# Annual Report to HM Government – Adult Skills Fund 2024-25

## 1. Introduction

1.1. The Secretary of State for Education published Guidance for the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority on the exercise of delegated adult education functions in July 2019. This guidance includes the requirement that the Mayor must provide HM Government with an annual report each year, which provides key information about the delivery of adult education functions in London.

1.2. This report is the sixth submission to HM Government and covers the full **2024-25 academic year** from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 relating to the delegation of the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) formally the Adult Education Budget (AEB). This report will focus on:

- Strategy and priorities for adult skills
- Spend
- Impact
- Monitoring and evaluation

## 2. Strategy and Priorities for Adult Skills

In 2024-25, the GLA's approach to adult education continued to be guided by the Mayor's Skills Roadmap. The Roadmap set out three core priorities: **locally relevant skills**, **making an impact**, and **accessible skills**. These themes translated into the following priorities for adult education delivery:

### Locally relevant skills

- Ensuring adult skills provision responds to London's labour market needs through closer collaboration between providers and employers.
- Prioritising sectors of strategic importance to London's economy, including hospitality, construction, health and care, digital and green industries.
- Supporting stronger coordination across the skills and employment system, including with boroughs, Jobcentre Plus and other partners, to provide a more joined-up offer for learners.

### Making an impact

- Focusing investment on provision that supports progression into work, in-work progression, or further learning, particularly for Londoners with lower-level qualifications.
- Maintaining a strong emphasis on essential and lower-level skills, especially at Level 2 and below, while supporting progression routes to higher-level learning where this aligns with employer demand.

- Using evidence and performance information to understand learner outcomes and inform ongoing improvements to delivery.

**Accessible skills**

- Increasing participation in adult education among Londoners facing barriers to engagement, including those in low-paid work, disabled Londoners, people with English language needs and other underrepresented groups.
- Raising awareness of adult education opportunities through targeted marketing, outreach and referral activity, including working with community organisations.

Engagement with disadvantaged groups

2.1. The Mayor has actively sought to increase participation in ASF-funded learning, particularly among Londoners who face barriers to engagement. The Mayor's Community Outreach Programme has been instrumental in raising awareness of adult education opportunities among underrepresented groups, ensuring that provision reaches those who can benefit most.

2.2. Development work on the Skills for Londoners Community Outreach Programme began in the 2021–22 academic year. The programme offered small grants to community organisations to support outreach activity, targeting Londoners deemed most in need of adult education and providing referral routes to help Londoners access the range of learning opportunities available.

Engagement with partners

2.3. The Mayor is committed to engaging with partners and stakeholders to ensure a more responsive and effective skills system that meets the needs of Londoners and London's employers. While decision making in relation to the ASF programme sits directly with the Mayor, he is committed to working closely with stakeholders, including London's boroughs, Further Education colleges, independent training providers and businesses to enable collective engagement in decision making on skills priorities, including the ASF.

2.4. As part of this, the Mayor established the Skills for Londoners (SfL) Board in 2018, which advised on actions to support implementation of the SfL Strategy and made recommendations to the Mayor in relation to the strategic priorities, outcomes and funding requirements for the ASF. The Board consisted of a range of representatives including adult skills providers, further education, employer representative bodies and London Councils.

2.5. Alongside the Board the also Mayor established the Jobs and Skills Business Partnership[1] (the Business Partnership) bringing together business members from a wide range of sectors to advise on occupational skills requirements and improvements to the skills system in London. The majority of members were

[1] Prior to April 2022 the Business Partnership was known as the Skills for Londoners Business Partnership.

appointed through an open recruitment process, and represented a range of industries including early years, construction, retail, hospitality, green, health, social care, technology, logistics and aviation. Furthermore, the membership also included nominees from major employer representative bodies and the Trade Union Congress.

2.6. Over the course of the 2024-25 academic year both the SfL Board and the Jobs and Skills Business Partnership held their final meetings ahead of being formally disbanded on 31 August 2025. The Jobs and Skills Business Partnership brought together employers, trade bodies, union representation and industry groups, such as BusinessLDN (London's employer representative body), to give critical insights and advice on the skills priorities taken forward by the GLA. This is to facilitate a refresh of ASF (and wider) governance arrangements to support the delivery of the London Growth Plan and its Inclusive Talent Strategy, and the establishment of an employer-led skills system. The Jobs and Skills Business Partnership was directly consulted on the development of this new skills system.

