

GLA response to the Wave 4 Skills Bootcamps for Londoners evaluation report.

The GLA welcomes the findings from the Wave 4 Skills Bootcamps for Londoners (SBfL) evaluation report. This report is the second in a series of reports evaluating the process and performance of the SBfL programme, which provides sector-specific training for Londoners looking to enter employment, change career or upskill.

Wave 4 was delivered in the financial year 2023-24 and constituted the second year of devolved funding to London, which has allowed the GLA to tailor provision to meet the specific skills needs of Londoners and employers in London.

CFE Research were commissioned to undertake this process evaluation. Management information (MI) data, collected by the GLA was analysed to assess the characteristics of those who started, completed, and achieved a successful outcome. A series of 36 individual and small-group interviews and 1 focus group explored participants' motivations, perceived impacts, and barriers to success. This evaluation provides a holistic and independent assessment to understand the effectiveness of the devolved funding and delivery model for Wave 4 and, to identify what works and what could be improved in future Waves.

Key findings

At Wave 4, there were more starts, completions and outcomes than at Wave 3 (2022-23).

A total of 28 providers participated in Wave 4 delivery, offering 71 courses, predominantly in the Digital and Construction sectors. Additionally, 295 unique employers were engaged, with most supporting the training through offering job vacancies (86%).

Participants were attracted to SBfL because they wanted to gain new skills and knowledge to secure employment – either to enter the job market, or to move to a higher-paying role or a sector with more job prospects. They particularly valued the short and flexible nature of the training.

	Wave 3 (2022-23)	Wave 4 (2023-24)
Starts (milestone 1) <i>Participants who started training and attended at least 5 days</i>	3,234	3,966
Completes (milestone 2) <i>Participants who completed all training and received an offer of an interview</i>	2,127 (66% of starts)	2,386 (60% of starts)
Successful outcomes (milestone 3) <i>Participants who, upon completion, secured a new job in the relevant sector, gained increased responsibilities or started new self-employment work.</i>	885 (42% of completes, 27% of starts)	1,291 (54% of completes, 33% of starts)

Employers and training providers were positive about the devolved model.

As with Wave 3, providers interviewed about their experiences in Wave 4 were consistently positive about the benefits of devolution for the management and delivery of SBfL. They highlighted GLA's unique potential to strengthen the link between skills development and employment opportunities to meet the needs of both residents and employers.

Providers stressed the significance of GLA's in-depth understanding of the region's skills needs and well-developed relationships with training providers and employers, which underpin its commissioning approach and focus on priority growth sectors.

Where providers raised issues in Wave 4, they suggested that the current devolved model is too restrictive. They would like GLA to have greater autonomy to shape not only SBfL, but also the design and delivery of wider skills and employability programmes in the capital.

At Wave 4, more participants were satisfied with the quality of their training compared to Wave 3.

Most described their courses as thorough, insightful, and empowering, equipping them with both technical knowledge and a broader understanding of industry opportunities in their sector of interest. The quality of the courses was identified as an important factor in participants achieving positive employment outcomes.

The amount and type of employability support continues to play a key role in determining how beneficial many perceive the training to be.

Building on the methods used in Wave 3, providers in Wave 4 sought to strengthen the involvement of employers in delivery and enhance the opportunities for participants to interact with them through interventions such as 1:1 mentoring, job fairs with employers and site visits.

Providers built on their good practice and lessons learnt from Wave 3 SBfL

They strengthened their partnerships with local employers, enhanced their training provision, and engaged new and different learner groups. They improved their employability support offering by providing support earlier in the course.

Employers who participated in Wave 4 of the evaluation had a positive experience with SBfL

The training helped them fill vacancies to address skills shortages, improve their recruitment practices, diversify their workforce, and increase their organisations' visibility amongst new and potential recruits.

Lessons learnt and areas for attention

1. Greater autonomy over the devolved funding model would allow GLA to strengthen the alignment of SBfL with local skills need.

Training providers and employers viewed devolution as key to tailoring skills provision to London's economy. GLA works alongside training providers and employers, so it is well-placed to identify shortages and direct funding effectively. Many providers and employers welcomed further devolution and un-ringfenced funding, which they believed would allow a more flexible, locally responsive programme.

