

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

# **Skills for Londoners Framework**

AEB Consultation 2021/22

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## Introduction

The Skills for Londoners Framework ('the Framework') is an annual consultation that seeks views on London's Adult Education Budget (AEB) and other skills and employment policies in the capital.

The Framework has been consulted on twice before since it was first published alongside the Mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy in 2018. The Framework outlines how the Mayor will support the delivery of the objectives of the Strategy. Summary reports of previous Framework consultations can be accessed on the GLA website.

This consultation seeks views on key policy areas related to the AEB in London, and on other skills and employment policies and programmes in the capital.

The findings from the consultation will be used to inform potential changes to the AEB Funding and Performance Management Rules in 2021/22 and beyond, as well as to support the ongoing development of the Mayor's long-term vision for skills in the capital.

City Hall will continue to engage with the sector and other interested parties both during and outside the formal consultation period.

### Who is this consultation for?

This consultation is for anyone with an interest in adult and further education and training in London. This includes:

- Further education colleges
- Local authorities
- Independent training providers
- Sixth form colleges
- Universities and higher education institutions
- Institutes of adult learning
- Organisations representing adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Government bodies and departments

Respondents are encouraged to answer any or all the questions depending on their relevance.

**Questions 1 to 6** relate to the reporting and funding arrangements of the AEB and therefore will be more relevant for those organisations in receipt of AEB funding in London.

**Questions 7 to 9** focus on emerging areas of interest that the AEB could be used to support. These questions are likely to be of interest to a broader range of stakeholders.

**Questions 10 to 13** identify other skills and employment policy priorities and are also likely to be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders.

### **How to respond**

To help us analyse the responses please use this [web survey](#).

In exceptional circumstances, if you are unable to access the survey online a word document version can be downloaded and emailed to: [AEB@london.gov.uk](mailto:AEB@london.gov.uk).

### **Deadline for responses**

The consultation will close at **23.59 on 22 March 2020**.

### **Enquiries**

If you have any questions about the policy content of the consultation you can contact the City Hall's Skills and Employment team on [AEB@london.gov.uk](mailto:AEB@london.gov.uk).

## Summary of Consultation Questions

### Questions

- 1a. Which level 3 and below qualifications should City Hall continue to fund as a regional skills priority based on their importance to London's economy, and why?
- 1b. What additional funding flexibilities would support the delivery of these qualifications to priority groups, and why?
2. How can City Hall further improve the provision of adult education in London for learners with SEND to increase participation and achievements?
- 3a. How are you embedding skills for a green economy in your provision and ensuring staff have the necessary capabilities to prepare for the transition to London becoming a zero-carbon city by 2050?
- 3b. How are you bringing digital learning into the classroom, and supporting staff to develop their own digital capabilities?
- 3c. More broadly, how can City Hall support greater digital leadership and practices such as service design, data sharing and collaboration?
- 3d. How could the Mayor support the professional development of London's FE workforce to be more responsive to the broader needs of London's economy and employers?
- 4a. How are you currently delivering training to in-work groups, including provision outside of core hours, and how can City Hall improve access to learning for in-work groups who cannot access core hours provision?
- 4b. Recognising the difficulty many workers in London's increasingly flexible labour market face in accessing training opportunities, how can skills provision better support them?
5. How could the GLA create a simpler and more effective funding system?
- 6a. What AEB data extracts from the Individual Learner Record would be most usefully shared?
- 6b. How would your organisation use this information?
7. How could the AEB be used to support unpaid carers unable to fully participate in work to enter/ re-enter employment?

