23, by broad type**

	Planned learning aim starts, 1 <sup>st</sup> August 22 to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 23	Actual learning aim starts, 1 <sup>st</sup> August 22 to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 23	% delivered
Adult Skills	299,293	298,740	99.8%
Community Learning	133,466	129,803	97.3%
Free Courses for Jobs	5,048	4,071	80.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>433,359*</b>	<b>432,614</b>	<b>99.8%</b>

Source: GLA Delivery Plans 2022/23; ILR 2022/23 R14. \*Figures do not sum due to NSF funding overlapping with other funding, and provider error or omission of breakdowns.

- 3.20 Looking at actual delivery against planned delivery by provider type for these 76 providers (Table 3.4), we can see that FE Colleges delivered more learning aim starts than they had planned in 2022/23 (108% delivered).
- 3.21 Local authorities delivered almost the exact number of learning aim starts that they had planned (100% delivered, while Institutes of Adult Learning (IALs) lagged behind, delivering only 81% of planned starts. This is an improvement compared with 2021/22 however, when IALs only delivered 50% of planned starts.

**Table 3.4 Delivery plans; comparison of learning aim starts planned vs. registered on the ILR, 2022/23, by broad provider type**

	Planned learning aim starts, 31 <sup>st</sup> July 23	Actual learning aim starts, 1 <sup>st</sup> August 22 to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 23	% delivered
FE College	197,920	214,491	108%
Local Authority	141,730	141,247	100%
Institute of Adult Learning (IAL)	92,090	74,314	81%

University	1,630	2,562	157%
<b>Total</b>	<b>433,359*</b>	<b>432,614</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: GLA Delivery Plans 2022/23; ILR 2022/23 R14. \*Figures do not sum due to provider error / omission of breakdowns.

### Adult skills

- 3.22 In 2022/23, half (50%) of Adult Skills learning aim starts were in Basic Skills (169,800/343,400), particularly for Language (105,100 starts, 31% of all starts), which mostly consists of ESOL qualifications. Learning aim starts for Language saw a year-on-year increase of 15,300 starts (17pp), while other Basic Skills remained consistent with 2021/22 or fell slightly. Digital remained consistent but Numeracy starts fell by 2,400 (9pp) and Literacy by 900 (3pp).
- 3.23 Outside of basic skills, certain subjects saw significant year-on-year increases in learning aim starts, particularly Engineering and Manufacturing Technology (+1,690 / +40pp), Leisure, Travel and Tourism (+1,230 / +31pp) and Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care (+450 / +24pp).
- 3.24 Although Adult Skills learning aim starts increased overall between 2021/22 and 2022/23, there were notable falls in starts in Retail and Commercial Enterprise (-15pp), Science and Mathematics (-1,730 / -10pp) and ICT (-1,330 / -9pp).
- 3.25 A full breakdown of the number of Adult Skills learning aim starts by subject area and basic skills type can be found in Annex A.

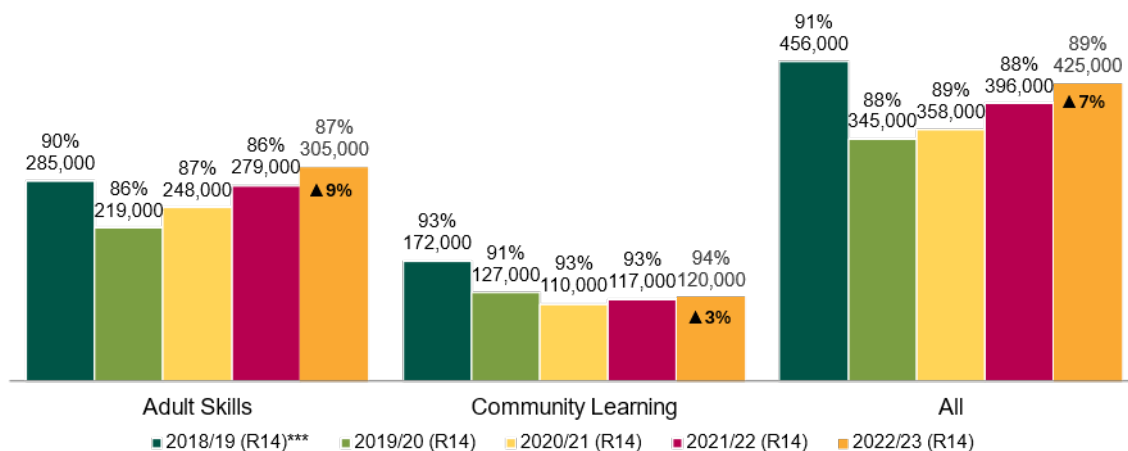
### Community learning

- 3.26 As seen earlier in this chapter, Community Learning saw a 3pp increase in learning aim starts between 2021/22 and 2022/23 (from 126,000 to 130,000), slightly lower than the 5% increase in Adult Skills starts. Providers who submitted delivery plans had delivered 97.3% of planned starts, again slightly below the 99.8% of planned starts delivered in Adult Skills.
- 3.27 In 2022/23 Community Learning starts continued to be dominated by a few specific subject areas, with almost three-quarters of all learning aim starts coming in three subject areas: Arts, Media and Publishing (36%), Preparation for Life and Work other than Basic Skills (23%), and Languages, Literature and Culture (15%). Notably, 2022/23 saw an increase in starts for Arts, Media and Publishing (+7pp) and Literature and Culture (+4pp), while the proportion starting Preparation for Life and Work other than Basic Skills fell by 5pp.
- 3.28 Across other subjects, numbers of learning aim starts were also fairly consistent between 2021/22 and 2022/23, with large year-on-year pp increases only really observed in subjects with a low number (<1,000) of starts.
- 3.29 As with Adult Skills, a full breakdown of number of Community Learning starts by subject area and basic skills type can be found in Annex A.

### Proportion of aims ending in an achievement

- 3.30 In 2022/23 the proportion of aims ending in an achievement was 89% (vs. 88% in 2021/22), with a higher proportion of Community Learning aims ending in an achievement (94%) than Adult Skills (87%). As shown in Figure 3.5, the proportion of aims ending in an achievement has remained relatively consistent over the last five years, both at an overall level and for Adult Skills and Community Learning individually.

**Figure 3.5 Number of achievements, and percentage of learning aims which ended with achievements, 2018/19\*\*\* to 2022/23**



Source: ILR 2018/19 R14, ILR 2019/20 R14, ILR 2020/21 R14, ILR 2021/22 R14 and ILR 2022/23 R14. \*\*\*2018/19 figures from before AEB budget devolution represent AEB Learning delivered to learners in London; other figures represent GLA funded learning only

3.32 Presented below are the key findings on learning aims ending in an achievement for all GLA funded provision, by course and individual characteristics are presented below. Full analysis of each of these findings is provided in Annex A. In general, the patterns observed are very similar to those seen in the 21/22 academic year.

- **Subject:** learning aims ending in an achievement were highest for History, Philosophy and Theology (96% vs. 94% in 2021/22), followed by Arts, Media and Publishing (94%, the same as 2021/22) and Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care (94%, vs. 91% in 2021/22).

The biggest increase in proportion of aims ending in an achievement between 2021/22 and 2022/23 was in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (up from 87% to 92%), while the biggest decrease was in Social Sciences (falling from 91% to 88%).

- **Level:** achievements were highest in unlevelled provision (94% of learning aims started), followed by entry level provision (90%), and were lowest for level 3 provision (74%).

Achievements by level in 2022/23 were very similar to 2021/22, although there was a slight increase in the proportion of aims ending in an achievement for Level 2 (84%, vs. 82% in 2021/22) and level 3 (74%, vs. 73% in 2021/22).

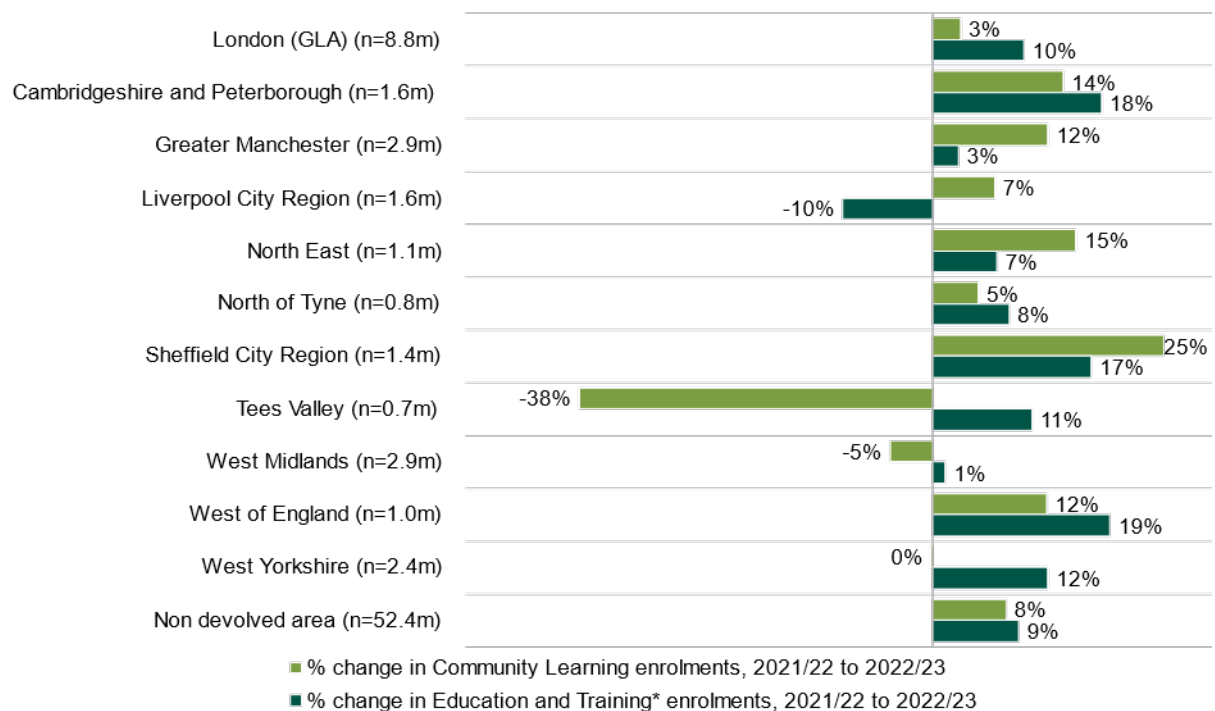
- **Age:** as with previous years, achievements varied significantly with age in 2022/23, rising from 80% achievements for those aged 19 to 20, up to 94% of achievements among those aged 65 or over. This pattern generally holds by level, although for level 3 achievement rates are fairly consistent for 19-20 year olds (69%), 21-23 year olds (67%) and 24-29 year olds (68%).
- **Ethnicity:** By ethnicity, the percentage of learning aims ending with an achievement was slightly higher than average among White British or Irish (92%), Chinese (92%), Bangladeshi (91%), and Indian ethnicity (90%) learners. It was slightly lower than average among Arab (86%), Black ethnicity learners of all sub-groups (86 to 87%), Mixed (87%) and

learners from another ethnic group (87%). These figures are almost identical to achievement figures in 2021/22.

- **Disability and/or health conditions:** There was little significant variation in achievement according to disability in 2022/23, although learners with a mental health condition were slightly less likely than average to complete their course (86% vs. 89% on average). Achievements were highest for those with an unspecified condition (91%). For context, those with no reported disability or health condition had an achievement rate of 89%, in line with the overall average.

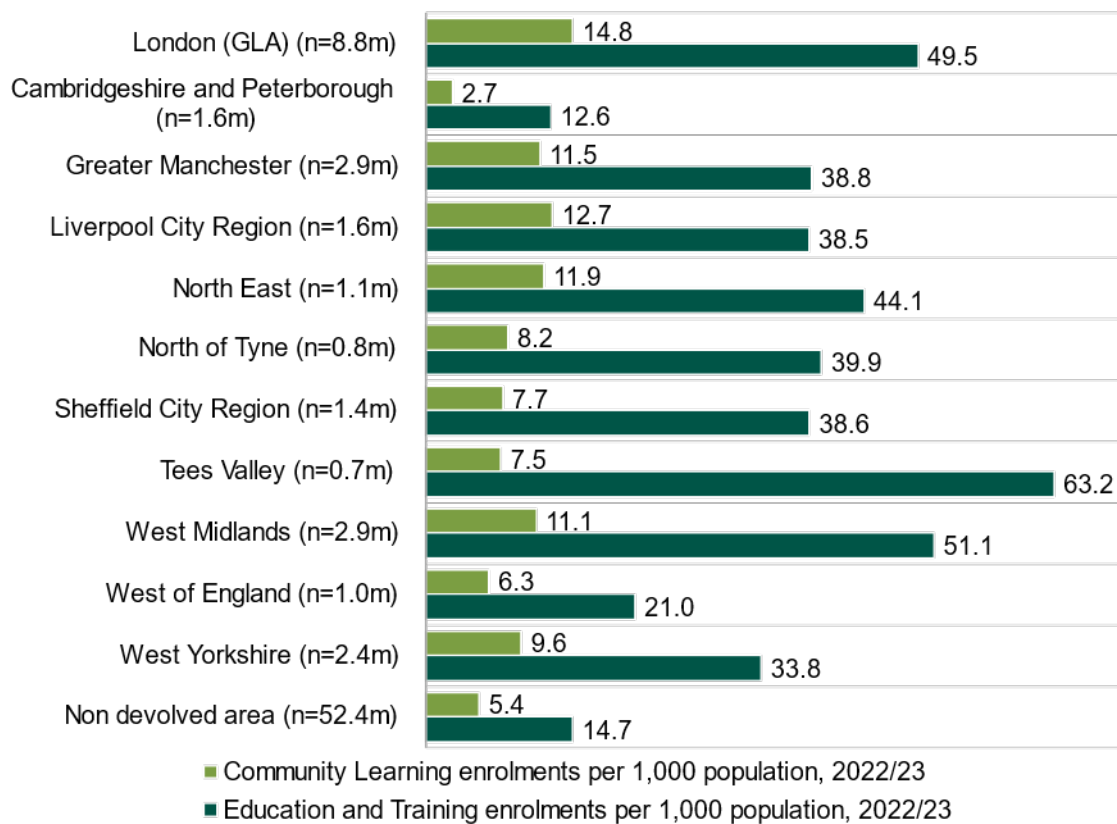
## Comparison with other parts of England

- 3.31 Several other Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) in England also have a devolved AEB budget, and it is useful for judging GLA's performance in managing the budget to understand whether provision in London is following a similar trajectory to the rest of England.
- 3.32 Comparative data is not available specifically on devolved AEB Adult Skills provision, but is available for 'Education and Training', the majority of which is composed of devolved AEB Adult Skills provision.
- 3.33 As Figure 3.6 shows, between 2021/22 and 2022/23, there was a 10pp increase in Education and Training enrolments in London. This is marginally higher than the trajectory of non-devolved regions, which increased by 9pp in the same time period. The percentage change in the number of Education and Training enrolments was higher for other devolved regions, particularly West of England (+19pp) and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (+18pp), although London had a significantly proportion of enrolments than Liverpool City Region (-10pp) and West Midlands (+1pp).
- 3.34 In terms of Community Learning, London recorded an increase of 3pp between 2021/22 and 2022/23. This is lower than all devolved regions with the exception of Tees Valley who recorded a change of -38pp between years, and for non-devolved regions (+8pp).
- 3.35 Although London's increase in enrolments was lower than some other areas, it's important to note that London's response to COVID-19 was more effective than average in obtaining a rapid rebound in provision than was the case nationwide. This may therefore have reduced the percentage increase in subsequent years relative to other areas whose recovery is now 'catching up' with London.

**Figure 3.6 Trajectory of enrolments in Community Learning and in Education and Training\*, 2021/22 to 2022/23**

Source: DfE FE and Skills data, full academic year 2021/22 and 2022/23. \*Education and Training mostly consists of the AEB devolved budget, but also includes other provision. 2021 Census population figures for each area are shown in the chart.

- 3.36 Figure 3.7 shows the number of Community Learning and Adult Skills enrolments per 1,000 of the population. This shows that London performed favourably compared with other devolved areas and non-devolved areas in 2022/23. For Education and Training, London had 49.5 enrolments per 1,000 of the population aged 19 or above. This put London third of all devolved areas, behind Tees Valley (63.2 enrolments per 1,000) and West Midlands (51.1 enrolments per 1,000), and substantially higher than non-devolved areas (14.7).
- 3.37 Furthermore, London had the highest number of Community Learning enrolments per 1,000 of the population aged 19 or above across the whole of England, at 14.8. This was more than 2 per 1,000 more than the next highest, Liverpool City Region, with 12.7, while non-devolved areas only saw 5.4 Community Learning enrolments per 1,000.

**Figure 3.7 Number of enrolments in Community Learning and in Education and Training\* per 1,000 population**

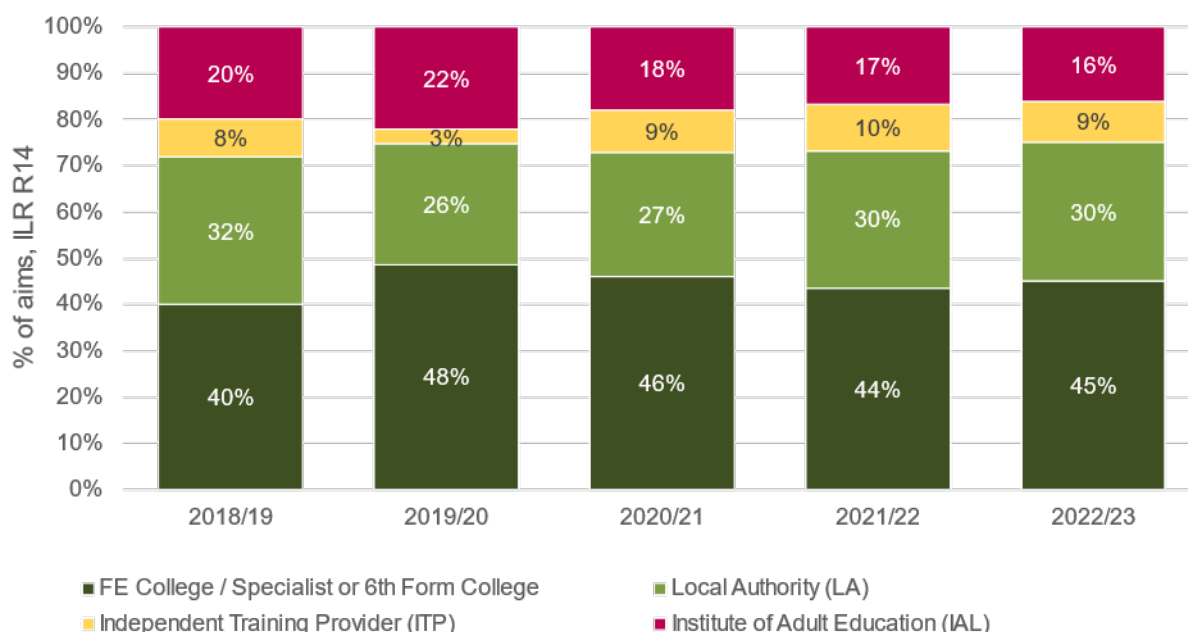
Source: DfE FE and Skills data, full academic year 2022/23. \*Education and Training mostly consists of the AEB devolved budget, but also includes other provision.

