

MAYOR OF LONDON

Mayor's Stewarding Academy

Funding Prospectus

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Introduction

In his 2024 Manifesto, the Mayor pledged to “*work with the Premier League and the English Football League on developing a skills academy for those working with football clubs in London, giving these important workers a route to career progression and raising standards in the sector*”. This strategic commitment aims to professionalise career pathways for stewards, help raise employment standards and improve visitor experience in football and the broader live events sector in London.

The Premier League and the GLA have identified four priorities and objectives to be delivered in partnership over the long term. These are;

- 1. Stewarding Academy**

Establish a Stewarding Academy to professionalise the stewarding industry in London, generating applicable learnings for Premier League events nationally, and for London's wider events industry.

- 2. International Trade and Growth**

Support the international expansion of Premier League games, reinforcing London's status as a global sporting leader. Introduce an international trade plan supporting this mission.

- 3. Positive Experience for All**

Utilise the power of the Premier League and Mayor of London brands to reduce incidents of abuse and hate at football matches and beyond, ensuring a positive, safe environment for all fans. This strand will focus on tackling violence against women and girls, as well as racist abuse – on matchday and outside of it.

- 4. Environmental Sustainability**

Support Premier London League clubs to achieve net-zero carbon emissions ahead of the national ambitions and promote environmentally sustainable practices across matchday operations.

This document serves as a prospectus to commission a lead organisation or consortium to establish and deliver the Mayor's Stewarding Academy (The Stewarding Academy).

As stewarding continues to grow in importance across sport and live events, the Premier League is working with partners to ensure that emerging best practices are shared and applied, contributing to higher quality and consistency across the experience economy. The Mayor's Stewarding Academy will help shape this national model and ensure Londoners are among the first to benefit from its opportunities.

The Experience Economy

The experience economy, from arts and culture to entertainment, **sport and tourism**, is at the heart of what makes London so special. These industries do not just define our city's unique character and global appeal; they bring people together, spark creativity and make London an exciting place to live, work and visit.

The Mayor is championing this vibrant sector through ambitious plans that recognise its power to drive cultural enrichment and economic growth. With the [London Growth Plan](#) aiming to grow the city's economy by **£107 billion by 2035**, with a strong focus on creative industries and the experience economy at its core, the future looks brighter, bolder and more dynamic than ever.

The Role of Stewards in the Experience Economy

Well-trained stewards are vital to realising the Mayor's aspirations for the experience economy; ensuring spectator safety and creating a welcoming environment. Football, in particular is at the heart of this and an integral part of London's thriving experience economy. With more Premier League, league and non-league clubs than any other city, the game permeates London's communities and is a foundation of local life. It's also a major economic driver for London, boosting tourism, local businesses, and job creation.

The demand for match day stewards has been increasing, with research¹ commissioned by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) in 2021 finding that there has been a shortfall in stewards at sports grounds. Given the increasing number of events delivered throughout the capital, the Premier League and the GLA are keen to support the development of stewarding resources to respond to this increasing demand.

While football remains a cornerstone of London's experience economy, stewarding plays a vital role across a wide range of live events. From theatre performances and concerts to festivals, exhibitions, cultural gatherings, and major public celebrations, stewards contribute to the safety and enjoyment of millions of Londoners and visitors every year.

¹ [Stewarding Labour Market - SGSA](#)

Stewarding Academy

To meet growing demand, the Mayor is establishing a **Stewarding Academy** with the Premier League, which will equip Londoners with the skills required to enter stewarding roles.

The overarching aims of the Academy are to:

- Ensure employers and event goers experience higher quality stewarding that responds to the needs of the events. The Academy will work to develop and coordinate London's offer of high-quality training, work experience and wider employment support (for example mentoring, advice and guidance) that reflects the priorities and specialisms of the sector.
- Enhance public and stakeholder perception of stewarding by promoting its professionalism, value, and essential role in safety and event success.
- Enhance the career progression and development pathways available to stewards, enabling clearer opportunities for growth and advancement.
- Improve the overall experience of stewards by fostering equitable treatment, inclusive practices, and supportive working conditions across all levels of the profession.
- Reduce attrition rates of stewards within football clubs and work with employers to develop inclusive and accessible employment and training practices within the stewarding industry. Support football clubs and other employers to develop ethical and sustainable solutions to fulfil event management needs.

