

BERKSHIRE SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

Information for potential providers



2025 - 2026

AMBITION, COLLABORATION AND GROWTH

Updated July 2025

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Introduction

The Skills and Business Hub has received grant funding from Department for Education (DfE) to deliver Skills Bootcamps in 2025/26 in and around Berkshire.

Skills Bootcamps are flexible training programmes offering government-funded courses of a minimum 60 hours of guided learning over up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector specific skills and fast track to a guaranteed interview with a locally based employer.

The key objectives are to support adults to retrain and help employers to fill current skills shortage vacancies in employer/sector 'in-demand' skills needs which may be either regulated (i.e., qualification based) or non-regulated (e.g., based on alignment with industry standards).

Funding is 100% for independent learners and partial funding is available for employed learners who are sponsored by their employer:

- 90% for SME employers¹
- 70% for large employer

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the context, priorities, and process for applications for grant funding to deliver Skills Bootcamps that will help meet the skills needs of Berkshire.

Alignment with DfE policy

All Skills Bootcamps to be eligible for consideration must meet the following principles.

- Skills Bootcamps must be delivered between Level 2 – 5.
- Courses on offer must be for a minimum of 60 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and a maximum of 16 weeks duration
- Providers must demonstrate in their proposal the provision of a 'wraparound service' of learner support (for example, using a coaching and mentoring approach, from programme application stage, during, and post programme, to move people into jobs/new roles and opportunities. This should include upfront screening of applicants, soft skills (or work readiness) training to support the occupational skills training, vacancy/role/opportunity identification, provision of pastoral services to help participants complete the programme, and follow-up services to participants and employers to support job placement mentorship, pastoral support) and high-quality advice and guidance to support the learner into a positive employment outcome (for example, CV writing support, mock interviews).
- Learners to receive a guaranteed job interview upon the completion of the Skills Bootcamps (in the case of a new job).
- Provision may be delivered face to face, remotely online (live) or a blended approach.

¹ An SME is any organisation that has fewer than 250 employees and a turnover of less than €50 million or a balance sheet total less than €43 million.

- All training must either be accredited, aligned to occupational standards managed by the Institute for Apprenticeship & Technical Education, or utilise a recognised standard for representing attainment (e.g., RARPA, SFIA).

Minimum expectations are that at least 80% of all learners who start a Skills Bootcamps will complete. All of these learners are to get an interview with 75% of them achieving a successful outcome within six months of the Skills Bootcamp.

Key investment principles

Applicants will need to demonstrate a clear demand for their Skills Bootcamps proposal from employers with an evidenced commitment to interview candidates (where participants are independent learners). All proposals should strongly demonstrate how employers have been consulted on the curriculum/skills needs during the development stage.

Skills Bootcamp Delivery Partners must have an active employer engagement plan detailing how they will gain new and maintain existing employer relationships with a direct line to securing guaranteed job interviews and job opportunities, and/or upskilling an existing workforce within the wider Berkshire area. It should detail how the Skills Bootcamp will be responsive to meet evolving employer skills requirements (within the scope of the proposed Skills Bootcamp), and how employers will be involved in the design and delivery of the Skills Bootcamp. An initial employer engagement plan should be submitted as part of the application and reviewed and updated monthly as a live document.

All proposals should have a demonstrable and robust engagement strategy for learners, including wrap around support for all learners including dropouts and learners unsuccessful at the interview stage.

In this second round, we are looking to allocate funding for provision in the **Hospitality** or **Retail** sectors and are only looking for expressions of interest that meet the needs of these sectors. Grants for all other category themes was allocated in our initial round of funding.

Target Learners

We want to ensure that the training is accessible to all eligible adults within the community. Recruitment for all learners must use a fair and open process.

Skills Bootcamps should be designed to encourage the participation of under-represented groups, such as those with protected characteristics and those who might face barriers to employment and aim to reflect the diversity of the local area.

A learner may only undertake one Skills Bootcamp per funding year. Providers are required to ask prospective learners whether they have already undertaken a Skills Bootcamp in that funding year as part of the eligibility process.

No prior attainment is required unless specifically prescribed by an employer and/or specifically related to the job and sector within which the vacancies or development opportunities are offered.