### Delivery by provider type

3.38 Overall, almost half (45%) of all GLA AEB learning aim starts were delivered by Colleges (45%), while one-in-three (30%) were delivered by local authorities, one-in-ten (9%) delivered by ITPs and around one-in-six (16%) were delivered by IALs (Figure 3.5). Universities delivered less than 1% of provision in each year and are therefore not shown on the chart.



**Figure 3.8 Percentage of learning aim starts delivered at each type of provider, all GLA AEB funding, 2018/19 to 2022/23\***



Source : ILR 2018/19 R14 (n=505,000), 2019/20 R14 (n=410,000), 2020/21 R14 (n=404,000), 2021/22 R14 (n=453,000) and 2022/23 R14 (n=473,000). \*Universities excluded due to being <1%.

3.39 Table 3.5 below shows the types of provider delivering each type of provision in 2022/23. In the 22/23 academic year, the vast majority of AEB Procured provision was delivered by ITPs (87%), an increase on the 79% in 2021/22, while the proportion of FE, Specialist of Sixth Form colleges delivering AEB Procured provision fell from 20% in 21/22 to 12% in 22/23.

3.40 FE colleges delivered a majority of Grant-funded Adults Skills provision (67%), with a smaller proportion being delivered by Local Authorities (24%), ITPs (8%) and IALs (1%). NSF provision was similar, with FE delivering over three quarters of provision (77%), followed by Local Authorities (14%), ITPs (5%) and IALs (3%).

3.41 Community Learning shows a very different distribution of providers, as it is predominantly delivered by Local Authorities (54%) and IALs (38%), while GWFA provision is predominantly delivered by ITPs

**Table 3.5 Proportion of learning aim starts at each type of provider broken down by funding stream, 2022/23**

Provider Type**	Procured AEB*	Adult Skills*	Community Learning*	NSF*	GWfA
FE College / Specialist or 6 <sup>th</sup> Form College	12%	67%	8%	77%	5%
Local Authority (LA)	0%	24%	54%	14%	8%
Independent Training Provider (ITP)	87%	8%	0%	5%	80%
Institute of Adult Education (IAL)	1%	1%	38%	3%	7%

<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
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Source: ILR 2022/23 R14 (n=473,000). \*excludes GWfA \*\* Universities excluded due to being <1%.

## Accessibility of the AEB

### Age distribution in Adult Skills and Community Learning

- 3.42 The GLA AEB budget is targeted at people aged 19 and over in London. As discussed in previous AEB evaluation reports, different areas of provision tend to serve different age ranges, but overall age groups are well served by AEB-funded activities, and this continued in 2022/23.
- 3.43 Looking at Community Learning and Adults Skills learners separately, we can see that the different strands of provision serve decidedly different age ranges (Table 3.6). Adult Skills funding serves a greater proportion of young people (5% of 19-20 years olds and 6% of 21-23 year olds, compared with 3% and 5% of the population of London aged 19+ respectively). Community Learning, on the other hand, more commonly served older people (26% of learning aim starts were for 50-64 year olds and 20% 65+, compared with 22% and 15% of the population of London aged 19+ respectively).

**Table 3.6 Age distribution of learning aim starts by funding model, 2022/23, compared to Census 2021 London population**

Age band	Community Learning starts	Adult Skills starts	Population of London aged 19+
19 to 20	1%	5%	3%
21 to 23	2%	6%	5%
24 to 29	8%	13%	14%
30 to 39	22%	28%	23%
40 to 49	21%	25%	19%
50 to 64	26%	19%	22%
65+	20%	4%	15%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Sources: ILR 2022/23 R14 (n=473,000), ONS Census 2021, Population estimates (2023)

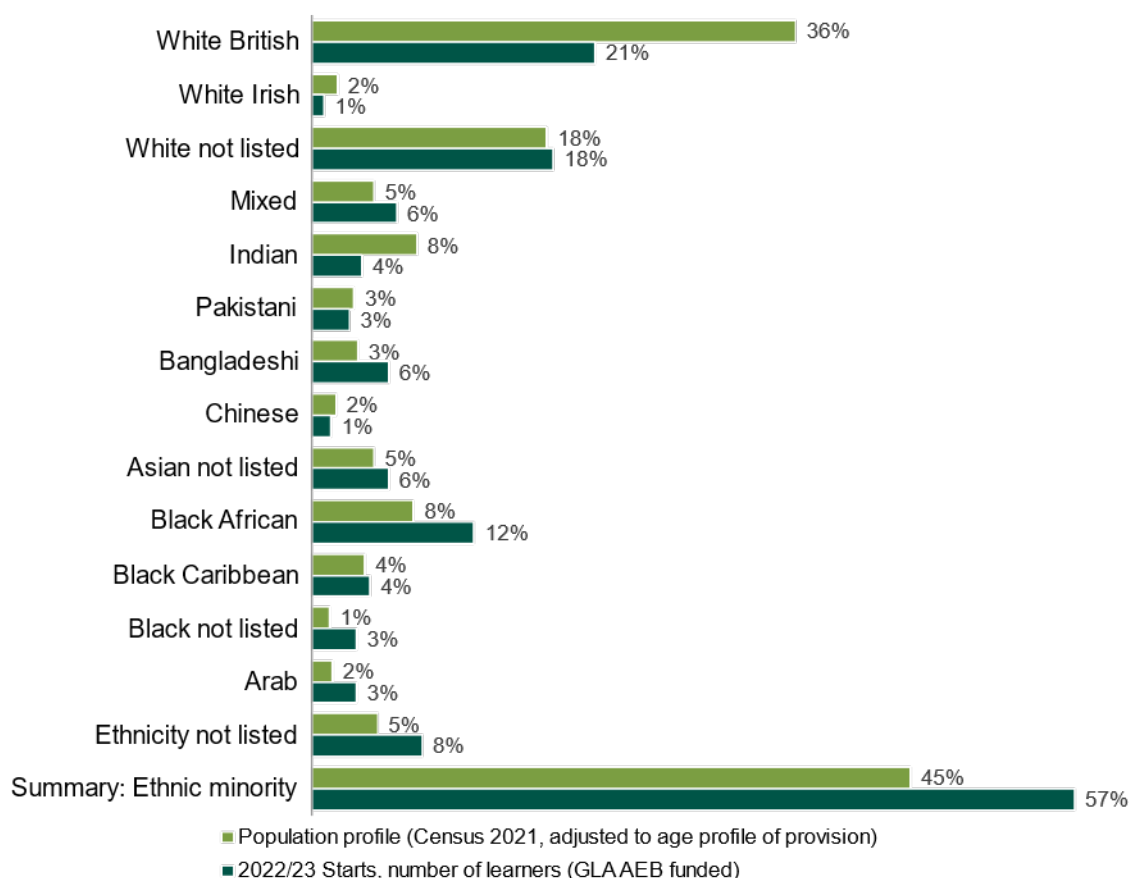
### Ethnicity distribution in Adult Skills and Community Learning

- 3.44 As shown in Figure 3.9 below, learning aim starts from ethnic minority learners made up over half (57%) of all those starting AEB-funded provision in 2022/23. This continues the trend of an increasing proportion of AEB learning aim starts from ethnic minority learners, which has increased from 53% in 2019/20, to 55% in 2020/21 to 56% in 2021/22. This compares to an

estimated 45% of the population of London in 2021, after adjusting to match the age distribution of the AEB Learning.<sup>3</sup>

- 3.45 Comparison of the ethnicity distribution of AEB learning aim starts against the (age-adjusted) population of London shows that Black African learners were strongly represented in Adult Skills provision (12% of all starts and 8% of the population of London), as were Bangladeshi learners (6% vs. 3% in the London population).
- 3.46 Inversely, White British (21% of all learning aim starts but 36% of the London population) and Indian (4% of all starts but 8% of the London population) learners were a smaller minority of learners than their proportion in the population would suggest. As reported previously, this is likely to reflect the emphasis of AEB funding on helping learners from financially less well-off backgrounds.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 3.9 Percentage of learning aim starts by ethnicity compared with adjusted Census 2021 population of London by ethnicity, GLA AEB Learning, 2022/23**



Source: ILR 2021/22 R14 (n=204,000), ONS Census 2021, Population estimates (2023)

<sup>3</sup> ONS Census 2021, Age adjustment carried out using ILR 2021/22 R14 data and table R032 (ethnicity by age) for London.

<sup>4</sup> It is likely the apparent over-representation of people of 'Other' ethnicity relates to differences in how people who have multiple ethnic identities or prefer not to state an ethnicity respond to questions about ethnicity in different circumstances.

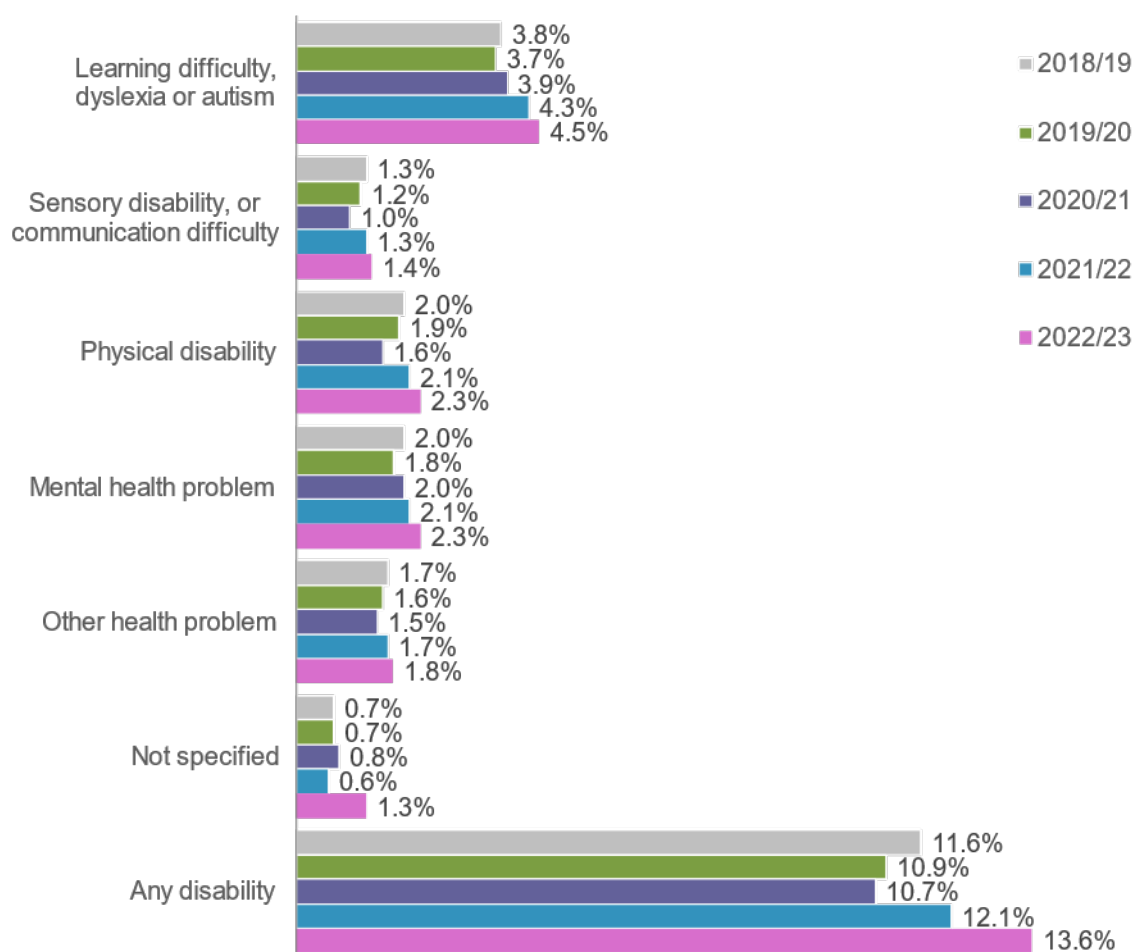
3.47 The ethnicity of learners on AEB provision varied significantly between Adult Skills and Community Learning and was primarily driven by the differing proportions of White British learning aim starts on each funding stream. White British learners accounted for 36% of Community Learning provision in 2022/23 compared with only 15% of Adult Skills provision. The opposite was the case for Black African learners, where they accounted for 14% of Adult Skills provision but just 7% of Community Learning provision.

### Disability and Learning Difficulties

3.48 The distribution of learners by disability or learning difficulty has remained very stable since 2018/19 with almost no variation between years (Figure 3.10). That said, it is notable that in 2022/23 13.6% of learners had a disability or learning difficulty of some description, compared with 12.1% in the previous year and less than 11% in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

3.49 A learner's disability or learning difficulty is recorded when any learning provision starts. However, while learners are asked if they have any disability or learning difficulty, this is self-declared to the learning provider. Since people may give different answers to this question in different circumstances, this is not directly compatible with the administrative data sources commonly used to estimate the proportion of the general population with a disability.

**Figure 3.10 Percentage of learners on AEB-funded aims with a disability or learning difficulty, 2018/29 R14, 2019/20 R14, 2020/21 R14, 2021/22 R14, 2022/23 R14**



Source: ILR 2018/19 R14 (n=232,000), 2019/20 R14 (n=156,000), 2020/21 R14 (n=177,000), 2021/22 R14 (n=201,000), 2022/23 R14 (n=204,000).

## Provision by Local Authority

- 3.50 As shown in Table 3.7 below, on average there were 53.3 learning aim starts per 1,000 population in 22/23, 38.7 of which were in Adult Skills and 14.6 were in Community Learning. However, learning is not distributed evenly across all London Local Authorities, as can be seen in Table 3.7. The Local Authorities with the highest level of learners using AEB provision relative to their populations are Newham (83.4 learning aim starts overall, 75.6 of which in Adult Skills and 7.8 in Community Learning) and Camden (75.9 overall, 39.3 of which in Adult Skills and 36.6 in Community Learning).
- 3.51 Local Authorities with the lowest level of provision are Havering (23.1 learning aim starts per 1,000), Bexley (25.3) and Sutton (29.4).
- 3.52 The Local Authorities with particularly high or low engagement are the same as the 2021/22 academic year, although it is worth noting that there is an increase in participation in Havering, Bexley and Sutton, which all had fewer than 20 learning aim starts per 1,000 12 months ago.

**Table 3.7 Learning aim starts across London, by Local Authority of learner residence, 2022/23**

Local Authority	Community Learning starts	Comm unity Learn ing starts per 1,000 popula tion	Adult Skills starts	Adult Skills starts per 1,000 population	All AEB starts	All AEB starts per 1,000 population
Newham	2,798	7.8	27,112	75.6	29,910	83.4
Camden	7,980	36.6	8,575	39.3	16,555	75.9
Haringey	4,809	18.4	14,122	53.9	18,931	72.3
Islington	5,413	24.6	9,420	42.7	14,833	67.3
Brent	4,044	11.9	18,611	54.5	22,655	66.4
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,825	26.0	7,228	39.0	12,053	65.1
Southwark	5,389	17.3	14,773	47.4	20,162	64.6
Lewisham	5,386	18.0	13,884	46.5	19,270	64.5
Lambeth	5,789	18.3	14,647	46.2	20,436	64.5
Hackney	5,345	20.4	11,515	44.0	16,860	64.5
City of London	481	44.3	200	18.4	681	62.8
Tower Hamlets	5,261	16.1	14,127	43.4	19,388	59.5
Waltham Forest	3,965	14.4	12,434	45.1	16,399	59.4
Westminster	4,323	20.5	7,857	37.2	12,180	57.6
Barking and Dagenham	3,011	13.7	9,066	41.2	12,077	54.9
Hounslow	2,730	9.4	12,486	43.0	15,216	52.4
Enfield	4,093	12.5	12,921	39.5	17,014	52.0
Croydon	3,300	8.4	16,948	43.2	20,248	51.6
Merton	3,727	17.4	7,249	33.8	10,976	51.1
Redbridge	4,765	15.3	10,833	34.8	15,598	50.2
Ealing	2,869	7.8	15,013	40.6	17,882	48.3
Greenwich	5,004	17.2	8,934	30.7	13,938	47.9
Richmond-upon-Thames	4,618	23.7	4,653	23.9	9,271	47.6
Kensington and Chelsea	2,901	19.8	4,048	27.7	6,949	47.5
Wandsworth	4,920	15.0	10,270	31.2	15,190	46.2
Barnet	5,338	13.7	12,375	31.8	17,713	45.5
Harrow	3,164	12.1	8,405	32.2	11,569	44.3
Kingston-upon-Thames	2,057	12.2	4,340	25.8	6,397	38.0
Hillingdon	1,746	5.6	9,890	31.8	11,636	37.5
Bromley	5,074	15.4	6,351	19.3	11,425	34.7
Sutton	1,734	8.3	4,446	21.2	6,180	29.4
Bexley	1,696	6.8	4,570	18.4	6,266	25.3
Havering	1,133	4.3	4,979	18.8	6,112	23.1
<b>Total / average</b>	<b>129,820</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>343,470</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>473,290</b>	<b>53.3</b>

Sources: ILR 2022/23 R14 (n=473,000), ONS Census 2021, Population estimates (2023). Figures for learning aim starts rounded to the nearest 10. \*ranked by overall prevalence of AEB Learning (i.e., Adult Skills + Community Learning – not shown separately)



## Future provision

- 3.53 Providers seeking GLA AEB grant funding for the academic year 2023/24 have been required to submit delivery plans<sup>5</sup>, outlining their plans for delivery of learning with the funding. In total, 76 delivery plans were provided for 2023/24. Therefore, these only represent a portion of total delivery. For this analysis, we have assumed that the remaining plans show similar trends.
- 3.54 Delivery plans for these 76 providers project provision for 209,504 learners in 2023/24, a 3pp increase on the 202,835 planned learners in 2022/23. Applying this projected increase to all learners registered on the ILR in 2022/23 under the GLA AEB, this would mean a total number of learners of 208,920 for the 2023/24 academic year. This would mean a continuation in the trend of increasing learners seen since the 2019/20 academic year, but still some way short of the 232,000 learners in 2018/19.