2.7. The GLA is now working with partners from across the skills and employment ecosystem in London to establish a new Inclusive Talent Delivery Group, which is expected to first formally meet in Spring 2026. The Group will have significant employer representation, with the Chair nominated by BusinessLDN. Membership will also include representatives from the Sector Talent Boards being established by the GLA. The Inclusive Talent Delivery Group will be responsible for the coordination and delivery of London's overarching workforce development framework, which includes implementing the Inclusive Talent Strategy, the Get London Working Plan and London's Local Skills Improvement Plan. Stakeholder input on ASF funded projects will be sought through this group.

2.8. In line with the Mayor's commitment, the GLA maintains regular contact with stakeholders, partners and employers across the skills ecosystem. This contact allows the GLA to understand the needs of partners, consult on project design and share information and best practice with the spectrum of training providers, colleges, businesses and funding recipients, including in the interim period while the new stakeholder board is being established.

Looking ahead

2.9. The Inclusive Talent Strategy(ITS), published in October 2025, sets the long-term direction for adult education and skills in London over the next ten years. It establishes a clear vision for an employer-led, inclusive system that supports London's economic growth while tackling entrenched inequalities in access, participation and outcomes. The strategy brings together skills, employment and wider support into a more joined-up offer, with a stronger focus on progression, sector-based pathways and removing barriers faced by under-represented Londoners, providing a coherent framework to guide future policy, funding and delivery decisions.

2.10. The ITS set out a number of actions that will be delivered in the first 12 months following publication. These include establishing the governance and partnership structures needed to support employer-led delivery, alongside the launch and scaling

of targeted programmes that improve progression into good jobs in priority sectors. Key priorities for the first reporting year include:

- Establishing **Sector Talent Boards** in selected priority sectors to strengthen employer leadership, improve alignment between skills provision and workforce demand, and shape progression pathways linked to real job opportunities. As a result, Interim Sector Talent Boards have been established for the following priority sectors: creative, life sciences and construction and built environment. Further interim boards are also being established for hospitality and health and social care sectors. Interim boards will help shape sector-focused programmes as well as securing wider engagement and senior industry representation for permanent sector talent boards.
- Launching the **London Talent Pathways Fund**, supporting sector-based approaches that help Londoners progress into and within work, particularly in sectors linked to London's economic growth and labour market demand. The fund aims to invest in training that supports progression pathways within priority occupations in key sectors (including construction, creative and life sciences) and prioritise funding for low-income or unemployed Londoners and Londoners who are under-represented in key sectors. The Fund aligns with priority sectors identified in the London Growth Plan and LSIP.
- Piloting and scaling new delivery models, including Skills Passports, to improve recognition of skills, support progression across employers and providers, and reduce friction for learners moving between training and work. This includes developing an understanding of the existing passports within priority sectors, such as in the hospitality sector, and working with Skills England.

2.11. These actions will support early delivery of the Inclusive Talent Strategy while contributing to wider objectives on growth, productivity and inclusion, ensuring that adult skills investment in 2025-26 delivers tangible benefits for Londoners and employers. The actions are critical in helping support London's priority growth sectors identified in the London Growth Plan: frontier innovation (including life sciences, AI and green innovation), financial, professional and business services (including finance, law, consulting, built environment, IT and cyber), creative industries and technologies (including film, TV, gaming, music and creative tech), and the experience economy (including culture, hospitality, events and attractions).

## 3. Policies for Adult Education

3.1 Notable changes to policies and interventions through the ASF in the 2024-25 academic year included:

3.2 From the start of the 2024 to 2025 academic year, the GLA implemented a new adult education funding model. This is broadly aligned to the national model because of the funding reform. What was previously known as the Adult Education Budget (AEB) became the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) from 1 August 2024.

3.3 In line with new national funding reform the ASF was split into two categories: The adult skills fund core and tailored learning.

3.4 Adult skills fund core, relates to formula-funded delivery, specifically:

- the four legal entitlements
- any other formula-funded regulated qualifications
- formula-funded non-regulated learning aims that meet the GLA's definition of 'essential skills core'
- any learning aims specifically funded by the GLA only (e.g., licence to practice).
- free courses for jobs offer (ringfenced as a separate line within the funding agreement)

3.5 Tailored learning now relates to non-regulated delivery, specifically:

- what was known in the 2023 to 2024 academic year as adult community learning;
- what were formula-funded non-regulated learning aims that do not meet the GLA's essential skills core offer.