**Questions (continued)**

- 8. How should City Hall raise awareness of the new basic digital skills entitlement and motivate London's digitally disengaged to access it?**
- 9a. What activities are FE providers currently engaged in to prevent and reduce violence?**
- 9b. What are the barriers for FE providers in supporting learners at risk of violent crime?**
- 9c. How can City Hall support FE providers to overcome these barriers and support a public health approach to reducing violence?**
- 10a. How can the Mayor work with providers and employers to support progression routes into and from higher level apprenticeships for young people as well as low income and disadvantaged Londoners?**
- 10b. What are the drivers of recent trends in London's apprenticeship system (growth in higher level apprenticeship starts and decline in lower and intermediate) and what impact are they having on learning and employment opportunities for Londoners?**
- 11a. In what ways are you currently using edtech?**
- 11b. Where do you think edtech has the most potential?**
- 11c. How can City Hall support the effective use of edtech?**
- 12a. How would you rate the condition of your current estates/ facilities and what are the implications of this on staff and learners?**
- 12b. Do your physical estates/ facilities allow you to meet local skills priorities? If FE capital funding remains under the control of the Mayor, what physical improvements should City Hall prioritise to enable your skills priorities to be met?**
- 12c. How far is the condition of your current estates/ facilities resilient to climate change and its environmental impact?**
- 13. How can City Hall support the work providers do with their local communities beyond skills provision?**

## Adult Education Budget 2021/22 and beyond

In this section we pose a number of questions on key policy areas related to AEB in London, with a view to making potential changes to the reporting and funding arrangements for the AEB from 2021/22. Any changes made to the AEB following on from this consultation will be subject to further modelling for feasibility, impact, and cost.

### Prioritising level 3 and below qualifications

The Government is currently reviewing post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below that are funded through the AEB,<sup>1</sup> with a view to rationalising the current number of technical qualifications, prior to the rollout of T Levels, and to establish a set of funding approval criteria for all level 3 and below qualifications in the future.

The Government's rationale for these changes is to reduce complexity for learners and employers, and to prioritise funding for high-quality courses. However, there is a risk that this will narrow the choice of qualifications available to adult learners, particularly at levels 2 and 3, which can lead to stronger employment outcomes. Employers will also need a wide range of qualifications to cater for the scale of occupational roles across London's labour market.

The Government has recently published proposals for how it will withdraw funding for qualifications with low and no publicly funded enrolments by August 2021.<sup>2</sup> The Government will consult on the remaining qualifications available for public funding later this year. Alongside this rationalisation, from September 2020, a 'moratorium' will be introduced on approving new qualifications for funding at level 3 and below. However, an exemption to the moratorium is in place where a qualification 'responds to a regional skills priority.'

City Hall has previously consulted on funding specific level 3 qualifications for disadvantaged groups and/ or in priority sectors. Further analysis is now being carried out to assess the options for doing this and the impact of any change given the pressure on existing budgets.

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<sup>1</sup> [Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England](#), DfE (2019)

<sup>2</sup> [Withdrawal of funding approval from qualifications with low and no publicly funded enrolments](#), DfE (2020)



In the meantime, City Hall is keen to understand the impact these proposed changes (set out above) could have on Londoners and London employers, and to identify the qualifications in scope for review which could be retained as part of London's skills offer.

- 1a. Which level 3 and below qualifications should City Hall continue to fund as a regional skills priority based on their importance to London's economy, and why?**
- 1b. What additional funding flexibilities would support the delivery of these qualifications to priority groups, and why?**

## **Special Education Needs and Disabilities**

There is a growing crisis in adult SEND provision in London, driven by increasing demand and reductions in national budgets.

The [London Post-16 SEND Review](#) ('the Review') identified that 70% of the projected demand for SEND provision over the next five years in London would be for adults.

Yet participation rates of disabled Londoners in AEB-funded provision do not currently reflect London's disabled population. Achievement rates are also typically lower for those with a declared disability than those without.

The Mayor wants to use the AEB to increase the participation, retention and achievement of disabled Londoners in education and training, building on the findings of the Review. He has already taken steps to support more learners with SEND to access AEB provision by:

- Fully funding Deaf Londoners to take qualifications in British Sign Language (BSL) where this would better support them to access further learning and work.
- From 2020/21, upskilling London's Further Education (FE) workforce to better support learners with SEND.
- Making SEND a priority for the Skills for Londoners Innovation Fund.