# 4 Implementation of policy changes

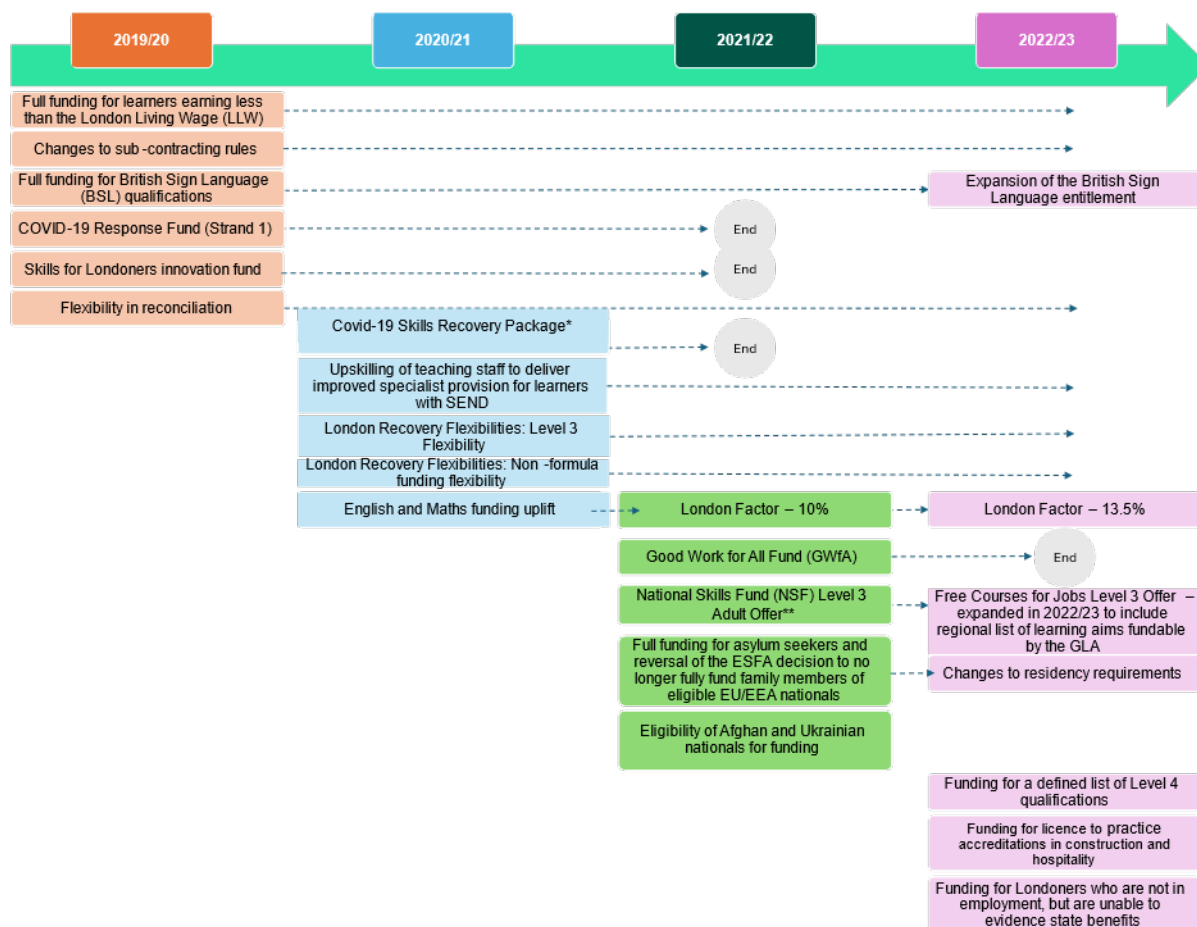
## Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter outlines the main policy changes introduced by the GLA so far, together with their impacts on participation in AEB-funded learning to date. It is important to note that changes may take time to emerge from the ILR data.
- 4.2 Policy changes have been introduced with the intention of ensuring that more adult Londoners, especially those under-represented in learning and work, are equipped to participate in society, realise their goals and progress in education and work. In addition, the changes sought to unlock wider individual and societal benefits such as increased social integration and wellbeing. These policy changes are also intended to improve employer's access to the skills they need.
- 4.3 In summary, the policies considered in this chapter comprise:

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<sup>5</sup> This requirement was introduced for 2021/22; plans were not drawn up for 2019/20 or 2020/21.

Figure 4.1 Timeline of AEB-related changes and flexibilities



\* Including High Value Courses for 19-year-olds, Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP) and the London Recovery Programme: JobCentre Plus

\*\* With flexibility to use up to 20% of allocation to fund qualifications on a GLA-specific list in addition to the national list of funded qualifications)

4.4 GLA have also funded the London Learner Survey to assist in the evaluation of the GLA AEB programme. This survey, open to all of the GLA's AEB-funded learners, started in August 2021, and is ongoing. The data gathered will contribute to future AEB Evaluation outputs.

## Changes introduced for 2022/23

### The 'London Factor' 13.5% funding uplift

4.5 The 'London Factor' is an uplift or increase in the funding paid for AEB-fundable qualifications, up to and including Level 2. A 10% uplift was in place for 2021/22<sup>6</sup> to support providers to reach out to potential learners at a time of high unemployment, to get people engaged with skills and to support progression into and within work. The uplift increased to 13.5% in 2022/2023. In the discussion between the GLA and IFF, the GLA explained that prior to the 10% uplift, rates had been static for some time, despite rising costs for providers. The aim of the uplift was to support the financial health and stability of the skills sector. Referring back to the Theory of Change, this policy meets the intended outcomes for providers to be incentivised to focus more

<sup>6</sup> Mayor of London (2021) *GLA Adult Education Budget 2021/22: Funding and Performance Management Rules for Grant-funded Providers, for the 2021 to 2022 funding year (1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022)*. Version 2. December 2021.

on the impact of their work, and the GLA being able to target funding towards the most impactful approaches.

- 4.6 The intention was for this policy to address the known, additional costs of supporting lower attainment Londoners to progress with employment outcomes. For example, supporting the costs of greater pastoral care, additional tailored support, employment coaching, and other delivery to 'wrap around' learning and addressing the challenges many learners with lower level skills face in progressing in education and training.
- 4.7 Excluding Free Courses for Jobs and Good Work for All learning, the uplift affected 301,400 aims in the 2022/23 academic year, higher than the 285,700 aims in the 2021/22 year. Due to the all-encompassing nature of the uplift, it is not possible to tease out any direct impact on provision through the data; nearly all grant-funded provision is affected, other than the minority (2%) at Level 3. The overall achievement rate for Adult Skills rose slightly in 2022/23 from 88% to 89%.
- 4.8 Awareness levels of the London Factor uplift were high amongst providers interviewed in the qualitative research. The majority of those aware of this policy had claimed it. They agreed that the London Factor uplift provided some additional support with running costs, especially in light of spiralling costs of living. As one provider explained:

*"That [the London Factor] has been a huge benefit to us as an organisation... costs to the college... have been increasing... particularly over the last two years."*

**FE college, Grant**

- 4.9 Some specific examples of how the London Factor had helped were shared by providers:

- More funding able to reach disadvantaged learners
- Allowed additional time for resits
- Enabled more one-to-one sessions with learners, and other 'extras' such as student transport costs and books
- Enabled wage rises for staff
- Helped with utility costs.

- 4.9.1 However, there were some comments that while the uplift was very helpful, it was not enough on its own to counter rising costs:

*"Every bit of uplift has been absorbed. So in a way, our legs are going around quite fast just to achieve the same kind of performance as the year before. Our strategy is to grow, but it's taking 110% just to stay still."*

**LA, Grant**

- 4.9.2 One provider highlighted that remote delivery costs in London had not decreased, as they believed the GLA had assumed:

*"It's just helped cover the costs of what it costs in London... The cost of remote tests actually went up, and we had to put more revision sessions than they used to."*

#### ITP, Procured

- 4.10 A theme also emerged about the administrative burden of claiming the London Factor uplift. During 2022/23, providers had to make a manual application for each learner, which they said was time-consuming, rather than it being applied automatically:
- 4.11 The GLA have already changed how this process works. From the 2023/24 academic year, changes have been made to the national system which enable the London Factor uplift to be generated automatically by the AEB funding formula. This removes the need for providers to make a separate claim.
- 4.12 For the few who were not aware of the London Factor, one ITP asked if it was available to ITPs. Another had not initially been aware, but then was able to backdate their claim when they did become aware.
- 4.13 Of those who claimed the London Factor, none had changed their type of provision as a result of receiving it. Rather, it had alleviated financial pressures, and enabled some 'extras' mentioned above to support learners.
- 4.14 Of those continuing with the GLA in the next academic year, providers expected it to carry on being helpful:

*"It just enables [us] to carry on doing what we're doing and pay our tutors what they should be paid, because we can't afford all our overheads and the rest of it. So it actually means we can continue and maintain and sustain the level of provision that we can do to offer our residents the learning that they need."*

#### LA, Grant

#### Free Courses for Jobs Level 3 Offer

- 4.15 The 2021/22 academic year was the first year of funding some Level 3 courses via the national Level 3 Adult Offer – which was then called the National Skills Fund, but is now called Free Courses for Jobs. Most Level 3 qualifications were AEB fundable prior to the National Skills introduction and remained so afterwards, but qualifications on the national Free Courses for Jobs eligible list were also fundable through Free Courses for Jobs funding allocations. The GLA operation of the Free Courses for Jobs offer is divided between those qualifications on the national list (where all delivery has to meet national criteria), and those on the 2022/23 GLA Regional Free Courses for Jobs list, which can be delivered to GLA criteria. Operation of the Free Courses for Jobs offer comprised a national list of level 3 qualifications (where all delivery was required to meet national criteria) and, in an expansion for 2022/23, an additional regional list of level 3 qualifications which could be funded by the GLA.

Any adult aged 24 or over is entitled to have their first full Level 3 qualification fully funded under the Free Courses for Jobs policy. This policy was in line with the GLA's aim to increase Londoners' ability to access training at Level 3.

**Learner case study: Lucian\***

*"I was surprised how much I liked it [the course]. I did not think that I would want to be a carer before, but the course was very good, and I learned lots of skills."*

Lucian wanted to find a new job and found out about the course via social media. He completed a Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care at an independent training provider. The course lasted for six months, with a mix of online and in-person classes. Lucian enjoyed the course, although he preferred the in-person classes over the online ones, as there were more opportunities to ask questions.

After completing the course, Lucian found a part-time job working in a care home. The course helped him develop skills relevant to being a carer, as well social skills and confidence speaking in public. Lucian wants to complete a Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care in the future, which his tutor recommended.

*"I made lots of friends online. I was very shy before speaking in public, but I feel confident now."*

\*Name has been changed

- 4.16 The GLA had already introduced its own AEB Level 3 flexibility from the start of the 2020/21 academic year, which pre-dated the Free Courses for Jobs offer. The ESFA have mirrored London's arrangements with funding for those with low wages or unemployed, which the GLA Delivery Managers believe may lead to less need for London's own Level 3 flexibility going forwards.
- 4.17 The GLA acknowledged that the national list of courses is based around national priority sectors, which exclude some sectors that are a priority in London. The GLA's regional Free Courses for Jobs Level 3 flexibility list includes qualifications in additional sectors that are a priority for London, highlighting the added value of the programme.
- 4.18 Whilst Grant providers received an additional allocation for Free Courses for Jobs delivery procured providers did not, but are able to benefit from the funding uplift generated by delivery of qualifications from the national Free Courses for Jobs list.
- 4.19 In total, the Free Courses for Jobs funding stream delivered 4,180 learning aim starts in 2022/23, exceeding the 3,380 starts in 2021/22. This takes the total number of starts since April 2021, when the programme was established, to 9,890.
- 4.20 The increase in annual learning aim starts for the Free Courses for Jobs funding stream compared to 2021/22 can potentially be explained by the fact that some providers interviewed in the 2021/22 academic year were planning to expand their Level 3 delivery but had not done this yet. The 2022/23 increase can show those plans being put into action this academic year, leading to the increase in capacity and therefore learning aim starts.

- 4.21 Almost four in ten learning aim starts (38%) were in Health, Public Services and Care in 2022/23. This was slightly lower than in 2021/22 (43%). Business, Administration and Law grew to a 23% share (from 21% in 2021/22). Construction, Planning and the Built Environment (13%) was consistent across years.

**Learner case study: Linda\***

*"It has given me more confidence in my setting because I'm qualified now...and it's given me the motivation to do more courses. I know I can push myself now because Level 3 was so hard, but I did it!"*

Linda\* is in her 50s, and a mum to three children. After 15 years working in the financial sector, she had become dissatisfied and wanted a career change. She completed a diploma supporting teaching and learning Level 3 at an adult education centre run by her local authority, where she had completed an IT course a few years before. The course was one day per week, in person for nine months.

After successfully completing the course, Linda was given a permanent role as a learning support assistant in a primary school nursery. She feels she has more control over planning and setting up resources now that she's qualified. The course also helped Linda to feel more confident and meet new friends.

*"I'm still in touch with people from the course and meet up socially. We support each other, it's nice. Everyone is from different cultures so we learnt about each other. We got together recently and shared food from our parts of the world."*

Linda hopes to progress to a Level 4 course and then a teaching degree in the future.

\*Name has been changed

- 4.22 The types of providers delivering this provision changed slightly between 2021/22 and 2022/23. FE colleges, who dominate this provision, delivered slightly more provision in 2022/23 (77% vs. 72% in 2021/22), while provision by ITPs had fallen from 14% to 5% between years. Delivery by Local Authorities was fairly consistent (14% in 2022/23 vs. 11% in 2021/22), as was IAL provision (3% in 2022/23 vs. 2% in 2021/22). Provider engagement was widespread, with 69 providers delivering aims under this funding stream, one more than in 2021/22.
- 4.23 In 2022/23, although the demographic profile of learners starting a course under this flexibility was more in line with the demographic profile of all AEB provision, this flexibility was still skewed towards learners from an ethnic minority (62% vs. 59% for all AEB funded provision). The change between 2021/22, where 66% were from an ethnic minority, is mostly attributable to a decrease in learners from a Black African ethnic background using this flexibility (18% of learning aim starts in 2022/23 vs. 24% the previous year)
- 4.24 With its Free Courses for Jobs Level 3 Regional qualification list, the GLA introduced more scope for Level 3 subject areas which has meant providers were able to expand their provision in Health & Social Care and other qualifications beyond the national FCFJ offer. In 2022/23



providers had the flexibility to deliver up to 20% of their Free Courses for Jobs allocation from the GLA's regional list of qualifications. In 2023/24 this will be increased to 50%, which will allow for an even larger range of courses, including the Access to Higher Education course<sup>7</sup> to be fully funded, allowing providers to expand their offer further. Providers have welcomed this.

*"We are further expanding our national list of qualifications and we are further expanding the regional qualifications we are offering given the 50% ceiling and that is our plan..."*

**LA, Grant**

*"What we have noticed for 2022/23, is we have seen an increase in funded delivery from that funding stream, because I think of the flexibilities that the GLA has introduced and they have actually increased the span of qualifications and specifically that has helped us. But also, we have tried to change our curriculum to deliver more qualifications in those areas"*

**FE College, Grant**

4.25 All providers were aware and generally positive about the policy, and it was widely used, especially by FE colleges. There were instances of a lack of understanding across providers, in terms of which courses were eligible for funding.

*"Yes I am aware of this... but for some reason as part of our contract we were not able to offer the Level 3 free courses for jobs... when we queried it with contracts manager we were told it's not part of our provision."*

**ITP, Procured**

4.26 A small number of FE colleges were unable to offer full funding for some courses at Level 3, such as hairdressing and beauty courses, because they were not included in list of Level 3 subject areas, despite the demand from students.

*"...There are a lot of people out there who want to do these courses...beauty, hairdressing, administration...we couldn't offer them..."*

**FE College, Grant**

4.27 A number of providers felt that this funding had a significant positive impact on their provision, particularly for women returning to work, those who did not succeed at school and wanted a 'second chance' at getting a Level 3 qualification, ESOL learners, and adults from disadvantaged backgrounds. Previously, learners unable to pay the course fees would have had to take out an Advanced Learner Loan to pay for the course, and providers reported that many were deterred from doing so, either because they did not want to get into debt or for religious reasons, so the introduction of this policy has been welcomed, and learners are able to utilise this funding to step into a higher role.

*"It's fantastic. It means that colleges can do more to support those adults that are employed but are completely stuck in an entry level role that they've been doing for years and years."*

**FE College, Grant**

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<sup>7</sup> [Access to Higher Education \(accesstohe.ac.uk\)](https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk)

- 4.28 As shown by the quantitative analysis, the introduction of the Free Courses for Jobs policy has been especially beneficial in the health and social care sector. It has enabled providers to deliver continued growth especially, and has encouraged retention of staff, allowing them to build more attractive progression pathways.