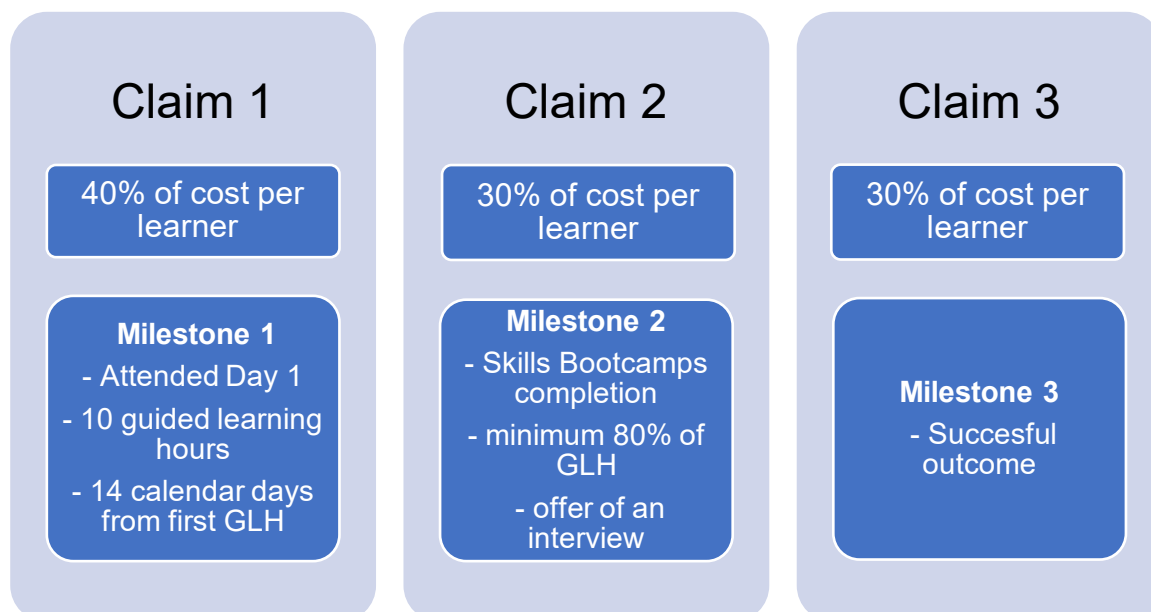
When recruiting learners, providers must have robust screening processes to ensure learners have the baseline skills, attitudes, and competencies to successfully complete the course and are looking to secure work.

Charging learners in any form, including for consumables and devices required for the duration of the Skills Bootcamp is not permitted. This includes any proposals that involve asking learners to pay the funding back afterwards.

Preference should be given to learners who either live, work or plan to work in Berkshire and the funding must look to support training for jobs in this geography.

Payment profile and process

The current payment profile operating in Berkshire is detailed below. Payments are made on the achievement of each of the three milestones.



Payments will be paid in arrears as follows, subject to submission of accurate data returns and accompanying evidence.

- 40% of agreed unit cost on completion of 10 Guided Learner Hours and 14 qualifying days.
- 30% of agreed unit cost on successful completion of the training programme including passing any required assessments and demonstrating new skills gained, and one of the following:
 - An offer of an interview on completion of the Skills Bootcamp for a job that matches the new skills acquired through the bootcamp where the participant is fully funded
 - An offer of a new role and / or responsibilities that matches the new skills acquired through the Skills Bootcamp where the participant is co-funded
 - Complete written confirmation/plan, using template provided by The Skills and Business Hub, from the learner of how the new learning has been/will be applied to acquire new opportunities/contracts where the participant is self-employed
- 30% of agreed unit cost on receipt of evidence of 'a successful outcome'. A successful outcome being offer of a new job (which must be continuous employment for at least 12 weeks), an Apprenticeship, a new role or additional responsibilities with an existing employer, or new contracts or new opportunities for the self-employed, utilising the skills acquired in the Skills Bootcamp, within 6 months of completing the Skills Bootcamp.

Where the employer is training their own existing employees (defined as someone directly employed by the employer, not a worker, sub-contractor, or freelancer) the Skills Bootcamps will be co-funded at 30% by the employer. This is reduced to 10% where the employer is a small or medium enterprise (SME) (defined as an employer with fewer than 250 employees) training their own existing employees, towards the cost of training.

Delivery timeline

We will require applicants to provide detailed information on the expected timescale for delivery of each Skills Bootcamp and their ability to support achievement of DfE targets.

All learners must have completed the Skills Bootcamps and had the offer of an interview (milestone two) within six months of the Skills Bootcamps completion, or by 31 March 2026, whichever is sooner.