While acknowledging the limited powers the Mayor has in respect of SEND provision,<sup>3</sup> City Hall is keen to explore what more can be done to improve the provision of adult education in London for learners with SEND to increase participation and achievements.

- 2. How can City Hall further improve the provision of adult education in London for learners with SEND to increase participation and achievements?**

## **Supporting the FE workforce to meet the skills needs of the future**

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<sup>3</sup> [The GLA Act Section 31](#) states the Authority cannot 'incur expenditure in providing education services in any case where the provision in question may be made by a London borough council, the Common Council or any other public body'.

The Mayor committed in his Skills for Londoners Strategy to ‘raise the quality of facilities, teaching and leadership in London’s further and adult education sector, promote its specialisms, and ensure its sustainability.’

There is a growing body of evidence highlighting the importance of continuous professional development in FE. Analysis by the Education and Training Foundation found that, nationally, while the sector has a high level of organisational and individual participation in training and development it does not meet all demands, particularly in: leadership and management, maths and English, and use of digital and other new technologies for teaching and learning.<sup>4</sup>

Responses to last year’s Framework consultation reinforced the need to upskill London’s FE workforce, and the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding also recommended that investment in the FE workforce should be a priority as it would improve recruitment and retention and draw in more expertise from industry.<sup>5</sup>

The Mayor is already supporting workforce development in FE through the Digital Talent Programme, the Mayor’s Construction Academy, and the ESOL Practitioners project.

From the academic year 2020/21, the Mayor will use the AEB to fund the upskilling of the FE workforce to deliver better support to learners with SEND. To build on this policy change, City Hall would like to further understand the workforce development needs of adult education providers in London and to identify their priorities and future training needs, focusing on two priority areas for the Mayor: digital transformation and ‘green skills’.

- 3a. How are you embedding skills for a green economy in your provision and ensuring staff have the necessary capabilities to prepare for the transition to London becoming a zero-carbon city by 2050?**
- 3b. How are you bringing new digital approaches into the classroom, and supporting staff to develop their own digital capabilities?**
- 3c. More broadly, how can City Hall support greater digital leadership and practices such as service design, data sharing and collaboration?**
- 3d. How could the Mayor support the development of London’s FE workforce to be more responsive to the broader needs of London’s economy and employers?**

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<sup>4</sup> [Training needs in the further education sector](#), Education and Training Foundation (2018)

<sup>5</sup> [The Review of Post-18 Education and Funding - independent panel report](#)

## Supporting in-work learners

For many people in work it can be difficult accessing training opportunities. The main barriers to learning for those in employment include: lack of time, lack of employer support, cost of learning, unsuitable course location/ times, or caring/ family responsibilities.<sup>6</sup>

The Mayor has already addressed some of these challenges by extending full funding of AEB courses to eligible in-work groups earning below the London Living Wage. Through his Good Work Standard,<sup>7</sup> the Mayor aims to create local employment and progression pathways and improve the quality of work for all Londoners.

Responses to last year's Skills for Londoners Framework highlighted the need for more flexibility in how provision is delivered (e.g. evenings or weekend classes/ blended delivery/ localised settings) to ensure it fits around learners' existing work and family commitments.

Building on this, City Hall wants to understand how the AEB can support those working within London's increasingly flexible labour market to access training opportunities, and support providers to deliver provision outside of core hours.

- 4a. How are you currently delivering training to in-work groups, including provision outside of core hours, and how can City Hall improve access to learning for in-work groups who cannot access core hours provision?**
- 4b. Recognising the difficulty many workers in London's increasingly flexible labour market face in accessing training opportunities, how can skills provision better support them?**

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<sup>6</sup> [Analysis of Adult Education Survey 2016](#), ONS (2019)

<sup>7</sup> The Mayor's Good Work Standard sets the benchmark for the best employment standards for London businesses.