GLA response: From 2026-27 financial year, the SBfL programme will be funded via the Integrated Settlement model which will increase flexibility in how resources are used to deliver outcomes for the city and meet local skills needs. In addition, in line with the [Inclusive Talent Strategy](#), the GLA is strengthening relationships with London employers through the Sector Talent Boards to enable a closer alignment of skills provision with local skills needs.

2. Delivery of SBfL continues to differ for some participant groups.

MI showed that some demographic groups who experience persistent barriers to employment also struggled to achieve an outcome through SBfL. These groups included women, people of black and mixed ethnicity, unemployed participants, and people with disabilities. GLA and providers could address these inequalities by embedding wraparound support, strengthening pre-course information, advice, and guidance (IAG), and ensuring individuals are directed to the most suitable training or employment support.

Co-funded participants continued to have high completion and outcome rates, indicating the co-funded model was highly effective at upskilling existing employees within in-demand sectors in Wave 4. Further development of co-funded opportunities for employers across the spectrum of SBfL sectors would help support the achievement of positive outcomes and foster greater employment mobility for participants.

GLA Response: The [London Growth Plan](#) and the [Inclusive Talent Strategy](#) present the GLA's plan to better connect London's skills, employment, health and careers services so that Londoners find it easier to access the skills and training they need and meet the diverse needs of all Londoners. This will help more people access the right learning, progress into good work, and continue developing their skills throughout their careers.

By joining-up London's skills and employment sector, working with key partners across London government, skills, employment and health, we will make it easier for Londoners to find the right training and employment path for them. To do this, the GLA will make the system simpler and easier to navigate, provide tailored support and make it easier for workers to move into better paid higher-skilled roles, build resilience and offer new routes into growth sectors.

In Wave 5 (2024-25), improvements were made to the bid assessment process that included verification visits to assess the suitability of the training venue and additional scrutiny of the provider's ability to meet their targets for priority groups. Further research by sector is also required to understand the factors underpinning the variance in outcomes of different groups, the GLA will be conducting further analysis to inform any additional actions to improve outcomes for particular groups. The GLA will work closely with the [Mayor's Workforce Integration Network](#)

[\(WIN\)](#) and the Sector Talent Boards to further explore and address the barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups in each sector.

3. The SBfL model worked well as a pathway into employment in industries with high demand for recruits to entry level roles

Wave 4 data showed strong SBfL performance in Construction, Health & Social Care, and Technical sectors, where level 2 training aligns with employer demand. By contrast, Digital SBfL at levels 3 and above had lower completion rates and outcomes, reflecting limited direct entry into digital jobs at these levels. These disparities highlight the need for GLA to review the programme's balance and contribution to delivering the Mayoral priorities for growth, inclusion and good work. To enhance this, the GLA could:

- Strategically map skills and employment progression pathways from SBfL in the target sectors.
- Work with providers and skills and employment services to make employment progression pathways explicit to residents considering or undertaking SBfL training. This would ensure participants understand the options for moving on from entry-level roles and progressing their careers.

GLA Response: The GLA strengthened the commissioning process from Wave 5 (2024-25) onwards, with emphasis placed on active and demonstrable employer involvement in co-design and their need to fill relevant vacancies, to ensure that employer involvement is tangible and is able to contribute to positive employment outcomes. Bootcamps that were unable to achieve acceptable levels of performance in achieving successful milestone 3 outcomes have not been continued for funding between Waves 4 and 5, and between Waves 5 and 6.

In recognition of the success of Skills Bootcamps for Londoners in these key sectors, the GLA increased the proportion of funding invested into Construction and Health and Social Care for Wave 5. The proportion invested in Digital was decreased to target funding where it is providing the most benefit.

Early insights into Wave 5 suggest that conversion rates between milestone 2 and 3, improved in Wave 5 (i.e., the proportion of learners who complete their course and get an offer of employment who then go onto relevant employment).

The GLA recognises that skills pathways are important to support Londoners in their journey into employment and good work. The Inclusive Talent Strategy aims to join up skills, employment, health and careers services. This will include strengthening collaboration with employers on curriculum design, placements and pathways into high-level technical and academic learning through the new Sector Talent Boards.