The Academy will initially focus on stewarding roles within football, but is designed with the flexibility to expand over time into other sectors of the live events industry, including music, culture, entertainment, and public gatherings; reflecting the full breadth of London's experience economy.

SQUAD Hub

The Premier League has developed a comprehensive learning and development platform known as the **Stewarding Quality and Development (SQUAD) Hub**, which will be made available to the successful Academy lead, provider partners and all project participants.

Nationally, between 15,000 and 20,000 stewards and safety professionals play an essential role in delivering safe, secure, and positive matchday experiences. SQUAD is being launched across all 92 clubs in the Premier League and English Football League

(EFL) and is expected to evolve into the national database for football stewards. By creating clear career pathways and facilitating entry into broader employment and education, SQUAD will help raise standards, improve retention, and professionalise spectator safety roles.

Designed to raise the profile of stewarding roles across football, SQUAD provides high-quality, football-specific training and professional development resources for both new and experienced stewards, supervisors, and safety officers. The Academy lead organisation and its provider partners will be the first providers to have **access to SQUAD resources and associated tools**, including qualification verification systems that enable clubs and event organisers to ensure individuals meet the standards required to operate in the sector.

As stewarding continues to grow in importance across sport and live events, the Premier League is working with partners to ensure that emerging best practices are shared and applied, contributing to higher quality and consistency across the experience economy.

The Mayor's Stewarding Academy will help shape this national model and ensure Londoners are among the first to benefit from its opportunities.

The Opportunity

Grant funding of up to £300,000 per year (totalling £900,000 over three years) is available for an organisation or consortium to establish, lead, and deliver the Stewarding Academy. This revenue funding is intended to cover:

- The recruitment of up to three full-time staff to manage the Academy. This is to include roles focused on programme leadership and partnership building, administration and reporting.
- The cost of marketing and events activity throughout the delivery period to promote the Academy to Londoners, partners and wider stakeholders.
- The use of up to £25,000 per year (a maximum of £75,000 over three years) for piloting wraparound support activity for learners to help them gain experience and secure employment, seeking to test approaches which could be adopted over the

longer term. This activity will need to be developed early in the delivery period, respond to employer feedback and be approved by the Academy Steering Group. Based on early feedback from the Premier League and some football clubs, this could include facilitating work experience opportunities and the creation of mentors across London's clubs to support new stewards into employment.

The successful applicant will lead a partnership of relevant organisations to include; employers, education and training providers and sector bodies to develop and coordinate London's offer of high-quality training, work experience and wider employment support (for example information advice and guidance) to ensure that Londoners are able to secure roles in the sector, underpinned by fair pay (in line with the London Living Wage) and safe working conditions.

The GLA is committed to supporting more employers to adopt the most inclusive employment practices, such as through the [Mayor's Good Work Standard \(GWS\)](#), which promotes best practice such as paying the London Living Wage to all staff, improving job security, offering training and career progression opportunities and supporting employee wellbeing. Whilst it is acknowledged that the structure of employment within Stewarding utilises zero-hour contracts, the partnership will encourage employers participating in the programme to provide decent and meaningful employment opportunities for Londoners. The successful applicant is encouraged to engage with the Good Work Standard's self-assessment process to understand how their employment practice benchmarks against others, to pursue full accreditation if appropriate for their organisation, and to demonstrate how they might encourage employers they work with to do the same.

Deliverables

The expected deliverables for the Stewarding Academy are:

Academy Lead

- To lead on the facilitation of a Skills Academy partnership of London football clubs, training providers and community organisations to work together to help drive up standards across the spectator safety sector.

Wider Academy Partnership

- Support 1,500 Londoners to achieve a level 2 spectator safety qualification over 3 years.

