

MAYOR OF LONDON

**The Skills for
Londoners
Community
Outreach
Programme 2026-29**

Prospectus

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**Greater London Authority
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1. The Programme Overview

The Skills for Londoners Community Outreach Programme 2026-29 will directly fund community organisations to raise awareness and increase participation of London's adult skills and employment support opportunities. It is often those who would stand to benefit most from adult learning and employment support that are least likely to access it.

The programme intends to address this gap by working with small, trusted community organisations who play a critical role in increasing participation among underserved groups, strengthening referral pathways and building sustainable links with Skills Providers across London to support the Mayor's ambitions.

This programme will run from September 2026 to August 2029 with initial funding offered for the first two years, up to August 2028.

- **Funding:** projects between £70 - £120k for two-years delivery

- **Number of projects supported:** Up to 28 organisations could be awarded funding.

Organisations are only permitted to submit one application per funding round. Only one grant will be given per organisation. Organisations who have applied for funding before are eligible to apply for funding again.

- **Geographical focus:** Projects can operate in a single borough, across multiple boroughs, or be pan-London.

The above information is provided as an overview, it is recommended that the entire Prospectus and Delivery Handbook and the information provided on the webpage is reviewed before making an application. This will ensure that you have understood the full requirements before submitting your application.

2. Background and objectives

The Mayor is responsible for the majority of adult skills in London through different programmes, however, many Londoners have a limited awareness of the adult skills and employment support opportunities available to them.

Evidence shows that community groups and local organisations are highly valued and trusted by the Londoners and neighbourhoods they work with, and, as such, can be more effective at reaching people and connecting them to opportunities. Therefore, the Mayor is committed to delivering a long-term engagement and community outreach programme for adult education in London, as set out in the Skills Roadmap for London published in 2022.

On 23rd October 2025, the Mayor and London Councils launched the [Inclusive Talent Strategy \(ITS\)](#). In the ITS the Mayor committed to three new areas of action for talent in London: putting employers at the centre of driving inclusive growth (action one); ensuring Londoners can find the right training and career path for them (action two); and tackling the barriers to retaining talent (action three). The strategy sets out a bold and ambitious plan to build the diverse talent pipeline London needs to deliver inclusive growth.

The Skills for Londoners Community Outreach Programme is particularly relevant to Action Two of the ITS, which commits to simplifying the skills system, tailoring support to individuals who face barriers, removing obstacles to work and training, improving talent development, and creating new routes into growth sectors.

The Skills for Londoners [Community Outreach Programme](#) is also aligned with the Get London Working (GLW) plan, which aims to reduce economic inactivity by creating a more integrated skills, employment, health, and careers system that is easier for Londoners and employers to navigate. The plan seeks to bring together fragmented services so people can access a broad package of support through a single, coordinated system, while employers benefit from clearer routes to the diverse, skilled workforce they need.

The Skills for Londoners Community Outreach 2026-29 objectives are:

- To reach diverse communities and connect Londoners to adult skills and employment support provision funded opportunities.
- To deliver outreach activities and interventions to Londoners to tackle barriers to accessing learning and employment support opportunities.
- For community groups to be better embedded in London's employer-led Inclusive Talent System.
- For community groups to establish long term, sustainable partnerships with London's Skills Providers and employment support services.
- For community groups to develop referral pathways with London's Skills Providers and employment support services, leading to better access for Londoners.

Case studies from previous successful grantees can be found on our [website](#).

3. Target groups

An Evidence Base published alongside the [Inclusive Talent Strategy](#) found that London's labour market faces persistent structural barriers that can limit access to skills training, employment, and economic opportunity. Some of the population groups most impacted include people with low levels of skills, women, minority ethnic people, care leavers, people with experience of the criminal justice system, those experiencing homelessness, people seeking asylum and disabled people or individuals with health conditions. Many individuals experience a multitude of barriers due to intersectionality; this can compound the impact on the individual and exacerbate exclusion.

The Skills for Londoners Community Outreach Programme 2026-29 will encourage organisations to prioritise the target groups mentioned in the ITS and Evidence Base, including Londoners from mixed ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, and younger Londoners.

Below is a comprehensive list of the target groups we are looking to highlight as priority groups to be supported by the funding, although this list is not exhaustive and bidders can outline additional target groups to the ones below, and their reasoning for doing so, in the application form:

- **Women**
- **Disabled people**, including those with **long-term health conditions**
- Londoners from **mixed ethnic backgrounds**, including, **Black Londoners**, and **Asian Londoners** (with a particular focus on **Bangladeshi** and **Pakistani women**)
- **Young Londoners**, including those **under 24**, **NEET**, and **care leavers**
- Londoners with **no or low qualifications**
- **Refugees**
- **People with experience of the criminal justice system**
- **Neurodivergent Londoners**
- **Unpaid carers**

The GLA is keen to ensure that the priority groups outlined above are supported through this funding. Bidders are therefore encouraged to review this list carefully before proposing engagement with any additional target groups. Where possible, the GLA will prioritise funding applications that demonstrate a clear focus on these priority groups during the assessment process.

