Skills Bootcamps for Londoners

Wave 4 (April 2023–March 2024)
Interim Evaluation Report

January 2026

CFE *research*

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the training providers, employers and participants who shared their views about Skills Bootcamps for Londoners (SBfL), thereby contributing to this evaluation.

Contents

Executive Summary

In July 2022, the Greater London Authority (GLA) received a £19 million allocation from the DfE to fund Skills Bootcamps for Londoners (SBfL). The GLA's SBfL forms part of the national Wave 3 (2022/23), Wave 4 (2023/24) and Wave 5 (2024/25) programmes. Skills Bootcamp provision focuses on developing 'in-demand' medium- to higher-level skills (mostly Level 3–5 with delivery at Level 2 by exception) for adults aged 19+, to respond to skills shortages and recruitment challenges faced by particular sectors or employers. Courses of up to 16 weeks' duration offer technical skills alongside employability support to address sectoral skills shortages. A unique feature of the Skills Bootcamp model is the offer of a guaranteed interview for a job relevant to the training for all eligible learners (excluding co-funded or self-employed participants).

Findings from the Wave 4 evaluation

At Wave 4, there were more starts, completions and outcomes than at Wave 3.[1]

3,966 individuals **started** a SBfL (Milestone 1)

- The training attracted individuals from diverse backgrounds, particularly black/African/Caribbean and black British individuals, unemployed individuals, and those who lived in more deprived areas.
- SBfL in Digital had the highest number of starts and SBfL in Green Skills the lowest.

60% (2,386) achieved a **completion** (Milestone 2)

- **84% of participants finished their training.**
- Completion rates varied considerably by type of SBfL– e.g. Construction had a 92% completion rate compared to 40% in Logistics. Fewer than one in five (17%) participants on PtAA courses completed their training.
- Higher completion rates were achieved by males, participants of 'other' white and Asian ethnicity, participants without a disability, previously self-employed individuals, those with an education level 3 and below, those who were co-funded and those who experienced face-to-face delivery.
- Completion rates were similar for participants who had or did not have caring responsibilities.
- Overall completion rate was lower at Wave 4 (60%) than Wave 3 (66%).

33% (1,291) achieved a **successful outcome** (Milestone 3)

- Higher outcome rates were achieved by males, 'other' white and white British participants, those who were previously self-employed, those without a disability, those educated to level 3 and below, those who were co-funded, and those who experienced face-to-face delivery.
- Outcome rates were similar regardless of where participants lived (IMD) or if they had caring responsibilities.
- Overall outcome rate was higher at Wave 4 (33%) than Wave 3 (27%).

– A total of 28 providers participated in Wave 4 delivery, offering 71 courses, predominantly in Digital and Construction. Additionally, 295 unique employers 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.

---

[1] For Wave 4, 3,966 individuals started their SBfL and completed 5 days training, triggering the payment of Milestone 1. A further 45 started their training but did not complete 5 days of training to be classified as a start.

Participant outcomes

One-third (33%, n=1,291) of participants on SBfL achieved an outcome aligned with the programme's objectives. For some, participating in the SBfL created employment opportunities that were previously unattainable, helped them secure higher income and an improved quality of life.

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.

Participants reported a range of benefits as a result of their SBfL

Similar to Wave 3, some interviewed participants secured employment in their chosen field after their SBfL. Earnings and working hours also increased for some, whilst most individuals gained valuable technical and employability skills and reported increased confidence and motivation towards work. A few experienced a better work life balance and improved wellbeing.

I gained confidence to know that the knowledge from my Bachelor's relates with what I've learnt on the Bootcamp and that was an eye-opener. I was struggling with my confidence to communicate. My mates on the Bootcamp were mostly native English speakers, so, it made me force myself to practise.

Participant – Green Skills

It's allowed me to move on and gave me the boost to understand where I actually want to be.

Participant – Creative Industries

Provider and employer outcomes

– 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.
– 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.

By engaging with employers at the right times, we're able to support employers with projects, or plan to support employers for future projects so that we can better align ourselves with them and look for learners that fit that employer.

Provider – Construction

Our time to hire has gone down, we've had a higher calibre of candidates, we've seen opportunity for candidates to be put in positions and then grow fast and be promoted with confidence and understanding in their role.

Employer – Digital

Lessons learnt to inform future SBfL design and delivery

Wave 4 saw a step-change in implementation and delivery compared to Wave 3. Several key lessons emerged for GLA and its delivery partners, to inform the future implementation of devolved skills programmes.

> 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.

> 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.

> 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 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 Mayor's 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.

> **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.

> **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.

Background to the evaluation

CFE undertook a process evaluation of Wave 4 SBfL (March 2025 to September 2025). 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 successful outcome of the DfE's Skills Bootcamps programme, including SBfL, includes the offer of a new job (continuous employment for at least 12 weeks); an apprenticeship; a new role or additional responsibilities with an existing employer; or new contracts or new opportunities for the self-employed, utilising the skills acquired in the training, within six months of completion. A series of 36 individual and small-group interviews and 1 focus group explored participants' motivations, perceived impacts, and barriers to success.

Introduction

About Skills Bootcamps for Londoners (SBfL)

Skills Bootcamps are courses of up to 16 weeks' duration that aim to support adults aged 19+ in reskilling and upskilling for work. Skills Bootcamps provision focuses on developing 'in-demand' medium- to higher-level skills (mostly Level 3–5 with delivery at Level 2 by exception), to respond to skills shortages and recruitment challenges faced by particular sectors or employers. Skills Bootcamps are targeted at those in employment or self-employed, prospective career-changers, returners, and recently unemployed adults. They are delivered flexibly to address barriers to participation due to learners' work and wider commitments.

A key feature of the Skills Bootcamp model is a high level of employer involvement and support for participants' progression into or in work. Alongside technical skills training, it includes employability support and, on completion, a guaranteed job interview with a participating employer. Providers engage employers as delivery partners and can support Skills Bootcamp delivery in a range of ways, including work placements, employability support, and guaranteed job interviews. Employers wishing to access Skills Bootcamps to upskill existing staff are required to make a co-financing contribution of 10% for small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and 30% for large organisations.

The national Department for Education (DfE) Skills Bootcamps programme was launched in August 2020, with delivery targeted at defined national sectors.[2] In July 2022, the GLA received a £19 million allocation from the DfE to fund Skills Bootcamps for Londoners (SBfL). SBfL formed part of the national Wave 3 (2022/23), Wave 4 (2023/24) and Wave 5 (2024/25) programmes and delivered higher-level skills training provision based on employer and sector need for 'in-demand' skills. The Wave 4 delivery covered the following sectors: Digital, Technical, Green skills, Construction, Logistics (HGV), and the London-specific sectors: Creative, Hospitality, Health & Social Care, and Professional Services. Some sectors also delivered SBfL under the Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeship (PtAA) scheme, in which the apprenticeship outcome after the SBfL is shortened by at least three months based on recognition of prior learning acquired during the SBfL.[3]

Building on the delegation of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) in August 2019, the allocation of funding for SBfL brought Skills Bootcamps within the scope of the wider

---

[2] The national sectors were: Digital, Technical (Engineering and Manufacturing), Green, Logistics, Construction, Creative Industries and Early Years. An additional priority of the national programme was the Pathway to Apprenticeships scheme.

[3] The PtAA component of SBfL is not strictly a 'sector' because PtAA were delivered in specific sectors (e.g. Design, Finance & Professional Services), however, they were treated in the analysis as a separate entity to reflect the added policy significance of these courses.

investment available to the GLA to deliver the Mayor's strategic priorities for jobs and skills. The Mayor set out the following priorities in his Skills Roadmap for London:[4]

– Make skills more locally relevant by providing a more joined-up skills and employment offer that meets the needs of Londoners and the local economy, including businesses and employers.
– Ensure learning is making an impact, transforming learners' lives, and leading to positive economic and social outcomes.
– Make learning accessible to those who need it most, while recognising that participation in learning can lift people out of poverty and address persistent inequality.

SBfL aligns closely with the Mayor's Good Work Standard,[5] which aims to support Londoners in gaining 'good' jobs that pay at least the London Living Wage, with a focus on meeting skills needs in priority regional growth sectors.

In February 2025, the Mayor of London launched the London Growth Plan, which set out the direction for London for the next ten years, starting with AY 2025/26, to build a more prosperous, fairer and greener city. Future waves of SBfL will align with the London Growth Plan and its underpinning strategies, which are currently under development.

About this evaluation

CFE undertook a process evaluation to understand the effectiveness of the devolved funding and delivery model for Wave 4 SBfL and conducted a summative assessment of the programme's outcomes. The aim was to identify what works and what could be improved in future waves, to ensure that the programme achieves its objectives and delivers positive impacts for learners, employers, and the wider economy in the longer term. The objectives of the evaluation were to assess three areas of interest identified by GLA:

– Process: the management of the devolved funds for SBfL.
– Delivery: best practices and challenges experienced during SBfL delivery, including lessons learnt for subsequent waves.
– Performance: the perceived success of the SBfL programme in meeting its objectives.

Evaluation approach

The Wave 4 evaluation took place between March and September 2025. Underpinned by an evaluation framework, it included quantitative analysis of Management information (MI) collected by GLA, and qualitative in-depth interviews and focus groups. A total of 36 in-depth interviews and one focus group were conducted, comprising 9 interviews with training providers, 11 with employers, 14 individual interviews, 2 small-group interviews, and 1 focus group with 5 participants.

---

[4] Skills Roadmap and other strategies | London City Hall

[5] The Mayor's Good Work Standard Guidance

Interviewees were purposively sampled from GLA's MI database of Wave 4 providers, employers, and participants to ensure a broad range of experiences and perspectives were represented. The sample included representation from different SBfL sectors, London subregions and training provider types. Participants were selected based on sociodemographic characteristics and included those who had demonstrated successful and unsuccessful outcomes post-participation.

Summary MI findings on the number of Wave 4 SBfL starts, completions, and outcomes across sectors are provided in this report. Qualitative findings should not be interpreted quantitatively, as the sample was not representative and the views reported may not reflect the opinions of the wider population.

Participation in SBfL

This chapter presents findings on who engaged with SBfL and why. It provides a summary of GLA's Management information (MI) on participants, providers and employers who engaged with Wave 4 SBfL. Qualitative findings are presented on motivations for engaging with SBfL, the perceived and anticipated benefits of SBfL, and barriers to participation.

In Focus 1, at the end of this chapter, outlines the extent to which perceptions about the benefits of devolved funding for SBfL have evolved between Waves 3 and 4.

Who engaged with Wave 4 SBfL?

In Wave 4, there were a total of **3,966 starts** and **2,386 completions**.[6] Overall, **1,291** participants had a successful **outcome**.[7] More individuals started, completed, and achieved an outcome from an SBfL in Wave 4 than in Wave 3. The outcome rate at Wave 4 was higher than at Wave 3 (W4: 33% vs. W3: 27%), while the completion rate was lower (W4: 60% vs. W3: 66%).

Figure 1 shows that:

– SBfL in Digital had the highest number of starts, and training in Green Skills had the lowest.
– More participants started a course following the Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeships (PtAA) model at Wave 4 (n=86) than at Wave 3 (n=14).
– Training in Construction, Health & Social Care, and Technical had the highest completion rates, while PtAA and Logistics and Digital had the lowest.
– Courses in Construction, Health & Social Care and Technical had the highest outcome rates. In contrast, courses delivered as part of the PtAA model, and those in Digital, Creative and Logistics had the lowest.

Compared with Wave 3, completion rates at Wave 4 increased in Green and Technical, while they decreased in Digital. The Wave 4 outcome rate increased in Green and Health & Social Care compared with Wave 3, but decreased in Construction and Technical.

---

[6] A completion was calculated according to the DfE criteria of finishing the training and receiving a guaranteed interview linked to the SBfL. More participants (n=3,318, 84%) finished the training but did not meet the criteria to trigger Milestone 2 payment.

[7] A successful SBfL outcome includes the offer of a new job (continuous employment for at least 12 weeks); an apprenticeship; a new role or additional responsibilities with an existing employer; or new contracts or new opportunities for the self-employed, utilising the skills acquired in the training, within six months of completion.

Figure 1: Number of Wave 4 participant starts and the proportion of completions and outcomes by SBfL sector and priority area (PtAA)[8]

	Starts (n)	Completion rate (% starts)	Outcome rate (% starts)	Outcome rate (% completions)
Digital	1,964	47%	14%	29%
Construction	925	92%	76%	83%
Creative Industries	317	54%	20%	38%
Health & Social Care	301	79%	43%	54%
Technical	167	57%	43%	75%
Logistics (HGV)	156	40%	24%	61%
PtAA	86	17%*	9%*	53%*
Green	50	66%*	22%*	33%*

Regionally, participants who started a SBfL were predominantly located in Local London (1,323) and Central London Forward (1,284). There were fewer participant starts in the West London Alliance (913) and South London Partnership (316).

Characteristics of participant starts

MI analysis shows that the profile of participants who started a SBfL differed across a range of characteristics (Figure 2). The characteristics of Wave 4 starts broadly reflected those at Wave 3, although there was a slightly lower proportion of unemployed participants who started at Wave 4 than at Wave 3. Additionally, marginally more participants were co-funded at Wave 4 than at Wave 3.

---

[8] Asterisk (*) denotes cells where the base (starts n) is <100.