- Targets will be set at 70% unemployed/economically inactive Londoners, 50% Female, 45% Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) Londoners and 13% Disabled.
- As part of the learner journey, facilitate / broker 1,500 Londoners to undertake work experience placements or mentorship within London's football clubs. (Work experience placements will be hosted by clubs).
- Provide wraparound employability support to enable at least 1,000 Londoners to

Eligibility

Eligibility to lead the Stewarding Academy is open to all organisations, provided they meet the following criteria either individually or as part of a consortium;

- Currently delivering skills training within stewarding / spectator safety.
- Have a track record of delivering skills and training at a physical site within London. Successful applicants must operate from a London-based learning site and be willing to deliver in situ at a club or venue, with elements of training to be delivered online where appropriate.
- Be in receipt of skills funding to deliver the training for example from the London Adult Skills Fund or Skills Bootcamps funding.
- Able to draw on existing contacts and networks to help convene the partnership effectively.

The lead organisation or consortium should have previous experience of engaging with and responding to employer needs within the sector. They should also have sufficient capacity to swiftly and effectively employ and host an Academy Coordinator and supporting staff to manage day-to-day activities.

To be eligible for support from the Academy; learners must be:

- A resident of London.
- Aged 19+.

Lead Organisation Role / Responsibilities

Coordination role

The coordination role is a critical factor in the success of the Academy and will require a diverse skillset, including prior knowledge of the sector, effective project management, stakeholder engagement, communications and relationship building along with a solid understanding of the skills system and the London labour market, including issues of inequality.

Dedicated administration support should also be factored into the resource requirements of the Academy, most notably in relation to data management and reporting.

Administration support can either be funded through the grant or match funded and should be outlined clearly in proposals.

Prospective applicants are invited to suggest additional resource roles such as sector-specific career coaching, employer coordination, or comms support that they believe would strengthen the Academy's impact. The onus would be on applicants to demonstrate how their proposed roles align with the aims of the programme.

Any fully funded role/s must be dedicated solely to delivering the aims of the Academy and the outputs and outcomes required of the programme.

Building the Academy Partnership

With the support of the Premier League and the GLA, the successful applicant will be responsible for building a network of training providers that work directly with clubs to deliver spectator safety qualifications in London. This network will meet on a regular basis to share best practice and work collaboratively to help raise the standards of delivery. Key areas of focus will include developing the work experience offer with the partner clubs and employers to help ensure learners are ready to secure employment in stewarding / spectator safety roles.

The successful applicant should also consider the value that can be added by other partners such as, community organisations to extend and improve community reach, thus helping to achieve the aim of diversifying spectator safety professionals. Other partners could include employment support services such as borough or employer brokerages and Jobcentre Plus who can play a key role in identifying local individuals wanting to work in the sector.

There is no limit to the number of training providers or partners that can be part of the Academy. However, all partners should have a clearly defined role set out in formal partnership arrangements in advance of approval being given.

Supporting Governance Infrastructure

With the support of the Premier League, the GLA and clubs, the successful applicant will build oversight infrastructure to challenge and support delivery. This will include an Academy Steering Group that will oversee performance, as well as provide expertise and advice to facilitate delivery.

The successful applicant will also convene a Learner Advisory Group which will be made up of members of the wider experience economy as well as academics working in the spectator sector. The purpose of this group is to capture good practice that can be applied across event safety management in sporting and cultural events in London and beyond, as well as feeding back successful activity taking place elsewhere. The Learner Advisory Group will have responsibility for producing guidance documentation for the sector to support good practice.

Academy Activities

This funding awarded under this opportunity will not directly fund training delivery, except for co-funding limited cases of learners not eligible for ASF funding. Successful applicants either individually or as part of a consortium; must be in receipt of skills funding for adults aged 19+ (e.g. Adult Skills Fund or Skills Bootcamps funding) to deliver L2 Spectator Safety qualifications in London and work in partnership with other providers to deliver a training offer to build a pipeline of skilled stewards. Any additional contributions, including staffing resources or match funding, should be detailed in the application, with clear explanation of how they enhance the value of Academy offer.

Training offered by providers should focus on spectator safety, complemented by essential employability skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem solving.

Programmes must be tailored to meet the skill needs of various employment opportunities within stewarding / spectator safety roles.