The GLA will continue to work with national government to add value and align with national initiatives, including Connect to Work and WorkWell, which are nationally designed but locally commissioned and delivered, as well as future programmes and services such as Pathways to Work and the new jobs and careers service. In doing so, we can align and integrate them into current provision.

The GLA will seek to work with the new Sector Talent Boards to map progression pathways for residents. The GLA is also considering how to incorporate the new UK Standard Skills Classification Tool released by Skills England and their occupational maps into the marketing of Skills Bootcamps for Londoners, so Londoners can identify the relevant progression pathways for the Bootcamps they may apply to.

4. Prioritise the development of strong provider-employer partnerships to help secure positive outcomes for participants

Strong provider-employer partnerships are key to the design of industry-relevant SBfL and help ensure guaranteed interviews for all eligible participants. Where providers had strong relationships with employers, this was associated with more employment outcomes for participants. To further enhance this element, GLA could implement the following actions:

- Employer involvement is required throughout the SBfL process, from the design phase through to the offer of vacancies. GLA could support providers in developing employer relationships by promoting and sharing best practices. This could include developing and disseminating employer-facing case studies to showcase the benefits to employers of engaging with SBfL to strengthen their talent pipelines and reduce recruitment costs.
- Work with employers to develop further co-funded opportunities that both upskill workforces and strengthen employer commitment because co-funded SBfL had the highest completion and outcome rates, encourage workforce internal mobility and lead to the creation of more entry-level jobs.

GLA Response: Improvements have been made to the commissioning process from Wave 5 (2024-25) onwards which aim to improve the quality of employer engagement. This has included robust verification checks on the employers listed within bids to the programme to ensure that they are able to contribute meaningfully to the programme and are adequately equipped to support participants into employment.

This evaluation also found that co-funded Bootcamps have been effective in upskilling the existing workforce. The programme has increased the proportion of funding allocated to co-funded bootcamps in Wave 5 (2024-25) and included a ringfence of £1.5m in the Wave 6 (2025-26) open competition process to ensure this growth in co-funded Bootcamps would continue to in Wave 6 (2025-26). The GLA also has created a new sector workforce team to increase engagement with businesses in London's key sectors, providing resource to further promote the use of Skills Bootcamps by employers to upskill their staff.

In Wave 6 (2025-26), the SBfL programme plans to pilot new methods to help employers and providers to identify and develop proposals for co-funded opportunities to ensure training is meeting both the recruitment and upskilling needs for the employers they support.

The Inclusive Talent Strategy presents the GLA's plans to build an employer-led system that will strengthen London's economy by linking skills supply more closely to business demand and providing more Londoners with the relevant skills to enter the job market, move into better employment and change career. This includes the development of Sector Talent Boards, the development of six pan-London sector hubs and four regional hubs to coordinate activity by

sector and explore opportunities to expand the use of Skills Passports which are industry-recognised credentials to enable employers to identify candidates that are ready to work.

5. Ensure providers work with employers to secure enough relevant guaranteed interviews

The prospect of a guaranteed interview for eligible participants attracted many learners to undertake a SBfL. Positively, in Wave 4, more participants were offered a guaranteed interview than in Wave 3. However, participants continued to express disappointment when they did not receive an interview that matched their expectations regarding salary, location, or role type. Providers should ensure that the guaranteed interviews they accept are appropriate to participants' skill and experience levels, so they have a realistic opportunity of success.

Providers should also build up a large pool of suitable vacancies to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for participants to progress into. Construction and Health & Social Care stood out as the two most successful sectors for supporting participants into work. In both cases, a high number of guaranteed interviews were offered.

GLA could also prioritise securing sufficient relevant guaranteed interviews in employer engagement. Drawing on examples of good practice, such as integrated models evidenced by some providers offering Digital and Construction courses, may help create a blueprint for introducing this more widely across SBfL delivery.

GLA Response: Through robust programme and performance management, the GLA is targeting funding at providers with a demonstrable record of successful delivery.

Through the Sector Talent Boards, the SBfL programme will further benefit from industry expertise which will contribute to the continual improvement in the quality of delivery and targeting at sectors that can most benefit from the Bootcamp model to ensure that funds are well spent.

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