## AEB funding systems

The Review of Post-18 Education and Funding identified the complexity of the current national funding system City Hall has inherited to deliver adult education in London. The report found that the system was inflexible, complex, and burdensome for providers; diverting time and resources away from them to prioritise and respond effectively to the needs of Londoners.<sup>8</sup>

There is little evidence that the current funding system supports providers to deliver improved learning outcomes. Moreover, the excessive reliance on a myriad of rate and rule calculations results in more bureaucratic and, arguably, unnecessary data processing; hindering the ability of providers to plan and forecast delivery with confidence.

City Hall is therefore keen to understand if there is a simpler approach to funding provision that would enable colleges, local authorities, and other providers, to deliver a transformative teaching and learning experience.

### **5. How could the GLA create a simpler and more effective funding system?**

## Data reporting

City Hall is looking to publish a range of London AEB data in order to support policy development, inform and engage stakeholders, and encourage greater transparency.

The Mayor previously consulted on his proposals to create a Skills and Employment Knowledge Hub to provide relevant data, including labour and careers information. Responses to the consultation highlighted the need for more transparency and accountability in reporting AEB data.

City Hall therefore wants to understand the data requirements of providers and, more precisely, the data extracts from the Individual Learner Record that would be most usefully shared (balancing this against the administrative burden it could create for providers).

### **6a. What AEB data extracts from the Individual Learner Record would be most usefully shared?**

### **6b. How would your organisation use this information?**

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<sup>8</sup> [The Review of Post-18 Education and Funding - independent panel report](#)

## Supporting unpaid carers

Many unpaid carers face significant barriers to entering or re-entering work. The Mayor wants to support them to participate in and benefit from employment opportunities in London.

According to the 2011 census, around 689,000 Londoners spend at least an hour a week caring for someone, while more than a third of those with caring responsibilities (approximately 255,000) provide more than 20 hours of care a week.<sup>9</sup>

A substantial proportion of unpaid carers are unable to work or participate in formal learning while they are caring. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits statistics show that there are around 97,000 working age claimants of the Carer's Allowance<sup>10</sup> in London, and the vast majority (76%) are women.<sup>11</sup>

Carers can face significant barriers to entering or re-entering work after their caring responsibilities end. These include: poor mental or physical health, low confidence, and low levels of qualifications.<sup>12</sup>

Losing carers from the workforce or failing to reintegrate them into the labour market is also bad for London's economy, resulting in lost productivity and the underutilisation of valuable skills.<sup>13</sup>

Through his Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the Mayor committed to provide employability and skills support to carers to enable them to participate in, and benefit from, employment opportunities in London. City Hall is keen to understand how the AEB could be used to support carers to enter/ re-enter work.

### **7. How could the AEB be used to support unpaid carers unable to fully participate in work to enter/ re-enter employment?**

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<sup>9</sup> [Census 2011](#), Provision of Unpaid Careers

<sup>10</sup> To receive the Carer's Allowance a person must be aged 16 or over, spend at least 35 hours caring for someone and have net earnings of less than £123 a week from the 1st April.

<sup>11</sup> [DWP 2018 Benefit Payments – Carers Allowance](#).

<sup>12</sup> [State of Caring Report 2019](#), Carers UK

<sup>13</sup> [Supporting Working Carers: The Benefits to Families, Business and the Economy](#), Carers in Employment Task and Finish Group

## Reaching the digitally disengaged

While more Londoners than ever are online, a significant number remain ‘digitally disengaged’, lacking the essential digital skills needed to benefit from, participate in and contribute to the digital world. This has both a social and economic cost. Research published by Lloyds Banking Group identified that consumers on average could save approximately £744 from being digitally capable.<sup>14</sup>

Barriers to digital participation include lack of skills to go online confidently, as well as concerns around security and fraud. Although the majority of those digitally disengaged are elderly, around half are under 60 and the same proportion come from low income households. In London, 14 per cent of benefit claimants are digitally disengaged. People with a disability are also more than twice as likely to be offline than those without a disability.<sup>15</sup>

Through the launch of his Smarter London Plan, the Mayor will develop new approaches to digital inclusion to support more Londoners to develop the digital skills they need for work and life.