Changes to existing local flexibilities in the 2024-25 academic year:

3.6 **The London Factor** This factor is a funding uplift applied to funding rates for priority provision in London. Given the uplift to the national rates, the London Factor was more targeted in 2024 to 2025 rather than applying to all qualifications at level 2 and below. The provisions below continued to benefit from the 15 per cent London Factor uplift where essential skills core is defined as learning aims with a tier 2 Sector Subject Area (SSA) of 6.1 (digital technology (practitioners)), 6.2 (digital technology (users)) or 14.1 (foundations for learning and life). In summary the uplift was applied as follows:

- non-regulated formula-funded entry level essential skills core learning aims
- regulated formula-funded entry level essential skills core learning aims
- legal entitlements (English, maths and digital) at Level 2 and below
- non-regulated formula-funded learning aims that are specific to the GLA (e.g., licence to practice)

Changes to ASF eligibility criteria

**English and Maths-** As part of the legal entitlements, the ASF now funds English and maths up to and including level 2 for individuals aged 19 and over who been assessed as having an existing skill level lower than grade 4. This will also apply to those who have previously achieved a GCSE or equivalent qualification in English or maths.

London flexibilities

3.7 The Mayor applied funding flexibilities in 2024-25 to deliver the priorities set out in the Skills Roadmap for London and the London Local Skills Improvement Plan. These priorities include removing barriers to participation by disadvantaged residents and extending the range of courses delivered to meet individual and employers skills needs. Flexibilities which were applied int he 2024-25 academic year include:

3.8 **Removing the three-year residency requirement for Londoners on certain immigration schemes** – UK residents who plan to be resident in London in the long term, in certain circumstances, can access ASF funded learning opportunities from their first day of arrival. The flexibility extends to Londoners who have British or Irish nationality and those of other nationalities who have permission to live in the UK for more than 12 months.

3.9 **Individuals out of work and outside benefit arrangements** – ASF funding training opportunities are extended to unemployed Londoners previously locked out of funded training due to an inability to evidence state benefits. The flexibility aims to support progression into good jobs and improve social outcomes.

3.10 **Level 4 qualifications** – ASF providers can fund non-prescribed vocational and technical qualifications at Level 4 from a list of fundable learning aims where learners are unemployed, out of work and outside of benefit arrangements, or in receipt of a low wage, regardless of prior qualification level. The flexibility offers clear progression routes from existing provision into skills training that leads to good jobs or supports efforts to address skills gaps in priority sectors for London.

3.11 **Licence to Practice** – Providers can use the ASF to fund specific licence to practice accreditations as part of skills training packages in construction and hospitality sectors. The GLA piloted this flexibility through the ‘Construction Skills Certification Scheme’, to help people access jobs on construction sites and the ‘Security Industry Authority’ (SIA) license, to increase the number of trained security guards as a boost to the night-time economy.

3.12 **British Sign Language (BSL)** – The entitlement includes any Londoner who is unemployed or in low paid work to undertake a qualification in BSL up to and including level 2.

3.13 **Living Wage** – To ensure that ASF-funded provision addresses the challenges faced by those in low-paid work, the Mayor agreed to fully fund skills provision for eligible adults earning below the London Living Wage to ensure they are better supported to progress in work and life, including providing greater flexibility to both grant and procured providers to access full funding for use to meet the costs of full Level 3 qualifications.

3.14 **Special education needs and disabilities (SEND) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Support** – Flexibility within ASF grant-funded provider allocations to fully fund certain categories of learning that upskill eligible teaching and learning support staff to deliver improved provision for learners with SEND.

## 4. Finance & Spend

Key financial information

4.1 The total ASF budget (including FCFJ) for the 2024-25 AY was £345,296,273 set out in MD3252. The total DfE income for the academic year was £345,296,273 (ASF - £322,669,259 and FCFJ - £22,627,014). The table below shows spend to date of £341,297,932 as of 6 February 2026 (end of GLA Period 11 management accounting period) which does not take note of the impact of 2024-25 AY final reconciliation position as approved following the December 2025 ASF Mayoral Board meeting.

| Items / Commitment | Budget approved via MD3252 (£) | 2024-25 AY |
|---|---|---|
| Grant* | 297,723,687 | 298,382,680 |
| Jobs & Skills Grant* (commissioned provision) | 37,927,782 | 34,865,792 |
| M&A | 8,142,592 | 6,324,288 |
| Learner Engagement Programmes | 1,502,212 | 1,725,171 |
| **Total** | **345,296,273** | **341,297,932** |

*FCFJ included

4.2 There is an overperformance of 104 per cent against the combined grant and commissioned (Jobs and Skills for Londoners) allocations for the 2024-25 academic year. There are no underspends against the AY budget. The year end position will eventually show an ASF overspend against the AY budget once the end of year reconciliation transactions is completed. ASF over delivery payments to providers will be funded from reserves from previous years' underspends as planned. Financial transactions relating to the 2024-25 AY end of year reconciliation are expected to be concluded before the end of financial year. The updated financial position will be included in the final report on 31 March 2026.