*"It has enabled us to deliver continued growth in the health and social care sector, especially. There are huge numbers of learners who've been working in the sector for 3-5 years but who don't have the level 3 qualification. This programme gives them an opportunity to take the qualification and progress into professional roles."*

**FE College, Grant**

*"When we are promoting it to our adult social care team within [REDACTED] and to our care home networks, to attract Council staff to achieve their first Level 3, it gives people a lot more confidence to engage with us rather than putting a massive fee in front of them...so it's enabled us to offer courses in health and social care within the Council..."*

**LA, Procured, GWfA**

- 4.29 Some providers did report barriers to taking up this policy flexibility. Providers expressed difficulties in getting enough employer placements for unemployed learners, who need to do an element of work experience in order to achieve a full diploma. A few providers suggested that it would be helpful if the GLA could support this by putting in place incentives or working with providers to attract more employers into offering placements in the future.

- 4.30 A small number of providers, especially LAs, felt that there is an urgency to address the skills shortages in specific sectors, but that the allocations process is too slow. There has been limited impact due to what has been seen as inflexible timeframes and some providers found it difficult to meet their allocations.

*"It operates on a two-year cycle, so next year has been influenced by our output in year 1, which is 2021/22. We were unable to go up and earn £125,000 because it was a new initiative. We were halfway there in year 2 and we'll be 100% there in year 3. However, next year's allocation has been halved, so colleges have to take significant financial risks as we are offering those courses and will be recruiting for those courses, but it's a roll of the dice as to whether we'll then secure the allocation for it."*

**College, Grant**

- 4.31 A small number of procured providers found it difficult to meet their allocations, mainly because they reported that Level 3 recruitment is so competitive for employed and unemployed learners. In addition, employed learners are unable to get the time off work.

*"Everyone is looking for Level 3 learners, it's very competitive." (with other providers) "There's so much out there - and a question about whether learners want to do Level 3, as adults tend to want short courses not ones that last 36 weeks. Also, in some sectors employers won't give them the time off."*

**ITP, Procured, GWFA**

- 4.32 The main reason providers cited for not making use of this policy was because they did not offer Level 3 courses, as they were focussed on basic skills up to Level 2. A small number of providers submitted business cases to expand their provision into Level 3, but did not get the additional funding.

*"We were going to use it to get younger people into the NHS [as they're struggling to recruit.]"*

**ITP, Procured**

### **Reconciliation approach for 2022/23 – payments for over-performance**

4.33 The reconciliation approach for 2022/23 enabled the GLA to approve payment for delivery above the funding year contract value. In 2022/23, all AEB providers who over-delivered were funded up to 103% of their existing AEB allocation, in recognition of their additional AEB provision. Please note, evidence from interviews with providers presented below is likely to reference the reconciliation of academic year 2021/22, because the interviews took place in Summer 2023 and reconciliation of 2022/23 took place at the end of 2023.

4.34 For the GLA the key aims and expectations of this policy are:

*"[To] encourage growth where there's good quality provision and demand for London residents. There's a relevance for learners – the extra 103% allows providers not to disadvantage learners by not being able to take them."*

**GLA policy staff**

4.35 Most providers were aware of this policy. Of those who were aware, it was positively received in the sense that providers felt they could reach more learners:

*"It just enables us to do more of what we do really well, and reach out to people."*

**LA, Grant**

4.36 A group emerged who were not yet achieving any overperformance. Some cited continuing recovery from COVID-19 as the reason for this. A couple of providers had been told by their Delivery Manager that going over 100% would be at their own risk:

*"Our Account manager has told us, if we do overperform that is our risk...we will not be getting paid."*

**ITP, GWfA**

4.37 Those who did claim extra for over-performance reported this to be a straightforward process:

*"It was simple, it was straightforward, we knew what we had to do."*

**LA Grant**

However, there were some calls for the amount to be increased to more than 103%:

*"We want [good performance] to be recognised and funding increased to reflect that. Some colleges are delivering below 97% while we've delivered over 103%, but if we had more funding we could do even more. The limits should be revised from 103% to 110% which would give a greater incentive to those providers that are meeting the thresholds year after year."*

**FE college, Grant**

### **Changes to residency requirements**

4.38 From November 2022, the GLA's Funding Rules now enable UK residents who plan to be resident in London in the long term to, in certain circumstances, access AEB funded learning opportunities from their first day of arrival in London. Under previous versions of the funding

rules, learners who were not otherwise exempt, were required to have been ordinarily resident in London and have been residing in the UK for at least the previous three years.

- 4.39 All providers interviewed were aware and very positive about this policy, as it has enabled them to offer more ESOL, basic skills support, and adult health care provision.

*"The three-year residency requirement predominantly affected our female ESOL learner population so there was a real issue. We were so grateful for it reverting back because we were able to call back all the learners we'd sent away in September to come back through in January. It means we can ensure engagement for the learners in the borough who most need ESOL."*

**LA, Grant**

- 4.40 The impact on adult health care provision was very positive. One provider noted that, as some countries cannot match these qualifications, this qualification allows people to work in care homes in England, and this can also be used as an entry route into the NHS.

*"It should be extended nationally; it's really helping those that need the help..."*

**ITP, Procured, GWFA**

- 4.41 The removal of the three year residency requirement for Londoners has enabled providers to hit their targets and support their current employers, rather than having to source learners from elsewhere.

*"I'm working with five care homes and I wasn't able to get enough numbers because of the restrictions on the visas, and then I had to look for more care homes in order to complete my target. But now within those five care homes I was able to recruit enough numbers so it actually saved us the headache of actually going around looking for more people."*

- 4.42 Providers who took part in the interviews reported a big impact on the volume of ESOL learners, especially Afghan and Ukrainian refugee referrals from Jobcentre Plus.

*"We've increased our ESOL offer as a direct result of that."*

**FE College, Grant**

### Learner case study: Nina\*

*"I could not get a job because I could not understand what people were saying to me. I wanted to feel part of my community and to make friends."*

Nina\* is in her 30s and originally from Ukraine. She wanted to improve her English language skills so she could feel more confident and communicate more easily with her child's school. She found out about her Entry Level 2 Award in ESOL Skills for Life (Speaking and Listening) via a Ukrainian support group on WhatsApp. She completed this course, having progressed from the Entry Level 1 course very quickly. The course was in person twice a week for 2 hours, at her local adult learning college. Following completion of her course, Nina successfully gained employment in a customer facing role in a café. She felt that the course also helped her to assimilate into British culture and make friends. Both outcomes improved her wellbeing.

*"I was invited out by my neighbours to a pub and I have met them at the park with the children, too. I am much more positive and confident, especially communicating with my children's school."*

\*Name has been changed

- 4.43 This has had an implication for some procured providers, who have specific targets for various learners, so came up against a 'cross-cutting' issue, where meeting one target meant it became very difficult to meet another one. Although procured providers have seen a big impact in terms of volumes of ESOL learners, especially Afghan and Ukrainian refugee referrals from Jobcentre Plus, these learners are generally younger, which has meant they have struggled to hit their over-50s target.
- 4.44 Providers also reported that immigration policies are complicated, and so they are not always clear on what a person's status is. The GLA have taken this on board and have published supplementary guidance on their website to provide clarification around this.<sup>8</sup>
- 4.45 When it comes to auditing, there were instances of providers feeling nervous as they did not feel this policy was clearly defined. The funding guidance document produced by ESF forms the basis for GLA's funding template, but one provider said that their ESF auditor had a different view for what they expected to see for residency. Providers felt all the risk was going to fall on them if the auditor disagreed that the learners funded were eligible.
- 4.46 The GLA noted that eligibility rules for further education are being discussed by the Government. Since European citizen status has now changed, they are looking at further adaptations.

### Expansion of the British Sign Language entitlement

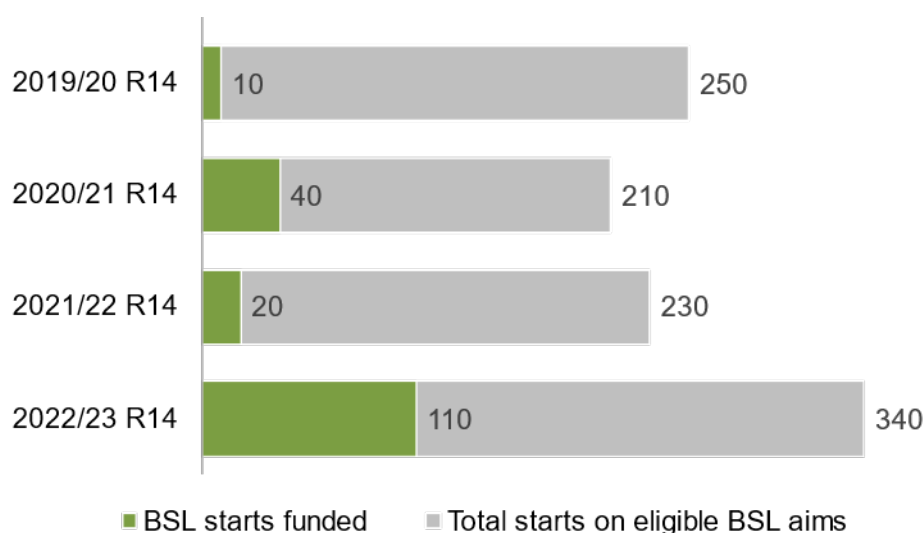
- 4.47 From the start of GLA's stewardship of the AEB budget, one of the immediate changes was to introduce full funding for any learner aged 19 or over whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language (BSL), or who cannot access spoken language because of their deafness and would benefit from BSL, to study for a first qualification in BSL up to and including Level 2. This

<sup>8</sup> [MD3016 AEB Funding and Performance Management Rules 2022-23 | London City Hall](#)

was implemented with the aim of increasing the number and diversity of people gaining the skills they need to progress through training and into higher skilled work.<sup>9</sup> For 2022/23 the eligibility criteria for this entitlement was expanded to fully funded learners who are unemployed or receiving low wage of out of work and outside state benefits.<sup>10</sup> The GLA has referenced the growing status of BSL, a unique language to the UK which they wanted to recognise, and reported that one of the aims of this policy was to create a sign language friendly city, where families of deaf people are able to participate.

- 4.48 The 2022/23 expansion has led to a higher number of learning aim starts under this entitlement (Figure 4.2). Although 2022/23 saw only 110 funded starts using this BSL entitlement, this is an increase from 20 starts in 2021/22. In addition 230 GLA AEB courses (on the eligibility list as a course, but not fully funded for other reasons) were funded via other routes, a slight increase from 210 in 2021/22.

**Figure 4.2 Number of fully funded learning aim starts on BSL learning aims, and number of starts on BSL learning aims eligible for full funding, 2018/19 to 2022/23**



Source: ILR 2018/19 R14 (n=505,000), 2019/20 R14 (n=410,000), 2020/21 R14 (n=404,000), 2021/22 R14 (n=453,000), 2022/23 R14 (n=473,000).

- 4.49 Aims were delivered by four providers delivering GLA AEB funded learning in London. Thirteen of 76 providers that submitted delivery plans indicated they would be using the BSL funding, meaning nine providers who had submitted delivery plans had intended to use this funding but had not done so in 2022/23.
- 4.50 There was mixed awareness of this policy change amongst providers interviewed in the qualitative research. Impressions were positive; however, it was perceived as another way to widen accessibility of education for Londoners.
- 4.51 Of those who were aware but had not taken up the offer, three groups emerged:

<sup>9</sup> Mayor of London (2019). *MD2462: Financial Management of the 2019/20 Adult Education Budget*. April 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Mayor of London (2022). *MD3016: GLA AEB Grant Funding and Performance Management Rules 2022-23*. July 2022

- Most commonly, it was about not having the expertise to teach BSL. Some referenced a shortage of sign language teachers
- Some providers referenced low demand for BSL courses
- One said the current set-up was not financially viable for them as they already offer a BSL course at a fee. They felt that offering the course for free would not work for them.

4.52 Reflecting the quantitative analysis, just one provider of the 20 interviewed in the qualitative research had taken up the BSL expansion policy. They were very positive about the policy but felt it could go further to include people who work or live with deaf people. This respondent gave their own experience as an example here, explaining that she had started working with deaf people as part of the new contract, but could not access the course herself under the policy, which meant she had to use Government funding to pay for an interpreter for meetings.

*“There is a massive gap for people who work with deaf people and people whose family is deaf.”*

**ITP, GWfA**

4.53 This provider felt the policy had enabled them to increase their numbers of learners, but that the type of provision on offer had not changed.

#### **Funding for a defined list of Level 4 qualifications**

4.54 For learning aim starts from 1 August 2022, GLA grant-funded providers have the flexibility to fund eligible learners for approved non-prescribed vocational and technical qualifications Level 4 qualifications of regional importance to London. Learners who are unemployed, out of work and outside benefit arrangements, or are in receipt of a low wage as defined in the GLA Grant Funding Rules may be fully funded, regardless of prior qualification level.

4.55 As part of the 2022/23 policy changes, the GLA provided funding for a defined number (8) of Level 4 qualifications under this stream. For reference, non-prescribed qualifications are those up to Level 4 or higher, which are vocational courses, not ordinarily delivered in Higher Education institutions or funded by the Office for Students. These aims were mostly in Business, Administration and Law, and Health and Social Care courses. This policy is seen as an early venture to supporting more Level 4 qualifications.

*“Funding non-prescribed vocational and technical qualifications at Level four will support AEB providers to offer clear progression routes from existing provision into skills training that leads to high labour-market returns and/or supports skills gaps in priority sectors for London.”<sup>11</sup>*

#### **GLA AEB Grant Funding and Performance Management Rules 2022-23**

4.56 2022/23 data shows that there were 23 learning aims started under this funding. Of these, 14 were funded for learners outside of work and outside of benefit arrangements; 5 by learners in recipient of a low wage and 5 receiving unemployment benefits.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> [GLA AEB Grant Funding and Performance Management Rules 2022-23 v1 | London City Hall](#)

<sup>12</sup> NB: these figures sum to 24 rather than 23 because 1 learning aim was started by a learner in recipient of a low wage and in receipt of universal credit.



4.57 The GLA saw an uptake in the number of providers delivering Level 4 courses, enabling learners to achieve a higher qualification (e.g., accountancy).

4.58 The majority of providers interviewed, especially ITPs and LAs, were not aware of this policy, mainly because they target lower-level learners to do entry level courses up to Level 3. However, some said that if they had been aware they would have used the funding. There was a lack of clarity around what non-prescribed qualifications relates to, suggesting that providers need clearer communication about this from the GLA.

*"In all honesty, no [was not aware of] but it is one I would have been interested as we wanted to offer courses to upskill people in care homes [mentions that apprenticeships are a way to do this but works out too expensive.] I actually didn't know that funding was available."*

**ITP, Procured**

4.59 At the time the qualitative fieldwork was conducted, in Summer of 2023, some providers were updating their curriculum to include Level 4 qualifications, so would look into this funding in the future. Some providers felt there was no demand at Level 4 from the cohorts that they traditionally fund (e.g., unemployed learners).

*"It's not for this cohort. It's about being able to get a cohort together to meet the criteria...adequate numbers of people who are unemployed to do that qualification to make it viable."*

**LA, Grant**

#### **Funding for License to Practice accreditations in construction and hospitality sectors.**

4.60 For learning aim starts from 1 August 2022, GLA-funded providers have the flexibility to fund licence to practice accreditations for eligible learners completing and achieving a licence-linked Adult Skills funded qualification in the current academic year. This flexibility applies to two specific sectors, construction and hospitality, and is available for learners who are unemployed, out of work and outside benefit arrangements or are low waged, as defined in the Funding Rules.

4.61 In the construction sector, eligible learners can be funded for the costs of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Green Card and, where required, the test fee for the associated CITB Health, Safety and Environment qualification. In hospitality, eligible learners can be funded for the SIA Licence (Door Supervisor) and, if required, the associated First Aid at Work qualification.

4.62 The intention behind this policy was to help Londoners get into jobs in key sectors, where licence fee costs can sometimes be a barrier:

*"A barrier can be the licence fee costs. GLA is looking at addressing fee barriers to employment."*

**GLA policy staff**

4.63 In 2022/23, the GLA funded 1,632 learning aims via this route. Most of these aims (1,007, 62%) were for CSCS Green Cards, with the remaining (625, 38%) for 'First Aid at Work' courses.

4.64 This funding stream was in use by 7 Providers. Two large colleges made up 500 of these aims, including all CSCS Green Card qualifications, with four ITPs delivering the remaining 89, all of which were First Aid at Work aims.



- 4.65 Awareness levels were high amongst providers, and it was received positively, as a way for those on lower incomes to be able to afford various required employment licenses, as the license is paid for as part of the course. As one explained:

*"It is really good. It's a big supporter of unemployed learners while they're not working."*

**ITP, GWfA**

- 4.66 Some of the providers interviewed in the qualitative research had taken up this policy but others had not. In most cases this was because they did not offer courses in construction or hospitality.
- 4.67 There was one instance where this policy was potentially relevant to the provider, who offered training in the relevant sectors, but it had not been taken up. This was because this provider did not believe having a CSCS card was a requirement in their borough. They were, however, open to offering License to Practice accreditations in the future, as they could see the value for learners in terms of access to jobs.
- 4.68 In one case, a provider had intended to offer the Security Industry Authority (SIA) Door Supervision course, but this had become economically unviable, as they reported that the SIA had changed the course length regulations from 5 days to 7 days, and then to 10 days, within a relatively short period of time. This meant there would have been additional costs, such as paying tutors for the extra days. It also posed more of a barrier for learners to attend, as some felt they would be missing out of more paid days of work to attend.
- 4.69 There was one example of a provider who had been partly aware of what was on offer. They did not realise that the CSCS card could be funded, and had therefore absorbed those costs themselves, internally:

*"I was aware of the funding for the licence to practice qualification because we did, as part of our programme, offer the health and safety qualification...I was not aware that the CSCS card could also have been paid for."*

**ITP, Procured**

- 4.70 In another instance, a provider explained that they offer License to Practice accreditations, but only where the learner can demonstrate it would benefit them re-entering the workforce. They offer this primarily to people who cannot demonstrate they are on benefits but have other reasons they have not been working, such as caring responsibilities:

*"We do offer this on an exceptional basis... the route for eligibility... is the benefits route... if they can make a compelling case as to how the learning can help them progress into employment. "*

**LA, Grant**

### **Funding for Londoners who are not in employment, but are unable to evidence state benefits**

- 4.71 In July 2022, the GLA announced a range of measures to make adult learning more accessible ensuring more Londoners are able to get the help they need to move into good jobs<sup>13</sup>. Many learners find it difficult to access learning for various reasons (e.g. providing childcare at home) and therefore not earning an income. The GLA have recognised that there is a clear gap in social integration, and they aim to close the gap with this new policy. Discretion was introduced

<sup>13</sup> [Mayor's plan to help 400,000 more Londoners get the skills they need | London City Hall](#)

for providers to fully fund learners who are not in paid work and are not in receipt of state benefits but want to be employed, and/or who are seeking support with social integration, including those with no recourse to public funds.