Practical experience will be central to the learner journey, coordinated through partnerships with participating clubs. The successful applicant will be responsible for managing and facilitating work experience and mentoring placements. Following completion, participants must receive support by their training provider to register with SQUAD and progress into stewarding roles.

Applicants are expected to outline how their model will operate across London, including their approach to geographic coverage and alignment with sector-specific skills needs in identified areas. Led by the Academy Coordinator, the programme should promote strong communication between partners, enabling collaboration across the stewarding ecosystem which will include some of the following:

- Address club stewarding needs by building a pipeline of learners through spectator safety courses.
- Identify any basic skills needs and signpost for additional support.
- Arrange additional pre-employability or learning support for Londoners with a focus on those underrepresented in stewarding / spectator safety roles, to secure employment in the sector or a related occupation.
- Facilitate work experience placements with clubs to provide on the ground experience to meet required stewarding competencies.
- Source employment opportunities across the collaborating partners.
- Support newly qualified stewards to register with SQUAD and help them to access employment opportunities within stewarding / spectator safety roles.
- Establish or utilise existing networks within the stewarding / spectator safety to increase and share learning on how to catalyse organisational change on workforce diversity and inclusion and how to implement and evaluate effective approaches.
- Work with schools and colleges via the London Career Hubs to organise a range of employer encounters to encourage young Londoners to consider working in stewarding/ spectator safety in the future.

Inclusive and Representative

The Academy aims to diversify the Capital's stewarding /spectator safety workforce to ensure that all London's communities see themselves reflected at London's world leading events.

The Academy aims to improve equity of experience between Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and non-BAME stewards by ensuring fair access to opportunities, inclusive training environments, and responsive support that reflects the diverse needs of all participants. In addition, Stewarding remains male-dominated, so improving the representation of women in stewarding / spectator safety roles is a priority for the programme. The Academy's role will be to identify inclusive recruitment practices, source individuals and build supportive pathways designed to attract, retain, and advance learners from underrepresented groups within the sector.

Priority groups of Londoners for the Academy include:

- Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds
- Women
- Unemployed and economically inactive Londoners, especially those currently underrepresented in stewarding roles, including:
 - Young people (Aged 19+) not in employment, education or training.
 - Young people (Aged 19+) with refugee/asylum seeker backgrounds,
 - Adults (Aged 50+) looking to make a career transition later in life,
 - Disabled Londoners.

The applicant and its partners may have its own evidence-based understanding of issues of underrepresentation within the stewarding / spectator safety. This should be set out clearly in the application, along with plans for engaging identified groups.

The Application Process

GLA funding will be awarded via a competitive process, managed and administered by the GLA Skills and Employment Unit at City Hall.

The closing date for applications is **17 November 2025**

The application form can be found on the www.london.gov.uk website.

Applications for the Mayor's Stewarding academy should be submitted via the GLA's Open Project System (GLA OPS). [Register and learn more](#) about OPS, or [sign in to OPS](#). Please use the Guidance to help submit your bid.

Organisations not currently registered to use GLA OPS are advised to request access using the details provided at the following link: <https://ops.london.gov.uk/#/home>.

Applications are to be made by submitting the following via OPS.

- Funding Application Form.
- Outputs and Outcomes template.
- Financial Forecast template.
- Two references from employers, at least one of which relates to spectator safety.
(These will be checked as part of the scoring process)
- Due diligence documents

Application Clarification Questions

Any questions from applicants must be submitted by email to sectoralacademies@london.gov.uk . Questions via other means will not be considered.

Applicants should note that all questions will be anonymised, and answers will be posted on the GLA website on a weekly basis to allow all applicants to be aware of formal responses provided by the GLA.