Figure 2: Summary characteristics for those who started a Wave 4 SBfL[9]

More males than females started a SBfL

More black/African/Caribbean/black British started than other ethnicities

Overall, 1 in 10 starts had a disability

Over half of starts were unemployed upon entry ★

Two fifths of starts were educated to a degree level or above

Only 7% of starts were co-funded by their employer ★

Around 1 in 5 starts had caring responsibilities

Around 4 in 5 starts lived in more deprived areas (IMD 1-5) ★

Around 2 in 5 starts claimed Universal Credit or other benefits

Training providers

A total of 28 providers participated in the Wave 4 delivery of SBfL, compared with 33 at Wave 3. Most (75%) were independent training providers (ITPs), five were local authorities (18%), and two were higher education institutions (2%).

Providers offered 71 courses, predominantly in Digital (n=28) and Construction (n=26), with fewer in Green, Logistics, Technical, Health & Social Care, and Creative Industries.[10] Compared with Wave 3, the number of Digital courses has decreased (from 38), and the number of construction courses has increased (from 14). This may reflect better alignment between these programmes and employer needs, increased demand for jobs in the construction sector, and the success at Wave 3 in achieving outcomes in this sector.

Providers were required to engage with employers at every stage of SBfL. The following section explores the characteristics of employers who worked with providers to design, deliver, and offer interviews for SBfL. On average, providers

---

[9] The stars indicate where there were changes in the pattern of starts at Wave 4 compared to Wave 3.

[10] Most providers delivered SBfL in the Digital sector (n=11, 34%) followed by Construction (n=6, 19%), Creative (n=4, 13%) and Health & Social Care (n=3, 9%). Two providers (6%) delivered SBfL in Logistics, Technical, Green and PtAA. Some providers delivered SBfL in more than one sector.

worked with 14 employers (median = 9, range = 1–58). Local authority providers, universities and providers who delivered SBfL across multiple sectors tended to have more employers listed as engaging with their programmes.

Employers engaged with SBfL

During Wave 4, 295 unique employers engaged with SBfL, fewer than at Wave 3 (345). A breakdown of employer engagement by sector is detailed in Figure 3. Most employers were from the Digital sector (60%), which was also the case at Wave 3 (50%). The number and proportion of employers from Construction (n=60, 16%) and Health & Social Care (n=46, 12%) sectors have increased significantly since Wave 3 (Construction n=17, 5%; Health & Social Care n=27, 8%). In contrast, the number of employers from the Technical sector (n=3, 1%) has reduced since Wave 3 (n=28, 8%). For PtAA, nine employers offered apprenticeships at reduced lengths across the Design and Finance & Professional sectors.

Figure 3: Wave 4 employer participation in SBfL by sector and priority area (PtAA)[11]
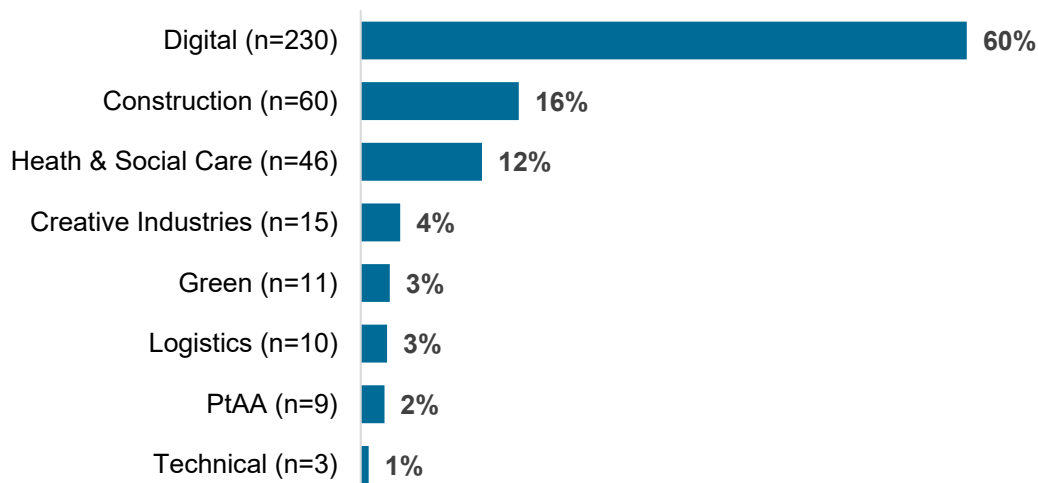
Most employers who engaged with Wave 4 SBfL were either large companies with more than 250 employees (44%) or small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs, 41%).

Most employers in Wave 4 supported the delivery of SBfL by offering job vacancies (86%, n=250). Of those offering job vacancies, two in five (42%) were large companies (>250 employees), and slightly fewer (38%) were small to medium-sized businesses (10–149 employees).

Nearly three in five employers listed in the MI (57%) offered job vacancies for Digital SBfL. Fewer employers offered vacancies in Construction (15%) and Health & Social Care (14%). Among all participating employers, nine (3%) accessed SBfL to upskill their current workforce and co-funded existing employers to take part. This was

---

[11] Some employers participated in multiple SBfL sectors; therefore, the total number of employers across all sectors exceeds the number of unique employers involved in SBfL.

slightly fewer employers than at Wave 3, where 12 (3%) co-funded their own employees.

Around two in five employers (39%) offered other types of support to SBfL, such as providing time to support delivery through employability skills training, offering information, advice and guidance (IAG) to participants, or providing equipment or venues to deliver training sessions.

How did participants find out about SBfL?

MI shows that participants heard about SBfL from different sources, most commonly on social media or from the government website (Figure 4).[12] Fewer Wave 4 participants (21%) found out about the training from a government website or campaign than Wave 3 participants (39%); however, this may be partially explained by the higher percentage at Wave 4 who responded 'Other' to this question without providing a free-text description.

Figure 4: Where participants heard about Wave 4 SBfL

Social Media – 25%

Government website / campaign – 21%

Family / Friend / Colleague – 20%

Job centre / NCS – 16%

Training Provider / Recruitment website – 11%

Current employer – 7%
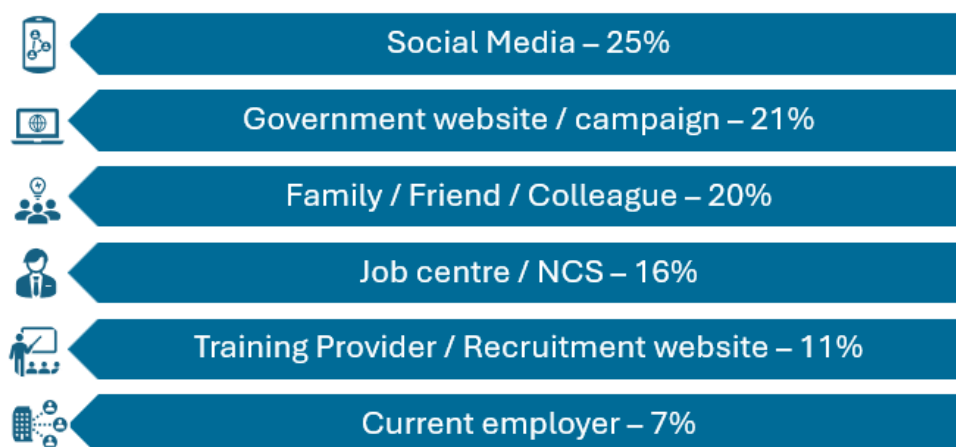
Most interviewed participants reported finding out about SBfL through online searches for training or job opportunities, particularly on social media or career websites such as Indeed. A few heard about SBfL through word of mouth from friends or family, while others learned about the training via National Careers Service (NCS) advisers, job fairs, or their employer.

Why did participants engage with SBfL?

Participant motivations and reasons for joining SBfL in Wave 4 were broadly similar to those reported in Wave 3.

Interviewed participants were attracted to SBfL because they wanted to reskill and gain new knowledge to secure employment.

---

[12] The highest proportion of responses were coded as 'Other' without any explanation in the MI of what this means. 'Other' responses were removed from this analysis.

For some participants, this meant developing specific technical expertise, such as data programming, coding, or rail track operations. In contrast, others were particularly interested in building their employability skills, including professional communication, job searching and interview techniques. Some participants said their SBfL was an opportunity to expand their professional and social networks by meeting others.

> I wanted to learn about how everything works in terms of looking for a job, careers, roles, because living in the UK was new for me. The Bootcamp also gave me the opportunity to connect with people with different and similar backgrounds who were looking for the same thing that I was looking for.
>
> **Participant – Green skills**

A few participants added that they chose to apply for a SBfL because of the unique employability support and the guaranteed interview at the end of the programme.

SBfL provided participants with opportunities to improve their employment status.

Many participants viewed SBfL as a route to changing their careers, moving into a higher-paying role or sector, or entering or re-entering the employment market after a career break.

> I worked as an IT developer before, and I had a career break of 11 years, so then I wanted to come back into IT, and that is the reason I was looking to upskill myself through a bootcamp.
>
> **Participant – Digital**

Participants in Digital, Green Skills and Technical SBfL were more likely to seek a career change or a better-paid role than participants in other SBfL sectors. This was mainly because interviewees perceived these sectors as well-paid and with a strong pipeline of jobs, likely to become more important in the future as a result of technological developments and Net Zero commitments.

> Sustainability is one of the biggest future sectors. From the figures that I found out, hundreds of thousands of qualified people will be needed, so I thought that it would be a very good avenue for me to get into a new sector.
>
> **Participant – Green Skills**

A few participants who wanted to move to a better-paying position noted that SBfL was a good way for them to achieve the certification required for certain job roles, such as project management roles in Construction, or to secure an HGV licence, which could lead to a higher-paying role.

The free, short, and flexible delivery of SBfL was particularly attractive to the participants interviewed.

The fact that SBfL are free for all Londoners directly influenced some participants' decision to enrol on the training. Likewise, the short duration of the training made

SBfL very attractive to individuals with caregiving responsibilities who were unable to commit to full-time courses, and it also enabled some interviewees to complete their SBfL alongside working part- or full-time.

> I considered doing a college apprenticeship, but I don't have time to spend a year or so in an apprentice job. That's why I went for the Bootcamp, which is a couple of months training, which allows you to continue your job.
>
> **Participant – Technical**

Similar to Wave 3, participants also valued the flexible delivery, with many courses offering at least some online provision alongside in-person sessions.

Providers' motivations for engaging in SBfL

Wave 4 was a natural progression for providers to build on Wave 3 and address local skills shortages.

Providers noted that demand for specific skills remained high during Wave 4, and they used SBfL to plug skills gaps, address employer needs, and continue building the London workforce. They identified that demand for skills was particularly high in Construction, Technical, and Health & Social Care sectors, specifically for entry-level jobs such as vehicle marshals, painters and decorators, track operatives and carers.

> We still identified that there is a massive need for carers, especially for domiciliary care. We thought that going for Wave 4 and trying to concentrate more on the unemployed customers to try and retrain them to enter the care industry will hopefully bridge that gap between the lack of carers in the industry and a struggle for employers to find carers.
>
> **Provider – Health & Social Care**

The short, skills-specific nature of SBfL creates the conditions for successful delivery and the achievement of employment outcomes by closing sector skills gaps and attracting new entrants and experienced workers to in-demand sectors.

Some providers used GLA Local Skills Improvement Plans to inform the development of SBfL and to determine which skills to target. This helped to ensure the SBfL were aligned with local needs. For example, a provider delivering Technical SBfL described a good match between their provision and the skills needs of rail employers, as most participants wanted to become self-employed contractors, such as track operatives.

> It was just a natural progression, and that demand was still there in the market. And because Wave 3 was quite new to the market, in Wave 4, the employers that we were working with wanted to continue down that avenue.
>
> **Provider – Technical**

Most interviewed providers were aware of the national Skills Bootcamps. Similar to Wave 3, some providers also delivered the national programme and described SBfL as a complementary addition to their provision. Providers compared the experience of providing the two programmes, as outlined in the section on Perceived benefits of SBfL over the national programme and in In Focus 1.

Employers' motivations for engaging in SBfL

Interviewed employers engaged with SBfL to address skills gaps.

Construction and Green Skills employers highlighted persistent skills gaps within their industries, which, in the Construction sector, are exacerbated by an ageing workforce. They emphasised the need to attract younger workers to their sectors through entry-level roles and to continue supporting them as they build long-term careers.

Construction and Green Skills employers who took part in the interviews saw SBfL as an opportunity to showcase that careers in these sectors offer individuals opportunities for career development and progression.

> It's not all about coming into the industry and having the skill as such because a lot of people have never worked, especially younger people. It's all about promoting the sector to them, getting them to understand it's a very good career, and they don't need to always have a degree to get into our industry.
>
> **Employer – Construction**

One Green Skills employer expressed concern about the lack of applicants in their sector, particularly for ground maintenance and arboriculture roles. They suggested that this could be due to a lack of awareness of these jobs, and they saw SBfL as a mechanism to increase people's awareness and understanding of the skills required for these roles, alongside their career prospects.

Employers value the tailored industry-focused nature of SBfL.

The tailored, industry-focused nature of SBfL includes support for individuals to develop the required technical skills, as well as support in achieving the accreditation necessary for some roles, such as the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) and other health and safety certificates. Employers also valued the flexibility of SBfL course content, which can be tailored to meet their needs, and the employability skills that are part of the programme, including communication skills, interview techniques, and CV writing. For example, one Construction employer said that they engaged with the training because it was tailored to their needs in electrical testing and inspection – areas where they faced skill shortages – which allowed them to upskill existing staff. The goal was to support professional development, career progression, and job satisfaction.