4.3 Robust processes are in place to ensure the proper administration of the ASF and FCFJ funding, including the way in which the funding is allocated, grant management and audit arrangements. These processes are subject to an internal annual audit review by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the GLA's internal auditor. The financial affairs of the GLA are being properly administered and are compliant with relevant legislation and guidance as set out in the GLA's approved Financial Regulations.

4.4 The table below displays the 2024-25 funding values for the statutory entitlements.

| Items | English | Level 2 | Level 3 | Maths | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grant | £15,955,403 | £3,797,915 | £14,606,278 | £17,538,999 | £51,898,595 |
| Jobs and Skills Grant | £860,299 | £113,302 | £669,800 | £994,030 | £2,637,432 |
| **Total** | **£16,815,702** | **£3,911,217** | **£15,276,078** | **£18,533,029** | **£54,536,027** |

## 5. ASF Impact

5.1 In 2024-25, the GLA-ASF demonstrated strong overall performance:

5.2 **Participation and Enrolments** - 211,700 GLA-funded learners undertook 457,830 aims in 2024-25. Overall, participation and enrolments fell by 5 per cent and 6 percent respectively (compared to 2023-24). The decline in engagement is expected due to funding rate reform which increased the cost of delivery.

5.3 **Levels and Subject Areas** - Level 3 enrolments increased by 12 per cent. 16,300 Level 3 aims were recorded (6 per cent of total) in 2024-25, supporting key sector areas and occupational skills. Around 53 per cent of aims were in Preparation for Life and Work, covering essential Maths, English, Digital and ESOL, in addition to employability skills.

5.4 **Inclusivity** - Learners came from all London boroughs, with Newham, Southwark, Croydon, Lambeth, and Tower Hamlets having the highest learner numbers. ASF supported diverse groups: 69 per cent were women, 62 per cent from minority ethnic learners, 16 per cent with learning disabilities and/or health problems, and 11 per cent were aged 19–23.

5.5 **Participation in GLA flexibilities -** The table below shows learner participation for the most popular GLA flexibilities. There has been a decline in participation in many areas in the last year, likely as a consequence of funding reforms introduced by DfE which increased the cost of delivery. However, the same level of participation by learners in receipt of income below the London the London Living Wage was maintained, highlighting the ASF's continued focus to support Londoners with the greatest need.

| ASF flexibility | 2023-24 Academic Year (AY) | 2024-25 AY | Year on Year % Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learners in Receipt of Low Wage | 24,960 | 24,460 | -2% |
| London Recovery Flexibility – Level 3 | 2,900 | 4,500 | 55% |
| British Sign Language | 170 | 270 | 59% |
| Upskilling Staff Delivering Specialist Provision to SEND Learners | 30 | 10 | -67% |
| Level 4 Qualifications | 320 | 390 | 22% |
| Licence to Practice | 2,270 | 2,430 | 7% |
| Learners Out of Work and Outside Benefit Arrangements (Including Asylum Seekers) | 18,200 | 9,790 | -46% |

*Source: Individualised Learner Record R14 2023-24 and 2024-25. Counts have been rounded to the nearest 10. Totals are the rounded totals from the original data, not sums of the rounded breakdowns.*

5.6 **Alignment of delivery with local priorities –** In 2024-25, there was a large growth in delivery at higher levels, including through the expansion of Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ). In 2024-25, there were 16,300 aim enrolments at Level 3 (representing 6 per cent of all ASF enrolments). Over the last three years FCFJ enrolments have almost doubled. Therefore, the expansion of FCFJ has supported the ASF to shift provision towards in demand skills and higher-level qualifications. Higher level courses are often more targeted towards specific occupations and therefore are a vital way to support local and national priority sectors. Delivery has also been aligned to LSIP priorities, as evidenced by the economic outcomes data from the London Learner Survey (see para 5.10).