All successful outcomes (milestone three) must be achieved within six months of the Skills Bootcamps completion, or by 30 September 2026, which is sooner.

Key definitions

Guided Learning Hours

- This is the time a learner spends being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate (live) guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate supplier of education or training whether this in in person or online.

An offer of interview refers to:

- Offer of an interview on completion of the Skills Bootcamp for a job that matches the new skills acquired through the Skills Bootcamp, where the learner is fully funded.
- Offer of an interview with current employer exploring opportunities to gain new responsibilities or a new role, where the learner is co-funded.
- Written confirmation/plan from the learner of how the new learning has been/will be applied to acquire new opportunities/contracts, where the learner is self-employed.

A successful outcome relates to:

- The utilisation of the skills acquired in the Skills Bootcamp, being deployed within 6 months of completing the Skills Bootcamp, and the learner achieving:
- Offer of a new job and continuous employment for at least 12 weeks,
- Apprenticeship,
- New role or additional responsibilities with an existing employer,
- New contracts or new opportunities for the self-employed.

Eligible learner

- Learners on the Skills Bootcamp must be aged 19 or over on 31 August 2025.
- They can be employed (full-time or part-time), self-employed, returning to work or unemployed.
- Serving prisoners due to be released within 6 months of completion of a Skills Bootcamp and those on temporary release are also eligible.
- They must have the right to work in the UK, this right can be checked on www.gov.uk/view-right-work.
- A learner may only undertake one Skills Bootcamp per funding year.

Information governance

UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018: All personal information relating to participants in the programme is governed by the requirements of the Data Protection Act (2018) (DPA), the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other privacy related legislation.

Data Sharing and Management: All personal information to be disclosed by the Delivery Partner to support the monitoring requirements of the funding must be detailed in a robust and transparent information sharing agreement. Mechanisms to transfer data securely will be discussed at the grant award.

Provider Security: The Service Provider must be able to evidence compliance with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation. The responsibility for compliance will be at the Service Provider's own expense.

Data Collection: It will be a requirement to ensure that the Participant is made aware of the Privacy Notice for the programme at the earliest opportunity. This should detail how they collect this data, how this is processed, where this is held, and the duration of retention. Where Sub-Processors or third parties will be collecting the data from Data Subjects the Joint Data Controller engaging the Sub-Processor or third party shall ensure they provide appropriate privacy notices.

Data sharing: At any time, information is shared by the successful consortia, it must also be in line with the Privacy Notice statement originally explained to the participant and the agreed processes.

Data Retention: The Service Provider will have the responsibility, at their own expense, to both securely retain and destroy the data in line with the disclosed retention period and the requirements of the DPIA and the GDPR. This responsibility must also be legally enforced with any third parties.

Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act: The Service Provider will be expected to support the Authority with requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, GDPR 2018 and any other relevant legislation relating to the service and data subject rights.

Quality Assurance

All providers will be required to submit monthly data submissions for evidence and audit.

With effect from April 2025, providers delivering Skills Bootcamps will need to make Individual Learner Record submissions to the Department for Education. Further information on these submissions will be provided to successful providers.

Providers will be required to engage with the Berkshire Skills Bootcamps team, who are responsible for exploring opportunities to continuously improve policy and delivery.

The Skills and Business Hub may conduct Quality Assurance visits at least once per year or as required. The aim is to support Delivery Partners, including third party providers, to deliver consistently high-quality Skills Bootcamps, share best practice and monitor continuous improvement.

Activity will include visits with Delivery Partners, including third party providers and will involve observations of sessions, discussions with key staff, participants, employers, and other stakeholders, as well as reviewing evidence.

Visits will be planned with at least 5 working days' notice. However, we do reserve the right to drop in unannounced where we feel that there might be some delivery quality concerns.

Verbal feedback is given straight away, followed by a written report including actions and recommendations. Progress towards these actions will be monitored in regular review meetings.

Safeguarding

Delivery Partners, and any third parties, must ensure that they promote a culture of safeguarding, including but not exclusive to:

- Acting in the best interests of the learners to protect them both online and offline including bullying, prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, radicalisation, and extremism (including PREVENT).
- Learners feel safe in the learning environment and know who to speak to if they do not.
- Safeguarding allegations are taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

Monitoring and evaluation

All Skills Bootcamps will be within the remit of both the DfE's Skills Bootcamp Quality Assurance Team but also within the remit of Ofsted.