> What was quite attractive to us was that the provider tends to tailor the course around your requirements, pay special attention to areas in which we want to excel in, for example, if we wanted our guys to learn testing and inspecting, they'll pay close attention on that. That was perfect for us.
>
> **Employer – Construction**

Employers were also motivated to engage in SBfL to diversify their workforce and fulfil their social value commitments.

A few employers from the Technical and Construction sectors also stated that SBfL contributes to their companies' social value commitments and helps meet their obligations under Section 106 planning agreements by providing local people with a

route into work and equipping them with a broad set of skills. They noted that their industries may be more open to candidates from a range of backgrounds and experiences compared with sectors such as Education. This aligns well with the SBfL model, which welcomes individuals who may have been out of work for long periods, do not hold formal qualifications, or lack prior work experience. A Construction employer emphasised that SBfL were particularly suitable for people who want to start a career through short, practical on-the-job training rather than pursuing a college or university degree. Compared with longer-term training, employers viewed SBfL as more accessible to a range of participants due to its shorter length and its free availability to learners, which was especially attractive to those who need to remain in paid employment or balance caring responsibilities.

Perceived benefits of SBfL over the national programme

Training providers involved in both SBfL and National Skills Bootcamps outlined several benefits of the devolved programme. Overall, they found working with GLA to be more straightforward and efficient for contract management and communication than their arrangements on the national programme.

> With GLA, the team was very responsive in helping us understand if there were errors, where we went wrong, when we were having to make the [milestone] submissions. They were stepping forward and helping us hit those challenges proactively.

Provider – Digital

Providers also perceived that locally delivered training can more effectively address skills gaps, especially in the Construction and Technical sectors, where London has different skills gaps than other parts of the country. For example, cladding and recladding are key priorities in London following changes to regulations in the aftermath of the Grenfell incident, and the ongoing maintenance of the Tube network involves a large number of organisations and operations, including track operatives who inspect, maintain, and repair the railway tracks and associated infrastructure.

In Focus 1: How devolution has addressed skills shortages in London

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.

> *With devolved funding, I think that there's a huge advantage in the funding being focused on the local jobs market, the local labour market, local areas of disadvantage.*

Provider – Green Skills

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.

Being close to the ground enabled GLA to provide **effective, tailored support for delivery.**

> *There's a number of things we've done with GLA where we've done networking event with other providers, where we've come together with other employers. There's that greater connection when we've delivered in London and our programme manager comes and meets us in person, they get to see first-hand our delivery, what makes our product special and I think that builds a stronger working relationship with the commission overall.*

Provider – Digital

This more hands-on approach was contrasted with the national programme.

> *GLA is an easier vehicle to work with because it seems like they're more responsive. It is more difficult with the national contract. With GLA, they're very aware of what's happening in London and how the Bootcamps support that and how training providers and [employers] knit together to make it work.*

Provider – Construction

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. Key areas that interviewees suggested would be **strengthened by a more devolved approach** include:

- **Programme design,** with greater flexibility of the SBfL model to address the needs of residents who are likely to need a longer period of training and support to progress into work.
- Marketing, promotion and **resident engagement.**
- **Employer engagement** and employer-provider relationships.

Participant completions and outcomes from SBfL

This chapter presents findings from the MI and interviews regarding completions and outcomes for participants in Wave 4 SBfL. Participants experienced a range of benefits from undertaking the training, including but not limited to the programme's primary purpose of enabling progression into or within work in priority sectors. Some participants gained employment, increased pay, new technical and employability skills, and improved workplace satisfaction after completing SBfL. This indicates that Wave 4 SBfL contributed to tackling the GLA's four pillars of good work: fair pay and conditions, workplace wellbeing, skills and progression, and diversity and recruitment.

The In Focus examples at the end of the chapter highlight how participants have progressed into employment, changed their career pathways, and secured higher-paying jobs across different sectors through their training. Participants' names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Completion rates

In total, 84% of participants who started a SBfL finished their training. For the purpose of this report, the DfE definition of a 'completion' is used: a participant who finishes their training and receives a guaranteed interview with an employer, which triggers the payment of Milestone 2 to providers.

The overall completion rate of 60% was lower than in Wave 3 (66%); however, there was considerable variation between sectors, ranging from 92% in Construction to 40% in Logistics. Participants enrolled on programmes as part of the PtAA scheme had a low completion rate (17%). The design and delivery factors that may contribute to the variation in completion rates are explored in a later chapter. Regionally, the Local London partnership had the highest completion rate (65%), whereas Central London Forward had the lowest (54%). Most completions (92%) had a high attendance rate (between 75–100%), and the completion rate for those with high attendance (73%) was much higher than for those with lower attendance (42% for 50–74%). When participants had less than 50% attendance, the completion rate was only 2%.

MI shows that several participant characteristics and features of SBfL were associated with higher Wave 4 completion rates.[13] This highlights where further interrogation may be required to explore reasons why some groups were more successful at completing their training than others (Figure 5).[14]

---

[13] Characteristics are reported where there is a difference of 5% or more.

[14] The stars indicate where there were changes in the pattern of completions at Wave 4 compared with Wave 3.

Figure 5: Characteristics of participants who achieved higher Wave 4 completion rates

- Male participants ★
- Participants of Other white or Asian ethnicity ★
- Previously self-employed participants
- Those with an education Level of 3 and below ★
- Participants on Level 2 Bootcamps ★
- Those living in more advantaged areas (IMD 6-10) ★
- Co-funded participants
- Those without a disability ★
- Face-to-face or blended delivery ★
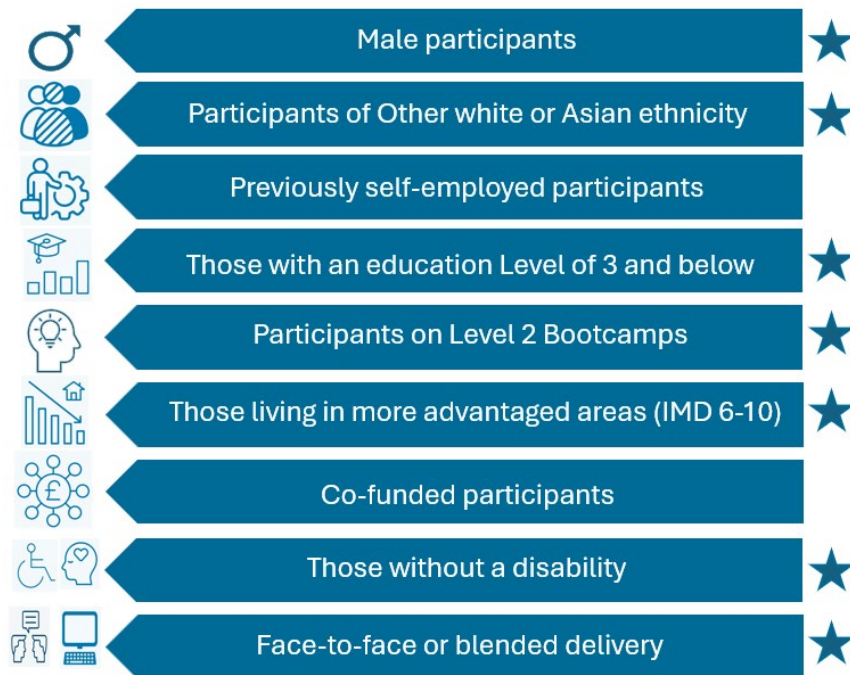
At Wave 4, some learner groups had lower completion rates. Many of these groups face persistent challenges across employment programmes, not specific to SBfL. The sociodemographic groups with lower completion rates included:

- Females
- Black and mixed ethnic groups
- Previously unemployed participants
- Those with a disability
- Non-co-funded participants
- Those with an education level 4 and above
- Participants on level 3, 4 and 5 SBfL
- Those whose training was delivered online.

Some participant characteristics of those who achieved higher completion rates in Wave 4 differed compared with Wave 3:

- Males had higher completion rates in Wave 4, while females had higher completion rates at Wave 3.
- At Wave 4, Asian participants achieved higher completion rates while white British participants did at Wave 3.
- Wave 4 participants with an educational level of 3 and below had a higher completion rate than those with an education level of 4 and above, whereas the opposite was found at Wave 3.
- Wave 4 participants on level 2 SBfL had a higher completion rate, whereas this group had the lowest completion rate at Wave 3.
- Participants without a disability achieved higher completion rates at Wave 4, while no differences were found at Wave 3.

There were no differences in Wave 4 completion rates between participants with and without caring responsibilities, or between those receiving and not receiving benefits.

Between Waves 3 and 4, there was some evidence that disparities in the completion rates for some participant groups had reduced. However, there were still some differences between groups at Wave 4, which suggests more could be done to increase the likelihood that all participants complete their SBfL, irrespective of their individual characteristics. This was particularly true for Wave 4 participants with a disability, who had a much lower completion rate (50%) than those without a disability (62%) – a difference not found at Wave 3. It would be important for GLA to identify and understand the specific barriers that prevent certain groups from completing their training, and work with providers to help them adapt and tailor their future design and delivery.

Participant employment outcomes and impacts

As reported earlier, one-third (33%) of Wave 4 SBfL participants were recorded as achieving a claimable employment outcome,[15] which was higher than the Wave 3 outcome rate (27%). Regionally, the Local London Partnership had the highest outcome rate (36%), whereas Central London Forward had the lowest (27%).

Construction SBfL had the highest outcome rate (76%), followed by Health & Social Care (43%) and Technical (43%). In contrast, Digital SBfL (14%) had the lowest outcome rate. Similar to the completion rate, participants on courses under the PtAA scheme had a very low outcome rate (9%), suggesting that more needs to be done to promote the scheme to participants, employers, and providers, and to ensure appropriate apprenticeships are available to participants upon completion of their training.

The level of training can explain the difference between Construction and Digital SBfL; of all the Level 2 outcomes achieved, nearly 9 in 10 (88%) were for Construction SBfL. Only specific sectors (Construction and Green) could offer Level 2 SBfL at Wave 4, which partially explains why these sectors have higher outcome rates. For example, providers could not offer Level 2 Digital SBfL – most were Level 3, which achieved only a 15% outcome rate. The challenges for Digital were exacerbated by the lack of entry-level roles in the sector that Level 3 SBfL courses can service. Over half (55%) of participants in Digital SBfL had a previous education Level of 6 or higher (Bachelor's degree or higher). As a result, there was greater demand for higher-level roles in Digital, with fewer vacancies and greater competition among applicants.

The SBfL model appears to be more successful at achieving outcomes for some sectors than others. When considering the outcome rate as a proportion of participants who completed the course, the sectors with the highest rates were

---

[15] A claimable employment outcome includes the offer of a new job (continuous employment for at least 12 weeks); an apprenticeship; a new role or additional responsibilities with an existing employer; or new contracts or new opportunities for the self-employed, utilising the skills acquired in the training, within six months of completion.

Construction (83%), Technical (75%), and Logistics (61%). In contrast, the sectors where the model seems less effective at converting completions into outcomes were Digital (29%), Green (33%) and Creative Industries (38%). It may be that more funding and priority should be targeted towards the sectors for whom the SBfL model is more effective at getting outcomes for participants who complete the training (Construction, Technical, Logistics).[16]

MI shows that a higher outcome rate was associated with specific participant characteristics, as detailed in Figure 6 and discussed below.[17]

Figure 6: Characteristics of participants with higher SBfL Wave 4 outcome rates[18]
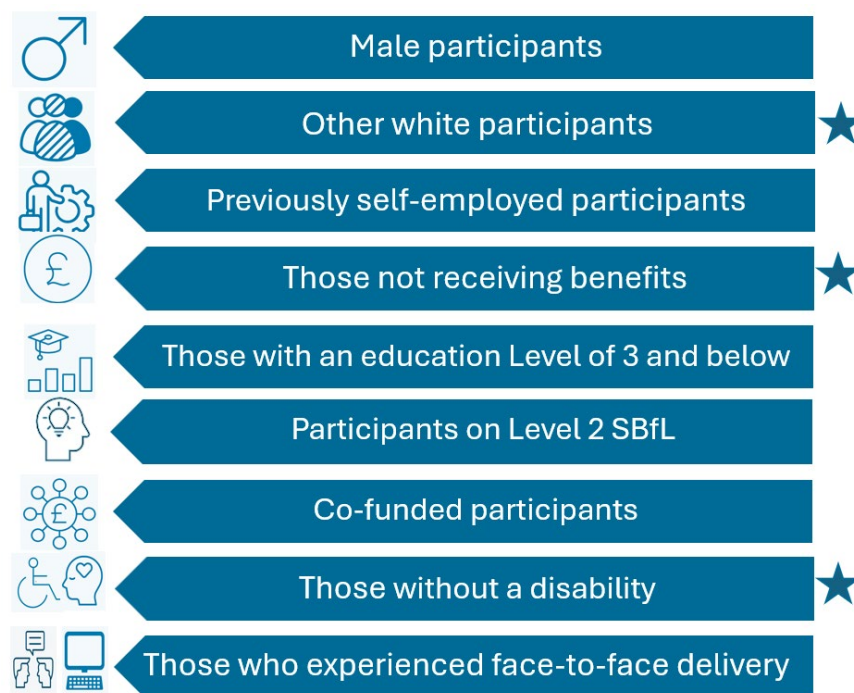
Overall, there were no differences in the Wave 4 outcome rates based on where participants lived, as measured by IMD. Similar to completion rates, some groups of participants experienced challenges when entering employment – challenges that persist despite employment programmes targeting these inequalities, including SBfL. Demographic groups with lower outcome rates included:

– Females
– Participants of black, mixed, Asian and 'other' ethnicities
– Those who were previously employed or not in employment
– Those with a disability

---

[16] Despite having a high outcome rate as a proportion of those who completed the training, Technical and Logistics SBfL had relatively low completion rates (57% and 40% respectively). Whilst there appears to be a strong job market in these sectors to convert the completions into an outcome, more work may be needed to ensure more participants who enrol on these courses complete their training.