Bidding organisations can work with a single or multiple target groups. Bidders should demonstrate existing connections with their target groups or an ability to develop new connections with the groups they will work with through their application.

Whilst organisations can work with multiple target groups, applications are encouraged to focus on limited target groups, with meaningful engagement to address identified barriers.

4. What will be funded

Bidding organisations will be able to apply for funding to deliver a range of outreach, engagement and support activities that will help to achieve the overall programme objectives.

Programme activity should include:

- Targeted support to outreach, engage and provide support to Londoners to promote, raise awareness and increase participation in adult learning and employment support opportunities by generating referrals.
- Deliver tailored activities to address individual barriers to accessing and participating in these opportunities.
- Working closely with Londoners to provide support that builds confidence, and helps access local services (such as childcare, housing, debt and financial advice, health and social care, legal advice, and other specialist services), to tackle barriers and aid their participation in adult learning or employment support opportunities.
- Building long term partnerships with Skills Providers and employment support services
- Establishing referral pathways for Londoners to access the opportunities delivered through Skills Providers and employment support services.

Note: the funding available is the same as in previous years whereby funding cannot be used to deliver courses or for direct training related to employability support but should be used to fund the engagement activities with participants who need support to accessing adult learning and employment support services.

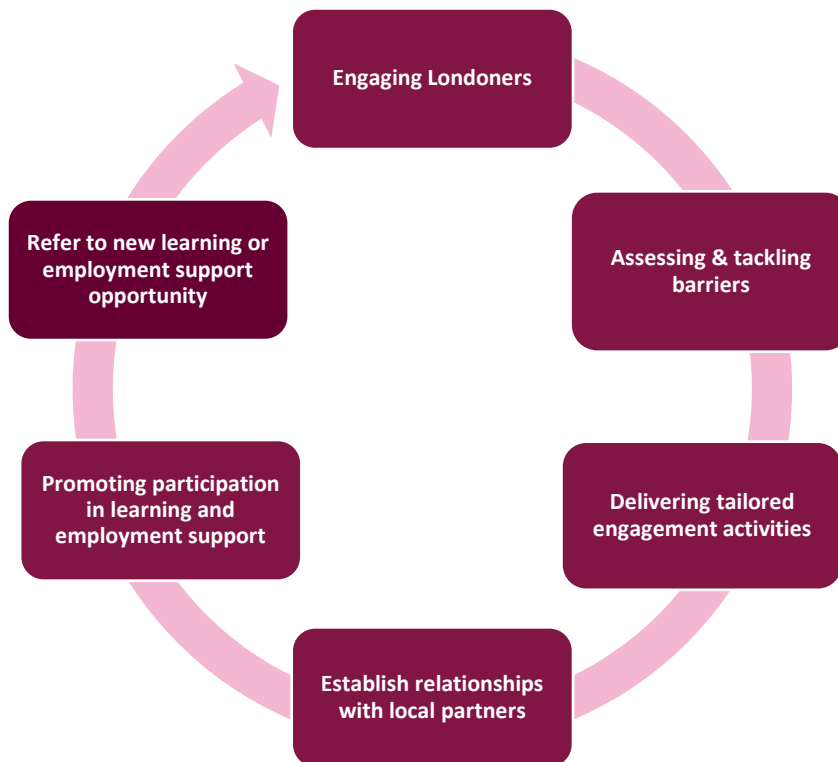
To help bidders understand the journey of a participant accessing SfL Community Outreach 2026-29 please see the table below, highlighting the stages of engagement and support a participant might go through.

Stage	Activity
Engaging Londoners	Community groups to engage with the Londoners they have identified as their target groups for outreach and engagement using the funding.
Enrolment & Assess barriers to accessing learning and employment support services	Community groups to enrol the Londoner onto the programme by collecting data and information on the individual's circumstances. This should include information and understanding of their learning and employment goals and barriers to accessing and participating in adult learning and employment support opportunities. Barriers should be recorded in the Participant Data Collection Template (PDC). The organisation should work with the Londoner to plan an effective engagement plan to address those barriers.