- 4.72 There was mixed awareness from providers. This was seen as a recognised issue in London and providers aware of the policy appreciated the additional funding. The increased flexibility allowed providers to expand learner numbers, particularly for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Professional Career Development Loans (PCDL) courses. In addition, it has benefitted people arriving in the country on spouse visas.

*"We've been able to increase intake from those groups of learners who previously before the cost would have been a barrier."*

**LA, Grant**

*"This has made some of the teacher's lives easier when they're trying to check eligibility. It's given us a bit more flexibility."*

**LA, Grant**

- 4.73 This policy has also helped providers, especially FE Colleges, to deliver bridging courses for people who want to move from one level to another.

*"When you have adults who are part time...there is a big step between level 1 and level 2 and we have to put on bridging courses so it helps us to do things like that..."*

**FE College, Grant**

- 4.74 However, there was some confusion around how providers, especially procured providers, could use this flexibility. Some were not confident they would be able to use it, so were still turning people away.

*"We had to make a concerted effort to increase the spend on that 15% allocation."* **ITP, Procured**

- 4.75 There was also some concern from procured providers about how auditors will react to them using this flexibility. There is scope for the GLA to support providers with this by issuing more clearcut guidance on what is acceptable evidence – some providers suggested that the GLA could produce an official form for providers that will establish consistency in terms of the evidence being used to apply the flexibility, and stand up to audit.

*"It's the type of thing that could get picked up by my auditors and the risk for us is too great in terms of clawback."*

**ITP, Procured, GWfA**

## Changes introduced prior to 2022/23

### GLA policy changes 2019/20

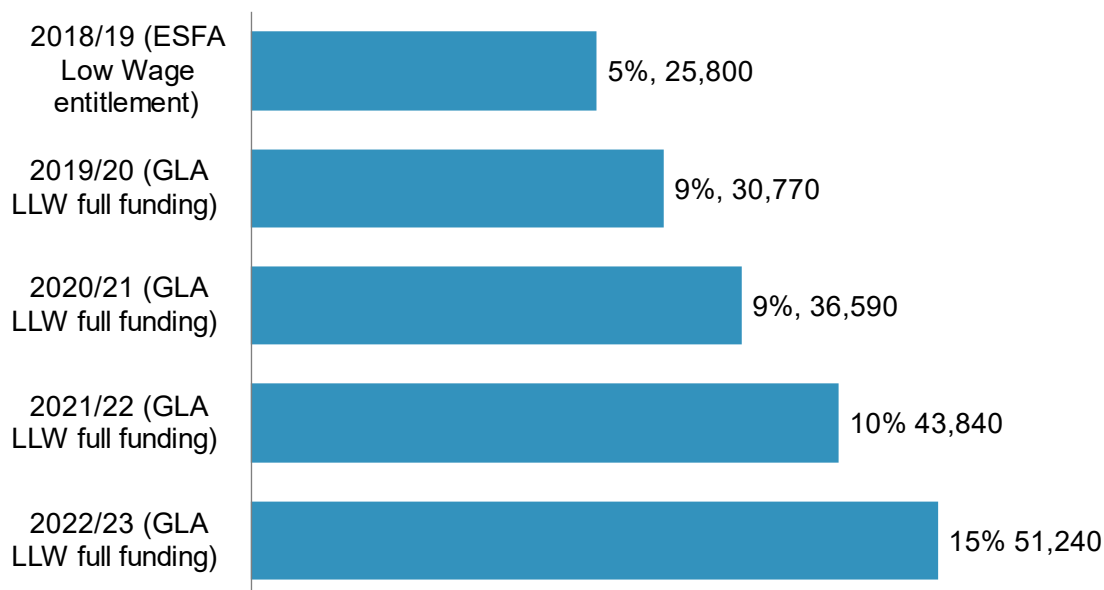
#### Full funding for learners in receipt of less than the London Living Wage

- 4.76 One of the immediate changes when the AEB was devolved to GLA was to introduce a focus on those earning less than the hourly London Living Wage. Learners who are employed, or self-employed, and would normally be co-funded may be fully funded under this measure for Adult Skills provision, for learning aims up to and including Level 2. This is a change from ESFA

policy prior to AEB devolution, which offered full funding for learners with a gross annual salary below a specific amount (£20,319 in 2023/23)<sup>14</sup>. This represents an increase in eligibility overall.

- 4.77 In 2022/23, 15% of Adult Skills learning aim starts were fully funded through the London Living Wage full entitlement, totalling 51,240 starts. This compared to 10% (43,840) in 2021/22.

**Figure 4.3 Number of fully funded learning aim starts through the London Living Wage full funding entitlement by number of starts and % of all Adult Skills funded starts**



Source: ILR 2018/19 R14 (n=505,000), 2019/20 R14 (n=410,000), 2020/21 R14 (n=404,000), 2021/22 R14 (n=453,000), 2022/23 R14 (n=473,000).

- 4.78 In 2022/23 the majority (51%) of learning aim starts funded via this route were at entry Level, with one fifth (20%) being Level 1 and over one quarter (28%) being Level 2.
- 4.79 In terms of subject area, approaching half (47%) of learning funded was in Basic Skills: Language, followed by Preparation for Life and Work (not Basic Skills) which accounted for 16% of learning funded. No other subject area accounted for more than 10% of the funding.

<sup>14</sup> [Adult education budget: funding and performance management rules 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/adult-education-budget-funding-and-performance-management-rules-2022-to-2023)

- 4.80 Learners who were aged 40-49 (29%) and 30-39 (28%) were most likely to be funded through this route. Overall, the age distribution of learners funded through this route was similar to learners funded through other routes, however learners funded through the London Living Wage full entitlement tended to be less likely to be aged 65+ compared to AEB Adult Skills provision as a whole (1% vs 4%).

**Learner case study: Leila\***

"My boss told me to do the course, but I did not want to at the start because I thought it would be too difficult... Now I can help people to complete applications online and show them how to apply for jobs using email."

Leila\* is in her 40s and had been working at a support centre for six months before she took the IT course. Her boss made it clear that she needed to gain better IT skills to do her job. She completed a Level 2 certificate for IT users online at an independent training provider (ITP), recommended by her friend. The course took place weekly online, and monthly at the ITP, which was in a convenient location for her.

"There was lots of information and the tutor was very patient and understanding. I suffer from fibromyalgia and I missed a lot of classes. It was really good that they were recorded so I could watch them back and catch up on what I missed."

After finishing the course, Leila's IT skills have improved. She is now able to use a computer to help customers online. She is also studying for a Level 3 IT skills course at the same provider, which she is really enjoying. Her dream is to go to university and get a better job. She feels the course has helped her to get closer to that goal.

**\*Name has been changed**

- 4.81 Sixty-five percent of learning aim starts funded via the London Living Wage full funding entitlement were among ethnic minority learners. This compares to 66% of all Adult Skills provision in 2022/23, and is marginally higher than the 64% for the London Living Wage flexibility in 2021/22. The proportion of learners with learning difficulties, disabilities or health problems funded through this route decreased slightly compared to the same period in 2021/22 (4% vs 6%). This is significantly lower than the 11% of learners with disability or health condition across all Adult Skills provision. It must be noted that this entitlement is only available to those earning less than the London Living Wage in employment, so it is likely that lower Levels of employment among disabled people result in a smaller number of eligible disabled people. Further analysis of the demographic profile of provision through this flexibility can be found in Annex B.
- 4.82 The majority (68%) of provision delivered to learners under this funding stream in 2022/23 was via Colleges, with just under a fifth (19%) delivered by Local Authorities, a further 8% by ITPs, and 5% by IALs.

### Learner case study: Victor\*

*"It has helped me feel more positive about moving on to university and getting the type of job I would like in cybersecurity. It has helped me a lot in terms of learning from different people and exchanging ideas."*

Victor\* is in his mid-20s and is currently studying a Level 3 Access to HE course in a FE college. He previously completed Level 1 and then Level 2 courses in cybersecurity at the same college. He would have liked to do a Level 3 course in cybersecurity, but the college told him this was not available as there was a shortage of tutors. He is enjoying the Access course and at the time of the interview he was about to apply to study IT and cybersecurity at university.

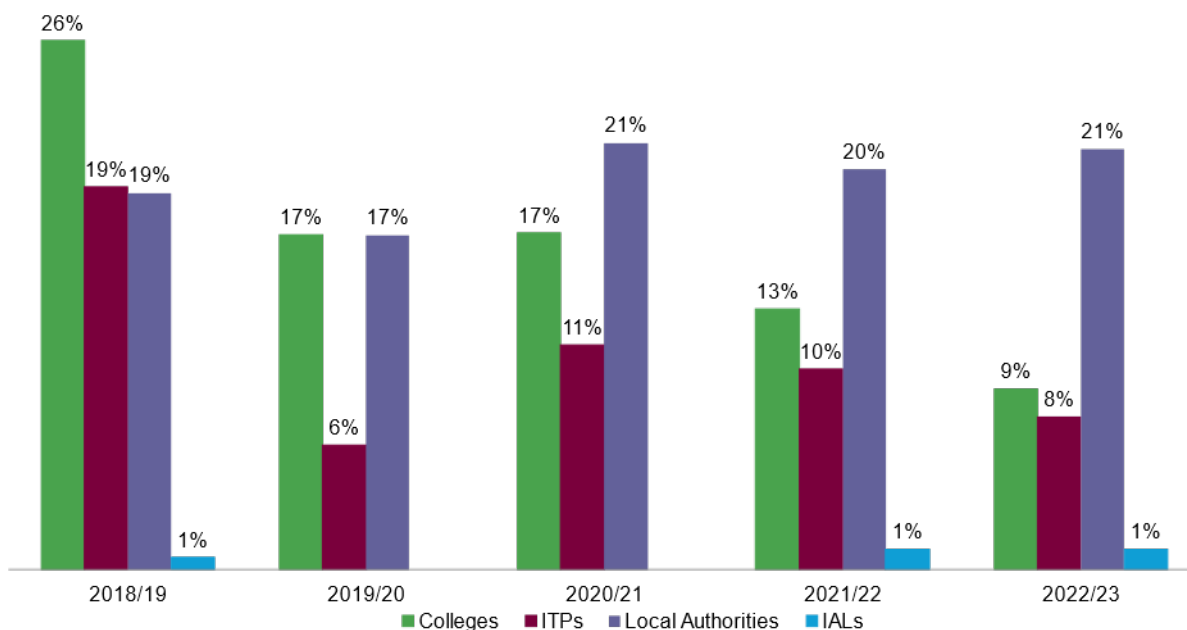
*"I would recommend this course but really any type of learning for people who are looking to move on in life. Learning gives you more options, and that is really important if you don't have any to start with."*

Doing the Level 1, Level 2 and now Level 3 courses has improved his IT skills and knowledge and helped him to progress towards his goal of going to university and then getting a job in cybersecurity. He has also built up his confidence and met lots of new people.

\*Name has been changed

### Changes to subcontracting rules

- 4.83 From 2019/20, the GLA changed its subcontracting policy so that providers are required to outline any subcontracting they anticipate carrying out prior to the commencement of their grant / contract, with a clear rationale for why the subcontracting is adding value. Changes to subcontracting arrangements throughout the year must be agreed with the relevant GLA Provider Manager. The management fees that providers can charge to subcontractors were also capped at 20% unless an exceptional case could be made. The intention is to allow providers to use subcontracting for niche or specialist provision where small providers would not be eligible for a grant from the GLA but to reduce the risks associated with subcontracting.
- 4.84 In 2022/23, 12% of AEB funding has been subcontracted (54,945 learning aim starts), this is a slight decrease from 13% in 2021/22.
- 4.85 There were, however, some differences by provider type, where subcontracting has decreased for colleges (4 pp decrease) and ITPs (2 pp decrease), whereas there has been a 1 pp increase for Local Authorities. The proportion of subcontracting for IALs has remained the same.

**Figure 4.4 Percentage of subcontracted provision in AEB, 2018/19 to 2022/23**

Source: ILR 2018/19 R14 (n=505,000), 2019/20 R14 (n=410,000), 2020/21 R14 (n=404,000), 2021/22 R14 (n=453,000), 2022/23 R14 (n=473,000).

4.86 There was also variation in the how learning aims were subcontracted according to subject area. While Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care continued to be the subject area most commonly subcontracted, the proportion of aims that were subcontracted has fallen each year since 2018/29, standing at 27% (800 learning aim starts) in 2022/23 compared with 31% (918 starts) in 2021/22 and 54% in 2018/19 (2,820 starts). The proportion of Health, Public Services and Care learning aims that were subcontracted also fell, from 28% (10,861 starts) in 2021/22 to 24% (8,971 starts) in 2022/23. On the other hand, Education & Training and Leisure, Travel and Tourism subcontracts rose since 2021/22, from 15% to 19% for each subject area. Further detail on subcontracted learning aims by subject area can be found in Annex B.

4.87 In terms of level, there was a significant increase in the proportion of subcontracted learning aims at Level 3 in 2022/23 compared with the previous academic year (15% vs. 8%), with a reduction in the proportion of Level 1 aim being subcontracted between years (from 14% to 10%). As above, see Annex B for further detail.

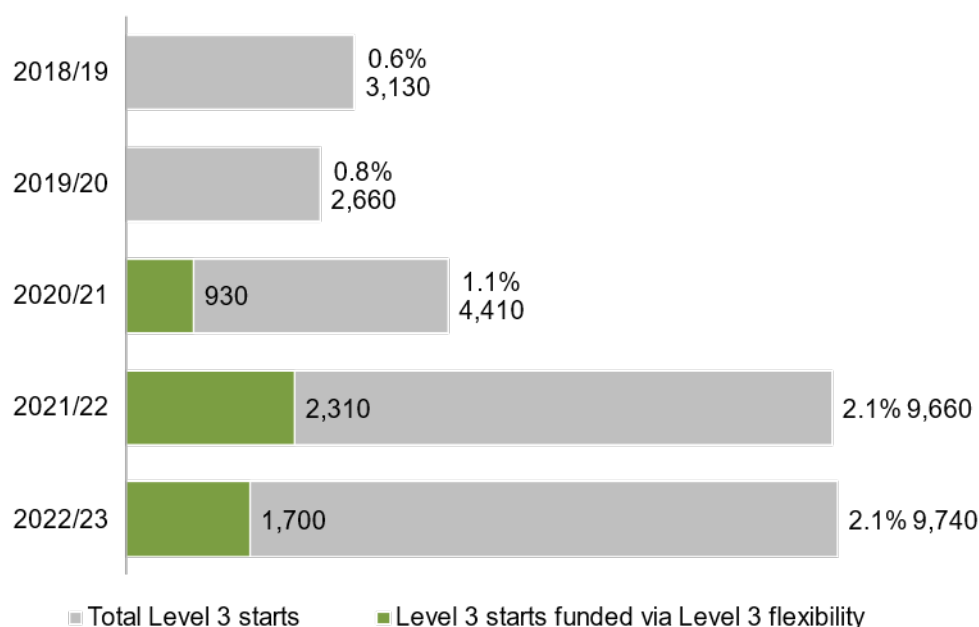
## GLA policy changes 2020/21

### London Recovery Flexibilities: Level 3 Flexibility<sup>15</sup>

4.88 Since the start of the 2020/21 academic year, the GLA has fully funded learners to undertake a Level 3 qualification (of no longer than 12 months) in addition to the legal entitlement, where they are unemployed or in receipt of a low wage.<sup>16</sup>

4.89 In 2022/23 the number of Level 3 learning aim starts fully funded via Level 3 flexibility was 1,700 (0.4% of all AEB provision), with 9,740 Level 3 starts in total (2.1% of all AEB provision). As shown in Figure 4.5, these figures are very similar to 2021/22, albeit with fewer starts fully funded through the Level 3 flexibility (1,700 vs. 2,310 in 2021/22).

**Figure 4.5 Level 3 learning aim starts, with and without Level 3 flexibility funding**



Source: ILR 2021/22 R14 (n=453,000), ILR 2022/23 R14 (n=473,000). Rounded to the nearest 10.

In 2022/23, learning aim starts under the Level 3 flexibility were most likely to be in Science and Mathematics (25%) or Social Sciences (14%).

4.90 In line with the GLA's priorities to support progression among disadvantaged Londoners, the Level 3 Flexibility specifically targets those who, prior to the learning aim, were unemployed or employed at below the London Living Wage rate. Of the 9,740 learning aim starts funded through the Level 3 flexibility in 2022/23, 4,690 (48%) involved unemployed learners. This compares to 47% in 2021/22.

<sup>15</sup> The definition for this flexibility is limited to delivery of AEB formula-funded L3 qualifications.

<sup>16</sup> Mayor of London (2020) *GLA Adult Education Budget 2022/23: Funding and Performance Management Rules for Grant-funded Providers, for the 2022 to 2023 funding year (1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023)*. Version 4 December 2022.

4.91 The demographic profile of learners using this flexibility is detailed below. Further analysis can be found in Annex B.

- Ethnicity: 64% of learning aims fully funded by the flexibility were started by ethnic minority learners, while 67% of all Level 3 starts were by ethnic minority learners. This compares with 66% across all AEB Adult Skills provision.
- Age: learning aims fully funded by this flexibility were most commonly started by those aged 30-39 (32%, vs. 25% of all Level 3 starts and 29% of all AEB Adult Skills Provision). Full funding under this flexibility was also more common for those aged 19-20 (10% vs. 5% for all AEB Adult Skills) but less common for older adults aged 65+ (1% vs. 4% of all AEB Adult Skills Provision).
- Disability: 8% of learning aims fully funded by the flexibility were started by learners with a learning difficulty or disability, compared with 9% of all Level 3 learning aims and 11% of all AEB funded Adult Skills learning aims.

