

Workforce Development Fund guidance for employers accessing the Workforce Development Fund through a partnership

What is the Workforce Development Fund (WDF)?

The Workforce Development Fund (WDF) for 2023-24 is a retrospective funding stream from the Department of Health and Social Care disseminated by Skills for Care. This means that an employer must have directly incurred costs for the qualifications or learning undertaken by their staff before a claim is made through WDF on completion of the learning. The fund focuses on the achievement of qualifications, learning programmes and digital learning modules and supports the continuing professional development of staff across the adult social care sector in England. In 2023-24 WDF will respond to a key sector priority:

- Additional support to registered managers and service managers as this is key to providing quality care. Enhanced funding will continue to be available for completion of leadership and management qualifications, learning programmes and digital modules.

The fund is distributed by Skills for Care via a network of employer led partnerships and large national organisations:

- an 'Area or National partnership' is a collection of social care employers who come together to 'pool' their workforce development needs.
- a 'Large National' organisation is an adult social care provider that has 1000+ care providing employees, provides services to a substantial number of people who need care and support and operates in two or more of Skills for Care areas in England.

The fund is only available to employers who provide an adult social care service and directly employ paid care staff in England.

The application process

Partnership leads submitted funding applications to Skills for Care. Funding allocations were agreed and grants were awarded to successful applicants.

How do I become eligible for funding?

There are three things that you must do before you become eligible for WDF:

1. Join a partnership by completing a member's declaration form and submitting to the grant holder by the advertised deadline.

2. Comply with the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) requirements or be prepared to meet these prior to claiming funding.
3. Have paid employees who have completed eligible qualifications, learning programmes or digital modules for which you want to claim funding, see the list of [funded qualifications and learning](#).

It is important to note that all of the courses in the [WDF list of qualifications and learning](#) will be funded during the 2023-24 financial year. The government is also due to launch a new fund for training and professional development to support members of the adult social care workforce to develop in their roles and progress in their careers, as outlined in the '[Next Steps to put People at the Heart of Care](#)' published in April. Some courses may be removed from the WDF when this new fund launches as new learners will have the opportunity to claim for training costs through the new fund. Please note, any learners enrolled in eligible learning prior to the new fund being launched will remain eligible for and receive support through the WDF.

What is the role of the grant holder within a WDF partnership?

The grant holder is responsible for disbursement of the WDF to partnership members, and for supporting those members to comply with Skills for Care's eligibility criteria and evidence requirements. Grant holders must also ensure that as far as practically possible partnerships are open to all members within the health or social care sector, including micro-employers.

How do I find a partnership?

Partnership details have been advertised on Skills for Care's website since the fund opened. From the [claim funding through a partnership](#) page, choose a link to national partnerships or partnerships in your area. You will be able to review the partnerships and contact the one you would like to join, via the details displayed on the webpage. If you operate in the local authority areas advertised, where funds can be claimed directly from Skills for Care, you can find information, guidance and forms which are available on our [website](#).

How do I join a partnership?

You need to check that you're aware of Skills for Care's eligibility criteria as outlined above.

Once you're aware of the criteria you need to complete a member's declaration form and submit it to the grant holder before 29 February 2024. Some grant holders may ask for additional information to support your application. Grant holders have to submit the declaration form to Skills for

Care by 29 February 2024.

How do I comply with the ASC-WDS requirements?

For a workplace to meet the ASC-WDS requirements for the Workforce Development Fund in 2023-24, the following three things must be completed:

1. A workplace which has completed an ASC-WDS workplace record before 1 April 2023 must fully update its workplace data.
2. The workplace must fully complete individual ASC-WDS staff records for all workers with a minimum of 90% of the data completed.
3. Individual staff records completed before 1 April 2023 which are included in the 90% calculation must be both fully completed and updated.

Once the above requirements have been met, a workplace will continue to meet the WDF criteria until 31 March 2024. A workplace's ASC-WDS account is expected to be an accurate reflection of its service and workforce. If your service or workforce changes significantly during the year it is expected that ASC-WDS will be updated. Failure to do so could affect your ability to claim funding. How can I tell if I have met the ASC-WDS requirements?

When logged into your ASC-WDS account you can run a report to check whether your account meets the requirements for WDF.

Can I claim WDF alongside apprenticeship funding?

You can but you need to be aware of the following information, which differs between apprenticeship levy payers and non-levy payers.

Levy paying employers, this also includes employers in receipt of transferred levy funds: The apprenticeship levy can only be used to pay training delivery and end-point assessment costs. It will be possible to claim WDF alongside the apprenticeship levy, but it will not be possible to use the WDF towards training delivery or end-point assessment costs because the levy is used for that. The apprenticeship levy is a tax being applied by government so public money cannot be used to offset it. However, the WDF can be used towards the associated costs of training, such as the 20% off the job learning time requirement, wage replacement costs if required to release the learner to undertake training etc. Further information is available in our [frequently asked questions](#). If a levy paying employer has used all their levy and is accessing funding in the same way as a non-levy paying employer, see the paragraph below in relation to calculating the total cost of training delivery for those learners.