Questions should be received by **7 November 2025**

Academy Opportunity Timetable

Table 1 – Timetable

Activity	Timeline
Prospectus launched inviting applications	17 October 2025
Deadline for clarification questions	7 November 2025
Deadline for receipt of applications	17 November 2025
Successful Academy lead informed	8 December 2025
Delivery of new Academy activity to commence	5 January 2026
Delivery completes	31 July 2028

Delivery Requirements

The successful applicant will be able to articulate how the Academy will deliver the aims of the programme and how they will generate and facilitate effective communication flows between other partners in relation to the following:

- Participating employers' skills requirements
- Diversity and inclusion within the workforce
- Skills training coordination
- Work experience opportunities
- Employment opportunities

The Academy will also be responsible for:

- Recruiting new learners through referrals and active targeting of community groups, job brokerages including Jobcentre Plus and through club outreach activities, with a particular focus on Londoners underrepresented in the sector
- Signposting learners to appropriate basic skills training provision as needed
- Signposting to relevant careers information, advice and guidance
- Arranging work experience placements through the clubs for all learners undertaking a spectator safety qualification
- Arranging mentoring for newly employed stewards
- Supporting stewards to secure additional work, including through registration on SQUAD
- Promoting best practice among employers/ training providers

Strong evidence of engagement with employers working in spectator safety will be particularly welcomed, as will a commitment to tackling inequality and underrepresentation in their workplaces.

To successfully deliver these objectives, the Academy is required to develop links and engage with some or all of the below:

- Football clubs and wider event venues
- Job brokerages
- Schools, including through working with the London Careers Hubs
- Sixth form colleges and further education colleges
- Independent training providers
- Local authorities
- Higher education institutions
- Careers advice and guidance services

- Third sector organisations
- Organisations focused on addressing inequalities in employment outcomes and labor market participation more broadly.

Academy Governance, Monitoring and Reporting

The Academy lead will be responsible for:

- Establishing a clear governance structure including a Steering Group with representation from the Premier League, the GLA and clubs.
- Establishing a Sector Learning Group to capture best practice and work with academic partners to drive sectoral insights.
- Managing delivery of the funded project
- Providing monitoring updates to the GLA on performance against agreed outputs and outcomes, including confirming the total employment outcomes delivered across the Academy.
- Addressing underrepresentation of workforce groups.

The GLA will provide strategic oversight of skills training provision across London and monitor the Academies delivery. It will:

- Act as commissioner/ funder
- Provide a central point of contact for the Stewarding Academy.
- Arrange regular progress meetings with the Stewarding Academy lead.
- Support the sharing of best practice
- Share data and commissioning research to help support the Academy delivery
- Showcase the impact of the Stewarding Academy and their partners.

The Premier League will accompany the strategic oversight of the programme and will:

- Act as co-funder, having invested 50% of total budget.
- Support with employer liaison across London's Premier League and EFL clubs
- Provide access to the SQUAD Hub training materials for the Stewarding Academy Lead
- Provide access to the SQUAD Hub stewarding platform to the Academy learners
- Once they obtain the appropriate qualifications support the programme with appropriate promotion and marketing,
- Raise the profile of the stewarding profession and improving understanding of the value offered by stewards.

Planning and Monitoring

Project Plan

Organisations applying to become the Stewarding Academy lead are required to submit a realistic project plan which details the key milestones for the Academy.

To be successful, applications must demonstrate that recruitment of an Academy coordinator can occur at pace and that coordination support will be in post for commencement of delivery (Q3 2025/26).

Risk Register

Applications should provide evidence of mitigating actions to reduce foreseeable risks and maintain delivery.

Match Funding to Enhance Delivery

Whilst there is no conditional match requirement for the revenue funding for this programme, applicants should set out how partners will support the Academy by offering match funding either in kind (e.g. additional staffing resource) or in cash and the added value this would bring. This includes public or private sector match in the form of contributions (cash or in-kind, such as through the use of facilities) by clubs.

It is expected that the successful Academy lead will consider how this model of delivery could continue beyond the lifetime of this funding programme. This is something Academy partners should explore through established governance processes.

Selection of Successful Applicants

Due Diligence of Applicant Organisations

The GLA will carry out financial due diligence checks prior to any offer of funding to ensure that any risk to either the success of the programme and project objectives, or to the funding itself, has been considered and that any risk is deemed acceptable.

Evaluation of Applications

Fully compliant applications that are received by the deadline will be scored by a minimum of two evaluators. The total maximum score available for the application will be 100 per cent. Individual sections will be weighted to represent the importance that the GLA attaches to them. The evaluation criteria and weightings are shown in the following tables.