4.92 In total, 46 providers delivered the 1,700 learning aim starts under the Level 3 flexibility in 2022/23, slightly fewer than the 50 providers in 2021/22.

4.93 The largest proportion of learning delivered under this flexibility was in FE Colleges (48%, up from 38% 2021/22), with ITPs (23%, down from 39% in 201/22) and Local Authorities (20% vs. 19% in 2021/22) also delivering substantial quantities. IALs delivered 8% of provision (compared with 4% at the same point in 2021/22).

4.94 For most providers, this initiative made up only a very small proportion of their total GLA AEB provision, with just five of the 46 providers using this flexibility for 5% or more of their provision. These five providers were also relatively small, with none delivering more than 500 AEB funded learning aim starts in 2022/23.

#### London Recovery Flexibilities: Non-formula funding flexibility

4.95 To adapt provision and respond flexibly to the London recovery skills needs in each local area, the GLA has allowed providers to use up to 10% of their AEB formula funded allocation (used for Adult Skills learning provision) for non-formula funded provision (in a similar way to that used for Community Learning provision). This is intended to be used to respond to local skills needs.

4.96 In 2022/23, 12,810 (2.7%) AEB learning aim starts were funded under the non-formula funding flexibility, a 52pp increase on the 8,440 (1.9% of all starts) in 2021/22. The main changes in how this flexibility was used in 2022/23 compared with 2021/22 are shown below:

- In 2022/23 57% of learners were unemployed prior to their course starting, slightly higher than the 53% unemployed in 2021/22.
- In terms of subject area, learning aims were most commonly funded under this flexibility in Preparation for Life and Work (not Basic Skills) (42%), which was a significant increase on the 29% in 2022/23. Arts, Media and Publishing continued to account for a significant proportion of learning aims too, at 23% in 2022/23 (down from 30% in 2021/22).
- In 2022/23, most learning aims funded under the non-formula funding were provided by FE colleges (47%), a significant increase on the 35% in 2021/22, or Local Authorities (45%, vs.



44% in 2021/22). Further, the proportion of learning aims delivered under this provision by IALs fell between years, from 21% to 8%.

4.97 In total, 22 GLA-funded providers took advantage of the flexibility (vs. 20 in 2021/22), the vast majority of which (16) were Local Authorities, with a minority being delivered by FE colleges (3) or IALs.

4.98 Of these 22 providers, 20 had submitted delivery plans, 16 of whom had planned to deliver learning aim starts using this funding in 2022/23. Of those 16 providers 11 had delivered more provision through this funding than they had planned, with 1 provider delivering 994% of their planned starts (1,445 against a planned 145) and another delivered 780% of what they had planned (195 vs. 25). All other providers who had submitted plans had delivered at least 48% of what they had planned for the 2022/23 academic year.

#### Upskilling of teaching staff to deliver improved specialist provision for learners with SEND

4.99 Among GLA's wider objectives is to promote and support training provision that meets the needs of disabled people,<sup>17</sup> as outlined in the *London Post-16 SEND Review*.<sup>18</sup> To support the aim of increasing the participation, retention and achievement of disabled Londoners in education and training, it was decided to use the AEB to fully fund relevant learning to enable the upskilling of eligible teaching and learning support staff to deliver improved provision for learners with SEND. Providers were invited to identify learning aims that should be funded, with GLA deciding which of these to fund.<sup>19</sup>

4.100 In 2022/23, 73 learners were funded for delivery through this flexibility – an increase on the 33 funded in 2021/22, and more in line with 70 seen in 2020/21. All provision in 2022/23 has occurred in 6 providers, of which 2 are FE colleges, 2 Local Authorities and 2 ITPs.

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<sup>17</sup> Mayor of London (2019). *MD2557 Adult Education Budget Policy Changes for 2020/21*. December 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Mayor of London (2019). *London Post-16 SEND Review*. March 2019. Accessed at: [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london\\_send\\_post-16\\_review\\_0.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_send_post-16_review_0.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Mayor of London (2019). *MD2557 Adult Education Budget Policy Changes for 2020/21*. December 2019.

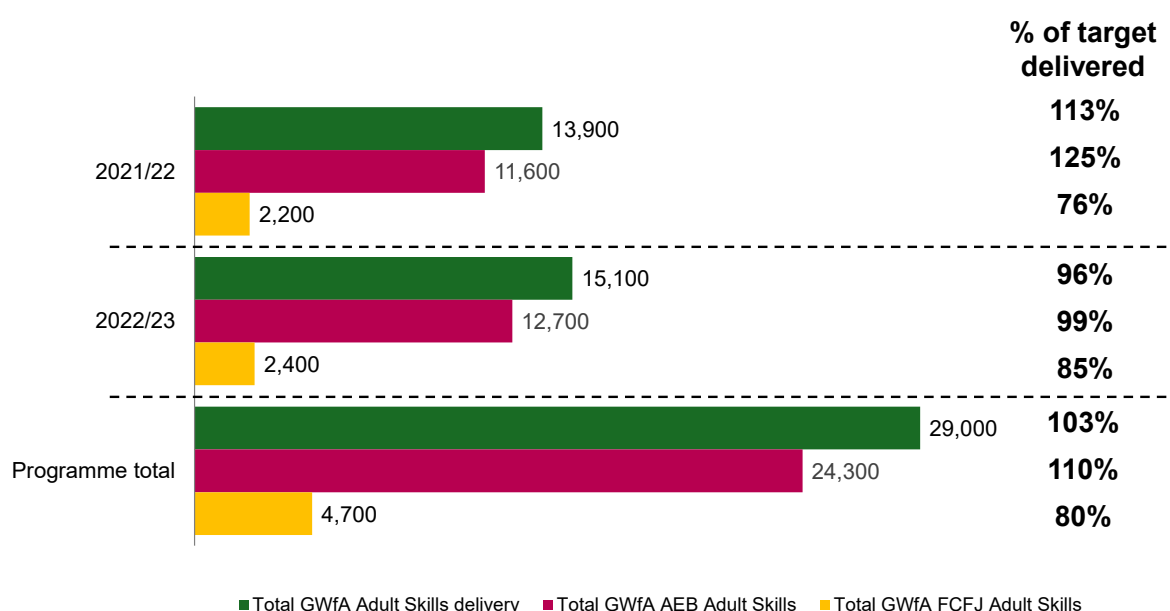
## 5 The Good Work for All Fund (GWfA)

- 5.1 Through The Good Work for All Fund (GWfA), London-based Providers could apply for grants from the GLA for the delivery of AEB-funded adult education and training services, to support the London Recovery Programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 5.2 Forty three contracts were awarded to successful bidders, running from 2021/22 to 2022/23. This chapter explains what was delivered through the GWfA based on GLA performance data and ILR data, and will outline the programme successes, lessons learned, and suggested areas for improvement based on qualitative self-evaluations completed by the providers who received the fund.

### GWFA provision

- 5.3 As shown in Figure 5.1 below, in total across the two years the programme ran for, GWFA total enrolments were 29,000, exceeding the target of 28,000 (103% of target). This was due to over deliver against target in 2021/22 (113% of target), while the 2022/23 academic year delivered just short of its target enrolments, at 96%.
- 5.4 Enrolments delivered through AEB funding followed a similar pattern in overdelivering against its target across the programme (110% of target), with 2021-22 over delivering (125%) and 2022-23 falling just sort of target (99%). Conversely, enrolments through FCFJ funding fell short of their target, delivering 80% of planned enrolments overall, 76% in 2021/22 and 85% in 2022/23.

**Figure 5.1 GWFA enrolment delivery vs. targets, 2021-2022 and 2022-23**



Source: GLA GWFA Programme Performance Data.

- 5.5 Table 5.1 below shows certain groups of learners where enrolment targets were missed. Of particular note are young Londoners (aged 19-23), where only 30% of the enrolment target was hit, and employed learners earning below the London Living Wage (36% of target). This

suggests that future provision, and marketing of the provision, should focus attempts on encouraging these hard to reach groups in particular into education.

**Table 5.1 Total GWFA enrolments delivery vs. targets by key subgroup (2021-2022 and 2022-2023 combined)**

	Targets	Delivery	% of target delivered
New Unemployed (under 12 months)	11,070	4,950	45%
Unemployed (over 12 months)	9,013	7,809	87%
Total Unemployed	20,083	12,759	64%
Employed earning below LLW	5,623	2,033	36%
Young Londoners (aged 19-23 years old)	6,365	1,891	30%
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners	16,256	12,566	77%
Disabled Londoners	3,062	2,542	83%
Londoners over 55	4,588	2,704	59%

Source: GLA GWFA Programme Performance Data.

- 5.6 While overall the GWFA achieved its intended aim in terms of the number of learners who enrolled on learning aims, only 81% of the target for learning aim achievements was hit (22,460 of the target of 27,706). Targets for achievements were missed in both the 2021/22 and the 2022/23 academic years and across both AEB and FCFJ funding streams. This shows that while the GWFA programme was successful overall in encouraging learners to enrol in learning aims, the main issue was ensuring a higher proportion of learners see that learning aim through to an achievement.
- 5.7 Now turning to the number of learning aims which were actually started by learners (as opposed to the number of enrolments), ILR data shows that the vast majority (80%) of GWFA learning aims were delivered by ITPs, with fewer than 10% respectively being delivered by FE (5%), Local Authorities (8%) and IALs (7%). This is significantly different from the distribution of learning aims by provider type for all AEB funded provision, where only 9% of learning aim starts were delivered by ITPs. On the other hand, just under half of learning aim starts are delivered by FE (45%), a third by Local Authorities (30%), and over one in ten delivered by IALs (16%).
- 5.8 GWFA was delivered mainly at Level 2 (45%), compared with just 17% of all AEB-funded provision. Level 3 provision was also delivered disproportionately through GWFA, making up 15% of GWFA provision, compared with just 2% of all AEB-funded provision.
- 5.9 Subject areas for GWFA provision also differed from all AEB-funded provision. For example, a higher proportion of Health, Public Services and Care learning aims were delivered through GWFA (30%, vs. just 7% of all AEB provision) and Business, Administration and Law (11% vs. 4% of all AEB provision). The emphasis on Health and Care aligns with priority sectors outlined

in the Good Work for All Prospectus<sup>20</sup>. On the other hand, GWFA delivered a lower proportion of learning aims in Basic Skills area (18% vs. 35% of all AEB-funded provision) and Preparation for Life and Work (12% vs. 17%).

#### **Learner case study: James\***

*"I wanted to find a career that would make me happier, get out and about, see people face to face."*

James is in his 40s. He wanted to change career from IT project management to horticulture, as he was finding IT stressful, and had long been interested in gardening. Improving his wellbeing at work was his main motivation. James completed a Level 2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture at a further education college. The course was in-person, once a week, for a year. James' learning experience at his provider was very positive.

The course gave James the confidence to make his career change, through development of the necessary knowledge and skills. He found a job as a gardener for a large gardening company after completing the course.

*"The course allowed me to change career, gave me a relevant qualification, and the confidence to get on and do what I wanted to do. I use the things I learnt every day."*

James also explained that making his career change had positively impacted his physical and mental health, as he was much more active in his new job, and was healthier as a result.

*"My physical appearance has changed. I've lost weight. I used to be quite a big guy. I'm more confident about my appearance now and about the way I approach life."*

\*Name has been changed

- 5.10 In terms of ethnicity, the profile of GWFA learners was fairly similar to all AEB-funded provision, although learning aims were started by a higher proportion of Black or Black African learners (26% vs. 20% of all AEB provision) and a lower proportion of Arab or another ethnic group (6% vs. 13%).
- 5.11 The age profile was fairly close to that of all AEB-funded provision, although GWFA learners were more likely to be aged 30-49 (55% were vs. 50% for all AEB provision) and less likely to be 65+ (2% vs. 10%).
- 5.12 The profile in terms of disability or health problem was similar to the profile of learners on all AEB funded provision, although a slightly lower proportion starting a GWFA learning aim had some kind of disability (10% vs. 11%).
- 5.13 In 2022/23, 82% of learning aims ended in an achievement, lower than the 89% of learning aim starts ending in an outcome for all AEB-funded provision and the 86% for Adult Skills provision (which makes up 99% of GWFA provision). This may partly be explained by the fact that ITPs, which deliver the majority of GWFA provision, have an overall achievement rate of 84%.

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/good\\_work\\_for\\_all\\_-\\_prospectus.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/good_work_for_all_-_prospectus.pdf)

Furthermore, GWFA provision has a far higher proportion of Level 1-3 provision than all AEB-funded provision, which have lower achievement rates than entry level or unlevelled provision. This is particularly the case for Level 3 provision, which has an overall achievement rate of 64%, and makes up 15% of all GWFA provision, compared with 2% of all AEB-funded provision, and Level 2 funding, with an overall achievement rate of 80%, making up 45% of GWFA compared with only 18% of all AEB-funded provision.

## GWfA spending and delivery

- 5.14 GLA's AEB reconciled financial data for 2021/22 and 2022/23 shows that overall across the two academic years that the GWFA programme ran, £38.2m of spending was committed for GWFA, split evenly across the two years. Of this, £21.2m was AEB funding (£20.4m grant allocation and £0.8m learner support) and £16.9m was FCFJ funding.
- 5.15 As shown in Table 5.2, £29.5m (77%) of this spending was actually paid to providers, meaning £8.7m (23%) was not used. That said, a higher proportion of AEB funding was used compared with FCFJ funding. Overall, 89% of AEB funding was paid to providers across the two years compared with 63% of FCFJ funding. Looking at the AEB funding only, AEB grant allocation was best utilised, with 92% of the allocation paid, compared with only 18% of the learner support allocation. Although the learner support allocation was only a small proportion of the overall AEB GWFA funding, these figures suggesting that more could have been done to reach and attract learners eligible for this funding.
- 5.16 The picture for AEB funding was almost identical between 2021/2022 and 22/23, although a slightly higher proportion of the learner support allocation was paid to providers in 2021/22 (20%) compared with 2022/23 (16%). Conversely, a higher proportion of the FCFJ allocation was paid to providers in 2022/23 (67%) compared with 2021/22 (59%).

**Table 5.2 Committed spend compared to actual spend for GWFA 2022/23**

	2021/22	% of committed spend paid 2021/22	2022/23	% of committed spend paid 2022/23	Programme total	% of committed spend, programme total
<b>Committed spend</b>						
AEB GWfA Allocation	£10.1m	-	£11.1m	-	£21.2m	-
of which... grant allocation	£9.7m	-	£10.7m	-	£20.4m	-
of which... learner support	£0.4m	-	£0.4m	-	£0.8m	-
FCFJ GWfA Grant Allocation	£8.9m	-	£8.0m	-	£16.9m	-
<b>Total GWFA Grant Allocation</b>	<b>£19.1m</b>	-	<b>£19.1m</b>	-	<b>£38.2m</b>	-

Actual spend						
AEB GWfA (paid)	£9.0m	89%	£9.9m	89%	£18.9m	89%
of which... grant allocation	£8.9m	92%	£9.8m	92%	£18.7m	92%
of which... learner support	£0.1m	20%	£0.1m	16%	£0.2m	18%
FCFJ GWfA (paid)	£5.3m	59%	£5.3m	67%	£10.6m	63%
<b>Total GWfA paid</b>	<b>£14.3m</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>£15.2m</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>£29.5m</b>	<b>77%</b>

Sources: GLA AEB allocation and earnings data for 2022/23 academic year, February 2024.

## How the programme was delivered<sup>21</sup>

- 5.17 Providers targeted specific groups of potential learners who were most affected by the pandemic. The priority groups included, but were not limited to: Black and other ethnic communities, third generation migrants, Ukrainians with immediate access to funds, women, people with English as their second language, and people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Providers conducted a needs assessment of these groups to cater to the specific skills gaps and challenges they faced to ensure that the training provided was relevant to the employment they were seeking and to eliminate barriers to entry in the sector. As a result, the GWfA programme empowered those hit hardest by the pandemic to access education and provided opportunities to secure, well-paid jobs.

*“Our programme addressed the skills needs of priority groups by identifying and specifically targeting priority groups that were most affected by the pandemic, tailoring our training programs to address their unique skill requirements.”*

**ITP, GWfA**

- 5.18 Providers actively engaged and collaborated with employers and stakeholders to develop sector-specific provision. This allowed providers to create training programmes that were directly aligned to the needs and expectations of the job market, ensuring that learners acquired skills that were in demand.

*“We have established a robust network of sector-specific organizations with whom we collaborate closely. Together, we tailor training programs to match local skill requirements and employment opportunities.”*

**ITP, GWfA**

<sup>21</sup> The rest of this chapter is based on analysis of self-evaluation reports that GWfA providers submitted to the GLA at the end of the programme.

- 5.19 Providers recognised the diverse needs of their learners. Their provision was designed to accommodate and recognise these differences, and training was tailored to meet the specific needs of each individual where possible. A diverse range of learning and training opportunities were provided, accommodating to the needs of priority groups at various skill levels (from entry-level to Level 3 qualifications and beyond). Providers also offered part-time and blended learning, kept class sizes small, and offered flexible learning hours, including evenings and Saturdays, where possible.

*"We provided an array of learning and training opportunities, spanning from foundational entry-level courses to the attainment of Level 3 qualifications. The inclusion of part-time, online, and evening courses ensured that access to education remained equitable and did not disadvantage any Learners."*

**ITP, GWfA**

- 5.20 Providers invested in recruiting highly skilled teaching and support staff to design and deliver their curriculum and equipped learning centres with excellent resources with access to technology, where they could learn and socialise.
- 5.21 The programme allowed learners to gain new skills and accreditations in key sectors they were interested in and focused on the development of expertise in the chosen sectors, aiming to have a long-term impact on the workforce. Many providers engaged with employers that met or exceeded the London Living Wage, fostered stability, and upheld fair employment practices, and actively discouraged the adoption of work arrangements such as zero-hour contracts.

*"We demonstrated a strategic commitment to the long-term development of expertise and high-quality provision within the chosen sectors, as outlined in the prospectus. Our project was not solely focused on short-term gains but aimed to establish a lasting impact on the workforce in our community."*

**FE College, GWfA**

- 5.22 The GWfA providers felt that the end of the contract had been communicated clearly. They noted that they had been given enough information on the closing process and that the information had been communicated through multiple channels such as through the OPS system, their Delivery Manager, in workshops and seminars.

