

Guidance for employers accessing the Workforce Development Fund directly from Skills for Care

What is the Workforce Development Fund (WDF)?

The Workforce Development Fund (WDF) for 2024-25 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 apprenticeships undertaken by their staff before a claim is made through WDF on completion of the learning. The fund is only available to employers who provide an adult social care service and directly employ paid care staff in England.

The fund focuses on the achievement of qualifications and apprenticeships and supports the continuing professional development of staff across the adult social care sector in England. **Claims can only be made for qualifications and apprenticeships which started on or before 31 March 2024 and which will complete by 31 March 2025.**

The application process

To claim WDF directly from Skills for Care you must complete a WDF direct access declaration form and submit it to the email address specified on the form. Declaration forms must be submitted by **28 February 2025**, any received after this date will not be accepted. On receipt Skills for Care will check and validate your application. Following validation of your application you will be issued with a grant letter which must be signed and returned before you can claim funds. The Workforce Development Fund is a resource to the sector so limits are applied to the amount of funding which can be claimed by a single organisation to maximise the number of employers who can benefit from the fund.

How do I become eligible for funding?

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

1. Have completed the WDF direct access declaration form and signed the grant letter as set out above.
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 or apprenticeships against which you want to claim funding, see the [list of funded qualifications and apprenticeships](#).

How do I comply with the ASC-WDS requirements?

For a workplace to meet the ASC-WDS requirements for the Workforce Development Fund in 2024-25, the following three things must be completed:

1. A workplace which has completed an ASC-WDS workplace record before 1 April 2024 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 2024 which are included in the 90% calculation must be both fully completed and updated.

Once the above requirements have been met, a workplace will be able to claim WDF until 31 March 2025. 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 and how will eligibility be monitored?

It is important for employers who want to claim WDF to keep the information on the ASC-WDS database up to date.

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

Once you have signed up for the fund and been issued with a funding claim form, this is an accurate way to check eligibility because only those workplaces showing on the organisation drop down list on the first tab of the funding claim form are eligible for funding.

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 of 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) cannot 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 you have signed your grant letter with Skills for Care and you have workplaces which meet the ASC-WDS requirements for WDF, we will send you a claim form to enable you to claim funding for your learners. You will need to fully complete the claim form with details of all learners and the qualifications and apprenticeships completed that you wish to claim for. There's a guidance document available to help you put your claim together which will be issued with the claim form. Once your claim form has been completed this needs to be submitted to directaccess.wdf@skillsforcare.org.uk along with your [claim submission form](#) and a copy of your evidence (learner's certificates). You must include details of any qualifications which are being claimed as part of an apprenticeship on your claim form.

It's important to note that a maximum of £2,035 per learner can be claimed in any funding year. The funding year for 2024-25 is 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The WDF funding contribution is a maximum of the value set out on the list of funded qualifications and apprenticeships 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 Skills for Care of the amount that you want to claim in your covering email.

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 2024 – 31 March 2025
- 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 programmes (this can be written on)
- The date of award must fall within our advertised dates for the funding year, so 1 January 2024 - 31 March 2025
- 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.

What happens next?

- Skills for Care reviews the claim form and evidence received.
- Any queries will be raised with the claimant.
- Duplicate learning or learning which is not fully evidenced will be rejected.
- Fully evidenced eligible learning will be paid.

Who can help me?

- For queries relating to claiming the Workforce Development Fund please e-mail directaccess.wdf@skillsforcare.org.uk and you will usually be replied to within two working days.
- For general enquiries about the Workforce Development Fund 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 241 1275.
- For ASC-WDS queries please contact the ASC-WDS Support Service on 0113 241 0969 or ascwds-support@skillsforcare.org.uk

If you have any feedback about the Workforce Development Fund please email wdf@skillsforcare.org.uk.