5.7 **Adult Skills Fund local analysis** - The GLA publishes ASF programme data biannually in line with the UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics and following the Department for Education's Further Education and Skills data publication. The Data Publication aims to ensure transparency, support engagement with stakeholders, bridge information gaps to support a more strategic approach to skills provision, and support learners and employers to make more informed decisions.

5.8 The most recent ASF data release includes statistics on ASF-funded Further Education and Skills in London based on data for the full academic year 2024-25 covering Tailored Learning, Adult Skills Core and FCFJ, which have been added for completeness. An interactive report was published alongside the data release to assist in interpreting the 2024-25 ASF statistics and highlights some of the key points and limitations. In addition, the GLA has published the ASF dashboard where users can explore the data by subject area, provider, geography and look at learner intersectionality.

5.9 **Employer focus / in-work-progression (ASF funded):** Grow London Local provides a single front door to simplify and strengthen access to business support for London's SMEs. It links SMEs directly to skills and employment support helping address skills gaps, build their workforce and support progress in work. The London Union Learning Programme works with the TUC and affiliated unions to help workers especially those in low-paid, low-skilled or insecure roles to access learning pathways, including essential and employability skills and wellbeing support. It also helps employers identify skills needs and connect to inclusive, often low-cost or free training via GLA-funded providers.

5.10 **Learner outcomes** - The latest London Learner Survey data (2023-24) found:

**Economic outcomes:**

- Nearly half (44 per cent) of all learners (equivalent to 77,400 learners) experienced a positive economic change 6 months after completing their course.

- 22,700 (23 per cent) of out-of-work learners were supported into work. Almost two thirds (62 per cent) of these learners were from a Black, Asian or Minority ethnic background.
- Mapping industry of employment to priority sectors set out in the LSIP and the London Growth Plan - shows that 60 per cent of employed learners (45,600 Londoners) were working in either a priority or an enabling sector following their course
- 21,200 learners (38 per cent of those in work) experienced in-work progression such as a pay increase, movement onto a permanent contract or an increase in hours of work.
- 126,400 learners (65 per cent) went on to or were about to start further study following their course.

**Social outcomes:**

- The majority (94 per cent) of learners experienced positive social changes (equivalent to around 183,500 learners).
- 156,100 learners (80 per cent) experienced an increase in their general wellbeing due to their course. Older learners (over 50) are the most likely to report improvements in their wellbeing as a result of the course.
- 169,000 learners (87 per cent) felt more confident due to their course. 150,600 learners (77 per cent) met new people due to their course.

5.11 The London Learner Survey findings are published annually, along with an interactive dashboard. Results of the 2024-25 London Learner Survey are due to be published in Spring 2026.

Impact on Participation through Community Outreach

5.12 The success of the Community Outreach pilot led to further development of the programme in 2023–24, offering additional funding of £676,966 to 28 organisations. Final performance data for the 2023–24 academic year showed that 5,277 participants were engaged through the community organisations, with 4,176 reported as referrals into adult learning, of which 1,525 were referrals to numeracy provision (London Multiply).

5.13 In 2024–25, the Mayor committed additional funding of £945,384 to the Skills for Londoners Community Outreach Programme for 34 community organisations to continue supporting Londoners to access adult learning opportunities. These 34 community projects successfully engaged a further 6,700 Londoners, with 5,657 reported as being referred to adult learning opportunities.

The Skills for Londoners Community Outreach Programme continues into the 2025–26 academic year, providing growth funding to 30 community organisations from the 2024–25 programme. It is expected to engage a further 5,889 Londoners, with 4,146 anticipated to be referred to adult learning or employment support opportunities by August 2026.

## 6 Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 A range of tools and processes are employed to monitor and evaluate the efficacy, the commissioning, delivery, management and outcomes of the delegated ASF. The approach enables the GLA to monitor progress against objectives, identify areas for improvement and generate insights that strengthen our understanding of the skills landscape.

6.2 **Monitoring and reporting**– A robust and established monitoring process and governance structure is in place to give senior GLA officers appropriate oversight of ASF delivery to enable evidence-based, timely decisions.

6.3 **Performance management** – Performance management of ASF training providers is carried out by dedicated named GLA provider managers throughout the year. Provider managers use quantitative reports produced by our in-house data systems team to monitor performance in-year against delivery plan targets. They meet with each provider regularly (at minimum once a term) to support providers in achieving delivery targets.