<p>Deliver tailored engagement activities</p>	<p>Community groups should plan and deliver individually tailored engagement activities, bespoke to their projects and the target groups they wish to support to address the barriers. It is expected that different participants will need various levels of support depending on their needs.</p> <p>The GLA recognises that community groups will work differently through well tried and tested methodologies of engagements with their chosen target group(s).</p> <p>How projects might engage with participants (examples are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person, face-to-face engagement with local communities. • Online, 1-1 or group engagement sessions • Workshops or open-door sessions. • Through established local events or services such as food banks, coffee mornings, faith groups <p>Community groups should note that whilst light touch employability support is expected, however separate funding is provided to address barriers to learning and employment support through services offering participants longer term support to return to work. Light-touch employability is limited to CV development, understanding how to look for work or general confidence.</p> <p>Support should not include interview skills or job search as funding does not pay for or monitor job outcomes.</p>
<p>Signposting to specialist IAG services for further wrap-around support.</p>	<p>Some participants might need additional wrap-around support through specialist advice and guidance services to tackle their barriers.</p> <p>Signposting services might include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing advice • Debt advice • Money Management • Childcare agencies • Benefits advice • In-work benefit calculations • Wellbeing & Mental health support <p>It is anticipated that signposting to advice and guidance services would happen alongside the tailored activities delivered by the community groups.</p>

	<p>Signposting should be recorded in the Participant Data Collection Template (PDC). This allows the GLA to see how you are supporting the participants with whom you are engaging.</p>
<p>Establish relationships with local Skills Providers, employment support services and regional partners</p>	<p>Community groups will need to establish and maintain relationships with local Skills Providers and employment support services and other key partners including the London No Wrong Door Integration Hubs as a part of programme delivery.</p> <p>These relationships will help to build successful referral pathways and align the Community Outreach funding with other local community work happening. The GLA will provide support to successful organisations to build relationships with Skills providers and employment support services to build upon the work community groups are already doing.</p>
<p>Referrals to Adult Learning & Employment Support Services</p>	<p>Community groups will refer participants to adult learning and employment support services reflective of the participants goals.</p> <p>Participants referrals can fit into one of the following three definitions:</p> <p>Adult Learning: Learning or training for people who are aged 19 years old and above. This could include learning at Further Education colleges, local authority adult education departments, independent training providers, institutes for adult learning, sixth form colleges and universities or community venues.</p> <p>Successful providers are encouraged to refer on to Mayor of London funded provision.</p> <p>Job Centre Plus Referrals: To help individuals find employment or for help with benefit claims.</p> <p>Employment Support: Employment support programmes encompass a variety of services designed to help individuals find, maintain, or progress in their careers. This includes assistance with job searching, career support, interview skills, CV development, access to employer vacancies and support within the workplace, often tailored to individual needs and circumstances. Should be a long-term support programme or service (not in-house) that works with employers and has job outcomes as the main aim of the support they deliver.</p> <p>Further information can be found within the Referral Guide on the Delivery Handbook.</p>

An example lifespan of a SfL Community Outreach project:



The key reporting statistics that will be monitored on the programme are:

1. Number of participants starting on the programme
2. Number of participants referred to adult learning and employment support (with a conversion of at least 50% of starts)

Note: a conversion of 50% of starts to referrals is required for successful applications and delivery against this will be monitored throughout delivery.

Ongoing monitoring of the programme will have a focus on how organisations engage with their target groups and how they are connecting with other key partners involved in the programme.

Bidding organisations should consider the reporting arrangements outlined in the Delivery Handbook when applying.

5. Geography

Bidding organisations can determine where their projects will operate.

Projects can operate in a single borough, across multiple boroughs or be pan-London. All project activity must take place within London with London residents.

As part of the application process, bidders will need to set out which London boroughs their projects will deliver in. Bidders should demonstrate an existing presence in their target area or an ability to work in the communities they are proposing to deliver in.

The GLA aims to maximise programme delivery across all London boroughs and is committed to ensuring that funding opportunities are available in every area. When making final award decisions, the GLA will consider the proposed geographical distribution of delivery to support a balanced spread across boroughs.

6. Partnership working

Successful organisations should establish links with key local partners involved in adult learning and employment support services, to gain an understanding of their services and develop strong connections.

These relationships will play a key part in helping successful projects build long-term referral pathways into opportunities for the participants they work with. Successful grantees will be provided with ongoing information and support to facilitate relationship building from the GLA. This support will be available at onboarding and throughout the lifetime of the delivery of the Programme.