[17] Characteristics are reported where there is a difference of 5% or more.

[18] Stars indicate where characteristics with higher outcome rates differ from Wave 3.

- – Those with an education level of 4 and above
- – Non-co-funded participants
- – Those who received universal credit or other benefits
- – Those who received their training via online delivery.

Some differences in outcome rates by participant characteristics at Wave 4 emerged compared to Wave 3:

- – Those not receiving benefits and those without a disability achieved higher outcome rates at Wave 4, while there were no differences at Wave 3.
- – White British participants achieved higher outcome rates at Wave 3, but this was not the case at Wave 4.
- – There were no differences in outcome rates and whether participants had caring responsibilities at Wave 4. This contrasts with Wave 3, where participants with no caring responsibilities had higher outcome rates than those with caring responsibilities.

Some Wave 4 participants progressed into employment in their chosen field.

Reflecting Wave 3, several interviewed participants secured employment after completing their SBfL across the different sectors in Green Skills, Health & Social Care, Creative, Technical, Digital and Logistics. Most participants explained that they would not have obtained these roles without SBfL. They conveyed that the training enabled them to gain valuable technical knowledge and accreditations, improve their soft skills, and build the confidence to find a job.

> It's really allowed me to move on in my career and gave me the right boost to understand where I actually want to be.

> **Participant – Creative Industries**

SBfL worked well for some self-employed participants in the Construction sector, as they gained new knowledge about project management and tax management for contractors, as well as certification, such as a CSCS card, which was viewed as valuable for their future work and career progression.

A journey of a Technical SBfL participant who successfully secured a job in the rail sector is described in In Focus 2.

In Focus 2: Participant progression into employment in a new sector as a result of completing a SBfL

Connor (22) entered a new career in rail via a Technical SBfL

Connor was interested in changing career after talking to a friend who had recently started work in the rail industry. Having no previous experience in rail, he was attracted to the Track Operative Bootcamp as a way of gaining relevant skills and qualifications and accessing an entry pathway to employment. The quality of the technical training compared well with other programmes Connor had accessed. He valued the focus on key subjects including rail safety, signalling, job roles and industry entry requirements, along with opportunities to further develop his generic skills such as teamwork and communication. By the end of the SBfL, Connor gained accreditations that qualified him for work on London's underground and mainline railways. Thanks to a contact he made on the SBfL, Connor secured his first job in rail through an agency working with industry employers.

To secure better employment outcomes, some participants from Digital and Green SBfL suggested that the course content could be tailored more to entry-level jobs and made more industry-focused, as most vacancies were for entry-level roles.

Some participants reported higher earnings after their SBfL.

For most participants (86%) with available MI data, their earnings increased after completing their SBfL. Interviewed participants from Logistics and Green Skills SBfL also noted that their earnings increased after their training. They attributed the quality of teaching to providing them with a greater understanding of the industry, which helped them secure better-paid jobs and progress further in their careers. An example of this is detailed in In Focus 3.

Working hours improved for some participants after the training.

The working hours of participants who secured a successful outcome after their SBfL increased, with MI showing an average increase of 17 hours. Those who completed SBfL in Green Skills (+33 hours), Logistics (+32) and Technical (+29) had the highest mean increase, while participants on Health & Social Care (+10) and Construction SBfL (+12) experienced the lowest mean increase in working hours.

Similar to Wave 3, interviewees gained valuable technical and employability skills, even if this did not translate into an employment outcome.

Some participants reported that the new technical knowledge and skills they developed have been beneficial for their development, despite not securing new employment after completing their SBfL. For example, interviewees from Digital SBfL reported improving their knowledge of Excel, as well as broadening their

understanding of other programmes and coding languages. A couple of Green Skills participants also noted that the training enabled them to gain new skills and knowledge in renewable energy, related technologies, and energy consumption in domestic settings. For these participants, learning these new skills was beneficial and helped confirm that their decision to change careers or move to a different sector was the right choice.

> The Bootcamp really helped me to learn how everything is working in terms of renewable technologies, all this Net Zero agenda that the UK is having now.
>
> **Participant – Green Skills**

Participants reported increased confidence towards training and work after completing SBfL.

SBfL are designed to increase participants' confidence in both their technical and employability skills, enabling them to secure a positive training or employment outcome. Many participants interviewed reported that one of the primary outcomes for them was increased confidence in their ability to perform a job in their chosen sector. This was particularly the case for those who had been out of employment or education for long periods. For example, a Green Skills participant noted that completing sustainability training helped them see how the knowledge gained during their Bachelor's degree abroad could be applied and valued in the UK, boosting their confidence to find their first job in the sector.

> I gained confidence to know that the knowledge from my Bachelor's relates with what I've learnt on the Bootcamp, and that really was an eye-opener. I was struggling with my confidence to communicate. My mates on the Bootcamp were mostly native English speakers, so it made me force myself to practise.
>
> **Participant – Green Skills**

A couple of participants from Health & Social Care, Creative Industries, and Green Skills SBfL who were further from employment before their training also described feeling more confident about pursuing their desired careers following their SBfL. For these participants, the impact of SBfL was significant. Despite these impacts not being classified as a claimable outcome, SBfL contributed to their increased employability and made steps to secure employment. More detailed journeys of some of these participants are described in In Focus 3 and In Focus 4.

Some participants experienced improved life satisfaction after their SBfL.

Participants reported improved job and life satisfaction as outcomes of securing a career change or gaining new personal insights. These outcomes were most prominent amongst participants in Green Skills, Health & Social Care, and Creative Industries SBfL. Participants highlighted that reflective learning and peer support were key elements of the training that led to this and helped them foster new friendships.

Mariana (36) rebuilt her career in the Green sector

An environmental engineer in her native Bolivia, Mariana moved to the UK in 2022. She aimed to re-establish her existing career and was looking for a course which would provide UK-recognised training. Mariana was considering studying for a Masters degree, but when a careers adviser told her about the Net-Zero Futures Bootcamp delivered by a local Higher Education Institution (HEI) she felt this was a less costly option while also helping her to connect with the Green jobs market in London. Overall, Mariana rated the training very highly, valuing the blend of theoretical content and practical, hands-on learning to develop her technical skills in key areas such as renewables technologies, together with support around soft skills and employability. After completing the SBfL, Mariana gained a job in environmental management and she credits SBfL with enabling her to secure interviews and ultimately employment. It gave her both UK-based training to include on her CV, and the knowledge and confidence to successfully navigate the job market. The group rapport fostered through the SBfL also enabled Mariana to start developing a professional network in London, and she made some lasting friendships.

Andy (41) progressed to a fulfilling new role in Green Skills

Following a career break due to ill health, Andy was attracted to the Net Zero Bootcamp as he was seeking a new direction and a route into the fast-growing sustainability sector. Delivered through blended learning, studying fitted well with Andy's on-going need to manage his health condition. He welcomed the mix of theory and practice, and particularly the opportunity to gain hands-on experience and technical skills and knowledge in Green technologies. Andy secured a job interview through the training and subsequently gained employment with the SBfL training provider. He attributes his success in part to the training's high-quality employability skills support, which included CV workshops, interview preparation training, and one-to-one career guidance. For Andy, his SBfL experience enabled him to progress into work that is both better paid and more personally fulfilling. He described his current role as "the best job I've ever had."

Provider and employer outcomes and impacts from SBfL

This chapter draws on interviews with providers and employers to examine the benefits they experienced from their engagement in the design and delivery of SBfL. Barriers to achieving outcomes and the solutions to address these are also explored.

Provider outcomes and impacts

SBfL helped providers to strengthen their relationships with local employers.

Interviewed providers conveyed how they built on their existing employer partnerships established in Wave 3, alongside fostering new relationships to increase the number and breadth of vacancies available. A few providers in the Digital and Construction sectors noted that their partnerships with some employers were strengthened between Waves 3 and 4, while most interviewed providers also developed new employer relationships. Some providers invested additional resources and staff in employer engagement activities, while also dedicating time to understanding sector-specific skill demands and employers' project life cycles. This allowed them to more effectively match participants with relevant employers, arrange guaranteed interviews and achieve successful outcomes.

> By engaging with employers at the right times, we're able to support employers for projects or plan to support employers for future projects so that we can better align ourselves with them. By knowing where projects are and what the employer's looking to do, we can look for learners that fit that employer quite well.
>
> **Provider – Construction**

A Health & Social Care provider suggested that the unique features of SBfL, including its short length and targeting of entry-level positions, attracted more employers to engage with SBfL than other training (e.g., a degree, apprenticeship) that takes place over a longer timeframe.

Further details on how SBfL has supported employers in developing their workforce are outlined in In Focus 5.

SBfL helped providers expand their local skills training offer.

Reflecting Wave 3, interviewed providers reported that engaging in SBfL had contributed to their effectively addressing local skills needs, such as cladding installations and care work, by connecting individuals to good jobs, particularly in Construction and Health & Social Care. A Digital provider described how SBfL complements their other training and enables them to expand their offer by providing alternative training pathways for individuals with no prior skills, allowing them to access training and progress into further learning or new employment.

> SBfL helped us from an organisational perspective, because we can offer a proper talent solution. We've got a recruitment business, we've got an apprenticeship business, we've got an Adult Skills Fund part, and then we've got this. It creates a way for a candidate to enter with no skills and to exit, going onto further learning and development, or potentially going onto a new career. It's so impactful having SBfL as part of the solution.
>
> **Provider – Digital**

Interviewed providers also reported enhancing their soft skills training offer, including communication and networking, as well as job search techniques. A provider in the Health & Social Care sector enhanced their employability support training offer between Waves 3 and 4 after observing that candidates had low confidence in applying for jobs and performing well at interviews.

Providers reached and engaged new learner groups.

Similar to Wave 3, SBfL enabled providers to support more diverse learner groups, including those who have been unemployed for long periods and have caring responsibilities. The identified impacts and benefits of engaging wider groups of learners in Wave 4 were varied, including helping address skills gaps and contributing to social value by broadening the groups providers work with. This, in turn, supported employers in diversifying their workforces and meeting their social value commitments. For one Wave 4 Health & Social Care provider, it was a strategic decision to target their training for economically inactive people and caregivers, with a view to supporting them back into work and helping address local skills gaps in care work.

> Bootcamps supported us to engage with the most economically inactive people. We're not only concentrating on the Job Centre referrals, we're actually connecting with children's nurseries, childcare centres and local community centres that a lot of new parents get involved in just to diversify and widen the connection that we are building especially with unemployed people.
>
> **Provider – Health & Social Care**

Employer outcomes and impacts

More employers were interviewed for the Wave 4 evaluation than for Wave 3, providing greater insight into the outcomes and impacts achieved for their organisations and workforces as a result of engaging in SBfL.

SBfL helped employers to fill vacancies.

Reflecting Wave 3, employers reported that the training provided them with an additional source to fill vacancies and address skills gaps. This was particularly the case for entry-level roles in Construction, Digital, Creative, and Green Skills sectors. A Construction employer, operating as a contractor for other companies, described filling more vacancies via SBfL than any other adult education programme they

engage with. Following the success of Wave 4, they plan to increase the number of vacancies offered in subsequent waves.

> Wave 4 has shown us in prototype what could be achieved. What we need to do now, is to get it to volume. Nine or ten job outcomes is great, compared to other similar programmes where we'd be lucky to get one or two outcomes. We've had nine job outcomes at Wave 4, what we'd like is 90.
>
> **Employer – Construction**

Employers who worked in recruitment also identified that SBfL helped them manage employment placements for companies in the Technical and Construction sectors. In addition to assisting them in filling vacancies, recruitment agencies received positive feedback from clients who hired SBfL participants who performed well in their roles. Employers valued candidates' acquired skills, knowledge and positive attitudes, which, in turn, strengthened agencies' relationships with their clients and demonstrated the wider credibility of SBfL in meeting workforce needs.

Employers' recruitment practices were strengthened, and the calibre of new recruits improved.

Some employers reported improvements in their recruitment practices as a result of their engagement in SBfL, including reduced recruitment times and more efficient use of human resources. For example, one Digital employer reported that recruitment time for new recruits has decreased, saving them time and money on human resources and enabling them to focus on other priorities, such as internal training and supporting new recruits. This employer was also impressed by the skills and attitude of SBfL learners, leading to some individuals being promoted relatively soon after joining the company.

> Our time to hire has gone down, we've had a higher calibre of candidates come through, we've seen opportunity for those candidates to be put in positions and then grow really fast and be promoted with the right confidence and understanding of where they need to be in regard to role.
>
> **Employer – Digital**

Employers gained more visibility to attract new recruits and engage with other organisations.

Through showcasing participants' SBfL success stories in their marketing and promotional materials, employers from the Construction, Digital and Green Skills sectors expanded their reach to potential new recruits and generated interest from other training providers and charitable organisations.

> SBfL give us good promotion, when we're attending various events and capturing previous bootcampers' stories, it's healthy for recruitment and retention.
>
> **Employer – Green Skills**

Additionally, a Green Skills employer reported attracting new recruits and interest from The King's Trust, which was keen to collaborate with them on the design and delivery of an adult training programme.