6.4 **Implementing lessons learnt** – The GLA makes changes each year to improve its management and the performance of the ASF as a result of findings from evaluations and regular feedback from providers. Details of these are provided later in this section. Key changes in 2025-26 included simplifying the funding rules and putting in place more webinars for providers to clarify any new funding rules, flexibilities and changes to the ILR submission.

- **2024-25 Provider insights** – In terms 1 and 2, GLA provider managers collected qualitative insights from training providers to contribute to our understanding of the 'on the ground' experience of ASF delivery and implementation of GLA strategic priorities. Term 1 insights focussed on factors impacting performance. The top three factors were:
    - Limits to funding allocations against demand
    - Teaching staff recruitment issues
    - The impact of the new funding rates, introduced by DfE.

6.5 A GLA project is underway to further our understanding of and test solutions related to improving FE workforce capacity and, early insights from the 2024-25 independent evaluation indicate a positive reception of the GLA funding policies that divert from the national funding reforms.

6.6 Term 2 insights focused on Green skills and found that:

- Along with standalone Green skills qualifications in STEM and construction sectors, providers are embedding Green skills into existing delivery. For example, one provider embeds sustainability into much of their tailored learning provision, including the creative arts where learners are taught about upcycling and reusing materials.

- Some providers are looking to actively expand Green skills provision, for example one provider is looking to create new outdoor spaces which qualifications could be developed around.

- Green skills are often embedded into the organisational culture, for example, two providers told us that they train their staff in Green skills.

- Challenges were highlighted, including shortage of tutors and shortage of job vacancies in jobs that require Green skills. Which the GLA aims to address through interventions informed by the Inclusive Talent Strategy.

6.7 **London Learner Survey** – The London Learner Survey is a first of its kind, pre- and post-survey to measure outcomes of ASF learners 6 months after course completion. (The latest results are detailed in the Impact section of this report).

6.8 The Survey is currently in its fifth year of data collection and continues to provide regular and vital insights to monitor performance of the ASF producing positive economic and social outcomes.

6.9 The number of baseline and follow-up responses continue to increase year on year, through working effectively with delivery partners and IFF Research. There were 99,800 responses to the baseline survey (up 2,440 on 2022-23) and 14,700 responses to the follow-up survey (up 2,487).

6.10 Data quality has improved further, and more training providers were able to receive their own weighted provider-level data (34 providers, up from 26 in 2022-23). We have received positive feedback on this data from training providers who have reported using the data to contribute to their internal reporting and monitoring, delivery planning and self-assessment reports. As a result, there are plans to hold best practice webinars to support providers' ongoing improvement in their approach to ASF delivery.

6.11 At present, responses are being collected for the follow-up survey for year 4 (2024-25) and the year 5 (2025-26) baseline survey was launched in August 2025. We expect to publish the final findings for 2024-25 in Summer 2026.

6.12 **Latest (2023-24) Independent AEB/ASF evaluation** – The GLA commissioned IFF Research to conduct a process evaluation of the first five academic years of its management of the ASF through a series of four reports. The latest report (2023-24 AY) published in 2025, constitutes the fourth and final report in this series. The GLA has commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to conduct a comparable process evaluation of the ASF for the two following academic years (2024-25 and 2025-26).

6.13 A mixed methods approach is taken, using a combination of quantitative sources, including Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data, the GLA London Learner Survey, and other external datasets along with qualitative interviews with learners, training providers and employers to provide a cohesive narrative with actionable recommendations.

Employer case study: Large retail and distribution company

*"We're committed to community development…it felt like the right thing to do."*

6.14 The Support Manager at a large retail company regularly employs warehouse operators, largely through the company's internal HR and training development team. She has found this more difficult due to Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, as many staff left to move back home. She was approached by a local Independent Training Provider (ITP) around two years ago to work with them in designing a course to get unemployed adult learners back into work.

6.15 The company is committed to investing in community development, and so she was keen to get involved. The 2-week Level 1 Certificate in Occupational Workplace Studies (Warehousing and Storage) (SWAP) course was designed by the ITP, in partnership with the employer who was able to provide example interview questions and tailor the learning to suit the employer's needs.

6.16 The learner is guaranteed an interview with the employer following successful completion of the course and many learners have gone on to find employment via this route. In her view, people employed via the provider are more motivated than those employed via the Jobcentre or through an agency. She noted that employees who are trained via the provider generally are there because they want to work in a warehouse and are keen to do the training to get the necessary skills.

6.17 One employee who came via the provider has just been promoted to a managerial position. She would have liked to work more with the provider, but the funding was limited and the course stopped. However, she already has plans in place to work with this provider again in the future.