The key local partners successful projects should look to engage with through the programme could include:

- Other organisations delivering the SfL Community Outreach 2026-29
- Your local Integration Hubs delivering Trailblazers and No Wrong Door.
- Skills Providers and Employment Support Services
- Other Mayor of London funded Skills Provision
- Other specific organisations relevant to project delivery

SfL Community Outreach 2026-29 has a priority to support provisions funded by the Mayor of London. Successful grantees should work with their target groups to encourage referrals into the best type of provision for their needs. In London, this provision currently includes:

- The **Adult Skills Fund (ASF)**, in London is a multi-million-pound programme that funds education and training for adults aged 19 and over. The ASF covers a wide variety of qualifications and non-regulated learning through colleges, local authorities, and independent training providers. The ASF funds the majority of ESOL provision in London.
- **Skills Bootcamps** offers free, flexible training courses (up to 16 weeks) for Londoners aged 19+, designed to fill skills gaps in sectors like digital, green, construction, and logistics. Supported by the Mayor of London, these courses help residents gain employment or upskill, with a guaranteed job interview upon completion.
- **Get London Working Trailblazers** are five innovative initiatives to help Londoners overcome barriers to employment through connected and collaborative services. These trailblazers focus specifically on addressing London's high economic inactivity and youth unemployment by integrating the employment support available. Further information can be found on integration hubs webpages.
- The **Inclusive Talent Brokerage** programme aims to help underrepresented Londoners with good jobs by connecting them with vacancies in London's growth sectors. It funds community organisations to provide tailored support, increase their job brokerage and placement support. This programme runs until September 2026.
- The **Connect to Work** programme is a voluntary, UK Government-funded initiative, designed to help disabled people, those with health conditions, and individuals with

complex barriers find, stay in, and thrive in employment. It provides personalised one-to-one support and includes in-work support, and tailored career advice, to help Londoners in their journey to secure employment.

- Some of our skills providers across London are detailed in our **[provider map on the website](#)**.

For further information, the below table will support applicants establishing the sub-region their projects operate in.

West London Alliance	South London Partnership
Barnet Brent Ealing Hammersmith & Fulham Harrow Hillingdon Hounslow	Croydon Kingston upon Thames Merton Richmond upon Thames Sutton
Central London Forward	Local London (North and East London)
Camden City Hackney Haringey Islington Kensington & Chelsea Lambeth Lewisham Southwark Tower Hamlets Wandsworth Westminster	Barking & Dagenham Bexley Bromley Enfield Greenwich Havering Newham Redbridge Waltham Forest

7. Funding Available

Funding of grants between **£70 – 120k**, for two-years delivery, is available for eligible organisations.

Grant funding will be provided between September 2026 and August 2028, in eight instalments.

Costs that will be covered by the fund include (but are not limited to):

- Staffing costs
- Resource and event costs
- Venue hire costs.
- Overheads
- Outreach, engagement, and support to tackle barriers

Additional funding, ring-fenced for specific target groups, may become available during the delivery period. The GLA will assess eligibility for this funding by considering both the direct grantees contracted for delivery in 2026–29 and the organisations that submit applications during the current application window.

Note: subject to availability of future funding there may be an opportunity for grantees to apply for growth funding into a third academic year. This will be ringfenced to grantees who demonstrate successful delivery of the programme and will be dependent on performance.

8. Organisation Eligibility

The following organisations are eligible to apply for funding, providing they meet the additional eligibility criteria listed below:

- Registered charity
- Social Enterprise
- Community Interest Company (CIC), including CIC's limited by guarantee or shares
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO)
- Community Benefit Society
- Charitable Company (limited by guarantee)
- Trusts
- Community Benefit Societies (CBS)

To be eligible to apply for funding on this programme, organisations must:

- Be a user-led London-based community, voluntary, faith, cultural, or grassroots organisation.
- Be a registered charity, social enterprise or Community Interest Company that can demonstrate a track record of transparent financial accounting processes.
- Have an annual income under £500,000.
- Hold a UK bank account.
- Be an individual or un-constituted community group nominating a partner organisation to receive the funds on their behalf.

Where applicable to the organisation type, organisations who are successful for grant funding must have the following documentation in place prior to the start of your project.

- Public Liability Insurance
- Employers Liability Insurance
- Health and Safety Risk Assessments
- Adult and Child Safeguarding Assessments
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- GDPR Processing Statement

Organisations may wish to form consortia with other community groups within their local area or with other groups who also support similar groups of Londoners. In these cases, it will be the responsibility of the consortia to agree a lead organisation and to collectively manage the administration of the programme.

Neighbourhood based groups who are eligible under the above criteria are considered eligible for funding where all other essential criteria is met.

Private limited companies are not eligible to apply for this funding.

9. Organisation Due Diligence Checks

As part of your application on the Open Project System (OPS), you will be asked to provide copies of the below documents and information.