Ofsted utilise the education inspection framework, and will cover Intent, Implementation, and Impact: [Education inspection framework \(EIF\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework)

All Skills Bootcamps providers must agree to work with the LEP to fully evaluate the success of the Skills Bootcamps, including the provision of:

- Names/Details of employers involved.
- Levels and details of employer co-funding achieved.
- Numbers of and personal details/demographic data for all applicants wishing to become learners on the Skills Bootcamp.
- Data on individual levels of training engagement and achievement (e.g., how many hours engaged with the course, number of completions).
- Details of job interviews by employers and the success rate.
- Track learners who complete the Skills Bootcamps, up to six months after completing the Skills Bootcamp to determine their outcome.
- Participate in qualitative interviews to reflect on implementation and identify lessons learned for future roll-out.
- Providing case studies covering the learner journey and outcomes.

The application process

To ensure the programme's delivery can commence as quickly as possible, funding will be disbursed through a combination of the following methods

- Performance-Based Allocation: Funding may be allocated to existing providers based on their current performance and evidence of successful delivery against milestones. These providers will also be required to submit a proposed delivery plan for the 2025/26 financial year and updated employer references.
- Application Process: Any remaining unallocated funds will be awarded via this open, competitive application process.

- Allocation of Unspent Funding: any unspent funds may be awarded during the 2025/26 financial year based on original or new applications.

This approach ensures efficient allocation of resources while maintaining alignment with programme goals and measurable outcomes.

Application timeline

Applications must be submitted by 17:00 BST on Friday 8th August 2025 to berkshireskillsbootcamps@thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk.

Please submit any questions or requests for clarification to berkshireskillsbootcamps@thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk by 17:00 BST on Friday, 25th July 2025. Responses will be made available on Berkshire Opportunities and all registered parties emailed.

Delivery Partner Eligibility

To deliver an organisation must be registered with the UK Register of Learning Providers. If you are an organisation or establishment, whether public, voluntary, charitable, or private that provides learning, advice, or guidance from any UK location either directly or via third-party providers you must be a recognised legal entity - a registered company, charity, school, or body created by statute. UKRLP also permits registration of sole traders or partners within organisations without registered company status. Registration is subject to UKRLP verification procedures. More information here.

Training providers must clearly demonstrate how outputs will benefit Berkshire businesses and residents.

Award Criteria

All applications must meet the eligibility criteria for Skills Bootcamps as set out by the DfE to be assessed by the LEP panel. Additionally, applications will only progress to the assessment stage if they successfully satisfy the declaration statement on compliance and demonstrate financial suitability. This ensures that all potential delivery partners adhere to the required standards and have the capacity to deliver high-quality Skills Bootcamps.

Each element of the award criteria will be scored out of five. Only applications which are assessed as acceptable and meet the minimum requirement will be considered for funding.

Q1	Application demonstrates experience of successful local delivery to post 19 learners with a particular focus on skills bootcamp delivery or short course delivery where appropriate.
Q2	Application demonstrates strong and effective employer engagement with an active employer engagement plan – employers are actively supporting the proposal, either through curriculum development, delivery and/or interviews and there is strong alignment to local data and labour market information
Q3	Application demonstrates a robust and effective learner recruitment strategy
Q4	Application demonstrates a strong and effective approach to learner support that supports learners pre the Skills Bootcamp, during the Skills Bootcamp and post the Skills Bootcamp to ensure that the learner achieves one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer of a new job and continuous employment for at least 12 weeks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An apprenticeship • A new role or additional responsibilities with an existing employer • New contracts or new opportunities for the self-employed.
Q5	Application demonstrates that the provider has a robust data and quality management in place to meet the requirements of DfE.
Q6	Application demonstrates capability and capacity to deliver Skills Bootcamps with named trainers identified
Q7	Application demonstrates an effective marketing and mobilisation strategy that will enable timely delivery to support overall Berkshire targets.
Q8	Application demonstrates value for money

The highest scoring providers will be prioritised for award, and award will be subject to available funds.

Where applicants are currently delivering DfE funded skills bootcamps of any category they must provide details of

- Location of Skills Bootcamp,
- Skills Bootcamps theme,
- Delivery performance by each milestone by each year,
- Source of contract/grant and awarding body

Scoring

Failure to respond or irrelevant information which fails to meet the requirement.	0
Response is inadequate, significantly failing to meet the requirements.	1
Response is unsatisfactory partially meets the requirement.	2
Response is acceptable and meets the minimum requirement.	3
Response is good	4
Response is excellent, exceeds the requirement and gives added value.	5