*"Employees who come via the provider are more motivated to succeed, as they have undergone the necessary training to equip them with the necessary skills required."*

Key learnings and responses (2023-24)

6.17 There is a need for increased collaboration between ASF providers, employers, community organisations and public bodies, noting that the Jobs and Skills for Londoners (JSfL) programme is an example of where this is being achieved. **Response:** Further collaboration aims to be achieved through developing an increasingly employer-led and integrated employment system as part of the Inclusive Talent Strategy, and interventions to improve navigation of the Skills system through the London Trailblazers.

6.18 The ASF plays an important role in supporting Londoners to pursue learning that improves their wellbeing and mental health. **Response**: London Learner Survey data shows that almost all (94%) of GLA-funded London learners experienced a positive social outcome. We will continue to monitor wellbeing and mental health

outcomes through the London Learner Survey and work with providers to share best practice in what works to improve these outcomes. The Get London Working Plan sets out plans for integrating health services with skills and employment provision.

6.19 There continues to be a growing demand to equip disadvantaged Londoners from migrant groups with English language skills. **Response**: In 2023-24, the 3-year residency requirement was relaxed so that all Londoners with the right to be in the UK for at least 12 months could access ASF-funded learning. For 2025-26, residency requirements have been further simplified.

6.20 Data shows small increases in participation among Londoners with long-term health conditions and disabilities. **Response**: The London Growth Plan, published earlier this year, acknowledges the wider challenges faced by Londoners with long-term health conditions and disabilities. The underpinning Inclusive Talent Strategy and its supplementary Get London Working Plan will aim to support Londoners with complex needs much more effectively, including through better collaboration between health, care, skills, employment and advice services.

6.21 Further information about the ASF evaluation and the full GLA response to the recommendations can be found on the London.gov.uk website.

2023-24 Independent Community Outreach Programme evaluation with 2024-25 and 2025-26 Delivery Implementations

6.22 Projects successfully reached those in need, many of whom were long-term unemployed, and had never accessed education or training. Participants faced multiple barriers which prevented prior access to education and training, among them: lack of English skills, lack of awareness of opportunities, and lack of work experience. Most projects met or exceeded their engagement targets. **Response:** 6,719 Londoners have enrolled in the programme, with more than 5,600 referred to adult skills provision between September 2024 and August 2025. The current delivery is expected to engage with 4,900 Londoners and refer 3,468 Londoners into adult learning or employment support opportunities.

6.23 The GLA should support organisations to have established relationships and agreements with AEB/London Multiply providers before delivery. There is also great potential for alignment of this project with the GLA-funded regional skills hubs to support partnerships and local network building. This would be most useful at the start of the programme, given the time it takes to build trusting relationships and the capacity issues described by the projects. **Response:** The GLA acknowledges the importance of early-stage relationship building between Community Organisations and key partners involved in the programme. The GLA has increased the focus of Stakeholder engagement as part of the Skills for Londoners Community Outreach Programme 2024-25 and continued this approach into the 2025-26 delivery term. To demonstrate the GLA's commitment to this, the following has taken place or is planned:

- The GLA imbedded ‘Introduction Sessions’ with all four No Wrong Door (NWD) Integration Hubs and the community organisations at onboarding stage.
- Facilitated all Mayoral-funded Skills Programmes, supported by the programme, to deliver presentations to community organisations early in the programme to increase understanding of Skills Programme offerings.
- Increased the number of in-person events across the lifetime of delivery with a minimum of one event to be focussed on partnership engagement.
- Sharing of contact details for all community organisations with Skills Programmes supported by the programme and NWD Integration Hubs early in the programme.
- GLA Provider Managers and GLA community outreach team to facilitate promotion of the community organisations internally and provide facilitated support to build connections with Skills Providers operating in local areas.
- Targeted mapping and matching of skills provision delivered by Skills Programmes with individual community organisations based on geographical area and target groups (including the GLA funded Inclusive Talent Brokerage programme).