Employers are diversifying who they recruit.

Some employers in the Green Skills and Construction sectors reported that engaging in SBfL helped them explore new recruitment pipelines to diversify their workforce. For example, because of their involvement in SBfL and through engaging candidates who had been out of employment or education for extended periods, a Green Skills employer was inspired to expand this practice further by offering opportunities to people beyond their usual recruitment pool. They consequently engaged with armed forces service leaver organisations, recognising that these candidates bring valuable skills to land management and arboriculture roles, where there were skills shortages.

Barriers to achieving outcomes

Providers experienced challenges in evidencing outcomes to GLA to secure their payment milestones.

Providers in Wave 4 continued to experience difficulties reporting and evidencing their payment milestones.[19] They perceived the milestone targets as unachievable, which placed them at an immediate financial disadvantage. Providers explained that from the outset of programme delivery, they were aware they would be unable to meet their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and therefore secure full funding.

> A target of 75%, when you're working with unemployed people, if you get 40% into jobs, that's amazing. That's absolutely standard for welfare to work contracts, 75% was never a realistic target, unless you're cooking the books.
>
> **Provider - Construction**

Available job vacancies did not always accommodate participants' personal circumstances, reducing the number of successful outcomes.

Some participants, for example, those seeking employment in Construction and Health & Social Care, identified that they required flexible working arrangements to accommodate personal responsibilities and childcare, including part-time contracts and adaptable working hours. Employers were not always able to offer this flexibility across available job roles, often due to the nature of site-based work in construction or shift work in the care sector, exacerbated by existing staff shortages.

Some employers experienced a mismatch between their requirements and candidate expectations.

This arose when participants expected to progress rapidly into high-level, higher-paid roles, rather than the entry-level vacancies offered by some employers. For example,

---

[19] Skills Bootcamps for Londoners: Delivery Handbook.

a Construction employer described how some candidates who had completed SBfL in cladding installation had expected to progress more quickly into higher-level roles than was typically the case. Salary expectations form a key part of the IAG providers give at the point of learner registration. The evidence that some Wave 4 participants had misconceptions about salaries and progression pathways in their chosen sector suggests that more could be done to ensure that provider IAG is delivered effectively.

Another employer expressed frustration that some participants only realised after their guaranteed interview that they were not interested in roles within the sector. They suggested that providers could implement more robust selection criteria to ensure participants are a good match for the SBfL training and associated job roles. This could include pre-consultations with potential participants to understand their backgrounds and whether they are a good fit for the course and related job roles.

Employers had mixed experiences of candidate preparedness.

A Digital employer, for example, experienced participants persistently rescheduling or cancelling their interviews at short notice. This employer also observed that some participants struggled to understand the interview questions or gave rehearsed responses that did not align with the role. This made it difficult for the employer to assess technical and interpersonal competencies, leading to unfilled vacancies.

Administrative burden was challenging for some employers, particularly SMEs.

This arose from inefficient, burdensome administrative processes imposed on employers to provide information that providers required to meet their payment milestones. A Technical employer with just 12 staff struggled to produce confirmation letters of interviews and/or employment for each candidate. They recommended a more streamlined, practical approach to reduce administrative burden.

In Focus 5: How SBfL supported employers to develop their workforce

SBfL offer employers a valuable route to recruit highly skilled individuals and upskill their workforce – many of whom have already successfully progressed within their role. Employers expressed that the high-quality training which is tailored to their needs and delivered by knowledgeable tutors, coupled with access to a pool of work-ready candidates, were key benefits of SBfL.

A Digital employer hired several ambitious candidates from SBfL who have since secured promotions within their organisation. A Green Skills employer recruited high-calibre individuals who, before starting their SBfL, did not know how about the pathway into the industry. One candidate with an ecology degree had been working in airport security at Heathrow due to limited opportunities in their field. The SBfL training provided a pathway for them to pursue a career aligned with their passion and expertise. A Construction employer described hiring a trainee project manager from a cladding SBfL who is already being considered for promotion. The individual reached this level of seniority much earlier than is typically expected in this sector:

> *Lawrence, the trainee, progressed directly from the Bootcamp in cladding into a role supporting site managers. Colleagues from the site were extremely positive about his progress, noting that he had introduced new systems for ordering materials and training staff in Excel. His strong IT knowledge, combined with his work ethic and intelligence, enabled him to take on responsibilities beyond expectations from the outset. Despite a difficult background, once given the opportunity, Lawrence demonstrated his ability and potential, highlighting how crucial access to the right opportunities can be.*

Employer – Construction

Employers who co-funded their employees through SBfL found the scheme to be beneficial in developing their workforce. One Construction employer reported improved and more efficient working practices in their electrical testing processes after co-funded employees completed the training. As their business grows, they plan to use SBfL more frequently to upskill employees, citing good value for money and clear benefits for staff development and progression.

> *The staff are more motivated, more enthusiastic, more optimistic – knowing that they've got a solid future within our company and they're acquiring solid skills supported by us.*

Employer – Construction

Design and delivery factors contributing to SBfL completions and outcomes

This chapter draws on MI analysis and qualitative insights from participants, providers, and employers to consider effective approaches adopted in the design and delivery of SBfL to help participants complete and achieve a positive outcome. In Wave 4, interviewees reported fewer challenges with the design and delivery of SBfL compared to Wave 3.

Designing SBfL

Similar to Wave 3, providers adapted existing materials and resources to develop SBfL.

Some providers interviewed at Wave 4 had also delivered at Wave 3, enabling them to modify the design and content of their existing SBfL courses. These providers highlighted that they adapted their existing materials to create more engaging SBfL, as well as increase their engagement with employers to co-design the training to ensure the content met industry knowledge and skills needs.

Other providers adapted their training materials from other adult education courses they offer. For example, one Construction provider developed their SBfL training from courses that they were already delivering under the AEB. Whilst some of the content was directly transferable between AEB-funded courses and SBfL, providers acknowledged that a key difference they had to incorporate into their design model for SBfL was the stronger emphasis on employer engagement, including greater alignment with employer needs and quicker pathways to employment. In addition to their existing course content, to meet SBfL expectations, the provider also included practical guidance for learners on becoming self-employed, including applying for CSCS cards, managing tax requirements, and developing entrepreneurial skills.

Providers aligned the design of SBfL with industry requirements and employer needs.

Reflecting the findings of Wave 3, providers in Wave 4 consulted employers about the courses' content to ensure they met their expectations and to identify additional skills, support, or wraparound elements that participants would benefit from to enhance the training. For example, one Technical provider identified employer consultation on the importance of using sector-specific standards, such as Network Rail's governance documents, to ensure the training met industry and employer requirements.

> There are industry standards that individuals need to work in the rail sector. That's where we start from. Speaking to the employers, looking at what their contracts are, what is the demand in the local area, as well as getting a better understanding of what other elements we can add to make sure that this individual can progress within the industry.
>
> **Provider – Technical**

Learners' needs were considered during the design process.

Because many providers already had extensive experience working with different types of learners in their sectors, they integrated this knowledge into their SBfL curriculum from the outset. Some interviewed providers sought feedback from past learners when designing the Wave 4 programme, particularly regarding their transition from training into employment. This feedback helped identify areas where additional support or clearer information could strengthen the SBfL model.

> We went to past learners to find out their journey from training into employment and if there were any areas within that that we could've supported better. What kind of elements they would have liked more guidance on, and then information that we gave initially, how clear it was, and how we could better move forward for them.
>
> **Provider – Construction**

Another provider who delivered SBfL across a range of sectors identified that their Green Skills SBfL courses were designed to provide a broad foundation across a range of technologies within the Net Zero field rather than preparing learners for a single, narrowly defined job. The aim of this was to help individuals with varied backgrounds, levels of qualification, and lengths of career experience adapt their skills to new opportunities in emerging industries. SBfL courses with a broader focus were designed not only to support participants' transition into employment but also to ensure the training remained relevant amid the fast-paced changes in the Net Zero field. This approach increased participants' adaptability and employability, and equipped them with transferable skills that could be applied across multiple emerging roles.

One Digital provider consulted with teachers, employers, and learners to ensure the training was pedagogically strong. They also worked with these experts to identify strategies to address potential delivery and teaching challenges, such as teaching mixed-ability groups and sustaining participant engagement in both in-person and online training.

> We spent a lot of time in consultation with professional educators about how to deal with mixed ability, how to deal with people who fall behind, how to deal with engagement, how to deliver content that has an impact remotely because we were also doing a lot off the back of COVID-19 when we were still remote.
>
> **Provider – Digital**

Strong provider-employer partnerships remained critical to the design of effective SBfL.

Employers played a direct role in shaping the content of SBfL beyond the mandatory training requirements. Providers consulted with them to identify which additional skills, wraparound support, or other elements should be included to make learners more employment-ready and better aligned with employer expectations.

In Wave 4, interviewed providers described their relationships with employers as iterative and consultative, with employers offering practical insights into the steps

learners must take to move from entry-level to more senior positions. More details on how providers fostered their partnerships with employers in Wave 4 are outlined in In Focus 6.

A few providers from the Digital, Construction, and Health & Social Care sectors faced challenges engaging employers in Wave 4. While employers often expressed positive attitudes toward SBfL, practical constraints, such as costs, time, and staffing shortages, limit their participation. Similar to Wave 3, a Health & Social Care provider noted that employers in their sector were often too busy to engage in SBfL due to staff shortages, limiting their capacity to deliver training and employability support. These challenges were particularly significant for employers considering co-funding their employees on SBfL. Additionally, a Digital provider highlighted challenges in engaging SMEs to co-fund their employees' participation, mainly because the training requires participants to be released from work, creating a significant time and resource commitment for employers.

Similar to Wave 3, interviewed providers had largely positive, collaborative partnerships with GLA.

Many providers praised their GLA contract managers for being responsive, supportive and proactive, even visiting training centres to observe delivery and engage with learners. The GLA contract managers' in-person visits were particularly helpful for a small Digital provider, as they enhanced their confidence in management and in the delivery of a government-funded programme, which they had little prior experience with. Monthly meetings were generally constructive, with GLA contract managers offering guidance, troubleshooting errors, and maintaining approachable, professional relationships. For some smaller providers or those new to delivering SBfL, a dedicated programme manager was invaluable, particularly in navigating the complex reporting requirements.

> We had a fantastic programme manager. He really bought into our mission and would come and witness our delivery all the time, and he did a really good job, particularly at the beginning of Wave 4, because we're a very small organisation, and dealing with government is new to us.
>
> **Provider – Digital**

While relationships with GLA staff were often described as positive and supportive, systemic issues around reporting were challenging for providers. These issues relate to communication about reporting requirements and to inconsistencies in guidance on reporting processes. For example, one Construction provider highlighted frustration due to frequent last-minute cancellations of GLA monitoring visits and contradictions in the interpretations of how to follow the guidance by different GLA representatives. Long and complex contract documents were also criticised for being difficult to navigate, leaving too much open to interpretation.

A couple of providers expressed frustration when errors in GLA data submissions were not flagged until weeks later, delaying their milestone payments. The planned transition towards using the ILR was widely welcomed as a means of streamlining data processes and reducing delays.

A minority of providers noted that changes in payment milestones[20] in Wave 4 impacted their organisation. While they understood the rationale for GLA to change the milestones to align with the national model and increase the focus on learner and employer outcomes, the change created financial pressures for the provider. Smaller providers, often from Construction, Technical and Creative Industry sectors, described the change as particularly challenging because they have limited cash flow and could not as easily cover delays in payment for training they completed. This was because the time lag between when providers received their Milestone 1 (start) and Milestone 2 (completion) payments meant that they felt they delivered most of their training without being paid.

---

[20] The percentage of payments made on each milestone was changed at Wave 4 to incentivise providers to meet Milestone 3. In Wave 3 it was: Milestone 1=45% of total contract, Milestone 2=35% and Milestone 3=20%. In Wave 4 it was Milestone 1=40% of total contract, Milestone 2=30%, and Milestone 3=30%.

In Focus 6: What providers did differently in Wave 4 to foster and strengthen employer partnerships

Provider-employer relationships are a central feature of SBfL. Providers work closely with employers throughout the duration of SBfL. This starts with course design and continues into delivery with a particular focus on employability support. Employer engagement continues after participants complete their training, when many offer guaranteed interviews and some recruit participants into jobs. Building on the successes and lessons learned from Wave 3, providers interviewed in Wave 4 changed the way they work with employers to embody elements of best practice:

– **Continuous engagement with employers throughout the SBfL life cycle.** As in Wave 3, Wave 4 providers continued to invite employers to round tables to discuss current challenges in the sectors and skills needs to inform the development of their SBfL. At Wave 4, employers emphasised the importance of maintaining ongoing communication with providers throughout the bootcamp life cycle. This differed from Wave 3, where providers often co-designed the training then had no engagement with employers until the vacancy search and guaranteed interview stages. One Wave 4 Digital provider highlighted that they actively request updated job descriptions from employers at regular points during their SBfL to ensure the content of their courses and employability support matches the skills and competencies required by employers in their sector:

> *We have meetings with employers where they can talk to us about challenges they're facing. We also look to go beyond the talent team and we like to speak to the hiring managers, the people who are actually working day-to-day with the junic talent. We speak to them in terms of what competencies, behaviours, knowledge they're looking for.*
>
> **Provider – Digital**

– **Increasing resources dedicated to employer-engagement.** Like Wave 3, providers' business development teams engaged employers to better understand their forward-looking workforce needs to ensure SBfL were matched to industry requirements. However, providers increased these efforts in Wave 4 by creating more dedicated employer engagement roles or joining membership bodies, such as BusinessLDN, a not-for-profit advocacy group representing businesses across London. One Digital provider outlined that BusinessLDN helped their delivery because it helped expand its engagement with a wider range of employers. This helped secure employer participation in employability support and arrange guaranteed interviews, contributing to successful outcomes for providers, employers and participants alike.