Non-levy paying employers: Pay 5% of the training delivery costs and the

government pays the remaining 95%. When calculating the total cost of training before making your WDF claim, the funds that you have directly paid towards training delivery (which may be a maximum of £150 on a standard capped at £3,000) can be factored into the total cost of training. The 95% from the government (up to £2,850 in this example) can't because that would constitute double funding and that is not allowed. The total cost of training can also include wider costs which are directly incurred by the employer as a result of the learner undertaking training, such as the 20% off the job learning time requirement, wage replacement costs if required to release the learner to undertake training etc. Further information is available in our frequently asked questions.

If you need further information about funding for apprenticeships in addition to what is available via the Workforce Development Fund, you can find additional information on our [website](#).

How do I claim funding?

Once your application has been approved by the grant holder and a member of your staff has completed some learning that is eligible for funding you should claim funding as follows.

Complete a Workforce Development Fund Employer Claim Submission Form, or equivalent supplied by your partnership, and send it to the grant holder with a copy of all of your learners' certificates. You must include details of any qualifications which are being claimed as part of an apprenticeship or declare that none of the learning within the claims is part of an apprenticeship.

It is important to note that a maximum of £2,000 per learner can be claimed in any funding year. The funding year for 2023-24 is 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The WDF funding contribution is a maximum of the value set out on the list of funded qualifications and learning even if you have incurred higher costs than this figure. If you have incurred lower costs than the value advertised, it's possible to claim a lower amount of funding by advising your partnership of the amount that you want to claim.

Qualifications evidence – To claim funding for a qualification a copy of the learner's certificate must be submitted which contains the following information:

- candidate name
- candidate registration number
- unique learner number
- name of qualification and qualification number as per the list of funded qualification and learning
- the date of issue of the certificate must fall within our advertised dates for the funding year, so 1 January 2023 – 31 March 2024

- name of Awarding Organisation
- name of Learning Provider or centre number.

Apprenticeship standards evidence – The evidence to claim an apprenticeship standard is a copy of the learner’s diploma certificate to claim the diploma within the apprenticeship standard (full detail as set out in the qualification evidence section above) and a copy of the final apprenticeship standard certificate. The final apprenticeship standard certificate must contain the following information:

- candidate name
- unique learner number
- name of the apprenticeship standard
- apprenticeship standard code as per the list of funded qualifications and learning (this can be written on)
- the date of award must fall within our advertised dates for the funding year, so 1 January 2023 - 31 March 2024
- the certificate must be issued by the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IfATE).

You can claim for the diploma once completed and certificated, and the apprenticeship standard at a later date once the end point assessment has been completed and the certificate for the apprenticeship standard has been issued.

Learning programmes evidence – To claim funding for a learning programme a copy of the learner’s certificate must be submitted which contains the following information:

- candidate name
- date of birth
- name of learning programme
- our code as per the list of funded qualification and learning
- the date of issue of the certificate must fall within our advertised dates for the funding year, so 1 January 2023 – 31 March 2024
- name of endorsed learning provider.

Digital learning modules evidence – To claim funding for a digital learning module a copy of the learner’s certificate must be submitted which contains the following information:

- candidate name
- date of birth
- name of digital module
- our claim code as per the list of funded qualifications and learning
- the date of issue of the certificate must fall within our advertised dates for the funding year, so 1 January 2023 – 31 March 2024.

Each WDF grant contains milestones which are as follows:

29 September 2023

30 November 2023

31 January 2024

28 March 2024

These deadlines are applicable to the grant holder; you must check with them what timeframes you must work to in order for them to achieve these deadlines. You must send your claims to your grant holder directly, a learning provider cannot do this on your behalf.

What happens next?

- The grant holder reviews the evidence received and for fully evidenced eligible qualifications, learning programmes and digital learning modules and submits funding claims to Skills for Care in line with the grant milestones.
- Skills for Care reviews claims received and pays the grant holder.
- The grant holder then pays their member. WDF partnership grant holders must pay the funding directly to their members and cannot pay the WDF to a third party such as a learning provider under any circumstances.

Who can help me?

- For queries relating to claiming the WDF please contact your grant holder.
- For general enquiries about the WDF please email wdf@skillsforcare.org.uk.
- For information about any other Skills for Care resources or projects or the ways Skills for Care can support you, please contact info@skillsforcare.org.uk or 0113 2411275
- For ASC-WDS queries please contact the ASC-WDS Support Service on 0113 2410969 or ascwds-support@skillsforcare.org.uk

If you have any feedback about the WDF please email
wdf@skillsforcare.org.uk