6.24 There is scope for adaptations to the paperwork to reduce administrative burden on grantee organisations, as well as further communication on this. Several data fields are requested by the GLA to enable future research (such as impact assessments). The GLA should consider reviewing data requests further and ensure that it explain why information is collected. **GLA Response:** The GLA is committed to streamlining processes and minimizing paperwork wherever possible. Following the Interim Evaluation report findings, the GLA conducted a series of reviews on all paperwork, data sets and reporting requirements to inform the 2024-25 programme design. The SfL Community Outreach Programme requires data sets to be reported to the Department for Education. Further work was conducted to highlight through market warming engagement to explain the reasons for the data to be collected as part of the new programme. As part of the 2024-25 programme, grantees are required to collate this data and report to the GLA using a Participant Data Collection Template (PDC). The PDC requires grantees to report destination and referral information to the GLA, where relevant. The implementation of the PDC enabled the GLA to keep paperwork to a minimum of one form. The data imbedded within is required to ensure that the GLA has the relevant data it needs to meet its reporting obligations; to ensure compliance with data processing laws.

6.25 The GLA should offer more opportunities for clarification questions following project design (such as Q&A sessions). A common understanding of expectations on process, outputs (particularly of recorded outputs) and paperwork would help grantees kick-off delivery. **GLA Response**: The GLA published a draft version of the Delivery Handbook at commissioning for the 2024/25 programme, to provide an expectation of the reporting requirements for the programme for successful grantees and an opportunity to ask clarifications to the requirements as part of commissioning. Further information was imbedded into the Market Warming

sessions delivered, within the formal responses to Questions received at commissioning and further support sessions were delivered to successful grantees at onboarding stage.

6.26 Future programmes would benefit from timely starts and having all systems/paperwork in place. This would allow projects to make use of key dates in the year, particularly enrolling Londoners onto learning provision with September start dates. **GLA Response**: Following the receipt of the Interim Evaluation report received in April 2024, The GLA reviewed, prepared and finalised all delivery paperwork to ensure that finalised versions of the delivery paperwork could be issued on 02 September 2024 to ensure that any projects looking to start delivering at risk were in a position to do so whilst grant agreements were issued for signing and being processed.

6.27 There is a need and appetite for longer-term funding. The projects want to offer follow ups and 'wraparound'/'holistic' support. However, they require longer-term funding for this. **GLA response**: Opportunities for additional funding were sought within the 2023-24 programme and an opportunity to extend delivery for 15 community organisations between May-August 2024, was identified. The 2024-25 programme provides an opportunity for community organisations to apply for grants up to £35k, instead of £27k as seen in 2023- 24 programme. The programme has also been designed to consider opportunities for growth into 2025-26, dependant on funding available. The GLA continuously reviews the impact that the Skills for Londoners Community Outreach Programme has on London and the Londoners it serves to identify opportunities to further enhance the programme to better support Londoners to have the skills they need to improve their lives. As the GLA works to set out plans for its programme of delivery within the Inclusive Talent Strategy supporting the 'Supporting Londoners to benefit from Growth' Mayoral mandate, its recognised that Community Organisations are uniquely placed to engage with the most disadvantaged Londoners who are most in need of support to access opportunities to embark of their journeys to improving economic stability. The data and continuous review of the current programme will support the work taking place on the Inclusive Talent Strategy.

6.28 In 2025-26, delivery, growth funding was issued to existing grantees delivering the 2024-25 grant programme, to support the GLA's commitment to offering longer term funding where possible. In addition to the growth funding opportunity, the GLA also introduced a small grant to community organisations for capacity building needs.

Research

6.29 The GLA often works with external partners to conduct research on trends and particular policy issues regarding skills, adult education, and employment. Research published on the London Datastore in the 2024-25 academic year includes:

- **The Rising Cost of Living and Access to Adult Education in London (July 2024):** The Learning and Work Institute were commissioned by the GLA to examine how rising living costs affect adult education in London, using surveys, interviews and focus groups.

- **Transferable Skills: Understanding effective delivery through adult skills provision (May 2024):** Ask Research explored how transferable skills are delivered through GLA-funded adult education and their impact on learners' economic and social outcomes.

- **Navigating the Transition: A Cost and Skills Analysis for Net Zero Carbon by 2030 in London's Further Education Colleges (July 2024):** Commissioned by the GLA and led by the Carbon Trust and EAUC, this report assesses the costs and skills needed for FE colleges to reach Net Zero Carbon by 2030.

6.30 Research has also been commissioned on methods of co-investment and co-design in London's adult skills system, exploring how employers, providers and local partners can work together to design, fund and deliver training that better reflects the needs of London's economy. This research is being undertaken by the Work Foundation and the Centre for Thriving Places and is expected to be published in February 2026.

## 7 Further Information

7.1 Please contact the ASF team at ASF@london.gov.uk for further information.

1.04.26



Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

Date