– **Understanding employer planning cycles of their projects** and workforce enabled providers to identify learners whose skills and availability closely matched the requirements of specific employers, improving the fit between learners and available job opportunities. This was most prominent in the Construction sector, where providers noted that because construction projects are often scheduled months or years in advance, if providers are not aware of an employer's workforce plans, coordinating guaranteed interviews with participants becomes more difficult and reduces the likelihood of achieving positive outcomes.

Content of SBfL

Interviewed participants were highly satisfied with the content of SBfL.

Wave 4 participants reported greater satisfaction with the content of their SBfL than Wave 3 participants. Overall, 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. Interviewees generally felt the training matched their expectations and intentions when they enrolled on the course, with many describing the experience as exceeding expectations. Other participants identified that the skills they learnt were directly applicable to working in their sector. For example, a Technical participant identified that learning about practical safety, such as recognising warning signs on the rail tracks, was highly valuable and useful once in work.

Similar to Wave 3, the content was generally pitched at the right level.

Participants overall felt the material was pitched at the right level, describing it as challenging but achievable. A couple of Digital and Green Skills participants noted that the course progressed from very basic material through to more advanced concepts, which was valuable for those with prior knowledge but challenging for complete beginners. For example, a Digital participant noted that some sessions covering Excel-based tasks felt repetitive for learners with more existing knowledge or experience. For one Green Skills participant, the training complemented their university studies and provided access to facilities and resources that would otherwise have been unavailable.

> For me, it was a wonderful experience. Not only because they gave us access to the university, to the classroom, to all kind of resources, in order for us to learn everything they were sharing, but also everything what I've learnt was a complement of what I was already studying in university.
>
> **Participant – Green Skills**

Interviewed participants were broadly satisfied with the balance of theory and practice in their SBfL.

Participants appreciated the range of learning activities, including group projects, guest lectures, site visits, and practical demonstrations of technologies such as solar panels and hydrogen fuel cells. Interviewees valued the mix of theory and practice because it made the training engaging and provided participants with relevant experience. For a Health & Social Care participant, the practical application only became fully meaningful once they started working in the field.

> It was more theoretical, because we were just learning. But, in the practical sense, it has now stood me in good stead because I'm practising now and have the skills to go out and practice.
>
> **Participant – Health & Social Care**

A minority of participants interviewed felt that there was limited time to apply their learning to practical exercises before they had to move on to new topics in the curriculum.

Interviewees had mixed views on whether there was enough time to learn all the content of their course.

SBfL courses are required to be up to 16 weeks in duration. Courses can differ in terms of length, number of guided learning hours and level. At Wave 3, a dominant theme was that participant felt there was too much content to learn in their short SBfL course. However, at Wave 4, some participants felt the short duration of SBfL was 'perfect' because it gave them enough opportunity to digest the content, independently practice the skills they had learnt, and enjoy the social and collaborative aspects of the course. This suggests that providers adjusted their training between Waves 3 and 4 to respond to participant feedback (as highlighted above).

> My Bootcamp was over three months, and it was really fun for me, because I was looking for a job, and then it was the opportunity to spend time whilst learning with other people, it was like being back in school.
>
> **Participant – Creative Industries**

A minority of participants on Digital and Green SBfL courses, however, felt the training was either too rushed or too condensed. These courses were usually higher-level (i.e., Level 4 or 5), and interviewees noted that complex topics, e.g., data analysis or technical engineering concepts, often required repetition and more time to fully absorb, which was not always possible given the short nature of SBfL.

Delivery of SBfL

Overall, participants were satisfied with the facilitation of their SBfL.

MI data shows that among participants who started SBfL, three in five (61%) received a blended learning approach, one-third (33%) had all their delivery online, and 6% had their training delivered in person. Compared to Wave 3, more participants at Wave 4 experienced blended or face-to-face delivery (W3: 50% vs. W4: 67%). This suggests that some providers adapted their Wave 4 delivery model based on Wave 3 findings that higher completion and outcome rates were associated with face-to-face delivery. Attendance rates across all SBfL were high at Wave 4. Overall, the average attendance was 82%, and nearly half (45%) had full attendance. This was higher than at Wave 3, where average attendance was 79% and 40% had full attendance.

In Wave 4, interviewed participants consistently rated the quality of the teaching and support they received as high, more so than in Wave 3. Many described their tutors as approachable, knowledgeable and supportive, even outside of scheduled teaching hours. A Creative Industries participant emphasised that high-quality facilitation and teaching, combined with access to a music studio and a theatre, contributed to their

satisfaction with the training. These elements helped bring the SBfL content to life and maximised understanding.

> We were able to access a studio, and then we had the theatre downstairs, where we could at the end of the day recapture what was happening. And then, we could organise some events down there. It really gave another dimension to this whole experience, and you could tell that the facilitators were well organised.
>
> **Participant – Creative Industries**

Participants most valued trainers with strong industry expertise because they could relate course content to real-world contexts. Participants on Digital, Creative Industries and Health & Social Care courses most commonly mentioned this.

A small number of Digital participants reported that the delivery quality was poor. As a result, these participants did not feel sufficiently guided or supported by their tutors, particularly in practical tasks. When participants did not receive feedback on their work, they felt uncertain about their learning and progress.

> Looking at the curriculum and how it was laid out, I thought, 'Okay, it would give a very good exposure, getting in a practical sense of what was done.' But in actual classes, it was more like reading something and not evaluating what we had done. There was no proper feedback, so actually, you are not sure whether you're on the right path or not.
>
> **Participant – Digital**

In Wave 3, some providers identified challenges with recruiting skilled facilitators to deliver their training, but this issue was not raised in Wave 4.

The role of employability support and the guaranteed interview

This chapter draws on MI analysis and insights from interviewed participants, providers and employers, regarding the effectiveness of the employability support offer and the guaranteed interview. It examines how these elements of the training helped participants to complete their training and achieve a positive outcome.

Employability support is an essential element of the SBfL training; it comprises a suite of activities, including CV development, mock interviews, mentoring/coaching, voluntary work experience, and guest speakers. The guaranteed interview for a job relevant to the training forms a unique aspect of SBfL, which sets it apart from other adult skills training provisions. On completion of the training, all eligible learners[21] should have an offer of a guaranteed interview with an employer.

The benefits of employability support

Wave 4 participants' views on the strengths, benefits and areas for improvement in the employability support element of SBfL broadly reflect those from Wave 3. In Focus 7 demonstrates how the employability support has evolved from Wave 3 to Wave 4 to help participants secure a guaranteed interview and achieve an employment outcome.

Participants found employability support most helpful when it was tailored to their individual needs and helped them build relationships directly with employers.

Most participants were offered some form of one-to-one employability support, which focused on building their skills and confidence to successfully apply for roles that aligned with their training, experience and interests. Through workshops and individual sessions, participants were supported to identify and articulate their skills and strengths, hone their CVs, undertake targeted job-search and prepare for interviews.

> They did help us in writing our CV, and they did help us with how to get the skills knowledge, and more importantly, the confidence to talk in the interview. All those things, they did really help me.
>
> Participant – Digital

Participants were most positive about employability support activities that brought them into direct contact with employers. They believed these had a clear impact on their prospects of securing employment. Providers arranged sessions such as employer talks, site visits, and job fairs to enable employers to showcase their organisations and the roles available, and to allow participants to learn more and make a positive impression. In some instances, these sessions were explicitly focused on recruitment and provided a direct route to interviews.

---

[21] There are separate requirements for self-employed or co-funded participants.

> We actually had some interviews with a company just before the actual programme finished. They came and did a presentation about the jobs that they do and about the work that they do, and we had a mini-interview with them at the same time and then we also went on to a job fair that was run by them and then there were the subcontractors there, so we had opportunities to speak to them and to get interviews with them as well.

<div align="right">Participant – Green Skills</div>

Interviewed employers who were involved in delivering employability support were enthusiastic about the benefits of being able to tap into a pool of potential recruits. An employer in the Creative Industries sector described how they hosted participants on a tour of their studio, discussed available roles and provided contact details for anyone wishing to enquire further about employment. As a result, several participants joined their bank of part-time studio assistants and gained paid work.

Several SBfL included opportunities for participants to undertake structured work placements or work one-to-one with an employer mentor. These enhanced forms of employability support enabled participants to gain a deeper, first-hand understanding of their prospective employment sector and to develop meaningful relationships with employers through an extended period of interaction.

> There was constant support through the weekly meetings that we had with our mentors and our peer group supervisors. They were really helping us, not only motivating us but helping us tick the boxes and to get ready for the actual interviews.

<div align="right">Participant – Creative</div>

Participants who do not secure employment by the end of their training would benefit from having access to more structured post-course support.

A key lesson from Wave 3 was that including post-course support interventions could help secure better outcomes for participants. Wave 4 evidence suggests that ongoing employability support for participants who do not achieve a successful outcome at the end of their SBfL training remained patchy. Some could access additional one-to-one guidance, but others reported receiving limited support, if any, from their provider in finding and securing a job.

> When it came to finishing the course, luckily I passed both exams first time, but then I never was able to get an interview, or any possible job prospect. After three months I received an email saying that I was at the maximum time that they were allowed to help me look for employment, but I never really felt that there was anything going on. The whole point of doing this bootcamp, is that they had employers that would take on the people that have completed the course and do an apprenticeship. I felt like once it was done, it was like, "Okay, it's over," and that was it.

<div align="right">Participant – Finance & Professional (PtAA)</div>

In particular, participants stressed that they would have liked to see providers doing more to connect them directly with recruiting employers to support progression into work.

> If they could say, 'Okay, now you've completed the Bootcamp, we have a partner that can take you on.' But, there was no partner organisations. There's just, 'Here's the links. Go and look for the job yourself.'
>
> **Participant – Health & Social Care**

In the absence of adequate post-course support, participants suggested a greater focus on helping them find work during the delivery period.

> There was some of that, but the main thing I think they could improve with the course is to try and get the people who hire to take people on from the Bootcamp before the Bootcamp finishes. Because once it's over, it's up to you.
>
> **Participant - Technical**

In Focus 7: How employability support evolved in Wave 4 to support participants to achieve employment outcomes

During our previous Wave 3 evaluation, participants welcomed the employability support element of their training and consistently said that it was most beneficial when employers were involved in delivery. They stressed that they would have liked more opportunities to network with employers, as this would have enabled them to learn about different companies and the range of roles available and to 'sell' and promote themselves directly.

Evidence from the evaluation of Wave 4 confirms that the amount and type of contact that participants have with employers plays a key role in determining how beneficial many perceive the training to be. Building on the methods used in Wave 3, providers sought to strengthen the involvement of employers in delivery and enhance the opportunities for participants to interact with them.

– **1:1 mentoring support** was a feature of employability support offered by some SBfL courses. A provider delivering Technical training ramped up their employability support for Wave 4 in response to feedback from employer partners and a key feature of the new approach was pairing all participants with an industry-based mentor for eight one-hour sessions. In many instances, this led to participants securing work in the mentor's organisation, and the mentoring continued to ensure their successful transition into employment.

– **Job fairs** enabled participants to learn more about working in their SBfL sector, hear about genuine vacancies that employers were seeking to fill, and meet and talk directly to prospective employers. A Health & Social Care provider increased the number of jobs fairs they ran, as part of an enhanced overall approach to employer engagement.

> *We actually did two job fairs in Wave 4, and the attendance compared to Wave 3 was excellent. In one of the job fairs, we had 50 participants attend, and I think about 15 of them had job offers on the same day.*
>
> **Provider – Health & Social Care**

– **Site visits** provided participants with first-hand exposure to the workplace, while **work experience** offered an extended opportunity to understand more about their chosen industry and build contacts with employers.

The guaranteed interview

As previously highlighted, the majority of employers engage with SBfL by offering vacancies. The total number of vacancies offered at Wave 4 was 3,276.[22] This was only slightly more than the total number of starts on Wave 4 SBfL that were eligible[23] for a guaranteed interview after completing their programme (n=3,094). The reason the number of participants who finished their training (n=3,318; 84%) was higher than those who were classified as a completion (n=2,386; 60%) was because they did not receive a guaranteed interview to trigger payment of Milestone 2.