From this year, the Department for Education (DfE) will introduce an entitlement to fully fund eligible adults with no or low digital skills to enrol on specified essential digital qualifications at entry level and level 1. City Hall is keen to raise awareness of this new entitlement and motivate and support London’s digitally disengaged to access it.

### **8. How should City Hall raise awareness of the new basic digital skills entitlement and motivate London’s digitally disengaged to access it?**

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<sup>14</sup> UK Consumer Digital Index 2019

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## **Preventing future violence**

The level of violent crime in London is unacceptably high and extremely damaging to individuals, families, and communities. As part of his strategy to reduce and prevent future violence in the capital, the Mayor is committed to tackling the root causes of violent crime by adopting a public health approach and has established a new Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to facilitate this.

A public health approach means working across organisational boundaries to generate long-term solutions, as well as short-term responses. Types of activities include: working with those directly exposed to violence, supporting those at risk of violence, and strengthening community resilience.

In September 2019, the Mayor convened a roundtable with FE Leaders and the VRU to discuss work to date on tackling youth violence. City Hall is now keen to further understand the role the FE sector can play in developing a public health approach to reducing violence.

- 9a. What activities are FE providers currently engaged in to prevent and reduce violence?**
- 9b. What are the barriers for FE providers in supporting learners at risk of violent crime?**
- 9c. How can City Hall support FE providers to overcome these barriers and support a public health approach to reducing violence?**

## Other skills and employment policies

In this section we are seeking input from a range of stakeholders on other areas of skills and employment policy.

### Apprenticeships

The Mayor is committed to increasing the number of quality apprenticeships to help Londoners earn, learn, and progress in their careers; and to enable businesses to meet their skills needs now and in the future.

Despite the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and accompanying reforms, the overall number of apprenticeship starts in London has fallen by 12 per cent between 2015/16 and 2018/19.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, London's businesses are reporting skills gaps: 13 per cent of the capital's employers struggled to recruit the skills they needed in 2017.<sup>17</sup>

Responding to this challenge, the Mayor has established Apprenticeships for Londoners: three projects to support businesses in London to make better use of their levy to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities. As part of his Call for Action, the Mayor, alongside London Councils, has called for full devolution of apprenticeship funding to London.

As well as increasing the number of quality apprenticeships, City Hall is also keen to understand the drivers behind recent trends in apprenticeship starts in the capital. While the overall number of apprenticeship starts have fallen in London, between 2015/16 and 2017/18, the number of higher level (levels 4 and 5) apprenticeship starts have increased three-fold, while intermediate and advanced level apprenticeship starts have reduced by 50 per cent over the same period.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [DfE Apprenticeship and levy statistics](#). Note: the 12% fall in apprenticeships starts in London is in the context of a 23% fall across England.

<sup>17</sup> Overall, there are 150,100 people working in London who are considered by their employers to be under-skilled for their job (3% of employment) and 29,200 vacancies proving hard to fill because of a lack of skills among applicants (16% of vacancies) [DfE \(2018\) Employer skills survey 2017: England LEP summary data tables](#)

<sup>18</sup> [DfE Apprenticeship and levy statistics](#). Note: the total number of higher apprenticeships across England have increased two-fold; slightly lower than London.