- latest set of accounts;
- confirming registered company/charity name;
- confirming registered address;
- confirming company/charity registration number;
- confirming VAT registration number (if applicable); and evidence of public liability and employer's liability insurance.

Bidders should note that grant funding is unable to be awarded without the relevant financial checks being completed. All bidding organisations are encouraged to ensure that they have submitted the correct required documents to support the efficiency of the process.

In the event of additional funding years, organisations may be subject to further financial due diligence checks.

10. The Payment Model

Payments will be made on the achievement of each milestone as outlined in the Skills for Londoners Community Outreach 2026-29 Delivery Handbook.

Eight payments will be made throughout the lifetime of the project as indicated in the table below.

	Claim Window date	% of payment
Milestone 1	September 2026	20%
Milestone 2	January 2027	10%
Milestone 3	April 2027	10%
Milestone 4	July 2027	10%
Milestone 5	October 2027	10%
Milestone 6	January 2028	10%
Milestone 7	April 2028	10%
Milestone 8	July/August 2028	20%

11. What support can be expected

It is expected that successful grantees will implement and maintain systems to regularly monitor and report on the key metrics of the programme and contribute to the overall delivery of the programme.

Bidding organisations should look at the Delivery Handbook associated with the programme to gain an overview of what the GLA will require from organisations on key reporting requirements of the programme.

The GLA is committed to providing successful grantees the support needed to understand the requirements to ensure that they are achieved throughout the lifetime of the programme.

The GLA may provide support to organisations in the following ways (but not limited to):

- Questions and answering raised in the commissioning window
- Onboarding sessions and webinar
- Drop-in sessions
- One-to-one sessions between projects and GLA Officers
- Written instructions and prompt/guide sheets
- Recorded demos
- Workshops and training
- Assigning a dedicated GLA officer to act as the GLA provider manager for each project

Bidding organisations must consider the reporting arrangements outlined in the Delivery Handbook when applying.

If you are ready to apply, please review the information set out on the [Community Outreach webpage](#) for the details.

Appendix A: Freedom of Information

The GLA as a public authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOIA"). In applying for this (or any) grant award Bidders should be aware that information they provide may be disclosable, either under the GLA's Publication Scheme or if a request is made to the GLA.

The FOIA requires the GLA normally to release information requested by any "person" ("person" legally includes companies and other bodies). At the same time the FOIA recognises that a public authority, in order to carry out its functions, may decline certain requests where an appropriate exemption applies. In particular, two exemptions under sections 41 and 43 of FOIA, described below, may apply.

Information provided in confidence

Section 41 provides that information is exempt if it was obtained by the GLA from any other person and the disclosure of the information to the public by the GLA would constitute a breach of confidence actionable ("actionable" meaning that it could be the subject of a legal claim) by that or any other person. In order for the GLA to rely on this exemption the information must be given in confidence, that is, the information must not be in the public domain, must not have been treated as non-confidential in the past, and must have been provided in circumstances importing an obligation of confidence.

Bidders should be aware that, firstly, the GLA will not normally agree to treat information as confidential in the absence of specific legal advice that it is proper to do so, and, secondly, that marking a document as "Confidential" will not give it that status. The scope for Application of the section 41 exemption in relation to an Application for funding is limited.

Commercially sensitive information

It is more likely that this exemption may apply to a grant Application. Section 43 provides that information may be exempt if it constitutes a trade secret or if the disclosure is likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person (which includes the Bidder). Accordingly, for example, genuinely sensitive pricing information may attract this exemption. This exemption is subject to the public interest test - that is, in considering disclosure, the GLA must weigh up the public interest in withholding disclosure with the public interest in disclosing the information in question.

Requests for special treatment of information

Should a Bidder regard particular information as given in confidence, constituting a trade secret, or likely if disclosed to prejudice their commercial interests, they should indicate this clearly, with an explanation. Note that it will not be sufficient to assert that the whole Application is confidential or commercially sensitive. Indicating what information may be confidential or commercially sensitive may assist the GLA in determining whether any exemptions apply. It should be noted that it is the GLA, which will determine whether a disclosure should be made and that this will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the GLA.

Effect of time

Bidders should be aware that, over time, some information may lose its confidential nature or commercial sensitivity. If you consider this to be the case, please indicate when, in your view, such information may be released. This should be a reasonable time period in relation to the nature of the data.

Personal data

One other FOIA provision, which may be relevant in certain circumstances, is section 40, which broadly speaking provides an exemption in relation to personal data (as defined in the Data Protection Act). This will not however usually exempt, for example, information provided about individuals involved in the Application.

Other formats and languages

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