Although all eligible participants are supposed to be offered a guaranteed interview at the end of their SBfL, MI analysis shows that just over half of eligible Wave 4 participants (54%, n=1,674) were offered one, compared with Wave 4 (66%, n=1,791). When participants achieved a successful outcome, three in five (60%, n=769) attributed this to their guaranteed interview. The highest success rate was for Construction SBfL (71%), whereas Digital had the lowest success rate (28%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Guaranteed interviews offered and the participant success rate by SBfL sector
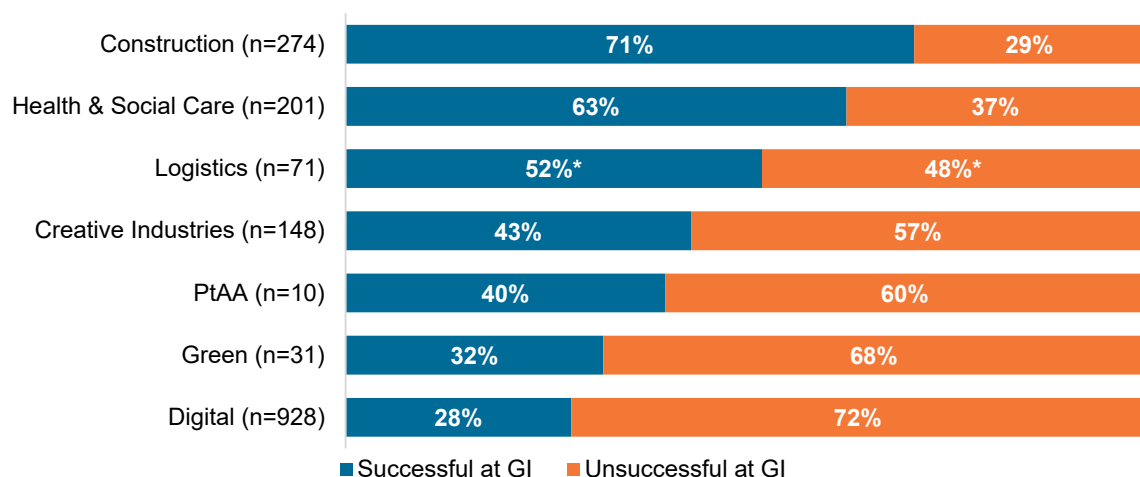
Where employers offered interviews, some sectors were more successful than others in recruiting participants from SBfL. According to the participant and employer MI, all available vacancies for participants on Creative Industries SBfL were filled.[24] In contrast, other sectors struggled to recruit to their vacancies, where only approximately one in six vacancies were filled for Digital (16%) and Health & Social Care (18%) SBfL.

---

[22] The total number of vacancies offered refers to the number of vacancies listed per employer in the MI. The employer MI data does not provide information on how many vacancies were actually offered and were associated with a guaranteed interview.

[23] Self-employed and co-funded participants were not eligible for a guaranteed interview.

[24] The number of vacancies available matched the number of Creative Industries SBfL participants who achieved an outcome.

Participants had a mixed experience of the guaranteed interview process.

Some interviewed participants were satisfied with the guaranteed interview at the end of their SBfL because the job they were offered was linked to their training and allowed them to enter a new industry.

> It's a crewing job, so going all around London and even around England, setting up stages, festivals, events. It's really quite fun, yes, so I was happy to get that interview.
>
> **Participant – Creative Industries**

However, as in Wave 3, a common theme in participant interviews was that the guaranteed interview was not always aligned with participants' career interests or represented a genuine job opportunity. Several participants on Technical and Construction SBfL were not offered a guaranteed interview after completing their training. A minority of interviewees felt the process was more of a 'tick-box exercise' for providers to meet requirements to receive funding rather than an actual pathway to employment.

> There's a guaranteed job interview, but it's definitely not a guaranteed job. Sometimes it's like a tick-box exercise. The agency might give you the interview with an employer that has no current jobs.
>
> **Participant – Technical**

As well as guaranteed interviews, some participants from the Health & Social Care and Technical SBfL identified receiving other forms of support at the end of their training, including lists of available job opportunities or employer contacts in their respective fields. However, participants generally did not find this helpful in their job search because the roles were not at the right level, or employers were not recruiting at the time.

In some sectors, the level of SBfL did not align with available vacancies. For instance, one Technical learner explained that, at the time they were looking for a job in the rail sector, companies had few entry-level vacancies that matched the skills developed on the SBfL. This participant noted that vacancies often required additional training and certification to meet the role's expectations.

Providers frequently reported challenges securing genuine job opportunities for participants.

Providers across sectors such as Construction, Digital, and Creative Industries explained that a shortage of employers able to offer guaranteed interviews and provide genuine vacancies for successful candidates hindered their ability to achieve outcomes and affected how the GLA perceived their success as providers.

> The main challenge was having enough vacancies to have every candidate interview three, four, five times. Most of our candidates had an average of 2.5 interviews, so that's a really good stat to have, but it wasn't 100% of candidates that had an interview because of various different reasons. You can never have enough employers.
>
> **Provider – Digital**

A few Construction providers explained that misaligned timelines between SBfL and industry were a barrier to providers supporting participants to achieve an outcome. This was also the case for SMEs in the Creative Industries sector, where vacancies and recruitment were often similarly shaped by the short-term and small-scale nature of projects. These employers often had fewer roles available but needed them filled immediately, so vacancies were no longer available by the time participants completed their SBfL.

Many employers were unable to commit to recruiting from a talent pool several months in advance, and larger employers engaging with new projects needed to forward-plan the number and type of likely vacancies. For example, one Construction provider outlined an ideal SBfL scenario as engaging with a large employer, such as a supermarket, intending to open a new store, which requires around 50 entry-level customer service staff vacancies suited to SBfL participants.

Another provider in the Creative Industries explained that their sector relies heavily on short-term or freelance work tied to specific projects, rather than clear progression pathways. This makes their job market highly competitive and, as a result, few entry-level roles are available for SBfL.

> The sector just doesn't work like that in terms of the linear process that the Skills Bootcamps want to take – it's not how the sector recruits. The market is extremely competitive, which means that the grads from these programmes have to be really on it to be able to get jobs as a direct result.

Provider – Creative Industries

Providers adapted their processes to overcome challenges experienced in securing enough guaranteed interviews.

In Focus 8 outlines how providers in Wave 4 addressed previously identified challenges in sourcing and arranging guaranteed interviews.

Some interviewed providers built on their good practices established at Wave 3. For example, a Construction provider explained that once they secured guaranteed interviews and jobs with employers ahead of the start of a course, they briefed their participants that the entire course served as an extended interview, with participants being assessed on their professional behaviour, communication skills, and technical knowledge. This meant that employers were part of the entire SBfL process and could get to know potential candidates early in the recruitment cycle. Other providers emphasised the importance of ongoing employer relationships with regular conversations about current and upcoming vacancies to plan for guaranteed interviews.

Some providers faced challenges when employers who initially offered vacancies at the outset of the training withdrew vacancies or changed their minds about the availability of specific roles. To address this, employers were asked to interview participants who, if successful, would enter a talent pool for roles either currently or in the near future.

> We recognised that some employers who had pledged jobs in the beginning didn't have jobs at the end. But we knew that they would have jobs in the future. So, we asked all employers to provide interviews based on a real job, whether it was in real time or in the future. Then the successful individuals would be put into a pool of talent to be considered for a future role.

Provider – Creative Industries

The long lead times between SBfL funding confirmation, delivery, and completion made it difficult for employers to guarantee vacancies for participants.

> We have vacancies within the business, but the vacancies are quite hard to predict. Between the points at which funding for a Bootcamp is confirmed to the point of delivery, there could be many, many months, so we can't guarantee how many vacancies we're going to have until we get quite close to the end.

Employer – Green Skills

To manage this, providers requested that employers submit vacancy lists and job specifications close to the start of a course to help them oversee available vacancies and match them to participants. Additionally, providers often encouraged employers to deliver elements of employability support to help learners prepare CVs and cover letters and improve their interview readiness before the guaranteed interview.

Another example of good practice was the development of tiered support to manage participants' progression into employment. One Digital provider highlighted that they placed their highest-performing participants on an 'interview pathway', where they were scheduled for interviews and supported by a caseworker to secure a job quickly. A second group were considered suitable for interviews but required additional support to improve their readiness for employment. A final group of participants were placed on the 'support pathway' and had more intensive support from a caseworker to find outcomes better suited to their needs. This system emphasises the importance of processes which create personalised employment outcomes for participants that are sensitive to experience and skill level.

In Focus 8: Changes made by providers in Wave 4 to secure guaranteed interviews

In Wave 3, the main challenge providers experienced in securing guaranteed interviews related to the time and capacity required to source and arrange interviews. Across both Wave 3 and 4, key elements that contributed to a successful guaranteed interview included strong employer involvement, employability support and training that matched industry needs. Additionally, Wave 4 providers reflected on their experiences at Wave 3 and made improvements to their practices, including:

– **Providing employability support earlier in the course.** Providers noted that by working on participants' employability skills from the start of the training, their support team better understood their goals and used this insight to connect them with the right employer. One Construction provider outlined that they check in with their participants at different points during the course in case their preferences have changed as they gained more knowledge of the industry. In addition to employability support, providers emphasised the **importance of managing learner expectations through clear IAG provided throughout the programme.**

– **Tighter management of employer engagement.** Many providers identified the benefit of having larger employer engagement teams and utilising more resource for employer engagement because stronger employer relationships contribute to achieving employment outcomes for participants and receiving associated milestone payments. For example, a large Digital provider in Wave 4 contractually managed employer engagement and secured commitments regarding the number of guaranteed interviews and available jobs they would offer to SBfL learners.

– **Involve employers in job fairs to support the arrangement of guaranteed interviews.** Job fairs were viewed by providers as an opportunity to connect SBfL participants with relevant employers, as well as to plan or conduct job interviews. When providers successfully ran job fairs, they were effective at linking participants with relevant employers which led to positive employment outcomes:

> *Job fairs have worked really well because we've been able to bring the employer to our centre where we have the learners and it gets them talking in a room basically. That's really had a positive impact.*

Provider - Health & Social Care

A Construction SBfL participant gave positive feedback after attending a job fair organised by their provider and employer partners. They valued the event as an opportunity to meet multiple employers and gain insight into current industry trends and skills needs.

Employers had a positive experience with the guaranteed interview.

Most employers interviewed offered SBfL participants guaranteed interviews linked to genuine vacancies. In some instances, employers also conducted mock interviews with participants to help develop their employability skills and shape their career ambitions. Guaranteed interviews were held at various points during the training, with some taking place informally throughout the course rather than at the end. This helped employers gain a fuller understanding of participants' availability for work, career aspirations and expectations, so that, by the completion of the training, they were fully prepared to start work with the employer.

Some employers also offered work experience to help bridge the gap between a SBfL and employment. In these instances, employers viewed the SBfL as a starting point in a participant's career because it provides the basic technical knowledge and soft skills needed to enter employment. Through work placements, employers continued to assess participants' performance, highlighting further areas for development that they could work on with the participant to support continued employment in the sector.

> We understand that although they're doing the Bootcamp, it's not long enough for them to learn everything. But if they come along and do the work experience, and then we can see good attendance, good time keeping, good attitude, we can build on that with them.

Employer – Construction

The guaranteed interview process could be further enhanced.

Some participants suggested that guaranteed interviews could be better organised, with more job opportunities and employers offering genuine vacancies. This was most commonly raised by participants in Digital, Logistics, and Health & Social Care. Similar to Wave 3, a Health & Social Care participant suggested that even work experience or voluntary roles would be valuable, as they provide opportunities to apply newly gained skills in practice.

From the employer's perspective, a large Digital company highlighted the benefits of mentoring to get to know SBfL participants and identify suitable candidates for vacancies. In Wave 4, the employer began discussions with their provider about increasing their involvement in mentoring and employability support in future waves.

Lessons learnt for future planning and delivery

The findings in this report provide insights into the strengths and limitations of the funding, planning, and delivery of SBfL during Wave 4. Overall, the evidence suggests that Wave 4 saw a step-change in implementation. Wave 3 was delivered under very tight timescales, with little opportunity for thorough planning and preparation by GLA, providers, and employers. In contrast, Wave 4 shows a more considered approach, with partners seeking to establish firmer foundations for delivery and, where possible, to apply some of the lessons learnt from the previous wave. This section highlights several key lessons for GLA and its delivery partners, to inform the future implementation of devolved skills programmes.

Greater autonomy over the devolved funding model will allow GLA to strengthen the alignment of SBfL with local skills needs.

Training providers and employers both stressed the benefits of devolution for enabling skills provision to be tailored to the needs of London's economy, employers and residents. They recognised that GLA occupies a unique strategic position to understand patterns of skills shortages in the capital and direct funding towards addressing these. The SBfL, which most effectively supported participants into employment during Wave 4 – notably the Construction, Health & Social Care, and Technical pathways – clearly aimed to respond to high levels of local employer demand for suitably trained recruits and to connect residents to job opportunities. Devolved commissioning also added value to contract management, with GLA being well-placed to build effective relationships with providers and offer tailored support for delivery.

With greater devolution, SBfL could move away from the national model and become more responsive to local circumstances. Stakeholders recognised the distinctive value of SBfL in delivering short, intensive training focused explicitly on supporting participants directly into work. Yet they would like to see GLA exercise more autonomy over programme design and delivery, rather than being bound to replicate the national model. The un-ringfencing of National Skills Bootcamp funding and the move to an integrated settlement for London will provide GLA with opportunities to take a more flexible approach, which could include the development of alternative programmes better aligned to the needs of employers and residents.

Some participant groups were able to achieve higher completion and outcome rates than others

MI data highlights differences among some participant groups in rates of SBfL participation, completions and outcomes. Overall, the MI data suggested that the programme was less effective at meeting the needs of participants from some groups who are known to face barriers to training and employment, including: women; people of black and mixed ethnicity; previously unemployed participants; and people with a disability. A particularly marked drop in completion and outcome rates was apparent between Wave 3 and Wave 4 for people with disabilities. In addition, completion and outcome rates for participants with level 4 or higher qualifications were lower than for those with lower qualifications.