- 10a. How can the Mayor work with providers and employers to support progression routes into and from higher level apprenticeships for young people as well as low income and disadvantaged Londoners?**
- 10b. What are the drivers of recent trends in London’s apprenticeship system (growth in higher level apprenticeship starts and decline in lower and intermediate) and what impact are they having on learning and employment opportunities for Londoners?**

## **EdTech**

Education Technology (EdTech) is an increasing part of all education sectors. The UK is the edtech capital of Europe, with London at its heart. It is estimated that the industry will be worth £3.4bn in 2021.<sup>19</sup>

Edtech can deliver wider learning opportunities, enhance teaching capacity, strengthen student support and analytical data, and enable organisational efficiencies. Edtech has the potential to transform teaching, learning, and support in adult education. However, it has to be effectively directed, applied, and scaled.

According to a recent survey, FE staff use digital teaching activities significantly more often than those in Higher Education, but only around a third feel they receive recognition when they develop the digital aspects of their role.<sup>20</sup> There are also concerns about evidence, with education providers unsure about what works in practice and edtech suppliers struggling to test and refine their products because of scepticism about their effectiveness.<sup>21</sup>

The Government’s edtech strategy (2019) seeks to address these challenges, while the Mayor’s Smarter London Together roadmap to make London ‘the smartest city in the world’ includes a mission to enhance digital leadership and skills.<sup>22</sup>

City Hall wants to understand where edtech is currently being used and where it has been shown to be effective in AEB-funded and wider post-19 education. City Hall also wants to identify opportunities to provide strategic direction, targeted funding, and programme development to support the adoption and use of edtech, including in delivering AEB-funded provision.

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<sup>19</sup> [Why Britain is top of the class for education technology](#), The Telegraph (4 January 2020)

<sup>20</sup> [Digital experience insights survey 2019: findings from teaching staff in UK further and higher education](#), Jisc (2019)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> [Smarter London Together](#)

**11a. In what ways are you currently using edtech?**

**11b. Where do you think edtech has the most potential?**

**11c. How can City Hall support the effective use of edtech?**

## **Capital Funding**

The Mayor and the London Economic Action Partnership have made significant capital funding investment in the further education and training estate in recent years. Funding was allocated based on:

- Ability to meet London's current and future skills needs.
- Evidence of partnerships and collaboration with employers and local stakeholders in the design and delivery of provision.
- Approaches to delivery which secure the highest levels of social, economic, and environmental value.
- Place making and high-quality design, strengthening links with local communities.

A full evaluation of the impact of the capital investment programme is being carried out this year. The Mayor is calling on the Government to commit to continued devolved capital funding to invest in new facilities and technologies to support FE providers to repair London's FE estate. It is also essential that we ensure our buildings are resilient for the future and are as environmentally friendly as possible. In the meantime, City Hall is keen to hear providers' views on what their priorities are for future capital investments, as well as to gain a sense of the impact of investment to date on the condition of the wider estate.

**12a. How would you rate the condition of your current estates/ facilities and what are the implications of this on staff and learners?**

**12b. Do your physical estates/ facilities allow you to meet local skills priorities? If FE capital funding remains under the control of the Mayor, what physical improvements should City Hall prioritise to enable your skills priorities to be met?**

**12c. How far is the condition of your current estates/ facilities resilient to climate change and its environmental impact?**

## **Skills providers as anchors for local communities**

Skills providers have a valuable contribution to make in the communities they serve or are located within. Many of London's skills providers are anchor institutions. As well as delivering skills and education, they help to build successful communities and local economies; for example, by supporting and hosting local events, providing referral services for learners with additional needs, creating pathways to employment, and convening local employers.

The Mayor wants to explore how City Hall can strengthen this activity and the positive impact that skills providers have in their wider communities.

### **13. How can City Hall support the work providers do with their local communities beyond skills provision?**

## **Any other comments**

This section invites you to provide any other comments or questions related to adult and further education and training in London.

## Equalities Assessment

Under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor is required to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This section invites you to identify any potential impacts of our priorities for change on people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnicity), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

## **Other formats and languages**

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