### **Partnership and collaboration with employers and businesses**

- 5.23 GWfA providers built strong partnerships with various organisations within and outside of their local communities to create employment opportunities for Londoners.
- 5.24 Providers conducted a needs assessment to understand the specific requirements and challenges faced by employers (including skills gaps, staff training needs, and anticipated future skills gaps). As a result, Providers were able to tailor their approach to meet these requirements, and set clear objectives aligned with the interests of potential partners and stakeholders.

*"A key element of our strategy was conducting comprehensive needs assessments to understand the specific requirements and challenges faced by our target audience. This*



*enabled us to tailor our services to meet the needs of employers, businesses, and the community effectively, showcasing our commitment to meeting their specific requirements.”*

**FE College, GWfA**

- 5.25 Providers worked with organisations focused on addressing inequalities in employment outcomes, and supported them in addressing structural barriers to engagement, recruitment, retention, and progression for underrepresented groups in the workforce. Providers established open communication channels with these organisations through networking events, conferences, seminars, and regular updates on project progress, to ensure that they were informed about, and engaged with, the programme.
- 5.26 Providers engaged with members of their local community and local organisations (through community events, workshops, and information sessions) to involve them in the programme and ensure that it was tailored to meeting their needs.
- 5.27 Providers highlighted the mutual benefit of collaboration among stakeholders, partners, and members of the local community, which fostered trust and a long-term commitment to the programme.

*“We established strong partnerships by engaging in meaningful dialogue, building trust, and creating a shared vision, working to identify common goals and objectives, and then developing strategies to achieve them. We have also worked to create a culture of collaboration and mutual respect, and to ensure that all stakeholders are heard, and their perspectives are taken into account.”*

**ITP, GWfA**

### Lessons learned from the programme and suggested areas for improvement

- 5.28 Providers had a positive relationship with their Delivery Manager throughout their GWfA contract and felt that the programme had had a positive impact on Londoners' lives. They felt that the programme was a good way to help them develop their curriculum in a way that was relevant to their local community:

*“Our experience with the Good Work for All programme has been positive, aligning with our commitment to making a meaningful impact in our community. The programme's focus on addressing skills needs, fostering partnerships, and promoting good work opportunities has been in line with our mission and objectives. [...] We appreciate the partnership [with the GLA] and the opportunities it has provided to contribute positively to our local community.”*

**FE College, GWfA**

- 5.29 Many providers completed regular internal reviews of their processes based on feedback from learners and stakeholders, which helped programmes evolve to meet the continuously changing needs of the community. Some Providers also highlighted that gaining feedback was essential to explore the successes and impact of the programme among participants and stakeholders, and therefore increase the chances of securing future funding:

*“Producing formal feedback can help showcase the program's impact and success, thereby promoting more opportunities for both current and future initiatives [...] and also serves as a*



*powerful tool for promoting the program, attracting more participants, and securing future funding.”*

**ITP, GWfA**

### **Suggested improvements for future, similar programmes**

- 5.30 Several providers suggested improvements in communication, guidance, and reporting on progress from the GLA and Provider managers. Some Providers felt that the timeliness of responding to requests for information and guidance could have been more efficient, specifically in relation to technical questions about the ILR. One Provider suggested to provide a direct contact for the technical team rather than going via the Provider Manager. Some Providers requested more frequent contract meetings to discuss the project progress, challenges, and achievements to ensure that the project was on track.
- 5.31 Providers also felt that the programme would have benefitted from more stakeholder engagement throughout the contract, such as via networking events to share best practice, and suggested that these should have taken place every six months.
- 5.32 Several providers would have liked additional support in the initial stages of their contract to develop a culture of best practice. Suggestions here included setting up a buddy system with previous GLA skills contract holders, and access to a dedicated ILR consultant to support them if they were making their first ILR return.
- 5.33 Providers confirmed that the availability of the funding had led to an increase in the number of learners attending their courses. However, it was noted that the funding lacked flexibility, which was disappointing if they had established new opportunities with employers in between submitting their bid and the funding being confirmed. It was also noted by one Provider that the hard close in the summer of 2023 meant that they had to turn away Learners because there was a risk that they would not have completed their course by the time the funding ended.

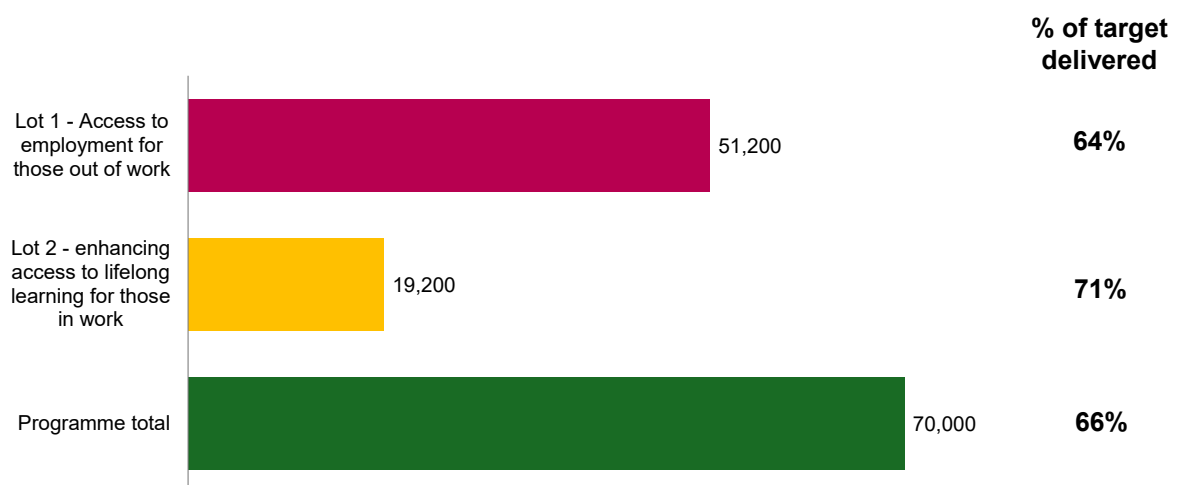
## 6 AEB Procured Provision

- 6.1 AEB procured provision refers to provision delivered by providers who have secured a contract to deliver AEB provision through a competitive tender process. AEB procured provision was divided into two 'lots'. Lot 1 provision is intended for training those who are out-of-work, with 75% of the contract value dedicated to this, and Lot 2 is intended for provision for those who are in-work, with the remaining 25% of the contract value dedicated to this.
- 6.2 Twenty nine contracts were awarded to successful bidders, running from 2019/20 to 2022/23. This chapter provides an analysis of AEB procured provision for the 22/23 academic year, the final year of that contract.

### AEB procured delivery

- 6.3 Figure 6.1 below shows the number of enrolments for AEB procured provision across the lifetime of the programme compared with targets. Overall this provision delivered 70,000 learning aim enrolments, around two-thirds of what had been targeted (66%). Lot 2, which provided for those already in work, was slightly closer to its delivery target, at 71% (19,200 enrolments), while Lot 1 enrolments, for those not in work, achieved 64% of its target (51,200 enrolments).

**Figure 6.1 AEB procured enrolment delivery vs. targets, 2019/20 to 2022/23**



Source: GLA AEB Procured Performance Data.

- 6.4 Looking at performance against targets for certain groups of learners, the programme was very successful in providing funding for those without basic skills. Across the programme 54,000 enrolments were delivered for this group of learners against a planned 35,100, significantly over delivering against target (154% of target). On the other hand, only 31% of the target was reached for the economically inactive (4,600/15,000) and only 36% for learners with a single adult household and dependent children (5,900/16,200), suggesting more can be done to engage these groups in learning.
- 6.5 As shown in Table 6.1, the vast majority of AEB procured starts (as opposed to enrolments) were delivered by ITPs (87%), with FE delivering 12% and IALs just 1%. This differs from the

distribution of AEB funded provision overall, where the majority is delivered by FE (45%) or Local Authorities (30%).

**Table 6.1 Proportion of learning aim starts at each type of provider broken down by funding stream, 2022-23**

Provider Type**	AEB Procured	All AEB starts
FE College / Specialist or 6 <sup>th</sup> Form College	12%	45%
Local Authority (LA)	0%	30%
Independent Training Provider (ITP)	87%	9%
Institute of Adult Education (IAL)	1%	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ILR 2022/23 R14 (n=34,000). \*\*Universities not shown (<0.5%).

- 6.6 The proportion of aims ending in an achievement for AEB Procured provision in 2022/23 was lower than other types of provision, at 85% compared with 87% of Adult Skills grant-funded provision and 93% of Community Learning provision.

### AEB procured spending

- 6.7 GLA's AEB financial data shows how the £33.8m committed to AEB procured funding was spent. As shown in Table 6.2, overall £29.6m, or 85%, of the £33.8m contract value was spent in 2022/23, with £3.9m left. Of this £29.6m spent, £28.7m (97%) was through AEB provision and £0.9m (or 3%) through FCFJ provision.
- 6.8 While total spend was below the contract value, Lot 1 provision accounted for a slightly higher proportion of the spend than originally intended (78% vs. 75%), while Lot 2 was slightly below intended spend (23% vs. 25%).

**Table 6.2 Committed spend compared to actual spend for AEB procured provision 2022/23**

	2022/23		
<b>Committed spend</b>			
<b>Total AEB Procured contract value</b>	<b>£33.8m</b>	-	-
<b>Actual spend</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>% of total committed spend 2022/23</b>	<b>% of total spend 2022/23</b>
AEB Procured Lot 1	<b>£23.1m</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>78%</b>
<i>of which... adult skills</i>	<i>£22.8m</i>	67%	77%
<i>of which... learner support</i>	<i>£0.3m</i>	1%	1%
AEB Procured Lot 2	<b>£6.9m</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<i>of which... adult skills</i>	<i>£6.88m</i>	20%	23%
<i>of which... learner support</i>	<i>£0.03m</i>	0%	0.1%
<b>Total AEB Procured spend</b>	<b>£29.6m</b>	<b>87%</b>	-
<i>of which... AEB</i>	<i>£28.7m</i>	85%	97%

<b>of which... FCFJ</b>	<b>£0.9m</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>
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Sources: GLA AEB reconciled financial data, 2022/23, February 2024.

- 6.9 Analysis of GLA's reconciled financial data (Table 6.3) shows that overall across the four years of AEB procured provision, 89% of the total contract value was paid to providers. This equates to £122.0m of the total contract value of £137.5m.
- 6.10 The first year of provision saw the lowest proportion of the contract value paid to providers (and lowest number of learning aim starts and learners), at 78%, before 2020/21 and 2021/22 saw 95% and 94% of the contract value paid to providers respectively. The last academic year, 2022/23 then saw a slight drop off, with 87% of the contract value paid to providers.
- 6.11 Although 89% of the contract value being spent shows a significant amount of funding was paid to providers, 11%, or £15.5m, of the contract value was unspent across the past four years. This may relate to the impact of COVID-19 in the early phase of the contract period.

**Table 6.3 AEB procured contract value compared with amount paid to providers, 2019/20-2022/23**

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
<b>AEB procured contract value</b>	£34.0m	£32.7m	£36.9m	£33.8m	£137.5m
<b>AEB procured paid (to providers)</b>	£26.5m	£31.1m	£34.9m	£29.6m	£122.0m
<i>of which... AEB</i>	-	£30.9m	£33.7m	£28.7m	-
<i>of which... FCFJ</i>	-	£0.2m	£1.2m	£0.9m	-
<b>% of contract value paid to providers</b>	78%	95%	94%	87%	89%

Sources: GLA AEB reconciled financial data 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23.

### Providers' reflections on procured contracts ending in 2022/23

- 6.12 Procured providers generally felt that the end of the contract was communicated effectively, and they had been given sufficient and clear information on the process. They had received information through multiple channels, for example, through webinars, over email, via letter and through their Delivery Managers.

*"We had it in a different formats as well...we had a webinar. I had an email and I had support from GLA staff as well..."*

**LA, Procured, GWfA**

- 6.13 However, one procured provider interviewed in the qualitative research judged that the tone of the communications had changed at the end of the contract. The previously informal tone had become much more formal. They felt the letter could have been worded differently.
- 6.14 Some providers thought that additional information had been requested at the end of the contract which they had not expected, and found time-intensive to administer. This was often related to end of contract audits or queries about reconciliation, and some providers suggested that a more regular or interim reconciliation would have been helpful.

*"We'd like more regular contact with the Provider Manager in the closedown stages and a more collaborative approach to working together. Moving forward, there could be an interim reconciliation at Period 9 or Period 12 rather than doing it quite a bit later."*

**ITP, Procured, GWfA**

- 6.15 Although monthly data uploads were a requirement, two providers who took part in the interviews had been unaware of this and felt that it should have been identified and communicated to them sooner by the GLA, as it created a lot of work for them during the contract closedown process.

## 7 Management of the AEB

- 7.1 This chapter explores provider views on the management and administration of the AEB. It includes provider relationships with GLA staff, GLA communications, the closure of procured contracts, reflections on the Good Work for All (GWfA) funding and overall impacts of the AEB. This chapter draws on evidence from the qualitative interviews with learning providers.

### Relationship with GLA staff

- 7.2 In 2019/2020 the GLA put in place a delivery team to act as a first point of contact for providers. GLA staff are responsible for monitoring the performance of providers throughout their funding, which involves a termly discussion. In 2022/23 this approach was continued but there had been a shift in focus from remote termly meetings to face-to-face meetings.
- 7.3 Providers continued to be positive about having a specific point of contact at the GLA. They felt that the communication approach of GLA staff had remained consistent or improved compared with the 2021/22 academic year. They appreciated the termly meetings, and some noted the move to more face-to-face communications, which they valued. In the provider survey, 10/20 reported the termly meetings were 'very useful' with 7/20 who reported them as 'fairly useful'. The remainder did not express a view. Commonly providers found GLA staff to be friendly, professional and supportive.

*"[REDACTED] at GLA is amazing. She is engaged, meets regularly, she's very supportive."*

**ITP, Procured, GWfA**

- 7.4 Providers that felt the communications had improved and GLA staff as having become more responsive and proactive. They noted that termly meetings were being arranged with more advance notice and GLA staff were visiting their premises for meetings more often, rather than relying on videocalls.

*"They are contactable and responsive, and it feels like a genuine relationship...We're having more visits from the GLA now which is a lot more of a proactive approach."*

**FE College, Grant**

- 7.5 However, a few providers had experienced a reduction in contact from the GLA which they felt was due to changes in GLA staffing or their specific contact having a more limited capacity to effectively keep on top of the communications. This had led to providers not always receiving as much regular contact as liked in a few cases.

*"We usually have termly meetings with our contracts person, and we haven't had that because there's been quite a few changes."*

**LA, Grant**

*"We went from having no communication directly from the funding body [the ESFA] to a named person - it is always useful to have a person who you can email to get clarification and support, develop a relationship with which can be honest and supportive to help enable best possible performance. This named person has changed too frequently."*

**LA, Grant**

- 7.6 A few providers raised a development need about the experience and knowledge of some GLA staff in dealing with queries about specific funding streams, which could sometimes result in a delayed or unclear response. .

*"If there's someone who's very experienced they can give you a definitive answer right away...someone with less experience may have to go away and check...and then you've got to wait...and then it's not always clear what's been said..."*

ITP, Procured

## GLA communications

- 7.7 In 2022/23 the GLA committed to focus more on forums for providers to highlight how they are effectively using the 2022/23 policy changes and flexibilities. The intention of the forums was two-fold to help raise awareness of the AEB funding changes and advertise how the different funding policies can be effectively applied. The provider forums were run as webinars and included Q&A sessions. The GLA also introduced a monthly newsletter and improved the accessibility of documentation on their website in 2022/23.
- 7.8 Providers were positive about GLA communications and felt the approach had improved since AEB delegation. In the provider survey, over half rated GLA email communications (13/20), communications with staff in the Skills and Employment Unit (11/20) and the GLA website (11/20) as either good or excellent.
- 7.9 In the last year, providers noted more regular updates and an increase in provider webinars. They found the provider forums/ webinars to be particularly helpful and they were keen for these to continue in the future. Providers mentioned that a format which enabled more discussion and direct interaction between providers would be helpful, as this would enable them to build relationships with other providers and regularly share key learnings.

*"The ongoing communication with providers. More events that pull providers together to share learning. Delivering masterclasses to share with others - more peer learning."*

ITP, GWfA

- 7.10 Overall, some providers felt that the AEB-relevant areas of the GLA website could be more user friendly. None of the providers interviewed in the qualitative research mentioned that they had seen an improvement in the accessibility of documentation on the website. Some providers reported finding it difficult to find information, such as on policy changes. In the provider survey, while 5/20 providers reported that changes made for the 2022/23 academic year had been clear, 10/20 said they were unclear and 4/20 said they were very unclear.

*"I still think that the website and the provision of documents relating to funding is not as good as it could be, and I compare this I suppose with the ESFA. It's a lot more straightforward to find out where they've put changes to funding regulations when there are new documents uploaded. It always feels like I've got to track it down when things have changed."*

FE College, Grant

*"You just get information overload on there and trying to find accurate, up to date information on there isn't easy at all."*

ITP, Procured

## Providers' views on the administration and management of the AEB

7.11 Overall, providers felt that the GLA wanted to work with them and help them to achieve their targets.

*"Consultation with providers has been spot on. We feel that policy changes are made with us rather than to us, and I think we've got a seat at the table that we didn't have before."*

LA, Grant

*"The GLA are always willing to listen and actively consult with providers whose feedback is taken onboard and informs funding and policy decisions."*

FE college, Grant

7.12 Providers suggested the following improvements to the administration and management of the AEB:

- A more intuitive system for claiming funding and managing provider performance. Providers queried why the OPS system required them to input information which had been provided to them by the GLA. For example, the need to set up a new contract in the system and input the funding values.
- More data analysis and reports on the ILR. Providers reported that a lot of information is provided through the ILR and it would be helpful if more analysis of this information was provided, more regularly.