GLA and its delivery partners are well-placed to identify both the issues that underpin these inequalities and to take appropriate steps to address them. Fundamentally, providers need to ensure that SBfL are the right choice for all participants who enrol on them. Evidence suggests that providers' recruitment processes for Wave 4 were more robust than in Wave 3, but the pre-course IAG and application processes may need further strengthening. Some individuals facing multiple and complex barriers may have a longer journey into employment than can realistically be achieved through a short, intensive SBfL. In contrast, others with higher-level qualifications may find that SBfL does not offer entry-level employment that matches their experience and expectations. Where a SBfL is not a good fit, individuals should be signposted to more suitable skills and employment support. There may also be scope for GLA to use its commissioning powers to develop a more bespoke approach in certain circumstances. For example, this could entail enabling a provider to embed wraparound support access into SBfL delivery for a discrete cohort of participants facing a particular barrier to training and work, thereby boosting the likelihood of individuals completing the course and achieving a successful outcome.

The SBfL model appears to work best as a pathway into employment in industries with high demand for recruits into entry-level roles.

Wave 4 data suggests that SBfL performed strongly in the Construction, Health & Social Care and Technical (rail) sectors, where there was clear alignment between the training and labour market need. Much of the delivery on these SBfL was at level 2, and there was high demand from employers for workers at this level. In contrast, completion and outcome rates were low for Digital SBfL, all of which were delivered at level 3 or above, and recruitment tends to be at the graduate level.

The stark disparities in completion and outcome rates between sectors, and the correlation between successful outcomes, sector and SBfL level, suggest the need for GLA to critically review the overall mix and balance of provision commissioned through the programme. The SBfL model did not work well for many participants as a direct pathway into Digital employment, despite the relatively high number of courses offered, participants enrolled, and employers engaged. There was some call from interviewed participants for Digital SBfL training to be refocused on entry-level roles, but this would need careful consideration to assess employer demand, particularly in light of the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on lower-level jobs.

More broadly, if SBfL functions chiefly as an entry point for entry-level roles, it will be essential to be clear about this in communications with both employer partners and prospective participants. At the same time, GLA, training providers, and skills and employment services have a role to play in supporting participants to move on from these entry-level roles and progress their careers, in line with the Mayor's strategic priorities for growth and inclusion. This could include mapping progression pathways and providing residents considering or undertaking SBfL training with a clear line of sight to further training and job roles. End-of-course progression interviews could be embedded into employability support to facilitate this process.

Strong provider-employer partnerships remain critical to the design and delivery of effective SBfL that secure positive outcomes for participants.

Successful SBfL depends on providers building strong relationships with employers to secure their meaningful involvement in all aspects of course design and delivery. Where employers were committed to SBfL, perceived the training to be relevant and valuable, and had the opportunity to meet and engage with participants, they were more likely to recruit from within a learner cohort. In particular, the evaluation shows that:

– Some providers significantly strengthened their employer engagement from Wave 3 to Wave 4, for example, by expanding their employer engagement team, bringing in new employers whose needs more closely aligned with the training, and involving employers in new roles such as mentoring SBfL participants.
– Some providers continued to experience challenges in engaging employers, citing cost and time pressures, as well as a challenging operating environment, as key reasons employers might not get involved.
– Participants highly valued employability support involving employers, which was instrumental in securing outcomes. Work experience, job fairs, mentoring, and interview support were highly beneficial, along with the development of softer skills such as teamwork and communication.

GLA could consider how it can further support employer engagement with SBfL, particularly via its links to third-party organisations such as employer representative bodies. It could also add value by developing and disseminating support materials, such as employer-facing case studies and testimonies, that showcase the benefits to employers of engaging with SBfL to strengthen and diversify their talent pipelines and reduce recruitment and training costs.

Securing enough relevant guaranteed interviews needs to be a priority in employer engagement.

Evidence on the number and proportion of participants who progressed to employment through a guaranteed interview highlights the critical importance of providers building a large pool of suitable vacancies. Construction and Health & Social Care stand out as the two sectors that were most successful at supporting participants into work, and in both cases, a high number of guaranteed interviews were offered. Indeed, in Health & Social Care, the number of guaranteed interviews was over twice the number of course enrolments.

While guaranteed interviews provided through SBfL were not the only route to work, participants consistently reported that the prospect of an interview was a key factor in their decision to enrol on an SBfL, and some expressed disappointment when this expectation was not met. In accepting guaranteed interviews, providers should ensure they are appropriate to participants' skill and experience levels, so that individuals going forward for an interview have a realistic prospect of success. The very low levels of recruitment via guaranteed interviews in Digital may be a further indication that the SBfL model was not a good match for the sector at Wave 4.

List of figures

Glossary

AEB: Adult Education Budget.

Co-funded participant: A participant whose employer contributed to the cost of the SBfL to upskill their employee(s). For SMEs, this contribution is 10% of the training cost, rising to 30% for larger employers.

Completion: Participants on SBfL who complete their training and receive a guaranteed interview. A record in the MI can only be counted as a completion if they are a valid start. On completion of the SBfL, the Milestone 2 payment is released to a provider.

Completion rate: The proportion of starts who completed their training and for which the provider can claim the Milestone 2 payment.

CSCS: Construction Skills Certification Scheme required for construction participants to be able to work on construction sites in the UK.

Curriculum vitae (CV): Used in job applications to summarise skills and relevant experience.

Employer engagement: Providers were required to engage with employers at all stages of SBfL. Employer engagement includes offering vacancies and/or guaranteed interviews, co-funding employees' participation in the SBfL training, mentoring/coaching, delivering aspects of the training (e.g., guest speaking, setting challenges for participants), offering work experience placements, or providing equipment or a venue to support delivery.

GLA: The Greater London Authority.

Guaranteed interview: On completion of the course, eligible participants have an offer of a guaranteed interview with an employer. There are separate requirements for self-employed or co-funded participants.

HEI: Higher Education Institution.

HGV: Heavy goods vehicle.

IAG: Information, advice and guidance.

Individualised Learner Record (ILR): This is the primary data collection requested from learning providers for further education and work-based learning in England.

IMD: Index of Multiple Deprivation.

ITP: Independent training provider.

KPI: Key Performance Indicator. The programme-level KPI for SBfL is that at least 75% of learners who complete the course achieve a positive outcome within six months.

London Good Work Standard (GWS): A free accreditation programme that provides employers with a set of best employment practices alongside

information and resources to help achieve them. The four pillars of Good Work are fair pay and conditions, workplace wellbeing, skills and progression, and diversity and recruitment.

London Living Wage: The real Living Wage is a voluntary pay rate based on the cost of living. The UK Real Living Wage rate is £12.60. Due to higher living costs, the London Living Wage is £13.85.

MI: Management information.

Outcome: Participants in SBfL who achieved a positive outcome. A successful outcome of a SBfL includes the offer of a new job (continuous employment for at least 12 weeks); an apprenticeship; a new role or additional responsibilities with an existing employer; or new contracts or new opportunities for the self-employed, utilising the skills acquired in the training, within six months of completion. A record in the MI can be counted as an outcome only if data indicate that the participant started and completed their training.

Outcome rate: The number of outcomes as a proportion of the number of starts. An alternative outcome rate, the number of outcomes as a proportion of completions, is also calculated and included in the appendix data tables.

Participant: Information supplied by providers on the individuals regarding their SBfL, identified by the presence of data in the 'participant' section of the management information.

Payment milestone: Providers were required to submit relevant evidence for each payment milestone before they received payment. Providers did not receive payment if no evidence was submitted. Payment milestone 1 (45%) relates to learners who officially started their training and completed five learning days. For the Milestone 2 payment (Completion – 35%), providers had to submit evidence that learners had completed their training and had been offered a guaranteed interview (where applicable). For the Milestone 3 payment (Outcomes – 20%), providers were required to submit evidence that learners had secured a new job that utilised the skills gained on the SBfL, gained increased responsibilities in the same job, or started new self-employed work.

Pathways to Accelerated Apprenticeships (PtAA): An accelerated apprenticeship means the apprenticeship's planned duration is shorter by at least three months than the typical length of the standard apprenticeship, based on recognition of prior learning acquired during a SBfL. Minimum apprenticeship requirements must still be met (12-month minimum duration and 20% off-the-job training).

Self-employed participant: A person is self-employed if they run their own business. Self-employed workers are not paid through PAYE and do not have the rights and responsibilities of an employee. GLA fully funds self-employed participants' SBfL.

SME: Small or medium-sized enterprise.

Start: A stricter version of a participant. Entries in the management information that are participants, plus other qualifying information (e.g., payment date), must be verified as valid starts.

Wave 3: Describes the first year of SBfL delivered from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (FY22/23).

Wave 4: Describes the second year of SBfL delivered from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 (FY23/24).

Wave 5: Describes the third year of SBfL delivered from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 (FY24/25).

Appendix: Detailed method

The evaluation used both primary and secondary research methods. We cleaned and analysed management information (MI) collected by providers, including SBfL starts, completions, and outcomes, and engaged employers. The primary research comprised individual and small-group interviews and one focus group to collect data directly from participants, employers, and providers. Fieldwork was conducted between March 2025 and August 2025.

Management information held on SBfL

The MI analysis includes data about individuals added by providers and processed by GLA that were part of the Wave 4 delivery of SBfL (from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024). GLA required training providers to complete an Excel data template designed to record MI for each SBfL. The Excel template enabled providers to record four broad categories of data:

1. Data about the provider and the SBfL itself (metadata).
2. Individual records of those who apply for the SBfL (applicants).
3. Individual records of those who participate in the SBfL (starts, completes, outcomes).
4. Organisation records of the employers whom providers engage in a SBFL (employers).

All data processed by GLA was transferred securely to CFE Research for processing and analysis.

Analysis of MI

Three data groups were derived from the MI to undertake the analysis about starts, completions and outcomes:

All starts: All valid starts (with a first payment milestone date) in the dataset (total n=3,966)

All completions: Cases where participants completed (with a second payment milestone date) their SBfL (total n=2,386)

All outcomes: Cases where participants achieved a positive outcome (with a third payment milestone date) from their SBfL (total n=1,291)

The analysis in the report presents the completion rate (as a proportion of starts) and the outcome rates (as a proportion of starts) for different demographic characteristics, and, where bases allow, by SBfL type. Additionally, outcome rate (as a proportion of completions) was calculated and presented in the data tables.

Qualitative fieldwork

Participant interviews

We conducted 14 individual interviews, 2 small-group interviews, and 1 focus group with 5 participants. Purposive sampling was used to capture different SBfL sectors, a range of varying participant characteristics and different SBfL types as detailed in Tables 1 to 6 below:

Table 1: Demographics of **individual** interviews (n=14)

Gender	Ethnicity	Caring responsibilities	Employment status
9 Female 5 Male	3 Asian/Asian British 3 Black/Black British/African/Caribbean 2 White British 2 Other white 2 Other ethnic groups 1 Mixed/multiple ethnic groups 1 Prefer not to say	3 Children 11 None	7 Employed 7 Not in employment

Table 2: SBfL details of **individual** interviews (n=14)

SBfL sector	Co-funded status	Whether completed SBfL	SBfL outcome	Offered a guaranteed interview
4 Digital 3 Health & Social Care 2 Construction 1 Creative industries 1 Logistics 1 Green Skills 1 Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeships 1 Technical	13 Not co-funded 1 Co-funded	13 Yes 1 Unknown	5 Successful 9 Unsuccessful	6 Yes 8 Unknown

Table 3: Demographics of **group** interviews (n=4)

Gender	Ethnicity	Caring responsibilities	Employment status
4 Male	1 Asian/Asian British 1 Black/Black British/African/Caribbean 1 Other white 1 Other ethnic groups	4 None	2 Employed 2 Not in employment

Table 4: SBfL details of **group** interviews (4)

SBfL sector	Co-funded status	Whether completed SBfL	SBfL outcome	Offered a guaranteed interview
3 Green Skills 1 Technical	4 Not co-funded	4 Yes	2 Successful 2 Unsuccessful	3 Yes 1 Unknown

Table 5: Demographics of **focus group** (5)

Gender	Ethnicity	Caring responsibilities	Employment status
2 Female 3 Male	1 Asian/Asian British 2 Black/Black British/African/Caribbean 1 White British 1 Other white	1 Children 4 None	2 Employed 3 Not in employment

Table 6: SBfL details of **focus group** (5)

SBfL sector	Co-funded status	Whether completed SBfL	SBfL outcome	Offered a guaranteed interview
5 Digital	4 Not co-funded 1 Co-funded	5 Yes	5 Successful	4 Yes 1 Unknown

Provider interviews

We undertook nine interviews with training providers from a range of different SBfL sectors and provider types (Table 7):

Table 7: Number of interviewed providers by SBfL sector

SBfL sector	Provider type
4 Construction 1 Creative Industries 2 Digital 1 Health & Social Care 1 Technical	7 Independent training providers 1 Higher education institution 1 Local Authority

Employer interviews

We undertook 11 interviews with employers from a range of sectors and of different company sizes:

Table 8: Number of interviewed employers by SBfL sector

SBfL sector	Company size	Offered vacancies

5 Construction 2 Green Skills 1 Creative Industries 2 Digital 1 Technical	1 small company (1–49 employees) 6 medium-sized companies (50–249 employees) 4 large companies (over 250 employees)	11 Yes

Interviews were audio recorded with the interviewee's permission and then transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were coded thematically using specialised qualitative data analysis software (NVivo). Some of the quotations in the main report have been edited for clarity and brevity.