An aggregate of the scores from both scorers will determine the final score for each question.

The GLA also reserves the right to not allocate all funding. The GLA also reserves the right to allocate funding on an annual basis, with funding for future years delivery remaining subject to funding availability.

The criteria for scoring is set out in the table below:

Table 2 – Criteria for Scoring

Score	Criteria for scoring
4	Excellent A comprehensive response of excellent quality that meets and exceeds all the minimum requirements and gives the GLA a high level of confidence that all aspects of the application are deliverable. Strong evidence provided which supports delivery of the application practice.
3	Good A good quality response that meets and exceeds all the minimum requirements and gives the GLA a good level of confidence that most of the aspects of the application are deliverable with no or only minor reservations. Good evidence provided which supports delivery of the application in practice.
2	Meets minimum requirements A response of satisfactory quality that meets the minimum requirements and gives the GLA confidence that all key aspects of the application are deliverable. Satisfactory evidence is provided which supports delivery of the application in practice.
1	Poor A poor response that fails to meet the minimum requirements and the evidence provided is weak. The GLA has concerns about the deliverability of one or more key aspects of the application in practice.
0	Inadequate A response that fails to meet the minimum requirements and is not supported by evidence or the evidence provided is inadequate. The GLA has serious concerns about the deliverability of a substantial number of aspects of the application in practice

Application Criteria Weighting

The application criteria weighting is set out in the table below:

Table 3 – Criteria Weighting

Section	Weighting
Delivery and Partnership working	60%
Project Management	40%

Applications will be evaluated by reference to criteria and scored in accordance with the scoring scale specified.

Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants

Feedback on unsuccessful applications will be made available upon request.

Pre-grant Clarification Meetings

Following any in principle offer of funding by the GLA to an applicant, the GLA will require that successful applicants attend a pre-grant clarification meeting. This meeting will confirm:

- The expectations and monitoring and reporting requirements of the GLA
- The final volumes of primary and secondary outputs/outcomes
- That the proposed profile of delivery is appropriate

This meeting will also be used to clarify any queries necessary to enable the grant agreement to be prepared and will give applicants the opportunity to ask any questions they may have pertaining to the delivery period.

Please note that decisions to award GLA revenue funding (if any) are subject to a formal decision-making process. You must not place any reliance whatsoever on the support of the GLA until formally notified in writing and until your authorised signatories have executed and returned a grant agreement. This will be provided to the successful lead applicant by the GLA should your application prove successful and following any pre-grant clarification meeting.

Accordingly, any expenditure that you incur and/or to which you commit prior to formal notification and execution and return of the funding agreement is incurred and/or committed entirely at your own risk. This includes any expenditure which applicants have incurred or committed to in relation to the preparation of the application.

Payments and Reporting

Payment of Grant

Payment breakdown will be as follows:

- 10% of overall costs upfront to support with the costs of project set up (subject to financial due diligence) and
- The remaining 90% will be paid on quarterly, based on agreed milestones. Any upfront payment will be recovered from future payments.

Please note, quarterly bursary expenditure will be collated and submitted with the milestone claim. Checks will be undertaken to interrogate this information.

Reporting

Payments will be linked to the submission of a satisfactory progress report each quarter. This report should detail progress made over the previous quarter in relation to partnership working and Academy achievements against agreed milestones and output/outcome performance, financial spend, risks and issues along with any other information necessary to assess performance in keeping with the GLA grant agreement. Academy leads will also be asked to provide regular case study information to illustrate the Academy achievements.

GLA Open Project System

Monitoring and payments will be submitted / processed via the GLA OPS platform. Training will be available to providers who have not yet used this system.

Evaluation

The successful Academy lead will be expected to complete a self-evaluation at the end of the delivery period. The format of the self-evaluation will be reflected in the grant agreement governing any GLA funding awarded.

In addition, the successful organisation will work with members of the Sector Learning group to ensure that best practice is captured to inform future activities.

Other formats and languages

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

Greater London Authority
Kamal Chunchie Way
London
E16 1ZE

Telephone **020 7983 4000**
www.london.gov.uk

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