*"We send information in, ILR information, we don't get a lot back."*

LA, Grant

- Extending timeframes for funding. Having funding contracts per academic year can be difficult to administer, as the planning for each academic year takes place before the funding has been confirmed. Longer contracts for multiple academic years would help providers to plan effectively and undertake more longer-term strategic planning. It is difficult to plan future academic years' curriculums if they are not clear on the funding they will be accessing in that year.

*"Having longer term contracts might be a little bit better because it might help you have that longer term strategy and vision around it. It just gives you that stability to be able to go right this is our five-year curriculum plan and this is how it meets the needs of [our local area]."*

LA, Grant

*"At the moment adult qualifications are funded almost on a yearly cycle, and it would be really good to get a heads up if they are going to fund Level 3 in Early Years for the next three years, rather than us waiting until June and crossing our fingers to see if it's going to be funded again."*

FE College, Grant



- More provider-based events. As previously mentioned, providers appreciated the increase in provider forums and they would like more events focused on peer learning and networking with other providers.
- More of a focus on the quality of the provision. Providers appreciated that monitoring performance and targets was necessary, but they felt more discussions around the quality of provision and learner experiences was important.

*"A lot of the meetings with Provider Managers are about performance, audit and compliance, and there's not much about the other parts of the contract like the quality elements. I think we should be celebrating more about what is delivered."*

**ITP, Procured, GWfA**

7.13 Providers also made some suggestions around improving the design of the AEB:

- More flexibility with funding, so providers can tailor this more to the needs of their learners. For example, so providers can focus more on local needs or introduce more innovative learning approaches.

*"I think they need to be a bit more flexible. I think they need to embrace people who aren't just going to churn out numbers... I think they need to embrace people like me and others that are innovative."*

**ITP, GWfA**

- A few providers also referenced how the timing of receiving growth funding was not ideal, as receiving it earlier would make it easier to spend, and would avoid having any left over which would potentially not get spent:

*"The problem is that I get this lump of money... in the middle of the year... the Council goes 'Well, what are you going to do with that then?' ...my budget is meant to get down to zero every year and sometimes it would be helpful if that came quicker or sooner in the year."*

**LA, Grant**

- Increased or additional funding for ESOL, online learning, creative industries and green industries. Providers felt offering ESOL provision was very important, but they would struggle to maintain this without further funding. Providers noted that 20% less funding for online courses did not reflect their experience of the costs of running online courses, and reviewing this would help to ensure offering online learning is attractive for providers.

*"Looking at the funding for online learning and making sure that it's attractive for providers to deliver."*

**FE College, Grant**

- The potential for an increased brokerage role for the GLA in collaborating with employers. Some providers thought that more targeted work by the GLA to engage with employers in key London sectors could stimulate demand and help to increase employer take up of training in key skills gaps and/or provide more impetus for employers to offer work placements for training aimed at people who were not currently in jobs. They highlighted employers in creative industries and construction.

## Providers' views on the overall impacts of AEB delegation

- 7.14 Overall, providers were satisfied with the fourth year of AEB delegation. This was identified through both the qualitative interviews and the provider survey, where 9/20 said they were very satisfied with the GLA's approach to managing the devolved AEB and a further 7/20 were fairly satisfied. The remainder were ambivalent, rather than being dissatisfied.
- 7.15 The GLA's communication approach and the introduction of Delivery Managers at the beginning of devolution continues to be a key element of provider satisfaction. They continue to appreciate having one point of contact for the organisation as they have been able to build strong relationships with their Delivery Managers.
- 7.16 Providers also felt that the GLA's approach in general was very collaborative and that policies were made with a sufficient level of provider consultation. These sentiments reflect aims in the Theory of Change. For example, one of the activities was that the GLA undertake research and consultation with providers to identify learner needs.

*"Consultation with providers has been spot on. We feel that policy changes are made with us rather than to us, and I think we've got a seat at the table that we didn't have before."*

**LA, Grant**

*"The GLA has adopted a strategic, community-focused approach that takes full account of the realities experienced by providers. A knowledgeable, engaged team who take an active interest in the work we do."*

**FE college, Grant**

- 7.17 In terms of changes made as a result of the devolved AEB, providers reported that the biggest changes were: more focus on Mayoral priorities, including sectors such as construction and green skills; more work-focused programmes tailored to employer needs; and more responsiveness to local learner and employer needs.
- 7.18 However, some providers felt that devolution had led to an additional administrative burden for those who were still accessing funding through the ESFA. The evidence and documentation requirements were time intensive to administer and were not always consistent between the ESFA and GLA. Others also noted that the number of funding streams introduced by the DfE has added another layer of complexity which providers considered had led to an additional administrative burden.

*"The devolution approach in general, it does add complexity to us as a provider, and where there is complexity there is cost involved."*

**FE College, Grant**

- 7.19 This was supported by the views of stakeholders, who identified that there were more complexities for providers, arising from increased devolution across other MCAs as well as in London. Some stakeholders raised consistency in how learner data was reported and improved systems/processes as areas for potential improvement, although it is important to note that they were often referring to issues facing providers across the country and not just specific to the GLA.

*“Consistency of approach between process and funding – return and contract formats – consistency between the devolved areas. Also reduce platform numbers e.g. use the ILR so there’s a consistent returning platform. Also on the audit side – make as seamless and straightforward as possible. The more time and money spent on admin means less on learners’ journey support.”*

**Stakeholder**

*“We currently use GLA-OPS... It’s clunky, it’s not intuitive... we want to automate and be smarter. We feel there must be something out there... to make it work better.”*

**Stakeholder**

7.20 Overall, stakeholders were very positive about how the GLA has developed and managed the AEB since delegation. Some commended the GLA as being particularly consultative and responsive in comparison to some other MCAs, treating its relationships with providers and their stakeholder bodies as one of partnership.

*“The people we work with [at the GLA] listen. We know we can pick up the phone and talk about what would help.”*

**Stakeholder**

## 8 Conclusions and areas for attention

- 8.1 The GLA committed to maintaining stability for the sector during the transition to the devolved AEB, with reforms being introduced incrementally. Evidence from earlier evaluation reports (2020/21 and 2021/22) shows this incremental transition was appreciated by providers and was successfully achieved.
- 8.2 During the latter half of the 2019/20 academic year and in 2020/21, COVID-19 response measures were implemented quickly to support the continuity of provision and sustain the sector through the challenges of successive lockdowns. From 2021/22 onwards, the priorities in the Skills Roadmap have become more important as the impacts of COVID-19 recede. In the short-term, the GLA's goals are to ensure Londoners are more easily able to access training at Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 focussed on sectors key to London's recovery; Londoners in need are more able to access funded AEB provision; and the overall quality of training delivered is improved.
- 8.3 Looking at the data from 2022/23, evidence on policies such as the Level 3 flexibility, the non-formula funding flexibility and full funding for learners receiving below the London Living Wage (LLW) shows **increasing provision so far** during 2022/23. However, and as highlighted in the 2021/22 report, there is still a risk that some providers lack capacity to expand future provision at Levels 3 and 4 due to issues such as staff recruitment challenges.
- 8.4 The additional flexibilities for funding specific 'licence to practice' courses and for additional Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications have been welcomed, in particular to support learners to get into jobs in construction and health and social care, and to support more in-work progression for learners who are already in work. Providers highlighted opportunities for progression within the health and social care sector as being particularly important to help address recruitment and retention issues within that sector in London.
- 8.5 A potential risk to continued expansion at these higher levels is employer engagement. In the qualitative research this year, some providers noted difficulties in generating employer placements for work-based components of courses and/or that learners who were in work could find it difficult to get time off for training. **Some providers highlighted that there could potentially be a bigger role for the GLA in encouraging more support for this from London employers.**
- 8.6 Where there are increases in participation, these are being successfully targeted at Londoners who are unemployed or earn below the LLW, **in line with strategic objectives to improve the accessibility of adult education and skills for more disadvantaged Londoners.** Providers reported that increased flexibility around residency requirements had been especially beneficial in helping them to expand their ESOL provision.
- 8.7 Analysis of the ILR for 2022/23 shows a continuing focus on learners from ethnic minorities (who are more likely to be in the low-income, disadvantaged groups that the GLA is seeking to support). The proportion of AEB-funded learners from ethnic minorities continues to outstrip the proportion in London as a whole. Participation among learners reporting a disability is recorded differently in the ILR and the Census, but the data in 2022/23 so far suggests that the proportion of AEB-funded learners who are disabled has increased slightly. This is still an area that may need additional focus by the GLA and providers.

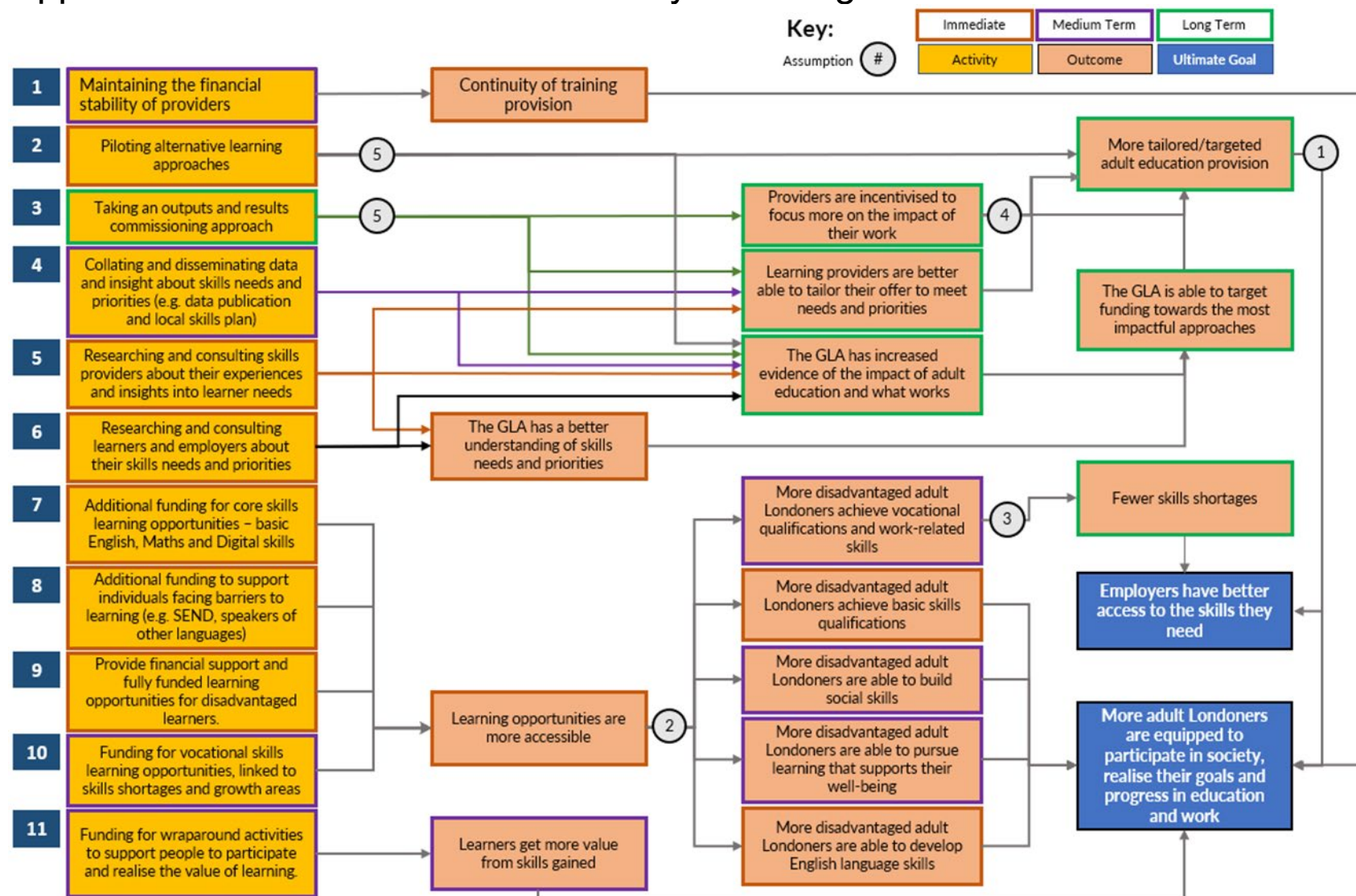
8.8 **Providers continued to be positive about their experiences with GLA Delivery Managers,** and all of them felt that having an individual to contact was an important aspect of effective communication. The move towards more face-to-face interaction during 2022/23 was particularly welcomed.

8.9 **Feedback on the contract closedown processes for AEB Procured providers and Good Work for All providers was mixed.** A few providers raised concerns about the higher than expected administrative burden this had caused.

8.10 In terms of improvements that providers identified for the AEB as a whole, the main features raised were:

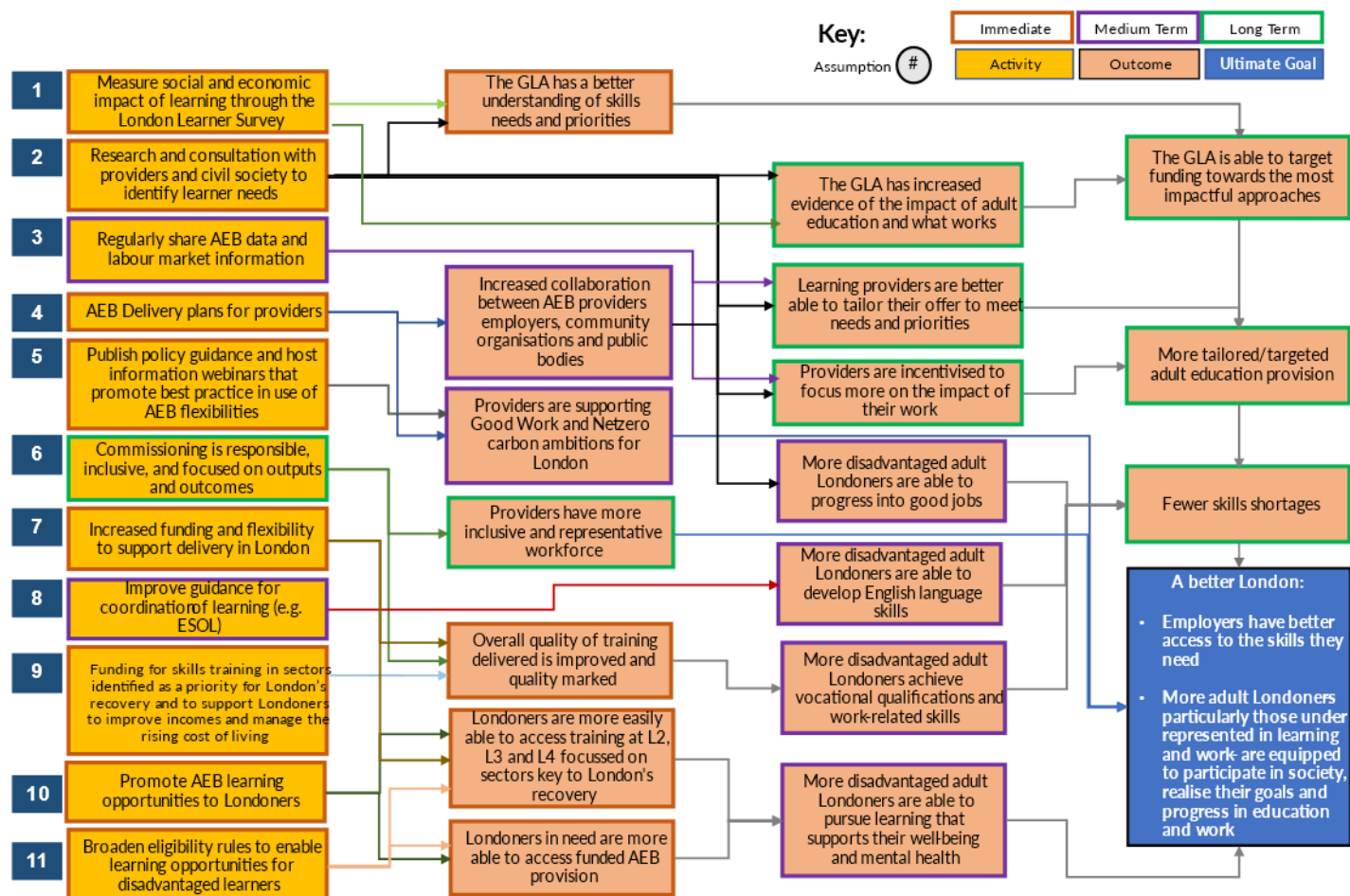
- **Continued dialogue and consultation with providers and their stakeholders.** Stakeholders in particular welcomed the GLA's partnership-based approach to working with the adult education sector and appreciated that the GLA has listened and acted on feedback. Some of the providers who took part in the interviews or survey would like more frequent forums and webinars from the GLA.
- **Simplification of the AEB funding rules enabling greater flexibility to respond to learner and employer needs.** Similar to previous years, some providers felt that simplification would improve their capacity to use the funds flexibly, and therefore more effectively, for example through greater local flexibility.
- **Higher performance thresholds** for providers that are over delivering. Again similar to 2021/22, in the qualitative interviews, providers who regularly met delivery targets expressed a desire to see higher thresholds for over-performance to incentivise and reward high-performing providers, and stimulate growth in provision.

## Appendix 1: 2019/20 to 2020/21 Theory of Change





## Appendix 2: 2021/22 to 2022/23, updated Theory of Change



1 Data and research throughout will be used to inform policy approach

1



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“

IFF Research illuminates the world for organisations businesses and individuals helping them to make better-informed decisions.”

#### Our Values:

##### 1. Being human first:

Whether employer or employee, client or collaborator, we are all humans first and foremost. Recognising this essential humanity is central to how we conduct our business, and how we lead our lives. We respect and accommodate each individual's way of thinking, working and communicating, mindful of the fact that each has their own story and means of telling it.

##### 2. Impartiality and independence:

IFF is a research-led organisation which believes in letting the evidence do the talking. We don't undertake projects with a preconception of what “the answer” is, and we don't hide from the truths that research reveals. We are independent, in the research we conduct, of political flavour or dogma. We are open-minded, imaginative and intellectually rigorous.

##### 3. Making a difference:

At IFF, we want to make a difference to the clients we work with, and we work with clients who share our ambition for positive change. We expect all IFF staff to take personal responsibility for everything they do at work, which should always be the best they can deliver.



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